

A  
Commentary  
on the Writings  
of  
John Chrysostom

by William A. Smee  
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## Introduction

John Chrysostom was born in 347 A.D. in Antioch. In Wikipedia we read, “John's father died soon after his birth and he was raised by his mother. He was baptized in 368 or 373 and tonsured as a reader (one of the minor orders of the Church).”

Wikipedia adds, “As a result of his mother's influential connections in the city, John began his education under the pagan teacher Libanius. From Libanius, John acquired the skills for a career in rhetoric, as well as a love of the Greek language and literature.

As he grew older, however, John became more deeply committed to Christianity and went on to study theology under Diodore of Tarsus, founder of the reconstituted School of Antioch. According to the Christian historian Sozomen, Libanius was supposed to have said on his deathbed that John would have been his successor "if the Christians had not taken him from us".

John lived in extreme asceticism and became a hermit in about 375; he spent the next two years continually standing, scarcely sleeping, and committing the Bible to memory. As a consequence of these practices, his stomach and kidneys were permanently damaged and poor health forced him to return to Antioch.”

Wikipedia also adds, “John was ordained as a deacon in 381 by Saint Meletius of Antioch who was not then in communion with Alexandria and Rome. After the death of Meletius, John separated himself from the followers of Meletius, without joining Paulinus, the rival of Meletius for the bishopric of Antioch. But after the death of Paulinus he was ordained a presbyter (priest) in 386 by Flavian, the successor of Paulinus. He was destined later to bring about reconciliation between Flavian I of Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome, thus bringing those three sees into communion for the first time in nearly seventy years.

In Antioch, over the course of twelve years (386–397), John gained popularity because of the eloquence of his public speaking at the Golden Church, Antioch's cathedral, especially his insightful expositions of Bible passages and moral teaching. The most valuable of his works from this period are his *Homilies* on various books of the Bible. He emphasized charitable giving and was concerned with the spiritual and temporal needs of the poor. He spoke against abuse of wealth and personal property:

Do you wish to honour the body of Christ? Do not ignore him when he is naked. Do not pay him homage in the temple clad in silk, only then to neglect him outside where he is cold and ill clad. He who said: "This is my body" is the same who said: "You saw me hungry and you gave me no food", and "Whatever you did to the least of my brothers you did also to me"... What good is it if the Eucharistic table is overloaded with golden chalices when your brother is dying of hunger? Start by satisfying his hunger and then with what is left you may adorn the altar as well.

His straightforward understanding of the Scriptures – in contrast to the Alexandrian tendency towards allegorical interpretation – meant that the themes of his talks were practical, explaining the Bible's application to everyday life. Such straightforward preaching helped

Chrysostom to garner popular support. He founded a series of hospitals in Constantinople to care for the poor.”

The most notable Alexandrian theologian that comes to mind is Origen who is very well known for his allegorizing of the Scriptures. Chrysostom is rightly commended for his straightforward understanding of the Scriptures.

Wikipedia also adds, “In the autumn of 397, John was appointed Archbishop of Constantinople, after having been nominated without his knowledge by the eunuch Eutropius. He had to leave Antioch in secret due to fears that the departure of such a popular figure would cause civil unrest.

During his time as Archbishop he adamantly refused to host lavish social gatherings, which made him popular with the common people, but unpopular with wealthy citizens and the clergy. His reforms of the clergy were also unpopular. He told visiting regional preachers to return to the churches they were meant to be serving—without any payout.

His time in Constantinople was more tumultuous than his time in Antioch. Theophilus, the Patriarch of Alexandria, wanted to bring Constantinople under his sway and opposed John's appointment to Constantinople. Theophilus had disciplined four Egyptian monks (known as "the Tall Brothers") over their support of Origen's teachings. They fled to John and were welcomed by him. Theophilus therefore accused John of being too partial to the teaching of Origen. He made another enemy in Aelia Eudoxia, wife of Emperor Arcadius, who assumed that John's denunciations of extravagance in feminine dress were aimed at her. Eudoxia, Theophilus and other of his enemies held a synod in 403 (the Synod of the Oak) to charge John, in which his connection to Origen was used against him. It resulted in his deposition and banishment. He was called back by Arcadius almost immediately, as the people became "tumultuous" over his departure, even threatening to burn the royal palace. There was an earthquake the night of his arrest, which Eudoxia took for a sign of God's anger, prompting her to ask Arcadius for John's reinstatement.

Peace was short lived. A silver statue of Eudoxia was erected in the Augustaion, near his cathedral. John denounced the dedication ceremonies as pagan and spoke against the Empress in harsh terms: "Again Herodias raves; again she is troubled; she dances again; and again desires to receive John's head in a charger", an allusion to the events surrounding the death of John the Baptist. Once again he was banished, this time to the Caucasus in Abkhazia.

Around 405, John began to lend moral and financial support to Christian monks who were enforcing the emperors' anti-Pagan laws, by destroying temples and shrines in Phoenicia and nearby regions.

And Wikipedia concludes, “Pope Innocent I protested John's banishment from Constantinople to the town of Cucusus in Cappadocia, but to no avail. Innocent sent a delegation to intercede on behalf of John in 405. It was led by Gaudentius of Brescia; Gaudentius and his companions, two bishops, encountered many difficulties and never reached their goal of entering Constantinople.

John wrote letters which still held great influence in Constantinople. As a result of this, he was further exiled from Cucusus (where he stayed from 404 to 407) to Pitiunt (Pityus) (in modern Georgia) where his tomb is a shrine for pilgrims. He never reached this destination, as he died at Comana Pontica on 14 September 407 during the journey. His last words are said to have been "δόξα τῷ θεῷ πάντων ἕνεκεν" (Glory be to God for all things).”

In studying the writings of John Chrysostom, my goal is to know how he lines up with the Biblical truth in the word of God. I have captured sections of his writing where something stood out to me, and I then comment on its significance. I will comment on the section of his writing in two ways. If the section is difficult to understand, I will comment on the entire section line by line, or thought for thought. This will make it easier to understand. If it is easier to understand, and a line by line or thought for thought comment is not necessary, I will begin the Commentary section with the words, “In summary”.

Also, instead of using the word “doctrine”, I will use the words, “Biblical truth”, to refer to a teaching in the word of God. This is because there is much misunderstanding about what the word, “doctrine”, actually means in the Church today. Doctrine in the Biblical sense is something taught in the word of God, that is, in the Scriptures, rightly divided.

All of the references, except when otherwise noted, are from the **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers**, volumes 9 through 14. The page numbers listed with each reference refer to the hard copy volumes. All of these volumes are also available digitally with different page numbers on <https://www.ccel.org/fathers>.

John is an important leader in the early Church. Studying the history of the Church helps us understand why we are where we are today. Studying the Biblical truth in the word of God helps us understand where we need to be going forward.

## Getting to Know Chrysostom

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Series 1, Volume 9**, we read in **Prolegomena. The Life and Work of St. John Chrysostom**. By Philip Schaff, as follows:

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, Prolegomena, page 5-23**

### **Chapter II.—*Chrysostom's Youth and Training, a.d. 347–370.***

“Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto Thee; and doest promise, that when two or three are gathered together in Thy name Thou wilt grant their requests: fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of Thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of Thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting, Amen.”

This beautiful and comprehensive prayer, which is translated from the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, has made his name a household word wherever the Anglican Liturgy is known and used.

John, surnamed Chrysostom (Ἰωάννης Χρυσόστομος) is the greatest pulpit orator and commentator of the Greek Church, and still deservedly enjoys the highest honor in the whole Christian world. No one of the Oriental Fathers has left a more spotless reputation; no one is so much read and so often quoted by modern preachers and commentators. An admiring posterity, since the close of the fifth century, has given him the surname Chrysostom (the Golden Mouth), which has entirely superseded his personal name John, and which best expresses the general estimate of his merits.

His life may be divided into five periods: (1) His youth and training till his conversion and baptism, A.D. 347–370. (2) His ascetic and monastic life, 370–381. (3) His public life as priest and preacher at Antioch, 381–398. (4) His episcopate at Constantinople, 398–404. (5) His exile to his death, 404–407.

John (the name by which alone he is known among contemporary writers and his first biographers) was born in 347, at Antioch, the capital of Syria, and the home of the mother church of Gentile Christianity, where the disciples of Jesus were first called “Christians.” His father, Secundus, was a distinguished military officer (*magister militum*) in the imperial army of Syria, and died during the infancy of John, without professing Christianity, as far as we know. His mother, Anthusa, was a rare woman. Left a widow at the age of twenty, she refused all offers of marriage, and devoted herself exclusively to the education of her only son and his older sister. She was probably from principle averse to a second marriage, according to a prevailing view of the Fathers. She shines, with Nonna and Monica, among the most pious mothers of the fourth century, who prove the ennobling influence of Christianity on the character of woman, and through her on all the family relations. Anthusa gained general esteem by her exemplary life. The famous advocate of heathenism, Libanius, on hearing of her consistency and devotion, felt constrained to exclaim: “Bless me! what wonderful women there are among the Christians.”

She gave her son an admirable education, and early planted in his soul the germs of piety, which afterwards bore the richest fruits for himself and the church. By her admonitions and the

teachings of the Bible, he was secured against the seductions of heathenism.

Yet he was not baptized till he had reached the age of maturity. In that age of transition from heathenism to Christianity, the number of adult baptisms far exceeded that of infant baptisms. Hence the large baptisteries for the baptism of crowds of converts; hence the many sermons and lectures of Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem and other preachers to catechumens, and their careful instruction before baptism and admission to the Missa Fidelium or the holy communion. Even Christian parents, as the father and mother of Gregory Nazianzen, the mother of Chrysostom, and the mother of Augustin, put off the baptism of their offspring, partly no doubt from a very high conception of baptism as the sacrament of regeneration, and the superstitious fear that early baptism involved the risk of a forfeiture of baptismal grace. This was the argument which Tertullian in the second century urged against infant baptism, and this was the reason why many professing Christians put off their baptism till the latest hour; just as now so many from the same motive delay repentance and conversion to their death-bed. Chrysostom often rebukes that custom. The Emperor Constantine who favored Christianity as early as 312, and convened the Council of Nicæa in 325, postponed baptism till 337, shortly before his death. The orthodox Emperor Theodosius the Great was not baptized till the first year of his reign (380), when attacked by a serious illness.

Chrysostom received his literary training chiefly from Libanius, the admirer and friend of Julian the Apostate, and the first classical scholar and rhetorician of his age, who after a long career as public teacher at Athens and Constantinople, returned to his native Antioch and had the misfortune to outlive the revival of heathenism under Julian and to lament the triumph of Christianity under his successors. He was introduced by him into a knowledge of the Greek classics and the arts of rhetoric, which served him a good purpose for his future labors in the church. He was his best scholar, and when Libanius, shortly before his death (about 393), was asked whom he wished for his successor, he replied: "John, if only the Christians had not stolen him from us."

After the completion of his studies Chrysostom became a rhetorician, and began the profitable practice of law, which opened to him a brilliant political career. The amount of litigation was enormous. The display of talent in the law-courts was the high-road to the dignities of vice-prefect, prefect, and consul. Some of his speeches at the bar excited admiration and were highly commended by Libanius. For some time, as he says, he was "a never failing attendant at the courts of law, and passionately fond of the theatre." But he was not satisfied. The temptations of a secular profession in a corrupt state of society discouraged him. To accept a fee for making the worse cause appear the better cause, seemed to him to be taking Satan's wages.

### **Chapter III.—*His Conversion and Ascetic Life.***

The quiet study of the Scriptures, the example of his pious mother, the acquaintance with Bishop Meletius, and the influence of his intimate friend Basil, who was of the same age and devoted to ascetic life, combined to produce a gradual change in his character.

He entered the class of catechumens, and after the usual period of three years of instruction and probation, he was baptized by Meletius in his twenty-third year (369 or 370). From this time on, says Palladius, "he neither swore, nor defamed any one, nor spoke falsely, nor cursed, nor even tolerated facetious jokes." His baptism was, as in the case of St. Augustin,

the turning point in his life, an entire renunciation of this world and dedication to the service of Christ. The change was radical and permanent.

Meletius, who foresaw the future greatness of the young lawyer, wished to secure him for the active service of the church, and ordained him to the subordinate office of rector (*anagnostes*, reader), about A.D. 370. The rectors had to read the Scripture lessons in the first part of divine service (the “Missa Catechumenorum”), and to call upon the people to pray, but could not preach nor distribute the sacraments.

The first inclination of Chrysostom after baptism was to adopt the monastic life as the safest mode, according to the prevailing notions of the church in that age, to escape the temptations and corruptions of the world, to cultivate holiness and to secure the salvation of the soul. But the earnest entreaties of his mother prevailed on him to delay the gratification of his desire. He relates the scene with dramatic power. She took him to her chamber, and by the bed where she had given him birth, she adjured him with tears not to forsake her. “My son,” she said in substance, “my only comfort in the midst of the miseries of this earthly life is to see thee constantly, and to behold in thy features the faithful image of my beloved husband who is no more. This comfort commenced with your infancy before you could speak. I ask only one favor from you: do not make me a widow a second time; wait at least till I die; perhaps I shall soon leave this world. When you have buried me and joined my ashes with those of your father, nothing will then prevent you from retiring into monastic life. But as long as I breathe, support me by your presence, and do not draw down upon you the wrath of God by bringing such evils upon me who have given you no offense.”

These tender, simple and impressive words suggest many heartrending scenes caused by the ascetic enthusiasm for separation from the sacred ties of the family. It is honorable to Chrysostom that he yielded to the reasonable wishes of his devoted mother. He remained at home, but turned his home into a monastery. He secluded himself from the world and practiced a rigid asceticism. He ate little and seldom, and only the plainest food, slept on the bare floor and frequently rose to prayer. He kept almost unbroken silence to prevent a relapse into the habit of slander.

His former associates at the bar called him unsociable and morose. But two of his fellow pupils under Libanius joined him in his ascetic life, Maximus (afterwards bishop of Seleucia), and Theodore of Mopsuestia. They studied the Scriptures under the direction of Diodorus (afterwards bishop of Tarsus), the founder of the Antiochian school of theology, of which Chrysostom and Theodore became the chief ornaments.

Theodore was warmly attached to a young lady named Hermione, and resolved to marry and to leave the ascetic brotherhood. This gave rise to the earliest treatise of Chrysostom—namely, an exhortation to Theodore, in two letters. He plied all his oratorical arts of sad sympathy, tender entreaty, bitter reproach, and terrible warning, to reclaim his friend to what he thought the surest and safest way to heaven. To sin, he says, is human, but to persist in sin is devilish; to fall is not ruinous to the soul, but to remain on the ground is. The appeal had its desired effect; Theodore resumed his monastic life and became afterwards bishop of Mopsuestia in Cilicia and one of the first biblical scholars. The arguments which Chrysostom used, would condemn all who broke their monastic vows. They retain moral force only if we substitute apostasy from faith for apostasy from monasticism, which must be regarded as a temporary and abnormal or exceptional form of Christian life.

#### Chapter IV.—*Chrysostom Evades Election to a Bishopric, and Writes His Work on the Priesthood.*

About this time several bishoprics were vacant in Syria, and frequent depositions took place with the changing fortunes of orthodoxy and Arianism, and the interference of the court. The attention of the clergy and the people turned to Chrysostom and his friend Basil as suitable candidates for the episcopal office, although they had not the canonical age of thirty. Chrysostom shrunk from the responsibilities and avoided an election by a pious fraud. He apparently assented to an agreement with Basil that both should either accept, or resist the burden of the episcopate, but instead of that he concealed himself and put forward his friend whom he accounted much more worthy of the honor. Basil, under the impression that Chrysostom had already been consecrated, reluctantly submitted to the election. When he discovered the cheat, he upbraided his friend with the breach of compact, but Chrysostom laughed and rejoiced at the success of his plot. This conduct, which every sound Christian conscience must condemn, caused no offense among the Christians of that age, still less among the heathen, and was regarded as good management or “economy.” The moral character of the deception was supposed to depend altogether on the motive, which made it good or bad. Chrysostom appealed in justification of laudable deception to the stratagems of war, the conduct of physicians in dealing with refractory patients, to several examples of the Old Testament (Abraham, Jacob, David), and to the conduct of the Apostle Paul in circumcising Timothy for the sake of the Jews (Acts xvi. 3) and in observing the ceremonial law in Jerusalem at the advice of James (Acts xxi. 26).

The Jesuitical maxim, “the end justifies the means,” is much older than Jesuitism, and runs through the whole apocryphal, pseudo-prophetic, pseudo-apostolic, pseudo-Clementine and pseudo-Isidorian literature of the early centuries. Several of the best Fathers show a surprising want of a strict sense of veracity. They introduce a sort of cheat even into their strange theory of redemption, by supposing that the Devil caused the crucifixion under the delusion that Christ was a mere man, and thus lost his claim upon the fallen race. Origen, Chrysostom, and Jerome explain the offense of the collision between Paul and Peter at Antioch (Gal. 2:11 sqq.) away by turning it into a theatrical and hypocritical farce, which was shrewdly arranged by the two apostles for the purpose of convincing the Jewish Christians that circumcision was not necessary. Against such wretched exegesis the superior moral sense of Augustin rightly protested, and Jerome changed his view on this particular passage. Here is a point where the modern standard of ethics is far superior to that of the Fathers, and more fully accords with the spirit of the New Testament, which inculcates the strictest veracity as a fundamental virtue.

The escape from the episcopate was the occasion for one of the best and most popular works of Chrysostom, the Six Books *On the Priesthood*, which he wrote probably before his ordination (between 375 and 381), or during his diaconate (between 381 and 386). It is composed in the form of a Platonic dialogue between Chrysostom and Basil. He first vindicates by argument and examples his well meant but untruthful conduct towards his friend, and the advantages of timely fraud; and then describes with youthful fervor and eloquence the importance, duties and trials of the Christian ministry, without distinguishing between the priestly and the episcopal office. He elevates it above all other offices. He requires wholesouled

consecration to Christ and love to his flock. He points to the Scriptures (quoting also from the Apocrypha) as the great weapon of the minister. He assumes, as may be expected, the then prevailing conception of a real priesthood and sacrifice, baptismal regeneration, the corporal presence, the virtue of absolution, prayers for the dead, but is silent about pope and councils, the orders of the clergy, prayers to saints, forms of prayer, priestly vestments, incense, crosses and other doctrines and ceremonies of the Greek and Roman churches. He holds up St. Paul as a model for imitation. The sole object of the preacher must be to please God rather than men (Gal. 1:10). "He must not indeed despise approving demonstrations, but as little must he court them, nor trouble himself when they are withheld." He should combine the qualities of dignity and humility, authority and sociability, impartiality and courtesy, independence and lowliness, strength and gentleness, and keep a single eye to the glory of Christ and the welfare of the church.

This book is the most useful or at least the best known among the works of Chrysostom, and is well calculated to inspire a profound sense of the tremendous responsibilities of the ministry. But it has serious defects, besides the objectionable justification of pious fraud, and cannot satisfy the demands of an evangelical minister. In all that pertains to the proper care of souls it is inferior to the "Reformed Pastor" of Richard Baxter.

#### **Chapter V.—*Chrysostom as a Monk. a.d. 374–381.***

After the death of his mother, Chrysostom fled from the seductions and tumults of city life to the monastic solitude of the mountains south of Antioch, and there spent six happy years in theological study and sacred meditation and prayer. Monasticism was to him (as to many other great teachers of the church, and even to Luther) a profitable school of spiritual experience and self-government. He embraced this mode of life as "the true philosophy" from the purest motives, and brought into it intellect and cultivation enough to make the seclusion available for moral and spiritual growth.

He gives us a lively description of the bright side of this monastic life. The monks lived in separate cells or huts (κελυβαι), but according to a common rule and under the authority of an abbot. They wore coarse garments of camel's hair or goat's hair over their linen tunics. They rose before sunrise, and began the day by singing a hymn of praise and common prayer under the leadership of the abbot. Then they went to their allotted task, some to read, others to write, others to manual labor for the support of the poor. Four hours in each day were devoted to prayer and singing. Their only food was bread and water, except in case of sickness. They slept on straw couches, free from care and anxiety. There was no need of bolts and bars. They held all things in common, and the words of "mine and thine," which cause innumerable strifes in the world, were unknown among the brethren. If one died, he caused no lamentation, but thanksgiving, and was carried to the grave amidst hymns of praise; for he was not dead, but "perfected," and permitted to behold the face of Christ. For them to live was Christ, and to die was gain.

Chrysostom was an admirer of active and useful monasticism, and warns against the dangers of idle contemplation. He shows that the words of our Lord, "One thing is needful;" "Take no anxious thought for the morrow;" "Labor not for the meat that perisheth," do not inculcate total abstinence from work, but only undue anxiety about worldly things, and must be harmonized with the apostolic exhortation to labor and to do good. He defends monastic



seclusion on account of the prevailing immorality in the cities, which made it almost impossible to cultivate there a higher Christian life.

In this period, from 374 to 381, Chrysostom composed his earliest writings in praise of monasticism and celibacy. The letters “to the fallen Theodore,” have already been mentioned. The three books against the Opponents of Monasticism were occasioned by a decree of the Arian Emperor Valens in 373, which aimed at the destruction of that system and compelled the monks to discharge their duties to the state by military or civil service. Chrysostom regarded this decree as a sacrilege, and the worst kind of persecution.

#### **Chapter VI.—*Chrysostom as Deacon, Priest and Preacher at Antioch. a.d. 381–398.***

By excessive self-mortifications John undermined his health, and returned to Antioch. There he was immediately ordained deacon by Meletius in 380 or 381, and a few years afterwards presbyter by Flavian (386).

As deacon he had the best opportunity to become acquainted with the practical needs of the population, the care of the poor and the sick. After his ordination to the priesthood he preached in the presence of the bishop his first sermon to a vast crowd. It abounds in flowery Asiatic eloquence, in humble confession of his own unworthiness, and exaggerated praise of Meletius and Flavian.

He now entered upon a large field of usefulness, the real work of his life. The pulpit was his throne, and he adorned it as much as any preacher of ancient or modern times.

Antioch was one of the great capitals of the Roman empire along with Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome. Nature and art combined to make it a delightful residence, though it was often visited by inundations and earthquakes. An abundance of pure water from the river Orontes, a large lake and the surrounding hills, fertile plains, the commerce of the sea, imposing buildings of Asiatic, Greek, and Roman architecture, rich gardens, baths, and colonnaded streets, were among its chief attractions. A broad street of four miles, built by Antiochus Epiphanes, traversed the city from east to west; the spacious colonnades on either side were paved with red granite. Innumerable lanterns illuminated the main thoroughfares at night. The city was supplied with good schools and several churches; the greatest of them, in which Chrysostom preached, was begun by the Emperor Constantine and finished by Constantius. The inhabitants were Syrians, Greeks, Jews, and Romans. The Asiatic element prevailed. The whole population amounted, as Chrysostom states, to 200,000, of whom one half were nominally Christians. Heathenism was therefore still powerful as to numbers, but as a religion it had lost all vitality. This was shown by the failure of the attempt of the Emperor Julian the Apostate to revive the sacrifices to the gods. When he endeavored in 362 to restore the oracle of Apollo Daphneus in the famous cypress grove at Antioch and arranged for a magnificent procession, with libation, dances, and incense, he found in the temple one solitary old priest, and this priest ominously offered in sacrifice—a goose! Julian himself relates this ludicrous farce, and vents his anger at the Antiochians for squandering the rich incomes of the temple upon Christianity and worldly amusements.

Chrysostom gives us in his sermons lively pictures of the character of the people and the condition of the church. The prevailing vices even among Christians were avarice, luxury, sensuality, and excessive love of the circus and the theatre. “So great,” he says, “is the depravity of the times, that if a stranger were to compare the precepts of the gospel with the actual

practice of society, he would infer that men were not the disciples, but the enemies of Christ.” Gibbon thus describes the morals of Antioch: in *Decline and Fall*, chapter 24, “The warmth of the climate disposed the natives to the most intemperate enjoyment of tranquility and opulence, and the lively licentiousness of the Greeks was blended with the hereditary softness of the Syrians. Fashion was the only law, pleasure the only pursuit, and the splendor of dress and furniture was the only distinction of the citizens of Antioch. The arts of luxury were honored, the serious and manly virtues were the subject of ridicule, and the contempt for female modesty and reverent age announced the universal corruption of the capital of the East. The love of spectacles was the taste, or rather passion of the Syrians; the most skilful artists were procured from the adjacent cities. A considerable share of the revenue was devoted to the public amusements, and the magnificence of the games of the theatre and circus was considered as the happiness and as the glory of Antioch.

The church of Antioch was rent for eighty-five years (330–415) by heresy and schism. There were three parties and as many rival bishops. The Meletians, under the lead of Meletius, were the party of moderate orthodoxy holding the Nicene Creed; the Arians, headed by Eudoxius, and supported by the Emperor Valens, denied the eternal divinity of Christ; the Eustathians, under the venerated priest Paulinus, were in communion with Athanasius, but were accused of Sabellianism, which maintained the Divine unity and strict deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit, but denied the tri-personality except in the form of three modes of self revelation. Pope Damasus declared for Paulinus and condemned Meletius as a heretic. Alexandria likewise sided against him. Meletius was more than once banished from his see, and recalled. He died during the sessions of the Council of Constantinople, 381, over which he presided for a while. His remains were carried with great solemnities to Antioch and buried by the side of Babylas the Martyr. Chrysostom reconciled Flavian, the successor of Meletius, with Alexandria and Rome in 398. Alexander, the successor of Flavian, led the Eustathians back into the orthodox church in 415, and thus unity was restored.

Chrysostom preached Sunday after Sunday and during Lent, sometimes twice or oftener during the week, even five days in succession, on the duties and responsibilities of Christians, and fearlessly attacked the immorality of the city. He declaimed with special severity against the theatre and the chariot-races; and yet many of his hearers would run from his sermons to the circus to witness those exciting spectacles with the same eagerness as Jews and Gentiles. He exemplified his preaching by a blameless life, and soon acquired great reputation and won the love of the whole congregation. Whenever he preached the church was crowded. He had to warn his hearers against pickpockets, who found an inviting harvest in these dense audiences.

A serious disturbance which took place during his career at Antioch, called forth a remarkable effort of his oratorical powers. The populace of the city, provoked by excessive taxes, rose in revolt against the Emperor Theodosius the Great, broke down his statues and those of his deceased excellent wife Flacilla (d. 385) and his son Arcadius, dragged the fragments through the streets, and committed other acts of violence. The Emperor threatened to destroy the whole city. This caused general consternation and agony, but the city was saved by the intercession of Bishop Flavian, who in his old age proceeded to Constantinople and secured free pardon from the Emperor. Although a man of violent temper, Theodosius had profound reverence for bishops, and on another occasion he submitted to the rebuke of St. Ambrose for the wholesale massacre of the Thessalonians (390).

In this period of public anxiety, which lasted several months, Chrysostom delivered series of extempore orations, in which he comforted the people and exhorted them to correct their vices. These are his twenty-one *Homilies on the Statues*, so-called from the overthrow of the imperial statues which gave rise to them. They were preached during Lent 387. In the same year St. Augustin submitted to baptism at the hands of St. Ambrose in Milan. One of the results of those sermons was the conversion of a large number of heathens. Thus the calamity was turned into a blessing to the church.

During the sixteen or seventeen years of his labors in Antioch Chrysostom wrote the greater part of his Homilies and Commentaries; a consolatory Epistle to the despondent Stagirus; the excellent book on the martyr Babylas, which illustrates by a striking example the divine power of Christianity; a treatise on Virginity, which he puts above marriage; and an admonition to a young widow on the glory of widowhood, and the duty of continuing in it. He disapproved of second marriage, not as sinful or illegal, but as inconsistent with an ideal conception of marriage and a high order of piety.

### **Chapter VII.—*Chrysostom as Patriarch of Constantinople. a.d. 398–404.***

After the death of Nectarius (successor to Gregory Nazianzen), towards the end of the year 397, Chrysostom was chosen, entirely without his own agency and even against his remonstrance, archbishop of Constantinople. He was hurried away from Antioch by a military escort, to avoid a commotion in the congregation and to make resistance useless. He was consecrated Feb. 26, 398, by his enemy Theophilus, patriarch of Alexandria, who reluctantly yielded to the command of the Emperor Arcadius or rather his prime minister, the eunuch Eutropius, and nursed his revenge for a more convenient season.

Constantinople, built by Constantine the Great in 330, on the site of Byzantium, assumed as the Eastern capital of the Roman empire the first position among the episcopal sees of the East, and became the centre of court theology, court intrigues, and theological controversies. The second œcumenical council, which was held there in 381, under Theodosius the Great, the last Roman emperor worthy of the name (d. 395), decided the victory of Nicene orthodoxy over the Arian heresy, and gave the bishop of Constantinople a primacy of honor, next in rank to the bishop of old Rome—a position which was afterwards confirmed by the Council of Chalcedon in 451, but disputed by Pope Leo and his successors.

Chrysostom soon gained by his eloquent sermons the admiration of the people, of the weak Emperor Arcadius, and, at first, even of his wife Eudoxia, with whom he afterwards waged a deadly war. He extended his pastoral care to the Goths who were becoming numerous in Constantinople, had a part of the Bible translated for them, often preached to them himself through an interpreter, and sent missionaries to the Gothic and Scythian tribes on the Danube. He continued to direct by correspondence those missionary operations even during his exile. For a short time he enjoyed the height of power and popularity.

But he also made enemies by his denunciations of the vices and follies of the clergy and aristocracy. He emptied the episcopal palace of its costly plate and furniture and sold it for the benefit of the poor and the hospitals. He introduced his strict ascetic habits and reduced the luxurious household of his predecessors to the strictest simplicity. He devoted his large income to benevolence. He refused invitations to banquets, gave no dinner parties, and ate the simplest fare in his solitary chamber. He denounced unsparingly luxurious habits in eating and dressing,

and enjoined upon the rich the duty of almsgiving to an extent that tended to increase rather than diminish the number of beggars who swarmed in the streets and around the churches and public baths. He disciplined the vicious clergy and opposed the perilous and immoral habit of unmarried priests of living under the same roof with “spiritual Sisters” (συνείσακται). This habit dated from an earlier age, and was a reaction against celibacy. Cyprian had raised his protest against it, and the Council of Nicæa forbade unmarried priests to live with any females except close relations. Chrysostom’s unpopularity was increased by his irritability and obstinacy, and his subservience to a proud and violent archdeacon, Serapion. The Empress Eudoxia was jealous of his influence over Arcadius and angry at his uncompromising severity against sin and vice. She became the chief instrument of his downfall.

The occasion was furnished by an unauthorized use of his episcopal power beyond the lines of his diocese, which was confined to the city. At the request of the clergy of Ephesus and the neighboring bishops, he visited that city in January, 401, held a synod and deposed six bishops convicted of shameful simony. During his absence of several months he left the episcopate of Constantinople in the hands of Severian, bishop of Gabala, an unworthy and adroit flatterer, who basely betrayed his trust and formed a cabal headed by the empress and her licentious court ladies, for the ruin of Chrysostom. On his return he used unguarded language in the pulpit, and spoke on Elijah’s relation to Jezebel in such a manner that Eudoxia understood it as a personal insult. The clergy were anxious to get rid of a bishop who was too severe for their lax morals.

### **Chapter VIII.—*Chrysostom and Theophilus. His First Deposition and Banishment.***

At this time Chrysostom became involved in the Origenistic controversies which are among the most violent and most useless in ancient church history, and full of personal invective and calumny. The object in dispute was the orthodoxy of the great Origen, which long after his death was violently defended and as violently assailed.

Theophilus of Alexandria, an able and vigorous but domineering, contentious and unscrupulous prelate, was at first an admirer of Origen, but afterwards in consequence of a personal quarrel joined the opponents, condemned his memory and banished the Origenistic monks from Egypt. Some fifty of them, including the four “Tall Brethren,” so-called on account of their extraordinary stature, fled to Constantinople and were hospitably received by Chrysostom (401). He had no sympathy with the philosophical speculations of Origen, but appreciated his great merits, and felt that injustice was done to the persecuted monks. He interceded in their behalf with Theophilus, who replied with indignant remonstrance against protecting heretics and interfering in another diocese.

Theophilus, long desirous of overthrowing Chrysostom, whom he had reluctantly consecrated, set every instrument in motion to take revenge. He sent the octogenarian bishop Epiphanius of Salamis, a well-meaning and learned but bigoted zealot for orthodoxy, to Constantinople, as a tool of his hierarchical plans (402); but Epiphanius soon returned and died on the ship (403). Theophilus now traveled himself to Constantinople, accompanied by a bodyguard of rough sailors and provided with splendid presents. He appeared at once as accuser and judge, aided by Eudoxia and the disaffected clergy. He held a secret council of thirty-six bishops, all of them Egyptians except seven, in a suburb of Chalcedon on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, and procured in this so-called synod at the Oak, the deposition and banishment of

Chrysostom, on false charges of immorality and high treason (403). Among the twenty-nine charges were these: that Chrysostom had called the saintly Epiphanius a fool and a demon, that he abused the clergy, that he received females without witnesses, that he ate sumptuously alone and bathed alone, that he had compared the empress to Jezebel.

The innocent bishop refused to appear before a packed synod of his enemies, and appealed to a general council. As the sentence of banishment for life became known, the indignation of the people was immense. A single word from him would have raised an insurrection; but he surrendered himself freely to the imperial officers, who conveyed him in the dark to the harbor and put him on board a ship destined for Hieron at the mouth of the Pontus. Theophilus entered the city in triumph and took vengeance on Chrysostom's friends.

The people besieged the palace and demanded the restoration of their bishop. Constantinople was almost in a state of insurrection. The following night the city was convulsed by an earthquake, which was felt with peculiar violence in the bedroom of Eudoxia and frightened her into submission. She implored the emperor to avert the wrath of God by recalling Chrysostom. Messengers were despatched with abject apologies to bring him back. A whole fleet of barks put forth to greet him, the Bosphorus blazed with torches and resounded with songs of rejoicing. On passing the gates he was borne aloft by the people to the church, seated in the episcopal chair and forced to make an address. His triumph was complete, but of short duration. Theophilus felt unsafe in Constantinople and abruptly sailed in the night for Alexandria. The feelings with which Chrysostom went into his first and second exile, he well describes in a letter to Bishop Cyriacus: "when I was driven from the city, I felt no anxiety, but said to myself: If the empress wishes to banish me, let her do so; 'the earth is the Lord's.' If she wants to have me sawn asunder, I have Isaiah for an example. If she wants me to be drowned in the ocean, I think of Jonah. If I am to be thrown into the fire, the three men in the furnace suffered the same. If cast before wild beasts, I remember Daniel in the lion's den. If she wants me to be stoned, I have before me Stephen, the first martyr. If she demands my head, let her do so; John the Baptist shines before me. Naked I came from my mother's womb, naked shall I leave this world. Paul reminds me, 'If I still pleased men, I would not be the servant of Christ.'"

### **Chapter IX.—*Chrysostom and Eudoxia. His Second Banishment, a.d. 403.***

The restored patriarch and the repentant empress seemed reconciled, and vied with one another in extravagant laudations for two months, when the feud broke out afresh and ended in perpetual exile and death.

Eudoxia was a beautiful, imperious, intriguing and revengeful woman, who despised her husband and indulged her passions. Not content with the virtual rule of the Roman empire, she aspired to semi-divine honors, which used to be paid to the heathen Cæsars. A column of porphyry with her silver statue for public adoration was erected in September, 403, on the forum before the church of St. Sophia, and dedicated amid boisterous and licentious revelry, which disturbed the sacred services.

Chrysostom ascended the pulpit on the commemoration day of the martyrdom of John the Baptist, and thundered his righteous indignation against all who shared in these profane amusements, the people, the prefect, and the haughty woman on the throne. In the heat of his zeal the imprudent words are said to have escaped his lips: "Again Herodias is raging, again she is dancing, again she demands the head of John on a platter." The comparison of Eudoxia with

Herodias, and himself (John) with John the Baptist was even more directly personal than his former allusion to the relation of Jezebel and Elijah. Whether he really spoke these or similar words is at least doubtful, but they were reported to Eudoxia, who as a woman and an empress could never forgive such an insult. She demanded from the emperor signal redress. In the conflict of imperial and episcopal authority the former achieved a physical and temporary, the latter a moral and enduring victory.

The enemies of Chrysostom flocked like vultures down to their prey. Theophilus directed the plot from a safe distance. Arcadius was persuaded to issue an order for the removal of Chrysostom. He continued to preach and refused to leave the church over which God had placed him, but had to yield to armed force. He was dragged by imperial guards from the cathedral on the vigil of the resurrection in 404, while the sacrament of baptism was being administered to hundreds of catechumens. "The waters of regeneration," says Palladius, "were stained with blood." The female candidates, half dressed, were driven by licentious soldiers into the dark streets. The eucharistic elements were profaned by pagan hands. The clergy in their priestly robes were ejected and chased through the city. The horrors of that night were long afterwards remembered with a shudder. During the greater part of the Easter week the city was kept in a state of consternation. Private dwellings were invaded, and suspected Joannites—the partisans of Chrysostom—thrown into prison, scourged and tortured. Chrysostom, who was shut up in his episcopal palace, twice narrowly escaped assassination.

At last on June 5, 404, the timid and long hesitating Arcadius signed the edict of banishment. Chrysostom received it with calm submission, and after a final prayer in the cathedral with some of his faithful bishops, and a tender farewell to his beloved Olympias and her attendant deaconesses, he surrendered himself to the guards and was conveyed at night to the Asiatic shore. He had scarcely left the city, when the cathedral was consumed by fire. The charge of incendiarism was raised against his friends, but neither threats, nor torture and mutilation could elicit a confession of guilt. He refused to acknowledge Arsacius and Atticus as his successors; and this was made a crime punishable with degradation, fine and imprisonment. The clergy who continued faithful to him were deposed and banished. Pope Innocent of Rome was appealed to, pronounced the synod which had condemned Chrysostom irregular, annulled the deposition, and wrote him a letter of sympathy, and urged upon Arcadius the convocation of a general council, but without effect.

### **Chapter X.—*Chrysostom in Exile. His Death. a.d. 404–407.***

Chrysostom was conveyed under the scorching heat of July and August over Galatia and Cappadocia, to the lonely mountain village Cucusus, on the borders of Cilicia and Armenia, which the wrath of Eudoxia had selected for his exile. The climate was inclement and variable, the winter severe, the place was exposed to Isaurian brigands. He suffered much from fever and headache, and was more than once brought to the brink of the grave. Nevertheless the bracing mountain air invigorated his feeble constitution, and he was hopeful of returning to his diocese. He was kindly treated by the bishop of Cucusus. He received visits, letters and presents from faithful friends, and by his correspondence exerted a wider influence from that solitude than from the episcopal throne.

His 242 extant letters are nearly all from the three years of his exile, and breathe a noble Christian spirit, in a clear, brilliant and persuasive style. They exhibit his faithful care for all the

interests of the church and look calmly and hopefully to the glories of heaven. They are addressed to Eastern and Western bishops, presbyters, deacons, deaconesses, monks and missionaries; they describe the fatigues of his journey, give advice on a variety of subjects, strengthen and comfort his distant flock, urge the destruction of heathen temples in Phœnicia, the extirpation of heresy in Cyprus, and encourage the missions in Persia and Scythia. Two letters are addressed to the Roman bishop Innocent I., whose sympathy and assistance he courted. Seventeen letters—the most important of all—are addressed to Olympias, the deaconess, a widow of noble birth, personal beauty and high accomplishments, who devoted her fortune and time to the poor and the sick. She died between 408 and 420. To her he revealed his inner life, upon her virtues he lavished extravagant praise, which offends modern taste as fulsome flattery. For her consolation he wrote a special treatise on the theme that “No one is really injured except by himself.”

The cruel empress, stung by disappointment at the continued power of the banished bishop, forbade all correspondence and ordered his transfer by two brutal guards, first to Arabissus, then to Pityus on the Caucasus, the most inhospitable spots in the empire. The journey of three months on foot was a slow martyrdom to the feeble and sickly old man. He did not reach his destination, but ended his pilgrimage five or six miles from Comana in Pontus in the chapel of the martyr Basiliscus on the 14th of September, 407, in his sixtieth year, the tenth of his episcopate. Clothed in his white baptismal robes, he partook of the eucharist and commended his soul to God. His last words were his accustomed doxology, the motto of his life: “Glory be to God for all things, Amen.”

He was buried by the side of Basiliscus in the presence of monks and nuns.

He was revered as a saint by the people. Thirty-one years afterwards, January 27, 438, his body was translated with great pomp to Constantinople and deposited with the emperors and patriarchs beneath the altar of the church of the Holy Apostles. The young Emperor Theodosius II. and his sister Pulcheria met the procession at Chalcedon, knelt down before the coffin, and in the name of their guilty parents implored the forgiveness of heaven for the grievous injustice done to the greatest and saintliest man that ever graced the pulpit and episcopal chair of Constantinople. The Eastern church of that age shrunk from the bold speculations of Origen, but revered the narrow orthodoxy of Epiphanius and the ascetic piety of Chrysostom.

The personal appearance of the golden-mouthed orator was not imposing, but dignified and winning. He was of small stature (like David, Paul, Athanasius, Melancthon, John Wesley, Schleiermacher). He had an emaciated frame, a large, bald head, a lofty, wrinkled forehead, deep-set, bright, piercing eyes, pallid, hollow cheeks, and a short, gray beard.

## **Chapter XI.—*His Character.***

Chrysostom was one of those rare men who combine greatness and goodness, genius and piety, and continue to exercise by their writings and example a happy influence upon the Christian church. He was a man for his time and for all times. But we must look at the spirit rather than the form of his piety, which bore the stamp of his age.

He took Paul for his model, but had a good deal of the practical spirit of James, and of the fervor and loveliness of John. The Scriptures were his daily food, and he again and again recommended their study to laymen as well as ministers. He was not an ecclesiastical statesman, like St. Ambrose, not a profound divine like St. Augustin, but a pure man, a practical

Christian, and a king of preachers. "He carried out in his own life," says Hase, "as far as mortal man can do it, the ideal of the priesthood which he once described in youthful enthusiasm." He considered it the duty of every Christian to promote the spiritual welfare of his fellowmen. "Nothing can be more chilling," he says in the 20th Homily on Acts, "than the sight of a Christian who makes no effort to save others. Neither poverty, nor humble station, nor bodily infirmity can exempt men and women from the obligation of this great duty. To hide our light under pretense of weakness is as great an insult to God as if we were to say that He could not make His sun to shine."

It is very much to his praise that in an age of narrow orthodoxy and doctrinal intolerance he cherished a catholic and irenic spirit. He by no means disregarded the value of theological soundness, and was in hearty agreement with the Nicene creed, which triumphed over the Arians during his ministry in Antioch; he even refused a church in Constantinople which the Arian Goths claimed. But he took no share in the persecution of heretics, and even sheltered the Origenistic monks against the violence of Theophilus of Alexandria. He hated sin more than error, and placed charity above orthodoxy.

Like all the Nicene Fathers, he was an enthusiast for ascetic and monastic virtue, which shows itself in seclusion rather than in transformation of the world and the natural ordinances of God. He retained as priest and bishop his cloister habits of simplicity, abstemiousness and unworldliness. He presents the most favorable aspect of that mode of life, which must be regarded as a wholesome reaction against the hopeless corruption of pagan society. He thought with St. Paul that he could best serve the Lord in single life, and no one can deny that he was unreservedly devoted to the cause of religion.

He was not a man of affairs, and knew little of the world. He had the harmlessness of the dove without the wisdom of the serpent. He knew human nature better than individual men. In this respect he resembles Neander, his best biographer. Besides, he was irritable of temper, suspicious of his enemies, and easily deceived and misled by such men as Serapion. He showed these defects in his quarrel with the court and the aristocracy of Constantinople. With a little more worldly wisdom and less ascetic severity he might perhaps have conciliated and converted those whom he repelled by his pulpit fulminations. Fearless denunciation of immorality and vice in high places always commands admiration and respect, especially in a bishop and court preacher who is exposed to the temptations of flattery. But it is unwise to introduce personalities into the pulpit and does more harm than good. His relation to Eudoxia reminds one of the attitude of John Knox to Mary Stuart. The contrast between the pure and holy zeal of the preacher and the reformer and the ambition and vanity of a woman on the throne is very striking and must be judged by higher rules than those of gallantry and courtesy. But after all, the conduct of Christ, the purest of the pure, towards Mary Magdalene and the woman taken in adultery is far more sublime.

The conflict of Chrysostom with Eudoxia imparts to his latter life the interest of a romance, and was over-ruled for his benefit. In his exile his character shines brighter than even in the pulpit of Antioch and Constantinople. His character was perfected by suffering. The gentleness, meekness, patience, endurance and devotion to his friends and his work which he showed during the last three years of his life are the crowning glory of his career. Though he did not die a violent death, he deserves to be numbered among the true martyrs, who are ready for any sacrifice to the cause of virtue and piety.



## **Chapter XII.—*The Writings of Chrysostom.***

Chrysostom was the most fruitful author among the Greek Fathers. Suidas makes the extravagant remark that only the omniscient God could recount all his writings. The best have been preserved and have already been noticed in chronological order. They may be divided into five classes: (1) Moral and ascetic treatises, including the work on the Priesthood; (2) About six hundred Homilies and Commentaries; (3) Occasional, festal and panegyric orations; (4) Letters; (5) Liturgy.

His most important and permanently useful works are his Homilies and Commentaries, which fill eleven of the thirteen folio volumes of the Benedictine edition. They go together; his homilies are expository, and his commentaries are homiletical and practical. Continuous expositions, according to chapter and verse, he wrote only on the first eight chapters of Isaiah, and on the Epistle to the Galatians. All others are arranged in sermons with a moral application at the close. Suidas and Cassiodorus state that he wrote commentaries on the whole Bible. We have from him Homilies on Genesis, the Psalms, the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of John, the Acts, the Pauline Epistles including the Hebrews, which he considered Pauline. Besides, he delivered discourses on separate texts of Scripture, on church festivals, eulogies on apostles and martyrs, sermons against the Pagans, against the Jews and Judaizing Christians, against the Arians, and the famous twenty-one orations on the Statues.

He published some of his sermons himself, but most of them were taken down by shorthand writers. Written sermons were the exceptions in those days. The preacher usually was seated, the people were standing.

Of the letters of Chrysostom we have already spoken.

The Liturgy of Chrysostom so-called is an abridgment and improvement of the Liturgy of St. Basil (d. 379), and both are descended from the Liturgy of James, which they superseded. They have undergone gradual changes. It is impossible to determine the original text, as no two copies precisely agree. Chrysostom frequently refers to different parts of the divine service customary in his day, but there is no evidence that he composed a liturgy, nor is it probable. The Liturgy which bears his name is still used in the orthodox Greek and Russian church on all Sundays, except those during Lent, and on the eve of Epiphany, Easter and Christmas, when the Liturgy of Basil takes its place.

## **Chapter XIII.—*His Theology and Exegesis.***

Chrysostom belonged to the Antiochian school of theology and exegesis, and is its soundest and most popular representative. It was founded by his teacher Diodor of Tarsus (d. 393), developed by himself and his fellow-student Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 429), and followed by Theodoret and the Syrian and Nestorian divines. Theodore was the exegete, Chrysostom the homilist, Theodoret the annotator. The school was afterwards condemned for its alleged connection with the Nestorian heresy; but that connection was accidental, not necessary. Chrysostom's mind was not given to dogmatizing, and too well balanced to run into heresy.

The Antiochian school agreed with the Alexandrian school founded by Origen, in maintaining the divine inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, but differed from it in the method of interpretation, and in a sharper distinction between the Old and the New Testaments,

and the divine and human elements in the same.

To Origen belongs the great merit of having opened the path of biblical science and criticism, but he gave the widest scope to the allegorizing and mystical method by which the Bible may be made to say anything that is pious and edifying. (**Schaff Note:** Allegorical interpretation makes the writer say something else than what he meant, ἄλλο μὲν φηγορεύει, ἄλλο δὲ νοεῖ.) Philo of Alexandria had used that method for introducing the Platonic philosophy into the Mosaic writings. Origen was likewise a Platonist, but his chief object was to remove all that was offensive in the literal sense. The allegorical method is imposition rather than exposition. Christ sanctions parabolic teaching and typical, but not allegorical, interpretation. Paul uses it once or twice, but only incidentally, when arguing from the rabbinical standpoint.

The Antiochian school seeks to explain the obvious grammatical and historical sense, which is rich enough for all purposes of instruction and edification. It takes out of the Word what is actually in it, instead of putting into it all sorts of foreign notions and fancies.

Chrysostom recognizes allegorizing in theory, but seldom uses it in practice, and then more by way of rhetorical ornament and in deference to custom. He was generally guided by sound common sense and practical wisdom. He was more free from arbitrary and absurd interpretations than almost any other patristic commentator. He pays proper attention to the connection, and puts himself into the psychological state and historical situation of the writer. In one word, he comes very near to what we now call the grammatico-historical exegesis. This is the only solid and sound foundation for any legitimate use of the Scriptures. The sacred writers had one definite object in view; they wished to convey one particular sense by the ordinary use of language, and to be clearly understood by their readers. At the same time the truths of revelation are so deep and so rich that they can be indefinitely expanded and applied to all circumstances and conditions. Interpretation is one thing, application is another thing. Chrysostom knew as well as any allegorist how to derive spiritual nourishment from the Scriptures and to make them “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.” As to the text of the Greek Testament, he is the chief witness of the Syro-Constantinopolitan recension, which was followed by the later Greek Fathers. He accepts the Syrian canon of the Peshito, which includes the Old Testament with the Apocrypha, but omits from the New Testament the Apocalypse and four Catholic Epistles (2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude); at least in the *Synopsis Veteris et novi Testamenti* which is found in his works, those five books are wanting, but this does not prove that he did not know them.

The commentaries of Chrysostom are of unequal merit. We must always remember that he is a homiletical commentator who aimed at the conversion and edification of his hearers. He makes frequent digressions and neglects to explain the difficulties of important texts. Grammatical remarks are rare, but noteworthy on account of his familiarity with the Greek as his mother tongue, though by no means coming up to the accuracy of a modern expert in philology. In the Old Testament he depended altogether on the Septuagint, being ignorant of Hebrew, and often missed the mark. The Homilies on the Pauline Epistles are considered his best, especially those to the Corinthians, where he had to deal with moral and pastoral questions. The doctrinal topics of Romans and Galatians were less to his taste, and it cannot be said that he entered into the depths of Paul’s doctrines of sin and grace, or ascended the height of his conception of freedom in Christ. His Homilies on Romans are argumentative; his

continuous notes on Galatians somewhat hasty and superficial. The eighty Homilies on Matthew from his Antiochian period are very valuable. Thomas Aquinas declared he would rather possess them than be the master of all Paris. The eighty-eight Homilies on John, also preached at Antioch, but to a select audience early in the morning, are more doctrinal and controversial, being directed against the Anomœans (Arians). (**Schaff Note:** So called because they taught that the Son is *unlike* or *dissimilar* (ἕτερομοιος) to the Father and of a *different* substance, in opposition to the Nicene doctrine of *equal* substance (ὁμοουσία), and the semi-Arian doctrine of *like*, or *similar* substance (ὁμοιουσία).). We have no commentaries from him on Mark and Luke, nor on the Catholic Epistles and the Apocalypse. The fifty-five homilies on the Acts, delivered at Constantinople between Easter and Whitsuntide, when that book was read in the public lessons, contain much interesting information about the manners and customs of the age, but are the least polished of his productions. Erasmus, who translated them into Latin, doubted their genuineness. His life in Constantinople was too much disturbed to leave him quiet leisure for preparation. The Homilies on the Hebrews, likewise preached in Constantinople, were published after his death from notes of his friend, the presbyter Constantine, and the text is in a confused state.

The Homilies of Chrysostom were a rich storehouse for the Greek commentators, compilers and epitomizers, such as Theodoret, Oecumenius, Theophylact, and Euthymius Zigabenus, and they are worth consulting to this day for their exegetical as well as their practical value.

The theology of Chrysostom must be gathered chiefly from his commentaries. He differs from the metaphysical divines of the Nicene age by his predominantly practical tendency, and in this respect he approaches the genius of the Western church. He lived between the great trinitarian and christological controversies and was only involved incidentally in the subordinate Origenistic controversy, in which he showed a charitable and liberal spirit. He accepted the Nicene Creed, but he died before the rise of the Nestorian and Eutychian heresies. Speculation was not his forte, and as a thinker he is behind Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, and John of Damascus. He was a rhetorician rather than a logician.

Like all the Greek fathers, he laid great stress on freewill and the cooperation of the human will with divine grace in the work of conversion. Cassian, the founder of Semi-Pelagianism, was his pupil and appealed to his authority. Julian of Eclanum, the ablest opponent of Augustin, quoted Chrysostom against original sin; Augustin tried from several passages to prove the reverse, but could only show that Chrysostom was no Pelagian. We may say that in tendency and spirit he was a catholic Semi-Pelagian or Synergist before Semi-Pelagianism was brought into a system.

His anthropology forms a wholesome contrast and supplement to the anthropology of his younger contemporary, the great bishop of Hippo, the champion of the slavery of the human will and the sovereignty of divine grace.

We look in vain in Chrysostom's writings for the Augustinian and Calvinistic doctrines of absolute predestination, total depravity, hereditary guilt, irresistible grace, perseverance of saints, or for the Lutheran theory of forensic and solifidian justification. He teaches that God foreordained all men to holiness and salvation, and that Christ died for all and is both willing and able to save all, but not against their will and without their free consent. The vessels of mercy were prepared by God unto glory, the vessels of wrath were not intended by God, but

fitted by their own sin, for destruction. The will of man, though injured by the Fall, has still the power to accept or to reject the offer of salvation. It must first obey the divine call. "When we have begun," he says, in commenting on John 1:38, "when we have sent our will before, then God gives us abundant opportunities of salvation." God helps those who help themselves. "When God," he says, "sees us eagerly prepare for the contest of virtue, he instantly supplies us with his assistance, lightens our labors and strengthens the weakness of our nature." Faith and good works are necessary conditions of justification and salvation, though Christ's merits alone are the efficient cause. He remarks on John 6:44, that while no man can come to Christ unless drawn and taught by the Father, there is no excuse for those who are unwilling to be thus drawn and taught. Yet on the other hand he fully admits the necessity of divine grace at the very beginning of every good action. "We can do no good thing at all," he says, "except we are aided from above." And in his dying hour he gave glory to God "for all things."

Thus Augustinians and Semi-Pelagians, Calvinists and Arminians, widely as they differ in theory about human freedom and divine sovereignty, meet in the common feeling of personal responsibility and absolute dependence on God. With one voice they disclaim all merit of their own and give all glory to Him who is the giver of every good and perfect gift and works in us "both to will and to work, for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12).

As to the doctrines which separate the Greek, Roman and Protestant churches, Chrysostom faithfully represents the Greek Catholic church prior to the separation from Rome. In addition to the ecumenical doctrines of the Nicene Creed, he expresses strong views on baptismal regeneration, the real presence, and the eucharistic sacrifice, yet without a clearly defined theory, which was the result of later controversies; hence it would be unjust to press his devotional and rhetorical language into the service of transubstantiation, or consubstantiation, or the Roman view of the mass.

His extravagant laudations of saints and martyrs promoted that refined form of idolatry which in the Nicene age began to take the place of the heathen hero-worship. But it is all the more remarkable that he furnishes no support to Mariolatry, which soon after his death triumphed in the Greek as well as the Latin church. He was far from the idea of the sinless perfection and immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary. He attributes her conduct at the wedding of Cana (John 2:3, 4) to undue haste, a sort of unholy ambition for the premature display of the miraculous power of her Son; and in commenting on Matthew 12:46–49, he charges her and his brethren with vanity and a carnal mind. He does not use the term *theotokos*, which twenty years after his death gave rise to the Nestorian controversy, and which was endorsed by the third and fourth ecumenical councils.

As to the question of the papacy he considered the bishop of Rome as the successor of Peter, the prince of the Apostles, and appealed to him in his exile against the unjust condemnation of the Council at the Oak. Such appeals furnished the popes with a welcome opportunity to act as judges in the controversies of the Eastern church, and greatly strengthened their claims. But his Epistle to Innocent was addressed also to the bishops of Milan and Aquileia, and falls far short of the language of submission to an infallible authority. He conceded to the pope merely a primacy of honor (προστασία, †ρχή), not a supremacy of jurisdiction. He calls the bishop of Antioch (Ignatius and Flavian) likewise a successor of Peter, who labored there according to the express testimony of Paul. In commenting on Gal. 1:18, he represents Paul as equal in dignity (σώτιμος) to Peter. He was free from jealousy of Rome, but

had he lived during the violent controversies between the patriarch of new Rome and the pope of old Rome, it is not doubtful on which side he would have stood.

In one important point Chrysostom approaches the evangelical theology of the Reformation, his devotion to the Holy Scriptures as the only rule of faith. "There is no topic on which he dwells more frequently and earnestly than on the duty of every Christian man and woman to study the Bible: and what he bade others do, that he did preeminently himself." (Note: Stephens, page 422) He deemed the reading of the Bible the best means for the promotion of Christian life. A Christian without the knowledge of the Scriptures is to him a workman without tools. Even the sight of the Bible deters from sin, how much more the reading. It purifies and consecrates the soul, it introduces it into the holy of holies and brings it into direct communion with God.

#### **Chapter XIV.—*Chrysostom as a Preacher.***

The crowning merit of Chrysostom is his excellency as a preacher. He is generally and justly regarded as the greatest pulpit orator of the Greek church. Nor has he any superior or equal among the Latin Fathers. He remains to this day a model for preachers in large cities. He was trained in the school of Demosthenes and Libanius, and owed much of his literary culture to the classics. He praises "the polish of Isocrates, the gravity of Demosthenes, the dignity of Thucydides, and the sublimity of Plato." He assigns to Plato the first rank among the philosophers, but he places St. Paul far above him, and glories in the victory of the tent-maker and fishermen over the wisdom of the Greeks.

He was not free from the defects of the degenerate rhetoric of his age, especially a flowery exuberance of style and fulsome extravagance in eulogy of dead martyrs and living men. But the defects are overborne by the virtues: the fullness of Scripture knowledge, the intense earnestness, the fruitfulness of illustration and application, the variation of topics, the command of language, the elegance and rhythmic flow of his Greek style, the dramatic vivacity, the quickness and ingenuity of his turns, and the magnetism of sympathy with his hearers. He knew how to draw in the easiest manner spiritual nourishment and lessons of practical wisdom from the Word of God, and to make it a divine voice of warning and comfort to every hearer. He was a faithful preacher of truth and righteousness and fearlessly told the whole duty of man. If he was too severe at times, he erred on virtue's side. He preached morals rather than dogmas, Christianity rather than theology, active, practical Christianity that proves itself in holy living and dying. He was a martyr of the pulpit, for it was chiefly his faithful preaching that caused his exile. The effect of his oratory was enhanced by the magnetism of his personality, and is weakened to the reader of a translation or even the Greek original. The living voice and glowing manner are far more powerful than the written and printed letter.

Chrysostom attracted large audiences, and among them many who would rather have gone to the theatre than hear any ordinary preacher. He held them spell-bound to the close. Sometimes they manifested their admiration by noisy applause, and when he rebuked them for it, they would applaud his rebuke. "You praise," he would tell them, "what I have said, and receive my exhortation with tumults of applause; but show your approbation by obedience; that is the only praise I seek."

The great mediæval poet assigns to Chrysostom a place in Paradise between Nathan the prophet and Anselm the theologian, probably because, like Nathan, he rebuked the sins of the

court, and, like Anselm, he suffered exile for his conviction. The best French pulpit orators—Bossuet, Massilon, Bourdaloue—have taken him for their model, even in his faults, the flattery of living persons. Villemain praises him as the greatest orator who combined all the attributes of eloquence. Hase calls his eloquence “Asiatic, flowery, full of spirit and of the Holy Spirit, based on sound exegesis, and with steady application to life.” English writers compare him to Jeremy Taylor. Gibbon (who confesses, however, to have read very few of his Homilies) attributes to him “the happy art of engaging the passions in the service of virtue, and of exposing the folly as well as the turpitude of vice, almost with the truth and spirit of a dramatic representation.” Dean Milman describes him as an “unrivalled master in that rapid and forcible application of incidental occurrences which gives such life and reality to eloquence. He is at times, in the highest sense, dramatic in manner.” Stephens thus characterizes his sermons:

“A power of exposition which unfolded in lucid order, passage by passage, the meaning of the book in hand; a rapid transition from clear exposition, or keen logical argument, to fervid exhortation, or pathetic appeal, or indignant denunciation; the versatile ease with which he could lay hold of any little incident of the moment, such as the lighting of the lamps in the church, and use it to illustrate his discourse; the mixture of plain common sense, simple boldness, and tender affection, with which he would strike home to the hearts and consciences of his hearers—all these are not only general characteristics of the man, but are usually to be found manifested more or less in the compass of each discourse. It is this rare union of powers which constitutes his superiority to almost all other Christian preachers with whom he might be, or has been, compared. Savonarola had all, and more than all, his fire and vehemence, but untempered by his sober, calm good sense, and wanting his rational method of interpretation. Chrysostom was eager and impetuous at times in speech as well as in action, but never fanatical. Jeremy Taylor combines, like Chrysostom, real earnestness of purpose with rhetorical forms of expression and florid imagery; but, on the whole, his style is far more artificial, and is overlaid with a multifarious learning, from which Chrysostom’s was entirely free. Wesley is almost his match in simple, straightforward, practical exhortation, but does not rise into flights of eloquence like his. The great French preachers, again, resemble him in his more ornate and declamatory vein, but they lack that simpler common-sense style of address which equally distinguished him.”

## Commentary Summary

Philip Schaff is a noted historian. In **Chapter IV** above, as Schaff has noted, we will see as we progress through Chrysostom’s writings that, “He assumes, as may be expected, the then prevailing conception of a real priesthood and sacrifice, baptismal regeneration, the corporal presence, the virtue of absolution, prayers for the dead, but is silent about pope and councils, the orders of the clergy, prayers to saints, forms of prayer, priestly vestments, incense, crosses and other doctrines and ceremonies of the Greek and Roman churches.”

And in **Chapter XIII** concerning his theology and exegesis, Schaff notes that, “We look in vain in Chrysostom’s writings for the Augustinian and Calvinistic doctrines of absolute predestination, total depravity, hereditary guilt, irresistible grace, perseverance of saints, or for the Lutheran theory of forensic and solifidian justification. He teaches that God foreordained all men to holiness and salvation, and that Christ died for all and is both willing and able to save

all, but not against their will and without their free consent.”

It is important that we in the Church today recognize what may, in Chrysostom’s writings, not agree with the Biblical truth in the Bible. We must give ourselves permission to be healthier than our fathers. In this study, we will present a segment of his writing to give the context. Then we will present a **Commentary** on this segment, line by line. We will include all references to Scripture by Chrysostom with a current Biblical reference from the **King James Version**, the **New King James Version**, or the **New American Standard Bible** in order to verify his quotations. We will include a **Commentary Summary** at the end of a heading. Now let us begin by looking at extracts of his writings.

## His Integrity

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XXII, page 508

Ver. 18. “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”

This is that: “let your light shine before men” (Matt. v. 16), not that we are to live for vanity, but that we are not to give those who have a mind for it a handle against us. Whence he says also in another place, “Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.” (1 Cor. x. 32) And in what follows he limits his meaning well, by saying, “If it be possible.” For there are cases in which it is not possible, as, for instance, when we have to argue about religion, or to contend for those who are wronged. And why be surprised if this be not universally possible in the case of other persons, when even in the case of man and wife he broke through the rule? “But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart.” (1 Cor. vii. 15) And his meaning is nearly as follows: Do thine own part, and to none give occasion of war or fighting, neither to Jew nor Gentile. But if you see the cause of religion suffering anywhere, do not prize concord above truth, but make a noble stand even to death. And even then be not at war in soul, be not averse in temper, but fight with the things only. For this is the import of “as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men.” But if the other will not be at peace, do not thou fill thy soul with tempest, but in mind be friendly (φίλος, several mss. φιλόσοφος) as I said before, without giving up the truth on any occasion.

**Commentary:** He begins by quoting **Romans 12 (KJV):18** If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

He then says, “This is that: “let your light shine before men” (Matt. v. 16), not that we are to live for vanity, but that we are not to give those who have a mind for it a handle against us.”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):16** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

That is, by letting our light shine, it is not for our own glory, but for the Father in heaven.

He then says, “Whence he says also in another place, “Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.” (1 Cor. x. 32)”

And he refers to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):32** Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:

He then continues, “And in what follows he limits his meaning well, by saying, “If it be possible.” For there are cases in which it is not possible, as, for instance, when we have to argue about religion, or to contend for those who are wronged. And why be surprised if this be not universally possible in the case of other persons, when even in the case of man and wife he broke through the rule? “But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart.” (1 Cor. vii. 15)

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):15** But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

So in some cases, it is not possible to live peaceably with all men because some will not have it so. We are to remain at peace, but let the unbelieving depart.

He continues, “And his meaning is nearly as follows: Do thine own part, and to none give occasion of war or fighting, neither to Jew nor Gentile. But if you see the cause of religion suffering anywhere, do not prize concord above truth, but make a noble stand even to death. And even then be not at war in soul, be not averse in temper, but fight with the things only. For this is the import of “as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men.” But if the other will not be at peace, do not thou fill thy soul with tempest, but in mind be friendly (φίλος, several mss. φιλόσοφος) as I said before, without giving up the truth on any occasion.”

How much could we in the Church today benefit from these words? We must not prize concord above truth, that is, Biblical truth. We can accept the fact that some will not change. But we must walk in the light if we are going to glorify our Father in heaven.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TITUS, HOMILY II, page 527**

Let us therefore pursue truth, and not be as if we were on the stage and acting a part. For of what advantage is it, tell me, to be gazed at by a multitude? It is vainglory, and nothing else. For return to thy house, and solitude, and immediately all is gone. Thou hast gone to the market place, thou hast turned upon thee the eyes of all present. What hast thou gained? Nothing. It vanished, and passed away like dissolving smoke. Do we then love things thus unsubstantial? How unreasonable is this! what madness! To one thing only let us look, to never seek the praise of men; but if it falls to us, we shall despise, deride, and reject it. We shall be affected as those who desire gold, but receive clay. Let not any one praise thee, for it profits nothing; and if he blame thee, it harms thee not. But with God praise and blame are attended with real gain and loss, whilst all is vain that proceeds from men. And herein we are made like unto God, that He needs not glory from men. “I receive not,” said Christ, “honor from men.” (John v. 41) Is this then a light thing, tell me? When thou art unwilling to despise glory, say, “By despising it, I shall resemble God,” and immediately thou wilt despise it. But it is impossible that the slave of glory should not be a slave to all, more servile than slaves in reality. For we do not impose upon our slaves such tasks, as glory exacts from her captives. Base and shameful are the things she makes them say, and do, and suffer, and when she sees them obedient, she is the more urgent in her commands.

Let us fly then, I entreat you, let us fly from this slavery. But how shall we be able? If we think seriously of what is in this world, if we observe that things present are a dream, a shadow, and nothing better; we shall easily overcome this desire, and neither in little nor in great things shall be led captive by it. But if in little things we do not despise it, we shall easily be overcome



by it in the most important. Let us therefore remove far from us the sources of it, and these are, folly, and meanness of mind, so that, if we assume a lofty spirit, we shall be able to look beyond honor from the multitude, and to extend our views to heaven, and obtain the good things there. Of which God grant that we may all be partakers, by the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom, &c.

**Commentary:** In summary, he begins as he says, “Let us therefore pursue truth, and not be as if we were on the stage and acting a part. For of what advantage is it, tell me, to be gazed at by a multitude? It is vainglory, and nothing else.”

The “esteem of men” is rightly said to be a “slavery”. Let us “look beyond honor from the multitude, and to extend our views to heaven, and obtain the good things there”, as Chrysostom has said.

John Chrysostom was in pursuit of truth.

## **His Esteem of the Scriptures**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILIPPIANS, HOMILY VII, page 300-301**

Colossians iii. 16, 17

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God. And whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

Having exhorted them to be thankful, he shows also the way, that, of which I have lately discoursed to you. And what saith he? “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly”; or rather not this way alone, but another also. For I indeed said that we ought to reckon up those who have suffered things more terrible, and those who have undergone sufferings more grievous than ours, and to give thanks that such have not fallen to our lot; but what saith he? “Let the word of Christ dwell in you”; that is, the teaching, the doctrines, the exhortation, wherein He says, that the present life is nothing, nor yet its good things. If we know this, we shall yield to no hardships whatever. (Matt. vi. 25, &c) “Let it dwell in you,” he saith, “richly,” not simply dwell, but with great abundance. Hearken ye, as many as are worldly, and have the charge of wife and children; how to you too he commits especially the reading of the Scriptures and that not to be done lightly, nor in any sort of way, but with much earnestness. For as the rich in money can bear fine and damages, so he that is rich in the doctrines of philosophy will bear not poverty only, but all calamities also easily, yea, more easily than that one. For as for him, by discharging the fine, the man who is rich must needs be impoverished, and found wanting, and if he should often suffer in that way, will no longer be able to bear it, but in this case it is not so; for we do not even expend our wholesome thoughts when it is necessary for us to bear aught we would not choose, but they abide with us continually. And mark the wisdom of this blessed man. He said not, “Let the word of Christ” be in you, simply, but what? “dwell in you,” and “richly.”

“In all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another.” “In all,” says he. Virtue he calls wisdom, and lowliness of mind is wisdom, and almsgiving, and other such like things, are wisdom; just as the contraries are folly, for cruelty too cometh of folly. Whence in many places it calleth the whole of sin folly. “The fool,” saith one, “hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Ps. xiv. 1); and again, “My wounds stink and are corrupt from the face of my foolishness.” (Ps. xxxviii. 5, Sept.) For what is more foolish, tell me, than one who indeed wrappeth himself about in his own garments, but regardeth not his brethren that are naked; who feedeth dogs, and careth not that the image of God is famishing; who is merely persuaded that human things are nought, and yet clings to them as if immortal. As then nothing is more foolish than such an one, so is nothing wiser than one that achieveth virtue. For mark; how wise he is, says one. He imparteth of his substance, he is pitiful, he is loving to men, he hath well considered that he beareth a common nature with them; he hath well considered the use of wealth, that it is worthy of no estimation; that one ought to be sparing of bodies that are of kin to one, rather than of wealth. He that is a despiser of glory is wholly wise, for he knoweth human affairs; the knowledge of things divine and human, is philosophy. So then he knoweth what things are divine, and what are human, and from the one he keeps himself, on the other he bestoweth his pains. And he knows how to give thanks also to God in all things, he considers the present life as nothing; therefore he is neither delighted with prosperity, nor grieved with the opposite condition.

Tarry not, I entreat, for another to teach thee; thou hast the oracles of God. No man teacheth thee as they; for he indeed oft grudgeth much for vainglory’s sake and envy. Hearken, I entreat you, all ye that are careful for this life, and procure books that will be medicines for the soul. If ye will not any other, yet get you at least the New Testament, the Apostolic Epistles, the Acts, the Gospels, for your constant teachers. If grief befall thee, dive into them as into a chest of medicines; take thence comfort of thy trouble, be it loss, or death, or bereavement of relations; or rather dive not into them merely, but take them wholly to thee; keep them in thy mind.

This is the cause of all evils, the not knowing the Scriptures. We go into battle without arms, and how ought we to come off safe? Well contented should we be if we can be safe with them, let alone without them. Throw not the whole upon us! Sheep ye are, still not without reason, but rational; Paul committeth much to you also. They that are under instruction, are not for ever learning; for then they are not taught. If thou art for ever learning, thou wilt never learn. Do not so come as meaning to be always learning; (for so thou wilt never know;) but so as to finish learning, and to teach others. In the arts do not all persons continue for set times, in the sciences, and in a word, in all the arts? Thus we all fix definitely a certain known time; but if ye are ever learning, it is a certain proof that ye have learned nothing.

**Commentary:** He begins as he says, ““Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God. And whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

He refers to **Colossians 3 (KJV):16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,

singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

He continues, “Having exhorted them to be thankful, he shows also the way, that, of which I have lately discoursed to you. And what saith he? “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly”; or rather not this way alone, but another also. For I indeed said that we ought to reckon up those who have suffered things more terrible, and those who have undergone sufferings more grievous than ours, and to give thanks that such have not fallen to our lot; but what saith he? “Let the word of Christ dwell in you”; that is, the teaching, the doctrines, the exhortation, wherein He says, that the present life is nothing, nor yet its good things. If we know this, we shall yield to no hardships whatever.”

He says that “the present life is nothing, nor yet its good things”. And this is in agreement with Jesus’ words in **Matthew 6 (KJV):25** Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

He continues, ““Let it dwell in you,” he saith, “richly,” not simply dwell, but with great abundance.”

He then encourages all to do this, as he continues, “Hearken ye, as many as are worldly, and have the charge of wife and children; how to you too he commits especially the reading of the Scriptures and that not to be done lightly, nor in any sort of way, but with much earnestness.”

We see his esteem of the Scriptures here. He then explains the benefits of reading the Scriptures, as he then says, “For as the rich in money can bear fine and damages, so he that is rich in the doctrines of philosophy will bear not poverty only, but all calamities also easily, yea, more easily than that one. For as for him, by discharging the fine, the man who is rich must needs be impoverished, and found wanting, and if he should often suffer in that way, will no longer be able to bear it, but in this case it is not so; for we do not even expend our wholesome thoughts when it is necessary for us to bear aught we would not choose, but they abide with us continually. And mark the wisdom of this blessed man. He said not, “Let the word of Christ” be in you, simply, but what? “dwell in you,” and “richly.””

We are to let the Biblical truth in the word of God dwell in us richly. He is encouraging all believers to let the word of Christ dwell in ourselves richly, and “not simply dwell, but with great abundance”.

And he encourages all to read the Scriptures, as we read again, “Hearken ye, as many as are worldly, and have the charge of wife and children; how to you too he commits especially the reading of the Scriptures and that not to be done lightly, nor in any sort of way, but with much earnestness.”

He continues, “As then nothing is more foolish than such an one, so is nothing wiser than one that achieveth virtue.”

He then explains, “For mark; how wise he is, says one. He imparteth of his substance, he is pitiful, he is loving to men, he hath well considered that he beareth a common nature with them; he hath well considered the use of wealth, that it is worthy of no estimation; that one ought to be sparing of bodies that are of kin to one, rather than of wealth. He that is a despiser of glory is wholly wise, for he knoweth human affairs; the knowledge of things divine and human, is philosophy. So then he knoweth what things are divine, and what are human, and

from the one he keeps himself, on the other he bestoweth his pains. And he knows how to give thanks also to God in all things, he considers the present life as nothing; therefore he is neither delighted with prosperity, nor grieved with the opposite condition.”

By reading the Scriptures we will know “things divine and human”.

He continues, as he then says, “Tarry not, I entreat, for another to teach thee; thou hast the oracles of God. No man teacheth thee as they; for he indeed oft grudgeth much for vainglory’s sake and envy. Hearken, I entreat you, all ye that are careful for this life, and procure books that will be medicines for the soul. If ye will not any other, yet get you at least the New Testament, the Apostolic Epistles, the Acts, the Gospels, for your constant teachers. If grief befall thee, dive into them as into a chest of medicines; take thence comfort of thy trouble, be it loss, or death, or bereavement of relations; or rather dive not into them merely, but take them wholly to thee; keep them in thy mind.”

He encourages all to get a copy of the New Testament which must have been difficult in those days when there was no printing press. And he did not want them just to have a copy, but to “dive not into them merely, but take them wholly to thee; keep them in thy mind”. And this reminds us of **Joshua 1 (KJV):8** This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

He then continues, “This is the cause of all evils, the not knowing the Scriptures. We go into battle without arms, and how ought we to come off safe? Well contented should we be if we can be safe with them, let alone without them. Throw not the whole upon us! Sheep ye are, still not without reason, but rational; Paul committeth much to you also. They that are under instruction, are not for ever learning; for then they are not taught. If thou art for ever learning, thou wilt never learn. Do not so come as meaning to be always learning; (for so thou wilt never know;) but so as to finish learning, and to teach others. In the arts do not all persons continue for set times, in the sciences, and in a word, in all the arts? Thus we all fix definitely a certain known time; but if ye are ever learning, it is a certain proof that ye have learned nothing.”

He is encouraging all to know the Scriptures. Even the sheep are “still not without reason, but rational”. His words remind us of those in **Hebrews 5 (KJV):11** Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY I, page 411-412**

“But whence,” you say, “come the rich, the healthy, the renowned, and how are some made rich by covetousness, some by inheritance, some by violence? and why does God suffer the wicked to be prosperous?” We answer, Because the retribution, according to the desert of each, does not take place here, but is reserved for hereafter. Show me any such thing taking

place Then! “Well,” say you, “give me here, and I do not look for hereafter.” (**Schaff Note:** Compare Jas. iv. 3) But it is because you seek here, that you receive not. For if when earthly enjoyment is not within your reach, you seek present things so eagerly as to prefer them to future, what would you do if you were in possession of unmixed pleasure? God therefore shows you that these things are nothing, and indifferent; for if they were not indifferent, He would not bestow them on such men. You will own that it is a matter of indifference whether one be tall or short, black or white; so is it whether one be rich or poor. For, tell me, are not things necessary bestowed on all equally, as the capacity for virtue, the distribution of spiritual gifts? If you understood aright the mercies of God, you would not complain of wanting worldly things, whilst you enjoyed these best gifts equally with others; and knowing that equal distribution you would not desire superiority in the rest. As if a servant enjoying from his master’s bounty food, clothing, and lodging, and all other necessaries equally with his fellow servants, should pride himself upon having longer nails, or more hair upon his head; so it is for a Christian to be elated on account of those things, which he enjoys only for a time. For this reason it is, that God withdraws those things from us, to extinguish this madness, and transfer our affections from them to heaven. But nevertheless we do not learn wisdom. As if a child possessing a toy, should prefer it to things necessary, and his father, to lead him against his will to what was better for him, should deprive him of his toy; so God takes these things from us, that He may lead us to heaven. If you ask then why He permits the wicked to be rich, it is because they are not high in His esteem. And if the righteous too are rich, it is rather that He allows it to be, than that He makes them so. Now these things we say superficially, as to men not knowing the Scriptures. But our discourses would be unnecessary if you would believe and take heed to the divine word, for that would teach you all things. And that you may understand that neither riches, nor health, nor glory, are anything, I can show you many, who, when they might gain wealth, do not seek wealth; when they might enjoy health, mortify their bodies; when they might rise to glory, make it their aim to be despised. But there is no good man, who ever studied to be bad. Let us therefore desist from seeking things below, and let us seek heavenly things; for so we shall be able to attain them, and we shall enjoy eternal delights, by the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ. To Whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory, power, and honor, now, and ever, and world without end. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “But whence,” you say, “come the rich, the healthy, the renowned, and how are some made rich by covetousness, some by inheritance, some by violence? and why does God suffer the wicked to be prosperous?” We answer, Because the retribution, according to the desert of each, does not take place here, but is reserved for hereafter. Show me any such thing taking place Then! “Well,” say you, “give me here, and I do not look for hereafter.” (**Schaff Note:** Compare Jas. iv. 3)”

And we read in **James 4 (KJV):3** Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

He continues, “But it is because you seek here, that you receive not. For if when earthly enjoyment is not within your reach, you seek present things so eagerly as to prefer them to future, what would you do if you were in possession of unmixed pleasure? God therefore shows you that these things are nothing, and indifferent; for if they were not indifferent, He would not bestow them on such men. You will own that it is a matter of indifference whether

one be tall or short, black or white; so is it whether one be rich or poor. For, tell me, are not things necessary bestowed on all equally, as the capacity for virtue, the distribution of spiritual gifts? If you understood aright the mercies of God, you would not complain of wanting worldly things, whilst you enjoyed these best gifts equally with others; and knowing that equal distribution you would not desire superiority in the rest. As if a servant enjoying from his master's bounty food, clothing, and lodging, and all other necessities equally with his fellow servants, should pride himself upon having longer nails, or more hair upon his head; so it is for a Christian to be elated on account of those things, which he enjoys only for a time. For this reason it is, that God withdraws those things from us, to extinguish this madness, and transfer our affections from them to heaven. But nevertheless we do not learn wisdom. As if a child possessing a toy, should prefer it to things necessary, and his father, to lead him against his will to what was better for him, should deprive him of his toy; so God takes these things from us, that He may lead us to heaven. If you ask then why He permits the wicked to be rich, it is because they are not high in His esteem. And if the righteous too are rich, it is rather that He allows it to be, than that He makes them so."

He that is spiritual is truly rich. He continues, "Now these things we say superficially, as to men not knowing the Scriptures. But our discourses would be unnecessary if you would believe and take heed to the divine word, for that would teach you all things."

Again, his words remind us of Hebrews 5:11-14 to be not dull of hearing, but to learn the Scriptures so that God might "transfer our affections" from "those things, which he enjoys only for a time" to "heaven".

He concludes, "And that you may understand that neither riches, nor health, nor glory, are anything, I can show you many, who, when they might gain wealth, do not seek wealth; when they might enjoy health, mortify their bodies; when they might rise to glory, make it their aim to be despised. But there is no good man, who ever studied to be bad. Let us therefore desist from seeking things below, and let us seek heavenly things; for so we shall be able to attain them, and we shall enjoy eternal delights, by the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ. To Whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory, power, and honor, now, and ever, and world without end. Amen."

## The Divinity of the Son

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY IV, page 16-19

John i. 1

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.”

[1.] When children are just brought to their learning, their teachers do not give them many tasks in succession, nor do they set them once for all, but they often repeat to them the same short ones, so that what is said may be easily implanted in their minds, and they may not be vexed at the first onset with the quantity, and with finding it hard to remember, and become less active in picking up what is given them, a kind of sluggishness arising from the difficulty. And I, who wish to effect the same with you, and to render your labor easy, take by little and little the food which lies on this Divine table, and instill it into your souls. On this account I shall handle again the same words, not so as to say again the same things, but to set before you only what yet remains. Come, then, let us again apply our discourse to the introduction.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.” Why, when all the other Evangelists had begun with the Dispensation; (for Matthew says, “The Book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David”; and Luke too relates to us in the beginning of his Gospel the events relating to Mary; and in like manner Mark dwells on the same narratives, from that point detailing to us the history of the Baptist;) why, when they began with these matters, did John briefly and in a later place hint at them, saying, “the Word was made flesh” (ver. 14); and, passing by everything else, His conception, His birth, His bringing up, His growth, at once discourse to us concerning His Eternal Generation?

I will now tell you what the reason of this is. Because the other Evangelists had dwelt most on the accounts of His coming in the flesh, there was fear lest some, being of grovelling minds, might for this reason rest in these doctrines alone, as indeed was the case with Paul of Samosata. In order, therefore, to lead away from this fondness for earth those who were like to fall into it, and to draw them up towards heaven, with good reason he commences his narrative from above, and from the eternal subsistence. For while Matthew enters upon his relation from Herod the king, Luke from Tiberius Cæsar, Mark from the Baptism of John, this Apostle, leaving alone all these things, ascends beyond all time or age. Thither darting forward the imagination of his hearers to the “was in the beginning,” not allowing it to stay at any point, nor setting any limit, as they did in Herod, and Tiberius, and John.

And what we may mention besides as especially deserving our admiration is, that John, though he gave himself up to the higher doctrine, yet did not neglect the Dispensation; nor were the others, though intent upon the relation of this, silent as to the subsistence before the ages. With good cause; for One Spirit It was that moved the souls of all; and therefore they have shown great unanimity in their narrative. But thou, beloved, when thou hast heard of “The Word,” do not endure those who say, that He is a work; nor those even who think, that He is simply a word. For many are the words of God which angels execute, but of those words none is God; they all are prophecies or commands, (for in Scripture it is usual to call the laws of God His commands, and prophecies, words; wherefore in speaking of the angels, he says, “Mighty in strength, fulfilling His word”) (Ps. ciii. 20), but this Word is a Being with subsistence,

proceeding without affection from the Father Himself. For this, as I before said, he has shown by the term “Word.” As therefore the expression, “In the beginning was the Word,” shows His Eternity, so “was in the beginning with God,” has declared to us His Co-eternity. For that you may not, when you hear “In the beginning was the Word,” suppose Him to be Eternal, and yet imagine the life of the Father to differ from His by some interval and longer duration, and so assign a beginning to the Only-Begotten, he adds, “was in the beginning with God”; so eternally even as the Father Himself, for the Father was never without the Word, but He was always God with God, yet Each in His proper Person.

How then, one says, does John assert, that He was in the world, if He was with God? Because He was both with God and in the world also. For neither Father nor Son are limited in any way. Since, if “there is no end of His greatness” (Ps. cxlv. 3), and if “of His wisdom there is no number” (Ps. cxlvii. 5), it is clear that there cannot be any beginning in time to His Essence. Thou hast heard, that “In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth” (Gen. i. 1); what dost thou understand from this “beginning”? clearly, that they were created before all visible things. So, respecting the Only-Begotten, when you hear that He was “in the beginning,” conceive of him as before all intelligible things, and before the ages.

But if any one say, “How can it be that He is a Son, and yet not younger than the Father? since that which proceeds from something else needs must be later than that from which it proceeds”; we will say that, properly speaking, these are human reasonings; that he who questions on this matter will question on others yet more improper; and that to such we ought not even to give ear. For our speech is now concerning God, not concerning the nature of men, which is subject to the sequence and necessary conclusions of these reasonings. Still, for the assurance of the weaker sort, we will speak even to these points.

[2.] Tell me, then, does the radiance of the sun proceed from the substance itself of the sun, or from some other source? Any one not deprived of his very senses needs must confess, that it proceeds from the substance itself. Yet, although the radiance proceeds from the sun itself, we cannot say that it is later in point of time than the substance of that body, since the sun has never appeared without its rays. Now if in the case of these visible and sensible bodies there has been shown to be something which proceeds from something else, and yet is not after that from whence it proceeds; why are you incredulous in the case of the invisible and ineffable Nature? This same thing there takes place, but in a manner suitable to That Substance. For it is for this reason that Paul too calls Him “Brightness” (Heb. i. 3); setting forth thereby His being from Him and His Co-eternity. Again, tell me, were not all the ages, and every interval created by Him? Any man not deprived of his senses must necessarily confess this. There is no interval therefore between the Son and the Father; and if there be none, then He is not after, but Coeternal with Him. For “before” and “after” are notions implying time, since, without age or time, no man could possibly imagine these words; but God is above times and ages.

But if in any case you say that you have found a beginning to the Son, see whether by the same reason and argument you are not compelled to reduce the Father also to a beginning, earlier indeed, but still a beginning. For when you have assigned to the Son a limit and beginning of existence, do you not proceed upwards from that point, and say, that the Father was before it? Clearly you do. Tell me then, what is the extent of the Father’s prior subsistence? For whether you say that the interval is little, or whether you say it is great, you equally have brought the Father to a beginning. For it is clear, that it is by measuring the space that you say



whether it is little or great; yet it would not be possible to measure it, unless there were a beginning on either side; so that as far as you are concerned you have given the Father a beginning, and henceforth, according to your argument, not even the Father will be without beginning. See you that the word spoken by the Saviour is true, and the saying everywhere discovers its force? And what is that word? It is “He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father.” (John v. 23)

And I know indeed that what now has been said cannot by many be comprehended, and therefore it is that in many places we avoid agitating questions of human reasonings, because the rest of the people cannot follow such arguments, and if they could, still they have nothing firm or sure in them. “For the thoughts of mortal men are miserable, and our devices are but uncertain.” (Wisd. ix. 14) Still I should like to ask our objectors, what means that which is said by the Prophet, “Before Me there was no God formed, nor is there any after Me”? (Is. xliiii. 10) For if the Son is younger than the Father, how, says He, “Nor is there any after me”? Will you take away the being of the Only Begotten Himself? You either must dare this, or admit one Godhead with distinct Persons of the Father and Son.

Finally, how could the expression, “All things were made by Him,” be true? For if there is an age older than He, how can that which was before Him have been made by Him? See ye to what daring the argument has carried them, when once the truth has been unsettled? Why did not the Evangelist say, that He was made from things that were not, as Paul declares of all things, when he says, “Who calleth those things which be not as though they were”; but says, “Was in the beginning”? (Rom. iv. 17) This is contrary to that; and with good reason. For God neither is made, nor has anything older; these are words of the Greeks. Tell me this too: Would you not say, that the Creator beyond all comparison excels His works? Yet since that which is from things that were not is similar to them, where is the superiority not admitting of comparison? And what mean the expressions, “I am the first and I am the last” (Is. xliv. 6); and, “before Me was no other God formed”? (Is. xliiii. 10) For if the Son be not of the same Essence, there is another God; and if He be not Coeternal, He is after Him; and if He did not proceed from His Essence, clear it is that He was made. But if they assert, that these things were said to distinguish Him from idols, why do they not allow that it is to distinguish Him from idols that he says, “the Only True God”? (John xvii. 3) Besides, if this was said to distinguish Him from idols, how would you interpret the whole sentence? “After Me,” He says, “is no other God.” In saying this, He does not exclude the Son, but that “After Me there is no idol God,” not that “there is no Son.” Allowed, says he; what then? and the expression, “Before Me was no other God formed,” will you so understand, as that no idol God indeed was formed before Him, but yet a Son was formed before Him? What evil spirit would assert this? I do not suppose that even Satan himself would do so.

Moreover, if He be not Co-eternal with the Father, how can you say that His Life is infinite? For if it have a beginning from before, although it be endless, yet it is not infinite; for the infinite must be infinite in both directions. As Paul also declared, when he said, “Having neither beginning of days, nor end of life” (Heb. vii. 3); by this expression showing that He is both without beginning and without end. For as the one has no limit, so neither has the other. In one direction there is no end, in the other no beginning.

[3.] And how again, since He is “Life,” was there ever when He was not? For all must allow, that Life both is always, and is without beginning and without end, if It be indeed Life, as

indeed It is. For if there be when It is not, how can It be the life of others, when It even Itself is not?

“How then,” says one, “does John lay down a beginning by saying, ‘In the beginning was’?” Tell me, have you attended to the “In the beginning,” and to the “was,” and do you not understand the expression, “the Word was”? What! when the Prophet says, “From everlasting and to everlasting Thou art” (Ps. xc. 2), does he say this to assign Him limits? No, but to declare His Eternity. Consider now that the case is the same in this place. He did not use the expression as assigning limits, since he did not say, “had a beginning,” but “was in the beginning”; by the word “was” carrying thee forward to the idea that the Son is without beginning. “Yet observe,” says he, “the Father is named with the addition of the article, but the Son without it.” What then, when the Apostle says, “The Great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit. ii. 13); and again, “Who is above all, God”? (Rom. ix. 5) It is true that here he has mentioned the Son, without the article; but he does the same with the Father also, at least in his Epistle to the Philippians (c. ii. 6), he says, “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God”; and again to the Romans, “Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. i. 7) Besides, it was superfluous for it to be attached in that place, when close above it was continually attached to “the Word.” For as in speaking concerning the Father, he says, “God is a Spirit” (John iv. 24), and we do not, because the article is not joined to “Spirit,” yet deny the Spiritual Nature of God; so here, although the article is not annexed to the Son, the Son is not on that account a less God. Why so? Because in saying “God,” and again “God,” he does not reveal to us any difference in this Godhead, but the contrary; for having before said, “and the Word was God”; that no one might suppose the Godhead of the Son to be inferior, he immediately adds the characteristics of genuine Godhead, including Eternity, (for “He was,” says he, “in the beginning with God,”) and attributing to Him the office of Creator. For “by Him were all things made, and without Him was not anything made that was made”; which His Father also everywhere by the Prophets declares to be especially characteristic of His own Essence. And the Prophets are continually busy on this kind of demonstration, not only of itself, but when they contend against the honor shown to idols; “Let the gods perish,” says one “who have not made heaven and earth” (Jer. x. 11): and again, “I have stretched out the heaven with My hand” (Is. xlv. 24); and it is as declaring it to be indicative of Divinity, that He everywhere puts it. And the Evangelist himself was not satisfied with these words, but calls Him “Life” too and “Light.” If now He was ever with the Father, if He Himself created all things, if He brought all things into existence, and keeps together all things, (for, this he meant by “Life,”) if He enlightens all things, who so senseless as to say, that the Evangelist desired to teach an inferiority of Divinity by those very expressions, by which, rather than by any others, it is possible to express its equality and not differing? Let us not then confound the creation with the Creator, lest we too hear it said of us, that “they served the creature rather than the Creator” (Rom. i. 25); for although it be asserted that this is said of the heavens, still in speaking of the heavens he positively says, that we must not serve the creature, for it is a heathenish thing.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.”

He quotes from **John 1 (KJV):** 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He continues, “[1.] When children are just brought to their learning, their teachers do not give them many tasks in succession, nor do they set them once for all, but they often repeat to them the same short ones, so that what is said may be easily implanted in their minds, and they may not be vexed at the first onset with the quantity, and with finding it hard to remember, and become less active in picking up what is given them, a kind of sluggishness arising from the difficulty. And I, who wish to effect the same with you, and to render your labor easy, take by little and little the food which lies on this Divine table, and instill it into your souls. On this account I shall handle again the same words, not so as to say again the same things, but to set before you only what yet remains. Come, then, let us again apply our discourse to the introduction.”

John Chrysostom was a good teacher. He continues, ““In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.” Why, when all the other Evangelists had begun with the Dispensation; (for Matthew says, “The Book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David”; and Luke too relates to us in the beginning of his Gospel the events relating to Mary; and in like manner Mark dwells on the same narratives, from that point detailing to us the history of the Baptist;) why, when they began with these matters, did John briefly and in a later place hint at them, saying, “the Word was made flesh” (ver. 14); and, passing by everything else, His conception, His birth, His bringing up, His growth, at once discourse to us concerning His Eternal Generation?”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):14** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

He continues, “I will now tell you what the reason of this is. Because the other Evangelists had dwelt most on the accounts of His coming in the flesh, there was fear lest some, being of grovelling minds, might for this reason rest in these doctrines alone, as indeed was the case with Paul of Samosata. In order, therefore, to lead away from this fondness for earth those who were like to fall into it, and to draw them up towards heaven, with good reason he commences his narrative from above, and from the eternal subsistence. For while Matthew enters upon his relation from Herod the king, Luke from Tiberius Cæsar, Mark from the Baptism of John, this Apostle, leaving alone all these things, ascends beyond all time or age. Thither darting forward the imagination of his hearers to the “was in the beginning,” not allowing it to stay at any point, nor setting any limit, as they did in Herod, and Tiberius, and John.”

He continues, “And what we may mention besides as especially deserving our admiration is, that John, though he gave himself up to the higher doctrine, yet did not neglect the Dispensation; nor were the others, though intent upon the relation of this, silent as to the subsistence before the ages. With good cause; for One Spirit It was that moved the souls of all; and therefore they have shown great unanimity in their narrative. But thou, beloved, when thou hast heard of “The Word,” do not endure those who say, that He is a work; nor those even who think, that He is simply a word. For many are the words of God which angels execute, but of those words none is God; they all are prophecies or commands, (for in Scripture it is usual to call the laws of God His commands, and prophecies, words; wherefore in speaking of the angels, he says, “Mighty in strength, fulfilling His word”) ( Ps. ciii. 20 ), but this Word is a Being with subsistence, proceeding without affection from the Father Himself.”

He refers to **Psalm 103 (KJV):20** Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.

He continues, “For this, as I before said, he has shown by the term “Word.” As therefore the expression, “In the beginning was the Word,” shows His Eternity, so “was in the beginning with God,” has declared to us His Co-eternity. For that you may not, when you hear “In the beginning was the Word,” suppose Him to be Eternal, and yet imagine the life of the Father to differ from His by some interval and longer duration, and so assign a beginning to the Only-Begotten, he adds, “was in the beginning with God”; so eternally even as the Father Himself, for the Father was never without the Word, but He was always God with God, yet Each in His proper Person.”

He then explains, “How then, one says, does John assert, that He was in the world, if He was with God? Because He was both with God and in the world also. For neither Father nor Son are limited in any way. Since, if “there is no end of His greatness” (Ps. cxlv. 3), and if “of His wisdom there is no number” (Ps. cxlvii. 5), it is clear that there cannot be any beginning in time to His Essence.”

He refers to **Psalm 145 (KJV):3** Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.

And to **Psalm 147 (KJV):5** Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.

He continues, “Thou hast heard, that “In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth” (Gen. i. 1); what dost thou understand from this “beginning”? clearly, that they were created before all visible things. So, respecting the Only-Begotten, when you hear that He was “in the beginning,” conceive of him as before all intelligible things, and before the ages.”

He refers to **Genesis 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

He continues, “But if any one say, “How can it be that He is a Son, and yet not younger than the Father? since that which proceeds from something else needs must be later than that from which it proceeds”; we will say that, properly speaking, these are human reasonings; that he who questions on this matter will question on others yet more improper; and that to such we ought not even to give ear. For our speech is now concerning God, not concerning the nature of men, which is subject to the sequence and necessary conclusions of these reasonings. Still, for the assurance of the weaker sort, we will speak even to these points.”

Chrysostom has argued well for the divinity and eternity of the Son, and he is in agreement with the Scriptures.

He continues, “[2.] Tell me, then, does the radiance of the sun proceed from the substance itself of the sun, or from some other source? Any one not deprived of his very senses needs must confess, that it proceeds from the substance itself. Yet, although the radiance proceeds from the sun itself, we cannot say that it is later in point of time than the substance of that body, since the sun has never appeared without its rays. Now if in the case of these visible and sensible bodies there has been shown to be something which proceeds from something else, and yet is not after that from whence it proceeds; why are you incredulous in the case of the invisible and ineffable Nature? This same thing there takes place, but in a manner suitable to That Substance. For it is for this reason that Paul too calls Him “Brightness” (Heb. i. 3); setting forth thereby His being from Him and His Co-eternity.”

He refers to **Hebrews 1 (KJV):3** Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:

Chrysostom believed that the apostle Paul wrote Hebrews. And his analogy of the sun and its radiance is helpful.

He continues, “Again, tell me, were not all the ages, and every interval created by Him? Any man not deprived of his senses must necessarily confess this. There is no interval therefore between the Son and the Father; and if there be none, then He is not after, but Co-eternal with Him. For “before” and “after” are notions implying time, since, without age or time, no man could possibly imagine these words; but God is above times and ages.”

Yes, the Son is Co-eternal with the Father, according to Scripture.

He continues, as he then argues, “But if in any case you say that you have found a beginning to the Son, see whether by the same reason and argument you are not compelled to reduce the Father also to a beginning, earlier indeed, but still a beginning. For when you have assigned to the Son a limit and beginning of existence, do you not proceed upwards from that point, and say, that the Father was before it? Clearly you do. Tell me then, what is the extent of the Father’s prior subsistence? For whether you say that the interval is little, or whether you say it is great, you equally have brought the Father to a beginning. For it is clear, that it is by measuring the space that you say whether it is little or great; yet it would not be possible to measure it, unless there were a beginning on either side; so that as far as you are concerned you have given the Father a beginning, and henceforth, according to your argument, not even the Father will be without beginning. See you that the word spoken by the Saviour is true, and the saying everywhere discovers its force? And what is that word? It is “He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father.” (John v. 23)”

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):23** That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

He continues, “And I know indeed that what now has been said cannot by many be comprehended, and therefore it is that in many places we avoid agitating questions of human reasonings, because the rest of the people cannot follow such arguments, and if they could, still they have nothing firm or sure in them. “For the thoughts of mortal men are miserable, and our devices are but uncertain.” (Wisd. ix. 14) Still I should like to ask our objectors, what means that which is said by the Prophet, “Before Me there was no God formed, nor is there any after Me”? (Is. xliii. 10) For if the Son is younger than the Father, how, says He, “Nor is there any after me”? Will you take away the being of the Only Begotten Himself? You either must dare this, or admit one Godhead with distinct Persons of the Father and Son.

He refers to **Wisdom 9 (Septuagint):14** For the thoughts of mortal men are miserable, and our devices are but uncertain.

And to **Isaiah 43 (KJV):10** Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

He continues, “Finally, how could the expression, “All things were made by Him,” be true? For if there is an age older than He, how can that which was before Him have been made by Him? See ye to what daring the argument has carried them, when once the truth has been unsettled? Why did not the Evangelist say, that He was made from things that were not, as

Paul declares of all things, when he says, “Who calleth those things which be not as though they were”; but says, “Was in the beginning”? (Rom. iv. 17)”

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):17** (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

He continues, “This is contrary to that; and with good reason. For God neither is made, nor has anything older; these are words of the Greeks. Tell me this too: Would you not say, that the Creator beyond all comparison excels His works? Yet since that which is from things that were not is similar to them, where is the superiority not admitting of comparison? And what mean the expressions, “I am the first and I am the last” (Is. xlv. 6); and, “before Me was no other God formed”? (Is. xliii. 10) For if the Son be not of the same Essence, there is another God; and if He be not Coeternal, He is after Him; and if He did not proceed from His Essence, clear it is that He was made. But if they assert, that these things were said to distinguish Him from idols, why do they not allow that it is to distinguish Him from idols that he says, “the Only True God”? (John xvii. 3)”

He refers to **Isaiah 44 (KJV):6** Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.

And to **John 17 (KJV):3** And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Chrysostom has again argued well here for the divinity and eternity of the Son, and he argues according to the Scriptures.

He continues, “Besides, if this was said to distinguish Him from idols, how would you interpret the whole sentence? “After Me,” He says, “is no other God.” In saying this, He does not exclude the Son, but that “After Me there is no idol God,” not that “there is no Son.” Allowed, says he; what then? and the expression, “Before Me was no other God formed,” will you so understand, as that no idol God indeed was formed before Him, but yet a Son was formed before Him? What evil spirit would assert this? I do not suppose that even Satan himself would do so.

Moreover, if He be not Co-eternal with the Father, how can you say that His Life is infinite? For if it have a beginning from before, although it be endless, yet it is not infinite; for the infinite must be infinite in both directions. As Paul also declared, when he said, “Having neither beginning of days, nor end of life” (Heb. vii. 3); by this expression showing that He is both without beginning and without end. For as the one has no limit, so neither has the other. In one direction there is no end, in the other no beginning.”

He refers to **Hebrews 7 (KJV):3** Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

He continues, “[3.] And how again, since He is “Life,” was there ever when He was not? For all must allow, that Life both is always, and is without beginning and without end, if It be indeed Life, as indeed It is. For if there be when It is not, how can It be the life of others, when It even Itself is not?

“How then,” says one, “does John lay down a beginning by saying, ‘In the beginning was’?” Tell me, have you attended to the “In the beginning,” and to the “was,” and do you not understand the expression, “the Word was”? What! when the Prophet says, “From everlasting

and to everlasting Thou art” (Ps. xc. 2), does he say this to assign Him limits? No, but to declare His Eternity.”

He refers to **Psalm 90 (KJV):2** Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

He continues, “Consider now that the case is the same in this place. He did not use the expression as assigning limits, since he did not say, “had a beginning,” but “was in the beginning”; by the word “was” carrying thee forward to the idea that the Son is without beginning. “Yet observe,” says he, “the Father is named with the addition of the article, but the Son without it.” What then, when the Apostle says, “The Great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit. ii. 13); and again, “Who is above all, God”? (Rom. ix. 5) It is true that here he has mentioned the Son, without the article; but he does the same with the Father also, at least in his Epistle to the Philippians (c. ii. 6), he says, “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God”; and again to the Romans, “Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. i. 7)”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

And to **Titus 2 (KJV):13** Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

And to **Romans 9 (KJV):5** Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

And in context to **Philippians 2 (KJV):5** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

And to **Romans 1 (KJV):7** To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

He continues, “Besides, it was superfluous for it to be attached in that place, when close above it was continually attached to “the Word.” For as in speaking concerning the Father, he says, “God is a Spirit” (John iv. 24), and we do not, because the article is not joined to “Spirit,” yet deny the Spiritual Nature of God; so here, although the article is not annexed to the Son, the Son is not on that account a less God. Why so? Because in saying “God,” and again “God,” he does not reveal to us any difference in this Godhead, but the contrary; for having before said, “and the Word was God”; that no one might suppose the Godhead of the Son to be inferior, he immediately adds the characteristics of genuine Godhead, including Eternity, (for “He was,” says he, “in the beginning with God,”) and attributing to Him the office of Creator.”

He refers to **John 4 (KJV):24** God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

He continues, “For “by Him were all things made, and without Him was not anything made that was made”; which His Father also everywhere by the Prophets declares to be especially characteristic of His own Essence.”

He refers in context to **John 1 (KJV): 1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** The same was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

He continues, “And the Prophets are continually busy on this kind of demonstration, not only of itself, but when they contend against the honor shown to idols; “Let the gods perish,”

says one “who have not made heaven and earth” (Jer. x. 11): and again, “I have stretched out the heaven with My hand” (Is. xlv. 24);”

He refers to **Jeremiah 10 (KJV):11** Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.

And to **Isaiah 44 (KJV):24** Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;

He continues, “and it is as declaring it to be indicative of Divinity, that He everywhere puts it. And the Evangelist himself was not satisfied with these words, but calls Him “Life” too and “Light.””

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):4** In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

He continues, “If now He was ever with the Father, if He Himself created all things, if He brought all things into existence, and keeps together all things, (for, this he meant by “Life,”) if He enlightens all things, who so senseless as to say, that the Evangelist desired to teach an inferiority of Divinity by those very expressions, by which, rather than by any others, it is possible to express its equality and not differing? Let us not then confound the creation with the Creator, lest we too hear it said of us, that “they served the creature rather than the Creator” (Rom. i. 25); for although it be asserted that this is said of the heavens, still in speaking of the heavens he positively says, that we must not serve the creature, for it is a heathenish thing.”

He refers to **Romans 1 (KJV):25** Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

John Chrysostom has presented the Biblical truth of the divinity of the Son of God clearly. And this he has done in spite of the many errors that were circulating in his time. He has defended the faith well here.

## Jesus

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, EUTROPIUS, PATRICIAN AND CONSUL, Homily II, After Eutropius having been found outside the Church had been taken captive, page 256-257**

7. Let the heretic who inquires curiously into the nature of heavenly generation saying “how did the Father beget the Son?” interpret this single fact, ask him how did the Church, being an harlot, become a virgin? and how did she having brought forth children remain a virgin? “For I am jealous over you,” saith Paul, “with a godly jealousy, for I espoused you to one husband that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ.” (2 Cor. xi. 2) What wisdom and understanding! “I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy.” What means this? “I am jealous,” he says: art thou jealous seeing thou art a spiritual man? I am jealous he says as God is. And hath God jealousy? yea the jealousy not of passion, but of love, and earnest zeal. I am jealous over you with the jealousy of God.

Shall I tell thee how He manifests His jealousy? He saw the world corrupted by devils, and He delivered His own Son to save it. For words spoken in reference to God have not the



same force as when spoken in reference to ourselves: for instance we say God is jealous, God is wroth, God repents, God hates. These words are human, but they have a meaning which becomes the nature of God. How is God jealous? "I am jealous over you with the jealousy of God." (2 Cor. xi. 2) Is God wroth? "O Lord reproach me not in thine indignation." (Ps. vi. 1) Doth God slumber? "Awake, wherefore sleepest thou, O Lord?" (Ps. xlv. 23) Doth God repent? "I repent that I have made man." (Gen. vi. 7) Doth God hate? "My soul hateth your feasts and your new moons." (Is. i. 14) Well do not consider the poverty of the expressions: but grasp their divine meaning. God is jealous, for He loves, God is wroth, not as yielding to passion, but for the purpose of chastising, and punishing. God sleeps, not as really slumbering, but as being longsuffering. Choose out the expression. Thus when thou hearest that God begets the Son, think not of division but of the unity of substance. For God has taken many of these words from us as we also have borrowed others from Him, that we may receive honour thereby.

8. Dost thou understand what I have said? Attend carefully my beloved. There are divine names, and there are human names. God has received from me, and He Himself hath given to me. Give me thine, and take mine He says. Thou hast need of mine: I have no need of thine, but thou hast of mine inasmuch as my nature is unmixed, but thou art a human being encompassed with a body, seeking also corporeal terms in order that, by borrowing expressions which are familiar to thee, thou who art thus encompassed with a body, mayest be able to think on thoughts which transcend thy understanding. What kind of names hath He received from me, and what kind hath He given to me? He Himself is God, and He hath called me God; with Him is the essential nature as an actual fact, with me only the honour of the name: "I have said ye are gods, and ye are all children of the most highest." (Psalm 82:6, John 10:34) Here are words, but in the other case there is the actual reality. He hath called me god, for by that name I have received honour. He Himself was called man, he was called Son of man, he was called the Way, the Door, the Rock. These words He borrowed from me; the others He gave from Himself to me. Wherefore was He called the Way? That thou mightest understand that by Him we have access to the Father. Wherefore was He called the Rock? that thou mightest understand the secure and unshaken character of the faith. Wherefore was He called the Foundation? That thou mightest understand that He upholdeth all things. Wherefore was He called the Root? That thou mightest understand that in Him we have our power of growth. Wherefore was He called the Shepherd? Because He feeds us. Wherefore was He called a sheep? Because He was sacrificed for us and became a propitiatory offering. Wherefore was He called the Life? Because He raised us up when we were dead. Wherefore was He called the Light? Because He delivered us from darkness. Why was He called an Arm? Because He is of one substance with the Father. Why was He called the Word? Because He was begotten of the Father. For as my word is the offspring of my spirit, even so was the Son begotten of the Father. Wherefore is He called our raiment? Because I was clothed with Him when I was baptized. Why is He called a table? Because I feed upon Him when I partake of the mysteries. Why is He called a house? Because I dwell in Him. Why is He called an inmate of the house? Because we become His Temple. Wherefore is He called the Head? Because I have been made a member of His. Why is He called a Bridegroom? Because He hath taken me as His bride. Wherefore is He called undefiled? Because He took me as a virgin. Wherefore is He called Master? Because I am His bondmaid.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “7. Let the heretic who inquires curiously into the nature of heavenly generation saying “how did the Father beget the Son?” interpret this single fact, ask him how did the Church, being an harlot, become a virgin? and how did she having brought forth children remain a virgin? “For I am jealous over you,” saith Paul, “with a godly jealousy, for I espoused you to one husband that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ.” (2 Cor. xi. 2)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):2** For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

He continues, “What wisdom and understanding! “I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy.” What means this? “I am jealous,” he says: art thou jealous seeing thou art a spiritual man? I am jealous he says as God is. And hath God jealousy? yea the jealousy not of passion, but of love, and earnest zeal. I am jealous over you with the jealousy of God.

Shall I tell thee how He manifests His jealousy? He saw the world corrupted by devils, and He delivered His own Son to save it. For words spoken in reference to God have not the same force as when spoken in reference to ourselves: for instance we say God is jealous, God is wroth, God repents, God hates. These words are human, but they have a meaning which becomes the nature of God. How is God jealous? “I am jealous over you with the jealousy of God.” (2 Cor. xi. 2) Is God wroth? “O Lord reproach me not in thine indignation.” (Ps. vi. 1)”

He refers to **Psalms 6 (KJV):1** O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

He continues, “Doth God slumber? “Awake, wherefore sleepest thou, O Lord?” (Ps. xlv. 23) Doth God repent? “I repent that I have made man.” (Gen. vi. 7) Doth God hate? “My soul hateth your feasts and your new moons.” (Is. i. 14)”

He refers to **Psalms 44 (KJV):23** Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever.

And to **Genesis 6 (KJV):7** And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

And to **Isaiah 1 (KJV):14** Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.

He continues, “Well do not consider the poverty of the expressions: but grasp their divine meaning. God is jealous, for He loves, God is wroth, not as yielding to passion, but for the purpose of chastising, and punishing. God sleeps, not as really slumbering, but as being longsuffering. Choose out the expression. Thus when thou hearest that God begets the Son, think not of division but of the unity of substance. For God has taken many of these words from us as we also have borrowed others from Him, that we may receive honour thereby.”

And God punishes because He upholds His own righteousness.

Chrysostom continues, “8. Dost thou understand what I have said? Attend carefully my beloved. There are divine names, and there are human names. God has received from me, and He Himself hath given to me. Give me thine, and take mine He says. Thou hast need of mine: I have no need of thine, but thou hast of mine inasmuch as my nature is unmixed, but thou art a human being encompassed with a body, seeking also corporeal terms in order that, by borrowing expressions which are familiar to thee, thou who art thus encompassed with a body, mayest be able to think on thoughts which transcend thy understanding. What kind of names

hath He received from me, and what kind hath He given to me? He Himself is God, and He hath called me God; with Him is the essential nature as an actual fact, with me only the honour of the name: “I have said ye are gods, and ye are all children of the most highest.” (Psalm 82:6, John 10:34)”

He refers to **Psalm 82 (KJV):6** I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.

And to **John 10 (KJV):34** Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?

He continues, “Here are words, but in the other case there is the actual reality. He hath called me god, for by that name I have received honour. He Himself was called man, he was called Son of man, he was called the Way, the Door, the Rock. These words He borrowed from me; the others He gave from Himself to me. Wherefore was He called the Way? That thou mightest understand that by Him we have access to the Father.”

He refers to **John 14 (KJV):6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

And to **John 10 (KJV):7** Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

And to **Matthew 16 (KJV):18** And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The word “Peter” in the Greek is Πέτρος (pronounced pe'-tros), and means “apparently a primary word; a (piece of) rock (larger than G3037); as a name, Petrus, an apostle:—Peter, rock.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4074**

The word “rock” in this verse in the Greek is πέτρα (pronounced pe'-trā), pet'-ra; feminine of the same as G4074; a (mass of) rock (literally or figuratively):—rock. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4073**

So πέτρα (pronounced pe'-trā) is a mass of rock, referring to Jesus, whereas Peter is a piece of rock.

Chrysostom continues, “Wherefore was He called the Rock? that thou mightest understand the secure and unshaken character of the faith.”

And we read in **Deuteronomy 32 (KJV):3** Because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. 4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

And to **Psalm 18 (KJV):31** For who is God save the Lord? or who is a rock save our God?

He continues, “Wherefore was He called the Foundation? That thou mightest understand that He upholdeth all things.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

And to **Hebrews 1 (KJV):3** Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:

He continues, “Wherefore was He called the Root? That thou mightest understand that in

Him we have our power of growth.”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):18** Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

He continues, “Wherefore was He called the Shepherd? Because He feeds us. Wherefore was He called a sheep? Because He was sacrificed for us and became a propitiatory offering.”

He refers to **John 10 (KJV):11** I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

And to **John 1 (KJV):29** The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

And in context to **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

He continues, “Wherefore was He called the Life? Because He raised us up when we were dead.”

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

And in context to **Ephesians 2 (NASB):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

He continues, “Wherefore was He called the Light? Because He delivered us from darkness.”

He refers to **John 8 (KJV):12** Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

And to **Colossians 1 (KJV):13** Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

He continues, “Why was He called an Arm? Because He is of one substance with the Father.”

He refers to **Isaiah 52 (KJV):10** The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

And to **Isaiah 53 (KJV):1** Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? 2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He continues, “Why was He called the Word? Because He was begotten of the Father.

For as my word is the offspring of my spirit, even so was the Son begotten of the Father. Wherefore is He called our raiment? Because I was clothed with Him when I was baptized.”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):14** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

He refers to **Galatians 3 (KJV):27** For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Actually, we are baptized into Christ when we believe in Jesus Christ, for that is when we are born again. This baptism is done sovereignly by the Spirit of God, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

We are placed in the body in a particular place as it pleased God, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

He continues, “Why is He called a table? Because I feed upon Him when I partake of the mysteries.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):21** Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

But this is not an offering or a sacrifice, but a remembrance of the offering and of the sacrifice, as Jesus spoke in **Luke 22 (KJV):19** And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

He continues, “Why is He called a house? Because I dwell in Him. Why is He called an inmate of the house? Because we become His Temple.”

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):56** He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth, in me, and I in him.

And to **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

And to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):19** Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

He continues, “Wherefore is He called the Head? Because I have been made a member of His.”

He refers to **Colossians 1 (KJV):18** And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

And to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):12** For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

He continues, “Why is He called a Bridegroom? Because He hath taken me as His bride.” Wherefore is He called undefiled? Because He took me as a virgin. Wherefore is He called Master? Because I am His bondmaid.”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):2** For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

And to **Matthew 25 (KJV):10** And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

And to **John 13 (KJV):13** Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

John Chrysostom was a believer, and he is with the Lord now.

## Christ's Age

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LV, page 198-199

Ver. 56. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad."

Again, He showeth that they were aliens from the race of Abraham, if they grieved at what he rejoiced in. "My day," seems to me to mean the day of the Crucifixion, which Abraham foreshowed typically by the offering of the ram and of Isaac. What do they reply?

Ver. 57. "Thou art not yet forty (fifty in John 8:57) years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?"

So that we conclude that Christ was nearly forty."

Ver. 58, 59. "Jesus saith unto them, Before Abraham was, I Am. Then took they up stones to cast at Him.

Seest thou how He proved Himself to be greater than Abraham? For the man who rejoiced to see His day, and made this an object of earnest desire, plainly did so because it was a day that should be for a benefit, and belonging to one greater than himself. Because they had said, "The carpenter's son" (Matt. xiii. 55), and imagined nothing more concerning Him, He leadeth them by degrees to an exalted notion of Him. Therefore when they heard the words, "Ye know not God," they were not grieved; but when they heard, "before Abraham was, I Am," as though the nobility of their descent were debased, they became furious, and would have stoned Him.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, "Ver. 56. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad."

He refers to **John 8 (KJV):56** Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

He continues, "Again, He showeth that they were aliens from the race of Abraham, if they grieved at what he rejoiced in. "My day," seems to me to mean the day of the Crucifixion, which Abraham foreshowed typically by the offering of the ram and of Isaac."

And "my day" in this verse relates not to the crucifixion, as Chrysostom asserts

above, but to when the Lord appeared to Abraham, as we read in **Genesis 18 (KJV):1** And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; 2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, 3 And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:

And to **Genesis 18 (KJV):13** And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? 14 Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

Chrysostom continues, “What do they reply?

Ver. 57. “Thou art not yet forty (fifty in John 8:57) years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?”

So that we conclude that Christ was nearly forty.”

Chrysostom thought that Christ was nearly forty years old. But Jesus began His ministry about the age of 30, as we read in **Luke 3 (KJV):23** And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli.

And Jesus ministered about 3½ years, as is evident in the Gospel of John which mentions three different Passover feasts that Jesus attended.

Chrysostom continues, “Ver. 58, 59. “Jesus saith unto them, Before Abraham was, I Am. Then took they up stones to cast at Him.

Seest thou how He proved Himself to be greater than Abraham? For the man who rejoiced to see His day, and made this an object of earnest desire, plainly did so because it was a day that should be for a benefit, and belonging to one greater than himself. Because they had said, “The carpenter’s son” (Matt. xiii. 55), and imagined nothing more concerning Him, He leadeth them by degrees to an exalted notion of Him. Therefore when they heard the words, “Ye know not God,” they were not grieved; but when they heard, “before Abraham was, I Am,” as though the nobility of their descent were debased, they became furious, and would have stoned Him.”

He refers to **Matthew 13 (KJV):55** Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

And to **John 8 (KJV):57** Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? 58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. 59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

The Jews thought that a teacher, or master, had to be over fifty years old to be trusted. However Jesus began to preach when He was about thirty years old. He began His ministry after he was baptized by John the Baptist as we read in **John 3 (KJV):21** Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, 22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. 23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli...

After His baptism, He was led into the wilderness and tempted by the devil for forty days, after which He began to preach as we read in **Mark 2 (KJV):9** And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. 10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: 11 And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 12 And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness. 13 And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him. 14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Jesus Himself also tells us a parable that hints at His age as we see in **Luke 13 (KJV):6** He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. 7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? 8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: 9 And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

So Jesus preached the Gospel for about 3 ½ years. History records that Pontius Pilate's retirement will not allow Jesus to have reached the age of years that would include Him in Trajan's reign who reigned as Roman Emperor from 98 A.D. until his death in 117 A.D. We know that Pilate was relieved from duty in 36 A.D. Jesus had to have been crucified before this. Schaff says, "Pontius Pilate was ten years governor of Judaea, from A.D. 26 to 36. Herod Antipas was deposed by Caligula, A.D. 39. Philip, his brother, died A.D. 34. Consequently, Christ must have died before A.D. 34, at an age of thirty-three, if we allow three years for his public ministry." **History of the Christian Church, Volume I, Chapter II, page 121, Philip P. Schaff.**

Also, Herod the Great was king when Jesus was born. Schaff also says that the date of Herod the Great's death has been "verified by the astronomical calculation of the eclipse of the moon, which took place March 13, A.U. 750, a few days before Herod's death. Allowing two months or more for the events between the birth of Christ and the murder of the Innocents by Herod, the Nativity must be put back at least to February or January, A.U. 750 (or B.C. 4), if not earlier." **History of the Christian Church, Volume I, Chapter II, page 112, Philip P. Schaff.**

This means that Jesus must have been crucified about 30 A.D. or before.

## **The Lamb, the Christ, the Prophet**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XVIII, page 62-64**

John i. 35-37

"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they



followed Jesus.”

[1.] The nature of man is somehow a thing slothful, and easily declining to perdition, not by reason of the constitution of the nature itself, but by reason of that sloth which is of deliberate choice. Wherefore it needs much reminding. And for this cause Paul, writing to the Philippians, said, “To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.” (Philip. iii. 1)

The earth when it has once received the seed, straightway gives forth its fruits, and needs not a second sowing; but with our souls it is not so, and one must be content, after having sown many times, and manifested much carefulness, to be able once to receive fruit. For in the first place, what is said settles in the mind with difficulty, because the ground is very hard, and entangled with thorns innumerable, and there are many which lay plots, and carry away the seed; afterwards, when it has been fixed and has taken root, it still needs the same attention, that it may come to maturity, and having done so may remain uninjured, and take no harm from any. For in the case of seeds, when the ear is fully formed and has gained its proper strength, it easily despises rust, and drought, and every other thing; but it is not so with doctrines; in their case after all the work has been fully done, one storm and flood often comes on, and either by the attack of unpleasant circumstances, or by the plots of men skilled to deceive, or by various other temptations brought against them, brings them to ruin.

I have not said this without cause, but that when you hear John repeating the same words, you may not condemn him for vain talking; nor deem him impertinent or wearisome. He desired to have been heard by once speaking, but because not many gave heed to what was spoken from the first, by reason of deep sleep, he again rouses them by this second call. Now observe; he had said, “He that cometh after me, is preferred before me”: and that “I am not worthy to unloose the latchet of His shoe”; and that “He baptizeth with the Holy Ghost, and with fire”; and that he “saw the Spirit descending like a dove, and it abode upon Him,” and he “bare record that this is the Son of God.” No one gave heed, nor asked, nor said, “Why sayest thou these things? in whose behalf? for what reason?” Again he had said, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”; yet not even so did he touch their insensibility. Therefore, after this he is compelled to repeat the same words again, as if softening by tillage some hard and stubborn soil, and by his word as by a plow, disturbing the mind which had hardened into clods, so as to put in the seed deep. For this reason he does not make his discourse a long one either; because he desired one thing only, to bring them over and join them to Christ. He knew that as soon as they had received this saying, and had been persuaded, they would not afterwards need one to bear witness unto Him. As also it came to pass. For, if the Samaritans could say to the woman after hearing Him, “Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world,” the disciples would be much more quickly subdued, as was the case. For when they had come and heard Him but one evening, they returned no more to John, but were so nailed to Him, that they took upon them the ministry of John, and themselves proclaimed Him. For, saith the Evangelist, “He findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.” And observe, I pray you, this, how, when he said, “He that cometh after me is preferred before me”; and that, “I am not worthy to unloose the latchet of His shoe”; he caught no one, but when he spoke of the Dispensation, and lowered his discourse to a humbler tone, then the disciples followed Him.

And we may remark this, not only in the instance of the disciples, but that the many are not so much attracted when some great and sublime thing is said concerning God, as when some act of graciousness and lovingkindness, something pertaining to the salvation of the hearers, is spoken of. They heard that “He taketh away the sin of the world,” and straightway they ran to Him. For, said they, “if it is possible to wash away the charges that lie against us, why do we delay? Here is One who will deliver us without labor of ours. Is it not extreme folly to put off accepting the Gift?” Let those hear who are Catechumens, and are putting off their salvation to their latest breath.

“Again,” saith the Evangelist, “John stood, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God.” Christ utters no word, His messenger saith all. So it is with a bridegroom. He saith not for a while anything to the bride, but is there in silence, while some show him to the bride, and others give her into his hands; she merely appears, and he departs not having taken her himself, but when he has received her from another who gives her to him. And when he has received her thus given, he so disposes her, that she no more remembers those who betrothed her. So it was with Christ. He came to join to Himself the Church; He said nothing, but merely came. It was His friend, John, who put into His the bride’s right hand, when by his discourses he gave into His hand the souls of men. He having received them, afterwards so disposed them, that they departed no more to John who had committed them to Him.

[2.] And here we may remark, not this only, but something besides. As at a marriage the maiden goes not to the bridegroom, but he hastens to her, though he be a king’s son, and though he be about to espouse some poor and abject person, or even a servant, so it was here. Man’s nature did not go up, but contemptible and poor as it was, He came to it, and when the marriage had taken place, He suffered it no longer to tarry here, but having taken it to Himself, transported it to the house of His Father.

“Why then doth not John take his disciples apart, and converse with them on these matters, and so deliver them over to Christ, instead of saying publicly to them in common with all the people, ‘Behold the Lamb of God?’” That it may not seem to be a matter of arrangement; for had they gone away from him to Christ after having been privately admonished by him, and as though to do him a favor, they would perhaps soon have started away again; but now, having taken upon them the following Him, from teaching which had been general, they afterwards remained His firm disciples, as not having followed Him in order to gratify the teacher, but as looking purely to their own advantage.

The Prophets and Apostles then all preached Him absent; the Prophets before His coming according to the flesh, the Apostles after He was taken up; John alone proclaimed Him present. Wherefore he calls himself the “friend of the Bridegroom” (c. iii. 29), since he alone was present at the marriage, he it was that did and accomplished all, he made a beginning of the work. And “looking upon Jesus walking, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God.” Not by voice alone, but with his eyes also he bore witness to, and expressed his admiration of, Christ, rejoicing and glorying. Nor does he for awhile address any word of exhortation to his followers, but only shows wonder and astonishment at Him who was present, and declares to all the Gift which He came to give, and the manner of purification. For “the Lamb” declares both these things. And he said not, “Who shall take,” or “Who hath taken”; but, “Who taketh away the sins of the world”; because this He ever doth. He took them not then only when He suffered, but from that time even to the present doth He take them away, not being repeatedly crucified, (for

He offered One Sacrifice for sins,) but by that One continually purging them. As then The Word shows us His pre-eminence, and The Son His superiority in comparison with others, so “The Lamb, The Christ, that Prophet, the True Light, the Good Shepherd,” and whatever other names are applied to Him with the addition of the article, mark a great difference. For there were many “Lambs,” and “Prophets,” and “Christs,” and “sons,” but from all these John separates Him by a wide interval. And this he secured not by the article only, but by the addition of “Only-Begotten”; for He had nothing in common with the creation.

**Commentary:** He begins as he says, “Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):**35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; 36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! 37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

He continues, [1.] The nature of man is somehow a thing slothful, and easily declining to perdition, not by reason of the constitution of the nature itself, but by reason of that sloth which is of deliberate choice. Wherefore it needs much reminding. And for this cause Paul, writing to the Philippians, said, “To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.” (Philip. iii. 1)”

He refers to **Philippians 3 (KJV):**1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.

He continues, as he then explains the ministry of the teacher, “The earth when it has once received the seed, straightway gives forth its fruits, and needs not a second sowing; but with our souls it is not so, and one must be content, after having sown many times, and manifested much carefulness, to be able once to receive fruit. For in the first place, what is said settles in the mind with difficulty, because the ground is very hard, and entangled with thorns innumerable, and there are many which lay plots, and carry away the seed; afterwards, when it has been fixed and has taken root, it still needs the same attention, that it may come to maturity, and having done so may remain uninjured, and take no harm from any. For in the case of seeds, when the ear is fully formed and has gained its proper strength, it easily despises rust, and drought, and every other thing; but it is not so with doctrines; in their case after all the work has been fully done, one storm and flood often comes on, and either by the attack of unpleasant circumstances, or by the plots of men skilled to deceive, or by various other temptations brought against them, brings them to ruin.”

And this reminds us of Jesus’ teaching in **Matthew 13 (KJV):**3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; 4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: 5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: 6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. 7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: 8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. 9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

He continues, “I have not said this without cause, but that when you hear John repeating the same words, you may not condemn him for vain talking; nor deem him impertinent or

wearisome. He desired to have been heard by once speaking, but because not many gave heed to what was spoken from the first, by reason of deep sleep, he again rouses them by this second call. Now observe; he had said, “He that cometh after me, is preferred before me”:

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):15** John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

He continues, “and that “I am not worthy to unloose the latchet of His shoe”;

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):27** He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

He continues, “and that “He baptizeth with the Holy Ghost, and with fire”; and that he “saw the Spirit descending like a dove, and it abode upon Him,” and he “bare record that this is the Son of God.””

He refers to **Matthew 3 (KJV):11** I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

And to **John 1 (KJV):32** And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. 33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. 34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

He continues, “No one gave heed, nor asked, nor said, “Why sayest thou these things? in whose behalf? for what reason?” Again he had said, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”; yet not even so did he touch their insensibility.”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):29** The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

He continues, “Therefore, after this he is compelled to repeat the same words again, as if softening by tillage some hard and stubborn soil, and by his word as by a plow, disturbing the mind which had hardened into clods, so as to put in the seed deep. For this reason he does not make his discourse a long one either; because he desired one thing only, to bring them over and join them to Christ. He knew that as soon as they had received this saying, and had been persuaded, they would not afterwards need one to bear witness unto Him. As also it came to pass. For, if the Samaritans could say to the woman after hearing Him, “Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world,” the disciples would be much more quickly subdued, as was the case.”

He refers to **John 4 (KJV):42** And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

He continues, “For when they had come and heard Him but one evening, they returned no more to John, but were so nailed to Him, that they took upon them the ministry of John, and themselves proclaimed Him. For, saith the Evangelist, “He findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.””

He refers in context to **John 1 (KJV):40** One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. 42 And

he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

He continues, “And observe, I pray you, this, how, when he said, “He that cometh after me is preferred before me”; and that, “I am not worthy to unloose the lachet of His shoe”; he caught no one, but when he spoke of the Dispensation, and lowered his discourse to a humbler tone, then the disciples followed Him.”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):35** Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; 36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! 37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

He continues, “And we may remark this, not only in the instance of the disciples, but that the many are not so much attracted when some great and sublime thing is said concerning God, as when some act of graciousness and lovingkindness, something pertaining to the salvation of the hearers, is spoken of. They heard that “He taketh away the sin of the world,” and straightway they ran to Him. For, said they, “if it is possible to wash away the charges that lie against us, why do we delay? Here is One who will deliver us without labor of ours. Is it not extreme folly to put off accepting the Gift?” Let those hear who are Catechumens, and are putting off their salvation to their latest breath.”

It was customary at the time of Chrysostom and Augustine for Catechumens to put off baptism for three years while they learned the teaching of the Church.

He continues, ““Again,” saith the Evangelist, “John stood, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God.” Christ utters no word, His messenger saith all. So it is with a bridegroom. He saith not for a while anything to the bride, but is there in silence, while some show him to the bride, and others give her into his hands; she merely appears, and he departs not having taken her himself, but when he has received her from another who gives her to him. And when he has received her thus given, he so disposes her, that she no more remembers those who betrothed her. So it was with Christ. He came to join to Himself the Church; He said nothing, but merely came. It was His friend, John, who put into His the bride’s right hand, when by his discourses he gave into His hand the souls of men. He having received them, afterwards so disposed them, that they departed no more to John who had committed them to Him.”

This was the purpose of John’s ministry as he himself confessed in **John 1 (KJV):23** He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

And in **John 3 (KJV):28** Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

And this was a fulfillment of prophecy in **Isaiah 40 (KJV):3** The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

He continues, “[2.] And here we may remark, not this only, but something besides. As at a marriage the maiden goes not to the bridegroom, but he hastens to her, though he be a king’s son, and though he be about to espouse some poor and abject person, or even a servant, so it was here. Man’s nature did not go up, but contemptible and poor as it was, He came to it, and when the marriage had taken place, He suffered it no longer to tarry here, but having taken it to Himself, transported it to the house of His Father.

“Why then doth not John take his disciples apart, and converse with them on these

matters, and so deliver them over to Christ, instead of saying publicly to them in common with all the people, ‘Behold the Lamb of God’?” That it may not seem to be a matter of arrangement; for had they gone away from him to Christ after having been privately admonished by him, and as though to do him a favor, they would perhaps soon have started away again; but now, having taken upon them the following Him, from teaching which had been general, they afterwards remained His firm disciples, as not having followed Him in order to gratify the teacher, but as looking purely to their own advantage.

The Prophets and Apostles then all preached Him absent; the Prophets before His coming according to the flesh, the Apostles after He was taken up; John alone proclaimed Him present. Wherefore he calls himself the “friend of the Bridegroom” (c. iii. 29), since he alone was present at the marriage, he it was that did and accomplished all, he made a beginning of the work.”

He refers in context to **John 3 (KJV):27** John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. 28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. 29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

He continues, “And “looking upon Jesus walking, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God.” Not by voice alone, but with his eyes also he bore witness to, and expressed his admiration of, Christ, rejoicing and glorying. Nor does he for awhile address any word of exhortation to his followers, but only shows wonder and astonishment at Him who was present, and declares to all the Gift which He came to give, and the manner of purification. For “the Lamb” declares both these things. And he said not, “Who shall take,” or “Who hath taken”; but, “Who taketh away the sins of the world”; because this He ever doth.”

He refers again to **John 1 (KJV):29** The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

He continues, “He took them not then only when He suffered, but from that time even to the present doth He take them away, not being repeatedly crucified, (for He offered One Sacrifice for sins,) but by that One continually purging them.”

And we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):10** By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

He concludes, “As then The Word shows us His pre-eminence, and The Son His superiority in comparison with others, so “The Lamb, The Christ, that Prophet, the True Light, the Good Shepherd,” and whatever other names are applied to Him with the addition of the article, mark a great difference. For there were many “Lambs,” and “Prophets,” and “Christs,” and “sons,” but from all these John separates Him by a wide interval. And this he secured not by the article only, but by the addition of “Only-Begotten”; for He had nothing in common with the creation.

And we read in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

## His Resurrection and Ascension

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXXXVI, page 323-327

John xx. 10, 11

“Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. But Mary stood without at the sepulcher, weeping.”

[1.] Full of feeling somehow is the female sex, and more inclined to pity. I say this, lest thou shouldest wonder how it could be that Mary wept bitterly at the tomb, while Peter was in no way so affected. For, “The disciples,” it saith, “went away unto their own home”; but she stood shedding tears. Because hers was a feeble nature, and she as yet knew not accurately the account of the Resurrection; whereas they having seen the linen clothes and believed, departed to their own homes in astonishment. And wherefore went they not straightway to Galilee, as had been commanded them before the Passion? They waited for the others, perhaps, and besides they were yet at the height of their amazement. These then went their way: but she stood at the place, for, as I have said, even the sight of the tomb tended greatly to comfort her. At any rate, thou seest her, the more to ease her grief, stooping down, and desiring to behold the place where the body lay. And therefore she received no small reward for this her great zeal. For what the disciples saw not, this saw the woman first, Angels sitting, the one at the feet, the other at the head, in white; even the dress was full of much radiance and joy. Since the mind of the woman was not sufficiently elevated to accept the Resurrection from the proof of the napkins, something more takes place, she beholdeth something more; Angels sitting in shining garments, so as to raise her thus awhile from her passionate sorrow, and to comfort her. But they said nothing to her concerning the Resurrection, yet is she gently led forward in this doctrine. She saw countenances bright and unusual; she saw shining garments, she heard a sympathizing voice. For what saith (the Angel)?

Ver. 13. “Woman, why weepest thou?”

By all these circumstances, as though a door was being opened for her, she was led by little and little to the knowledge of the Resurrection. And the manner of their sitting invited her to question them, for they showed that they knew what had taken place; on which account they did not sit together either, but apart from one another. For because it was not likely that she would dare at once to question them, both by questioning her, and by the manner of their sitting, they bring her to converse. What then saith she? She speaks very warmly and affectionately;

“They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.”

“What sayest thou? Knowest thou not yet anything concerning the Resurrection, but dost thou still form fancies about His being laid?” Seest thou how she had not yet received the sublime doctrine?

Ver. 14. “And when she had thus said, she turned herself back.”

And by what kind of consequence is it, that she having spoken to them, and not having yet heard anything from them, turned back? Methinks that while she was speaking, Christ suddenly appearing behind her, struck the Angels with awe; and that they having beheld their Ruler, showed immediately by their bearing, their look, their movements, that they saw the Lord; and this drew the woman’s attention, and caused her to turn herself backwards. To them

then He appeared on this wise, but not so to the woman, in order not at the first sight to terrify her, but in a meaner and ordinary form, as is clear from her supposing that He was the gardener. It was meet to lead one of so lowly a mind to high matters, not all at once, but gently. He therefore in turn asketh her,

Ver. 15. "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?"

This showed that He knew what she wished to ask, and led her to make answer. And the woman, understanding this, doth not again mention the name of Jesus, but as though her questioner knew the subject of her enquiry replies,

"Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."

Again she speaks of laying down, and taking away, and carrying, as though speaking of a corpse. But her meaning is this; "If ye have borne him hence for fear of the Jews, tell me, and I will take him." Great is the kindness and loving affection of the woman, but as yet there is nothing lofty with her. Wherefore He now setteth the matter before her, not by appearance, but by Voice. For as He was at one time known to the Jews, and at another time unperceived though present; so too in speaking, He, when He chose, then made Himself known; as also when He said to the Jews, "Whom seek ye?" they knew neither the Countenance nor the Voice until He chose. And this was the case here. And He named her name only, reproaching and blaming her that she entertained such fancies concerning One who lived. But how was it that,

Ver. 16. "She turned herself, and saith," if so be that He was speaking to her? It seems to me, that after having said, "Where have ye laid him?" she turned to the Angels to ask why they were astonished, and that then Christ, by calling her by name, turned her to Himself from them, and revealed Himself by His Voice; for when He called her "Mary," then she knew Him; so that the recognition was not by His appearance, but by His Voice. And if any say, "Whence is it clear that the Angels were awestruck, and that on this account the woman turned herself," they will in this place say, "whence is it clear that she would have touched Him, and fallen at His feet?" Now as this is clear from His saying, "Touch Me not," so is the other clear from its saying, that she turned herself. But wherefore, said He,

Ver. 17. "Touch Me not"?

[2.] Some assert, that she asked for spiritual grace, because she had heard Him when with the disciples say, "If I go to the Father, 'I will ask Him, and He shall give you another Comforter.'" (c. xiv. 3, 16) But how could she who was not present with the disciples have heard this? Besides, such an imagination is far from the meaning here. And how should she ask, when He had not yet gone to the Father? What then is the sense? Methinks that she wished still to converse with Him as before, and that in her joy she perceived nothing great in Him, although He had become far more excellent in the Flesh. To lead her therefore from this idea, and that she might speak to Him with much awe, (for neither with the disciples doth He henceforth appear so familiar as before,) He raiseth her thoughts, that she should give more reverent heed to Him. To have said, "Approach Me not as ye did before, for matters are not in the same state, nor shall I henceforth be with you in the same way," would have been harsh and high-sounding; but the saying,

"I am not yet ascended to the Father," though not painful to hear, was the saying of One declaring the same thing. For by saying, "I am not yet ascended," He showeth that He hasteth and presseth thither; and that it was not meet that One about to depart thither, and no longer to



converse with men, should be looked on with the same feelings as before. And the sequel shows that this is the case.

“Go and say unto the brethren, that I go unto My Father, and your Father, unto My God and your God.”

Yet He was not about to do so immediately, but after forty days. How then saith He this? With a desire to raise their minds, and to persuade them that He departeth into the heavens. But the, “To My Father and your Father, to My God, and your God,” belongs to the Dispensation, since the “ascending” also belongs to His Flesh. For He speaketh these words to one who had no high thoughts. “Is then the Father His in one way, and ours in another?” Assuredly then He is. For if He is God of the righteous in a manner different from that in which He is God of other men, much more in the case of the Son and us. For because He had said, “Say to the brethren,” in order that they might not imagine any equality from this, He showed the difference. He was about to sit on His Father’s throne, but they to stand by. So that albeit in His Subsistence according to the Flesh He became our Brother, yet in Honor He greatly differed from us, it cannot even be told how much.

Ver. 18. “She therefore departeth, bearing these tidings to the disciples.”

So great a good is perseverance and endurance. But how was it that they did not any more grieve when He was about to depart, nor speak as they had done before? At that time they were affected in such a way, as supposing that He was about to die; but now that He was risen again, what reason had they to grieve? Moreover, Mary reported His appearance and His words, which were enough to comfort them. Since then it was likely that the disciples on hearing these things would either not believe the woman, or, believing, would grieve that He had not deemed them worthy of the vision, though He promised to meet them in Galilee; in order that they might not by dwelling on this be unsettled, He let not a single day pass, but having brought them to a state of longing, by their knowledge that He was risen, and by what they heard from the woman, when they were thirsting to see Him, and were greatly afraid, (which thing itself especially made their yearning greater,) He then, when it was evening, presented Himself before them, and that very marvelously. And why did He appear in the “evening”? Because it was probable that they would then especially be very fearful. But the marvel was, why they did not suppose Him to be an apparition; for He entered, “when the doors were shut,” and suddenly. The chief cause was, that the woman beforehand had wrought great faith in them; besides, He showed His countenance to them clear and mild. He came not by day, in order that all might be collected together. For great was the amazement; for neither did He knock at the door but all at once stood in the midst, and showed His side and His hands. At the same time also by His Voice He smoothed their tossing thought, by saying,

Ver. 19. “Peace be unto you.”

That is, “Be not troubled”; at the same time reminding them of the word which He spake to them before the Crucifixion, “My peace I leave unto you” (c. xiv. 27); and again, “In me ye have peace, but” “in the world ye shall have tribulation.” (c. xvi. 33)

Ver. 20. “Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.”

Seest thou the words issuing in deeds? For what He said before the Crucifixion, that “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you” (c. xvi. 22), this He now accomplished in deed; but all these things led them to a most exact faith. For since they had a truceless war with the Jews, He continually repeated the, “Peace be unto you,”

giving them, to counterbalance the war, the consolation. And so this was the first word that He spake to them after the Resurrection, (wherefore also Paul continually saith, “Grace be unto you and peace,”) and to women He giveth good tidings of joy, because that sex was in sorrow, and had received this as the first curse. Therefore He giveth good tidings suitable respectively, to men, peace, because of their war; joy to women, because of their sorrow. Then having put away all painful things, He telleth of the successes of the Cross, and these were the “peace.” “Since then all hindrances have been removed,” He saith, “and I have made My victory glorious, and all hath been achieved,” (then He saith afterwards,)

Ver. 21. “As My Father hath sent Me, so send I you.”

“Ye have no difficulty, owing to what hath already come to pass, and to the dignity of Me who send you.” Here He lifteth up their souls, and showeth them their great cause of confidence, if so be that they were about to undertake His work. And no longer is an appeal made to the Father, but with authority He giveth to them the power. For,

Ver. 22, 23. “He breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.”

As a king sending forth governors, gives power to cast into prison and to deliver from it, so in sending these forth, Christ investeth them with the same power. But how saith He, “If I go not away, He will not come” (c. xvi. 7), and yet giveth them the Spirit? Some say that He gave not the Spirit, but rendered them fit to receive It, by breathing on them. For if Daniel when he saw an Angel was afraid, what would not they have suffered when they received that unspeakable Gift, unless He had first made them learners? Wherefore He said not, “Ye have received the Holy Ghost,” but, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” Yet one will not be wrong in asserting that they then also received some spiritual power and grace; not so as to raise the dead, or to work miracles, but so as to remit sins. For the gifts of the Spirit are of different kinds; wherefore He added, “Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them,” showing what kind of power He was giving. But in the other case, after forty days, they received the power of working miracles. Wherefore He saith, “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa.” (Acts i. 8) And witnesses they became by means of miracles, for unspeakable is the grace of the Spirit and multiform the gift. But this comes to pass, that thou mayest learn that the gift and the power of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is One. For things which appear to be peculiar to the Father, these are seen also to belong to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. “How then,” saith some one, “doth none come to the Son, ‘except the Father draw him’?” (c. vi. 44) Why, this very thing is shown to belong to the Son also. “I,” He saith, “am the Way: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.” (c. xiv. 6) And observe that it belongeth to the Spirit also; for “No man can call Jesus Christ Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” (1 Cor. xii. 3) Again, we see that the Apostles were given to the Church at one time by the Father, at another by the Son, at another by the Holy Ghost, and that the “diversities of gifts” (1 Cor. xii. 4) belong to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

[4.] Let us then do all we can to have the Holy Spirit with ourselves, and let us treat with much honor those into whose hands its operation hath been committed. For great is the dignity of the priests. “Whosoever sins,” it saith, “ye remit, they are remitted unto them”; wherefore also Paul saith, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves.” (Heb. xiii. 17) And hold them very exceedingly in honor; for thou indeed carest about thine own affairs, and if

thou orderest them well, thou givest no account for others, but the priest even if he rightly order his own life, if he have not an anxious care for thine, yea and that of all those around him, will depart with the wicked into hell; and often when not betrayed by his own conduct, he perishes by yours, if he have not rightly performed all his part. Knowing therefore the greatness of the danger, give them a large share of your goodwill; which Paul also implied when he said, "For they watch for your souls," and not simply so, but, "as they that shall give account." (Heb. xiii. 17) They ought therefore to receive great attention from you; but if you join with the rest in trampling upon them, then neither shall your affairs be in a good condition. For while the steersman continues in good courage, the crew also will be in safety; but if he be tired out by their reviling him and showing illwill against him, he cannot watch equally well, or retain his skill, and without intending it, throws them into ten thousand mischiefs. And so too the priest, if he enjoy honor from you, will be able well to order your affairs; but if ye throw them into despondency, ye weaken their hands, and render them, as well as yourselves, an easy prey to the waves, although they be very courageous. Consider what Christ saith concerning the Jews. "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you to do, do ye." (Matt. xxiii. 2, 3) Now we have not to say, "the priests sit on Moses' seat," but "on that of Christ"; for they have successively received His doctrine. Wherefore also Paul saith, "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us." (2 Cor. v. 20) See ye not that in the case of Gentile rulers, all bow to them, and oftentimes even persons superior in family, in life, in intelligence, to those who judge them? yet still because of him who hath given them, they consider none of these things, but respect the decision of their governor, whosoever he be that receives the rule over them. Is there then such fear when man appoints, but when God appointeth do we despise him who is appointed, and abuse him, and besmirch him with ten thousand reproaches, and though forbidden to judge our brethren, do we sharpen our tongue against our priests? And how can this deserve excuse, when we see not the beam in our own eye, but are bitterly overcurious about the mote in another's? Knowest thou not that by so judging thou makest thine own judgment the harder? And this I say not as approving of those who exercise their priesthood unworthily, but as greatly pitying and weeping for them; yet do I not on this account allow that it is right that they should be judged by those over whom they are set. And although their life be very much spoken against, thou, if thou take heed to thyself, wilt not be harmed at all in respect of the things committed to them by God. For if He caused a voice to be uttered by an ass, and bestowed spiritual blessings by a diviner, working by the foolish mouth and impure tongue of Balaam, in behalf of the offending Jews, much more for the sake of you the right-minded will He, though the priests be exceedingly vile, work all the things that are His, and will send the Holy Ghost. For neither doth the pure draw down that Spirit by his own purity, but it is grace that worketh all. "For all," it saith, "is for your sake, whether it be Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas." (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23) For the things which are placed in the hands of the priest it is with God alone to give; and however far human wisdom may reach, it will appear inferior to that grace. And this I say, not in order that we may order our own life carelessly, but that when some of those set over you are careless livers, you the ruled may not often heap up evil for yourselves. But why speak I of priests? Neither Angel nor Archangel can do anything with regard to what is given from God; but the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, dispenseth all, while the priest lends his tongue and affords his hand. For neither would it be just that through the wickedness of another, those who come in faith to the symbols of their salvation

should be harmed. Knowing all these things, let us fear God, and hold His priests in honor, paying them all reverence; that both for our own good deeds, and the attention shown to them, we may receive a great return from God, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory, dominion, and honor, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins as he says, ““Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. But Mary stood without at the sepulcher, weeping.”

He refers in context to **John 20 (KJV):10** Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. 11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, 12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

He continues, “[1.] Full of feeling somehow is the female sex, and more inclined to pity. I say this, lest thou shouldest wonder how it could be that Mary wept bitterly at the tomb, while Peter was in no way so affected. For, “The disciples,” it saith, “went away unto their own home”; but she stood shedding tears. Because hers was a feeble nature, and she as yet knew not accurately the account of the Resurrection; whereas they having seen the linen clothes and believed, departed to their own homes in astonishment. And wherefore went they not straightway to Galilee, as had been commanded them before the Passion?”

He may refer to **Mark 14 (KJV):28** But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

And to **Luke 24 (KJV):6** He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, 7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. 8 And they remembered his words...

However, there is nothing in the Gospels that indicates the apostles knew accurately the account of the Resurrection, and so they believed “after having seen the linen clothes”.

Chrysostom continues, “They waited for the others, perhaps, and besides they were yet at the height of their amazement. These then went their way: but she stood at the place, for, as I have said, even the sight of the tomb tended greatly to comfort her. At any rate, thou seest her, the more to ease her grief, stooping down, and desiring to behold the place where the body lay. And therefore she received no small reward for this her great zeal. For what the disciples saw not, this saw the woman first, Angels sitting, the one at the feet, the other at the head, in white; even the dress was full of much radiance and joy. Since the mind of the woman was not sufficiently elevated to accept the Resurrection from the proof of the napkins, something more takes place, she beholdeth something more; Angels sitting in shining garments, so as to raise her thus awhile from her passionate sorrow, and to comfort her. But they said nothing to her concerning the Resurrection, yet is she gently led forward in this doctrine. She saw countenances bright and unusual; she saw shining garments, she heard a sympathizing voice. For what saith (the Angel)?

Ver. 13. “Woman, why weepest thou?”

He refers to **John 20 (KJV):13** And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

He continues, “By all these circumstances, as though a door was being opened for her,

she was led by little and little to the knowledge of the Resurrection. And the manner of their sitting invited her to question them, for they showed that they knew what had taken place; on which account they did not sit together either, but apart from one another. For because it was not likely that she would dare at once to question them, both by questioning her, and by the manner of their sitting, they bring her to converse. What then saith she? She speaks very warmly and affectionately;

“They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.”

“What sayest thou? Knowest thou not yet anything concerning the Resurrection, but dost thou still form fancies about His being laid?” Seest thou how she had not yet received the sublime doctrine?

Ver. 14. “And when she had thus said, she turned herself back.””

He refers to **John 20 (KJV):14** And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

He continues, “And by what kind of consequence is it, that she having spoken to them, and not having yet heard anything from them, turned back? Methinks that while she was speaking, Christ suddenly appearing behind her, struck the Angels with awe; and that they having beheld their Ruler, showed immediately by their bearing, their look, their movements, that they saw the Lord; and this drew the woman’s attention, and caused her to turn herself backwards. To them then He appeared on this wise, but not so to the woman, in order not at the first sight to terrify her, but in a meaner and ordinary form, as is clear from her supposing that He was the gardener. It was meet to lead one of so lowly a mind to high matters, not all at once, but gently. He therefore in turn asketh her,

Ver. 15. “Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?”

He refers to **John 20 (KJV):15** Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

He continues, “This showed that He knew what she wished to ask, and led her to make answer. And the woman, understanding this, doth not again mention the name of Jesus, but as though her questioner knew the subject of her enquiry replies,

“Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.”

Again she speaks of laying down, and taking away, and carrying, as though speaking of a corpse. But her meaning is this; “If ye have borne him hence for fear of the Jews, tell me, and I will take him.” Great is the kindness and loving affection of the woman, but as yet there is nothing lofty with her. Wherefore He now setteth the matter before her, not by appearance, but by Voice. For as He was at one time known to the Jews, and at another time unperceived though present; so too in speaking, He, when He chose, then made Himself known; as also when He said to the Jews, “Whom seek ye?” they knew neither the Countenance nor the Voice until He chose. And this was the case here. And He named her name only, reproaching and blaming her that she entertained such fancies concerning One who lived. But how was it that,

Ver. 16. “She turned herself, and saith,” if so be that He was speaking to her? It seems to me, that after having said, “Where have ye laid him?” she turned to the Angels to ask why they were astonished, and that then Christ, by calling her by name, turned her to Himself from them, and revealed Himself by His Voice; for when He called her “Mary,” then she knew Him; so that

the recognition was not by His appearance, but by His Voice. And if any say, “Whence is it clear that the Angels were awestruck, and that on this account the woman turned herself,” they will in this place say, “whence is it clear that she would have touched Him, and fallen at His feet?” Now as this is clear from His saying, “Touch Me not,” so is the other clear from its saying, that she turned herself. But wherefore, said He,

Ver. 17. “Touch Me not”?”

He refers in context to **John 20 (KJV):16** Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. 17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

He continues, “[2.] Some assert, that she asked for spiritual grace, because she had heard Him when with the disciples say, “If I go to the Father, ‘I will ask Him, and He shall give you another Comforter.” (c. xiv. 3, 16)”

He refers to **John 14 (KJV):3** And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

And to **John 14 (KJV):16** And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

He continues, “But how could she who was not present with the disciples have heard this? Besides, such an imagination is far from the meaning here. And how should she ask, when He had not yet gone to the Father? What then is the sense? Methinks that she wished still to converse with Him as before, and that in her joy she perceived nothing great in Him, although He had become far more excellent in the Flesh. To lead her therefore from this idea, and that she might speak to Him with much awe, (for neither with the disciples doth He henceforth appear so familiar as before,) He raiseth her thoughts, that she should give more reverent heed to Him. To have said, “Approach Me not as ye did before, for matters are not in the same state, nor shall I henceforth be with you in the same way,” would have been harsh and high-sounding; but the saying,

“I am not yet ascended to the Father,” though not painful to hear, was the saying of One declaring the same thing. For by saying, “I am not yet ascended,” He showeth that He hasteth and presseth thither; and that it was not meet that One about to depart thither, and no longer to converse with men, should be looked on with the same feelings as before. And the sequel shows that this is the case.

“Go and say unto the brethren, that I go unto My Father, and your Father, unto My God and your God.”

Yet He was not about to do so immediately, but after forty days.”

He refers in context to **Acts 1 (KJV):1** The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: 3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: 4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Chrysostom here explains his understanding of the ascension, as he says, “Yet He was not about to do so immediately, but after forty days”. But actually, Jesus would not let Mary touch Him because He had not yet ascended into heaven. But that He did so after meeting Mary is evident because, when He appeared to the disciples, He told them to touch Him, as we read in **John 20 (KJV):**26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. 27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. 28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

And in **Luke 24 (KJV):**36 And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. 38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. 40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. 41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? 42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. 43 And he took it, and did eat before them.

Chrysostom continues, “How then saith He this? With a desire to raise their minds, and to persuade them that He departeth into the heavens. But the, “To My Father and your Father, to My God, and your God,” belongs to the Dispensation, since the “ascending” also belongs to His Flesh. For He speaketh these words to one who had no high thoughts. “Is then the Father His in one way, and ours in another?” Assuredly then He is. For if He is God of the righteous in a manner different from that in which He is God of other men, much more in the case of the Son and us. For because He had said, “Say to the brethren,” in order that they might not imagine any equality from this, He showed the difference. He was about to sit on His Father’s throne, but they to stand by. So that albeit in His Subsistence according to the Flesh He became our Brother, yet in Honor He greatly differed from us, it cannot even be told how much.”

And this is explained in **Hebrews 2 (KJV):**14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. 17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

And in **Philippians 2 (KJV):**5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

He continues, “Ver. 18. “She therefore departeth, bearing these tidings to the disciples.”

He refers to **John 20 (KJV):18** Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

He continues, “So great a good is perseverance and endurance. But how was it that they did not any more grieve when He was about to depart, nor speak as they had done before? At that time they were affected in such a way, as supposing that He was about to die; but now that He was risen again, what reason had they to grieve? Moreover, Mary reported His appearance and His words, which were enough to comfort them. Since then it was likely that the disciples on hearing these things would either not believe the woman, or, believing, would grieve that He had not deemed them worthy of the vision, though He promised to meet them in Galilee; in order that they might not by dwelling on this be unsettled, He let not a single day pass, but having brought them to a state of longing, by their knowledge that He was risen, and by what they heard from the woman, when they were thirsting to see Him, and were greatly afraid, (which thing itself especially made their yearning greater,) He then, when it was evening, presented Himself before them, and that very marvelously. And why did He appear in the “evening”? Because it was probable that they would then especially be very fearful. But the marvel was, why they did not suppose Him to be an apparition; for He entered, “when the doors were shut,” and suddenly.”

But we read as in **Luke 24 (KJV):36** And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

Chrysostom continues, “The chief cause was, that the woman beforehand had wrought great faith in them; besides, He showed His countenance to them clear and mild. He came not by day, in order that all might be collected together. For great was the amazement; for neither did He knock at the door but all at once stood in the midst, and showed His side and His hands. At the same time also by His Voice He smoothed their tossing thought, by saying,

Ver. 19. “Peace be unto you.””

He refers to **John 20 (KJV):19** Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

He continues, “That is, “Be not troubled”; at the same time reminding them of the word which He spake to them before the Crucifixion, “My peace I leave unto you” (c. xiv. 27); and again, “In me ye have peace, but” “in the world ye shall have tribulation.” (c. xvi. 33)”

He refers to **John 14 (KJV):27** Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

And to **John 16 (KJV):33** These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

He continues, “Ver. 20. “Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.””

He refers to **John 20 (KJV):20** And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

He continues, “Seest thou the words issuing in deeds? For what He said before the Crucifixion, that “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you” (c. xvi. 22), this He now accomplished in deed;”

He refers to **John 16 (KJV):22** And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.



He continues, “but all these things led them to a most exact faith. For since they had a truceless war with the Jews, He continually repeated the, “Peace be unto you,” giving them, to counterbalance the war, the consolation. And so this was the first word that He spake to them after the Resurrection, (wherefore also Paul continually saith, “Grace be unto you and peace,”) and to women He giveth good tidings of joy, because that sex was in sorrow, and had received this as the first curse. Therefore He giveth good tidings suitable respectively, to men, peace, because of their war; joy to women, because of their sorrow. Then having put away all painful things, He telleth of the successes of the Cross, and these were the “peace.” “Since then all hindrances have been removed,” He saith, “and I have made My victory glorious, and all hath been achieved,” (then He saith afterwards,)

Ver. 21. “As My Father hath sent Me, so send I you.””

He refers to **John 20 (KJV):21** Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

He continues, ““Ye have no difficulty, owing to what hath already come to pass, and to the dignity of Me who send you.” Here He lifteth up their souls, and showeth them their great cause of confidence, if so be that they were about to undertake His work. And no longer is an appeal made to the Father, but with authority He giveth to them the power. For,

Ver. 22, 23. “He breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.””

He refers to **John 20 (KJV):22** And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

He continues, “As a king sending forth governors, gives power to cast into prison and to deliver from it, so in sending these forth, Christ investeth them with the same power. But how saith He, “If I go not away, He will not come” (c. xvi. 7), and yet giveth them the Spirit?”

He refers to **John 16 (KJV):7** Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

He continues, “Some say that He gave not the Spirit, but rendered them fit to receive It, by breathing on them. For if Daniel when he saw an Angel was afraid, what would not they have suffered when they received that unspeakable Gift, unless He had first made them learners? Wherefore He said not, “Ye have received the Holy Ghost,” but, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” Yet one will not be wrong in asserting that they then also received some spiritual power and grace; not so as to raise the dead, or to work miracles, but so as to remit sins. For the gifts of the Spirit are of different kinds; wherefore He added, “Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them,” showing what kind of power He was giving.”

He refers again to **John 20 (KJV):22** And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

When Jesus breathed on them He was assuring them that the Holy Spirit would come as He had promised them. Yet they had the Holy Spirit in them already because they had believed in Jesus and had been born again. But the Holy Spirit would fill them and empower them when they were baptized with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, as we read in **Luke 24 (KJV):49** And,

behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

The enduing “with power from on high” was for the impartation of spiritual gifts, as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):**1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And Jesus also taught as in **John 14 (KJV):**12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

Chrysostom continues, “But in the other case, after forty days, they received the power of working miracles. Wherefore He saith, “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa.” (Acts i. 8)”

He refers to **Acts 1 (KJV):**8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, which was fifty days after His resurrection as we shall see.

He continues, “And witnesses they became by means of miracles, for unspeakable is the grace of the Spirit and multiform the gift. But this comes to pass, that thou mayest learn that the gift and the power of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is One. For things which appear to be peculiar to the Father, these are seen also to belong to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. “How then,” saith some one, “doth none come to the Son, ‘except the Father draw him’?” (c. vi. 44)”

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):**44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

He continues, “Why, this very thing is shown to belong to the Son also. “I,” He saith, “am the Way: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.” (c. xiv. 6)”

He refers to **John 14 (KJV):**6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

He continues, “And observe that it belongeth to the Spirit also; for “No man can call Jesus Christ Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” (1 Cor. xii. 3)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

He continues, “Again, we see that the Apostles were given to the Church at one time by the Father, at another by the Son, at another by the Holy Ghost, and that the “diversities of gifts” (1 Cor. xii. 4) belong to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

He continues, “[4.] Let us then do all we can to have the Holy Spirit with ourselves, and let us treat with much honor those into whose hands its operation hath been committed. For

great is the dignity of the priests. “Whosoever sins,” it saith, “ye remit, they are remitted unto them”; wherefore also Paul saith, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves.” (Heb. xiii. 17)”

He refers to **Hebrews 13 (KJV):17** Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

So Chrysostom thought that the Holy Spirit’s “operation hath been committed” into the hands of the priests. “For great is the dignity of the priests”, who remit sins. But Chrysostom did not understand that there is no basis for a priestly ministry in the Church. God has set all believers in the body of Christ where it pleased Him, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

All the members of the body have a function that is unique according to their place in the body, as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):4** For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Chrysostom continues, “And hold them very exceedingly in honor; for thou indeed carest about thine own affairs, and if thou orderest them well, thou givest no account for others, but the priest even if he rightly order his own life, if he have not an anxious care for thine, yea and that of all those around him, will depart with the wicked into hell; and often when not betrayed by his own conduct, he perishes by yours, if he have not rightly performed all his part. Knowing therefore the greatness of the danger, give them a large share of your goodwill; which Paul also implied when he said, “For they watch for your souls,” and not simply so, but, “as they that shall give account.” (Heb. xiii. 17)”

He refers again to **Hebrews 13 (KJV):17** Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

Chrysostom here places great responsibility on the priests in his time, as he says, “if he have not an anxious care for thine, yea and that of all those around him”, he “will depart with the wicked into hell”. There is no grounds for such an assertion in the Scriptures, for we are all saved by our faith in Jesus Christ, and not by our works, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

It is interesting that Chrysostom quotes from Hebrews, yet he did not seem to realize that in Hebrews we read that there has been a change in the priesthood, as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):11** If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of

Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

The Levitical priesthood was restricted to the sons of Aaron. The other Levites were required to serve the needs of the priest, such as setting up the tabernacle and anything else the priests needed. Only the sons of Aaron could offer sacrifice. Crysostom and the Church in his time did not seem to realize that the change in the priesthood was made from the Levitical to the “order of Melchisedec”. This is further explained in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):**15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. 18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. 19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. 20 And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: 21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) 22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. 23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

Jesus has an “unchangeable priesthood” because He “continueth ever”. We continue in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):**25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26 For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

So why did Chrysostom call the ministers in the Church priests since the only other priesthood mentioned in the Scriptures is that of Melchisedec? We will talk more about this as we progress through his writings.

He continues, “They ought therefore to receive great attention from you; but if you join with the rest in trampling upon them, then neither shall your affairs be in a good condition. For while the steersman continues in good courage, the crew also will be in safety; but if he be tired out by their reviling him and showing ill will against him, he cannot watch equally well, or retain his skill, and without intending it, throws them into ten thousand mischiefs. And so too the priest, if he enjoy honor from you, will be able well to order your affairs; but if ye throw them into despondency, ye weaken their hands, and render them, as well as yourselves, an easy prey to the waves, although they be very courageous. Consider what Christ saith concerning the Jews. “The Scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you to do, do ye.” (Matt. xxiii. 2, 3)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 23 (KJV):**2 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, 2 Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: 3 All therefore

whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

He continues, “Now we have not to say, “the priests sit on Moses’ seat,” but “on that of Christ”; for they have successively received His doctrine. Wherefore also Paul saith, “We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us.” (2 Cor. v. 20)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):20** Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

However, Paul never referred to himself as a priest.

Chrysostom continues, “See ye not that in the case of Gentile rulers, all bow to them, and oftentimes even persons superior in family, in life, in intelligence, to those who judge them? Yet still because of him who hath given them, they consider none of these things, but respect the decision of their governor, whosoever he be that receives the rule over them. Is there then such fear when man appoints, but when God appointeth do we despise him who is appointed, and abuse him, and besmirch him with ten thousand reproaches, and though forbidden to judge our brethren, do we sharpen our tongue against our priests?”

Where in the Scriptures does it say that God appointed his ministers as priests in the New Testament? The answer is that there is no support in the New Testament for a ministry of priests as we shall see in due time.

He continues, “And how can this deserve excuse, when we see not the beam in our own eye, but are bitterly overcurious about the mote in another’s? Knowest thou not that by so judging thou makest thine own judgment the harder? And this I say not as approving of those who exercise their priesthood unworthily, but as greatly pitying and weeping for them; yet do I not on this account allow that it is right that they should be judged by those over whom they are set. And although their life be very much spoken against, thou, if thou take heed to thyself, wilt not be harmed at all in respect of the things committed to them by God. For if He caused a voice to be uttered by an ass, and bestowed spiritual blessings by a diviner, working by the foolish mouth and impure tongue of Balaam, in behalf of the offending Jews, much more for the sake of you the right-minded will He, though the priests be exceedingly vile, work all the things that are His, and will send the Holy Ghost. For neither doth the pure draw down that Spirit by his own purity, but it is grace that worketh all. “For all,” it saith, “is for your sake, whether it be Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas.” (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):21** Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are your's; 22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's; 23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

He continues, “For the things which are placed in the hands of the priest it is with God alone to give; and however far human wisdom may reach, it will appear inferior to that grace. And this I say, not in order that we may order our own life carelessly, but that when some of those set over you are careless livers, you the ruled may not often heap up evil for yourselves. But why speak I of priests? Neither Angel nor Archangel can do anything with regard to what is given from God; but the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, dispenseth all, while the priest lends his tongue and affords his hand. For neither would it be just that through the wickedness of another, those who come in faith to the symbols of their salvation should be harmed. Knowing all these things, let us fear God, and hold His priests in honor, paying them all reverence; that both for our own good deeds, and the attention shown to them, we may receive a

great return from God, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory, dominion, and honor, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.”

However, Chrysostom did not understand that his thinking was based on tradition. We read as in **1 Timothy 5 (Douay Rheims)**: 17 Let the priests that rule well be esteemed worthy of double honour: especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 18 For the scripture saith: Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn: and, The labourer is worthy of his reward. 19 Against a priest receive not an accusation, but under two or three witnesses. 20 Them that sin reprove before all that the rest also may have fear.

But we read in **1 Timothy 5 (KJV)**: 17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 18 For the scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward. 19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. 20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

The Douay Rheims version of the Bible was a translation of the Latin Vulgate into English. But the actual Latin word translated as priest in the Latin Vulgate is **presbyteri** in verse 17 and **presbyterum** in verse 19. This corresponds to the **King James Version** which translates the Greek word **πρεσβύτερος** (pronounced pres-bü'-te-ros) as elders in verse 17 and verse 19. The English definition of this Greek word is “comparative of **πρέσβυς** présbys (elderly); older; as noun, a senior; specially, an Israelite Sanhedrist (also figuratively, member of the celestial council) or Christian "presbyter":—elder(-est), old.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4245** So “elders” is a good English translation. But it in no way corresponds to “priests”.

Why did the **Roman Catholic Church** translate it this way in 1582, when it was first published in Rheims, France? The reason is because it was assumed to be the order of ministry in the Church dating back even to Irenaeus who wrote **Adversus Heresies** from 177 to 202 AD. The **Roman Catholic Church** has corrected this as we read in **1 Timothy 5 (New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (NRSVCE))**: 17 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; 18 for the scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves to be paid.” 19 Never accept any accusation against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

But the correction was not made until Vatican II ended on December 8, 1965. I was twelve years old at the time, and going to a Catholic school, St. Martin of Tours, in Brentwood, California. My mother was Catholic and had placed me in this school from the second grade through the eighth grade when I graduated. In about the third grade we had to cover our books with grocery bags back then. We actually had a Bible as one of our books, but we never read it or used it. One day one of the students in my class asked why we had to cover this book because we never read it. The next day the nun who was teaching had us get the Bible out and we started reading in Genesis. I always remember when I put that Bible back in my desk that I felt something. I did not know what that feeling was. I only knew that I did not feel anything with any of the other books in my desk.

We got through Genesis, and about half way through Exodus and the ten commandments, when we stopped reading the Bible. But I have always remembered this time. I also remember

having a question about where the Bible spoke of priests. I decided to see if I could find anything about it in the Bible in the Church where I went to Mass. The Bible in the Church at that time was the **Douay Rheims** version. I happened one day to turn to 1 Timothy 4:14 which read as in **1 Timothy 4 (Douay Rheims):14** Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with imposition of the hands of the priesthood.

I then turned to 1 Timothy 5 to see if there were any more references to priests and I found 1 Timothy 5:17-19. I was convinced that priests were referred to in the New Testament. However, when Vatican II ended, and I came to church one morning, all the Bibles were gone from the pews. I wondered what had happened. Then, a couple of months later, new Bibles were in the pews. I quickly turned to 1 Timothy 4 just to check. The Bible had changed the word from priesthood to elders. I was shocked because I knew the words were very different. I promised myself then that I would check this out further when I got older. That did not happen until I was twenty when I came to know the truth about Jesus, and about salvation, for I read in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Chrysostom believed in Jesus, but he held, unknowingly, to many of the traditions of his time.

## Commentary Summary

Concerning **The Divinity of the Son**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY IV, page 16-19**, he says, “For this, as I before said, he has shown by the term “Word.” As therefore the expression, “In the beginning was the Word,” shows His Eternity, so “was in the beginning with God,” has declared to us His Co-eternity. For that you may not, when you hear “In the beginning was the Word,” suppose Him to be Eternal, and yet imagine the life of the Father to differ from His by some interval and longer duration, and so assign a beginning to the Only-Begotten, he adds, “was in the beginning with God”; so eternally even as the Father Himself, for the Father was never without the Word, but He was always God with God, yet Each in His proper Person.”

According to Chrysostom, the Son is Co-eternal with the Father, and this is according to Scripture. And he argues well as he says, “Still I should like to ask our objectors, what means that which is said by the Prophet, “Before Me there was no God formed, nor is there any after Me”? (Is. xliiii. 10) For if the Son is younger than the Father, how, says He, “Nor is there any after me”? Will you take away the being of the Only Begotten Himself? You either must dare this, or admit one Godhead with distinct Persons of the Father and Son.”

John Chrysostom has presented the Biblical truth of the divinity of the Son of God clearly, and this he has done in spite of the many errors that were circulating in his time. He has defended the faith.

Concerning **Jesus**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, EUTROPIUS, PATRICIAN AND CONSUL, Homily II, After Eutropius having been found**

**outside the Church had been taken captive, page 256-257**, Chrysostom acknowledged that He “was called the Way, the Door, the Rock”. He understood that He is our foundation. And he asks, “Wherefore was He called the Life? Because He raised us up when we were dead.”

And he says, “Wherefore was He called the Rock? that thou mightest understand the secure and unshaken character of the faith.”

And he says, “Wherefore was He called the Foundation? That thou mightest understand that He upholdeth all things.”

And he says, “Wherefore was He called the Root? That thou mightest understand that in Him we have our power of growth.”

And he says, “Wherefore was He called the Shepherd? Because He feeds us. Wherefore was He called a sheep? Because He was sacrificed for us and became a propitiatory offering.”

And he says, “Wherefore was He called the Life? Because He raised us up when we were dead.”

And he says, “Wherefore was He called the Light? Because He delivered us from darkness.”

And he says, “Why was He called an Arm? Because He is of one substance with the Father.”

And he says, “Why was He called the Word? Because He was begotten of the Father. For as my word is the offspring of my spirit, even so was the Son begotten of the Father. Wherefore is He called our raiment? Because I was clothed with Him when I was baptized.”

And he says, “Wherefore is He called the Head? Because I have been made a member of His.”

And he says, “Why is He called a Bridegroom? Because He hath taken me as His bride.” Wherefore is He called undefiled? Because He took me as a virgin. Wherefore is He called Master? Because I am His bondmaid.”

John Chrysostom was a believer, and he is with the Lord now.

Concerning **Christ’s Age**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LV, page 198-199**, he says, ““My day,” seems to me to mean the day of the Crucifixion, which Abraham foreshowed typically by the offering of the ram and of Isaac. What do they reply?

Ver. 57. “Thou art not yet forty (fifty in John 8:57) years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?”

So that we conclude that Christ was nearly forty.”

But Jesus began His ministry about the age of 30, and ministered about 3½ years. The limitation of Pilate’s reign makes it impossible for Jesus to have lived past 36 A.D. The fact that Herod the Great died in 4 B.C. means that Jesus was born sometime before 4 B.C., since Herod the Great tried to kill all the infants 2 years old and younger when the Magi did not return.

This means that Jesus must have been crucified about 30 A.D. or before.

Concerning **The Lamb, the Christ, the Prophet**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XVIII, page 62-64**, Chrysostom quotes



John the Baptist in **John 1 (KJV):29** The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Chrysostom testifies that the Lamb would take away the sin of the world. He concludes, “As then The Word shows us His pre-eminence, and The Son His superiority in comparison with others, so “The Lamb, The Christ, that Prophet, the True Light, the Good Shepherd,” and whatever other names are applied to Him with the addition of the article, mark a great difference. For there were many “Lambs,” and “Prophets,” and “Christs,” and “sons,” but from all these John separates Him by a wide interval.”

Concerning **His Resurrection and Ascension**, in **His Resurrection and Ascension**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXXXVI, page 323-327**, Chrysostom held that Christ was resurrected bodily, and that Christ ascended to heaven after forty days, which He did. But Chrysostom also held that it was then that the Holy Spirit would give the disciples “the power of working miracles”, as he says, ““But in the other case, after forty days, they received the power of working miracles. Wherefore He saith, “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa.” (Acts i. 8)”

Chrysostom also did not understand that Christ had to ascend into heaven before the disciples could touch Him. Christ had to first redeem us, as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):11** But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

And in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):24** For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

So Christ entered into the holy place, that is heaven itself, by His own blood to obtain eternal redemption for us. Then He returned to earth to show Himself alive to His disciples for forty days, as we read in **Acts 1 (KJV):1** The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: 3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: 4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Then He ascended into heaven, as we read in **Acts 1 (KJV):9** And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into

heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Then ten days later, the Holy Spirit came upon them, as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV)**:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

## The Priesthood

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, On the Priesthood, Book III, page 46-49**

4. For the priestly office is indeed discharged on earth, but it ranks amongst heavenly ordinances; and very naturally so: for neither man, nor angel, nor archangel, nor any other created power, but the Paraclete Himself, instituted this vocation, and persuaded men while still abiding in the flesh to represent the ministry of angels. Wherefore the consecrated priest ought to be as pure as if he were standing in the heavens themselves in the midst of those powers. Fearful, indeed, and of most awful import, were the things which were used before the dispensation of grace, as the bells, the pomegranates, the stones on the breastplate and on the ephod, the girdle, the mitre, the long robe, the plate of gold, the holy of holies, the deep silence within. (Exodus 28:4) But if any one should examine the things which belong to the dispensation of grace, he will find that, small as they are, yet are they fearful and full of awe, and that what was spoken concerning the law is true in this case also, that “what has been made glorious hath no glory in this respect by reason of the glory which excelleth.” (2 Corinthians 3:10) For when thou seest the Lord sacrificed, and laid upon the altar, (**Schaff Note:** The Holy Eucharist is frequently called by St. Chrysostom and other Greek Fathers the Sacrifice, sometimes the “unbloody Sacrifice,” partly as being an offering of praise and thanksgiving, partly as being a commemoration or representation of the sacrifice of Christ. We must bear in mind that no controversy had then arisen about this Sacrament, and that writers could freely use expressions which in later times would have been liable to objection or misconstruction. The passage before us must be read in the light of other passages in Chrysostom’s works; but one of these is sufficient to indicate the sense in which it is to be understood. In Homily xvii. c. 3. on the Epistle to the Hebrews, after contrasting the many and ineffectual sacrifices of the Jews with the one perfect and efficient sacrifice of Christ, he proceeds, “What then? do we not make an offering every day? We do, certainly, but by making a memorial of His death; and this memorial is one, not many. How one, not many? Because the sacrifice was offered once for all, as that great sacrifice was in the Holy of Holies. This is a figure of that great sacrifice, as that was of this: for we do not offer one victim today and another to-morrow, but always the same: wherefore the sacrifice is one. Well, then, as He is offered in many places, are there many Christs? No, by no means, but everywhere one Christ, complete both in this world and in the other, one body. As then, though offered in many places, He is but one body, so is there but one sacrifice. Our High Priest is He who offers the sacrifice which cleanses us. We offer that now which was offered then: which is indeed unconsumable. This takes place now, for a memorial of what took place then. ‘Do this,’ said He, ‘for my memorial.’ We do not then offer a different sacrifice, as the high priest formerly did, but always the same; or rather we celebrate a memorial of a sacrifice.”)

Chrysostom continues, “and the priest standing and praying over the victim, and all the worshippers empurpled with that precious blood, (**Schaff Note:** This may be only a rhetorical expression, but perhaps there is an allusion to a custom which prevailed in some churches, that the worshippers after receiving the cup applied the finger to the moistened lip, and then touched their breast, eyes and ears.) canst thou then think that thou art still amongst men, and standing

upon the earth? Art thou not, on the contrary, straightway translated to Heaven, and casting out every carnal thought from the soul, dost thou not with disembodied spirit and pure reason contemplate the things which are in Heaven? Oh! what a marvel! what love of God to man! He who sitteth on high with the Father is at that hour held in the hands of all, (**Schaff Note:** The caution mentioned just now in note 3 must be repeated here. A comparison of passages in the writings of Chrysostom and his contemporaries proves clearly enough that they did not hold that the elements of bread and wine were transmuted into the body and blood of Christ in such a sense as to cease to be bread and wine. The authenticity of the letter of Chrysostom to Cæsarius is doubtful, but whoever the writer may have been, he is clearly representing the current orthodox belief of the Church in his day. He maintains, in opposition to the Apollinarian or perhaps the Eutychian heresy, that there are two complete natures in the one person of God the Son Incarnate, and illustrates it by the following reference to the holy elements in the Eucharist: “Just as the bread before consecration is called bread, but when the Divine Grace sanctifies it through the agency of the priest it is released from the appellation of bread, and is deemed worthy of the appellation of the ‘Lord’s Body,’ *although the nature of bread remains in it*, and we speak not of two bodies, but one body of the Son: so here the Divine nature being seated in the human body, the two together make up but one Son—one Person.”)”

Chrysostom continues, “and gives Himself to those who are willing to embrace and grasp Him. And this all do through the eyes of faith. Do these things seem to you fit to be despised, or such as to make it possible for any one to be uplifted against them?”

Would you also learn from another miracle the exceeding sanctity of this office? Picture Elijah and the vast multitude standing around him, and the sacrifice laid upon the altar of stones, and all the rest of the people hushed into a deep silence while the prophet alone offers up prayer: then the sudden rush of fire from Heaven upon the sacrifice:—these are marvellous things, charged with terror. Now then pass from this scene to the rites which are celebrated in the present day; they are not only marvellous to behold, but transcendent in terror. There stands the priest, not bringing down fire from Heaven, but the Holy Spirit: and he makes prolonged supplication, (**Schaff Note:** In the Liturgy which bears the name of St. Chrysostom, the following invocation of the Holy Spirit occurs: “Grant that we may find grace in thy sight that our sacrifice may become acceptable to Thee, and that the Good Spirit of thy grace may rest upon us, and upon these gifts spread before Thee, and upon all Thy people,” and presently the deacon bids the people, “Let us pray on behalf of the precious gifts (*i.e.*, the bread and wine) which have been provided, that the merciful God who has received them upon His holy spiritual altar beyond the heavens may in return send down upon us the divine grace and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost.”)”

Chrysostom continues, “not that some flame sent down from on high may consume the offerings, but that grace descending on the sacrifice may thereby enlighten the souls of all, and render them more refulgent than silver purified by fire. Who can despise this most awful mystery, unless he is stark mad and senseless? Or do you not know that no human soul could have endured that fire in the sacrifice, but all would have been utterly consumed, had not the assistance of God’s grace been great.

5. For if any one will consider how great a thing it is for one, being a man, and compassed with flesh and blood, to be enabled to draw nigh to that blessed and pure nature, he will then clearly see what great honor the grace of the Spirit has vouchsafed to priests; since by

their agency these rites are celebrated, and others nowise inferior to these both in respect of our dignity and our salvation. For they who inhabit the earth and make their abode there are entrusted with the administration of things which are in Heaven, and have received an authority which God has not given to angels or archangels. For it has not been said to them, “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.” (Matthew 18:18) They who rule on earth have indeed authority to bind, but only the body: whereas this binding lays hold of the soul and penetrates the heavens; and what priests do here below God ratifies above, and the Master confirms the sentence of his servants. For indeed what is it but all manner of heavenly authority which He has given them when He says, “Whose sins ye remit they are remitted, and whose sins ye retain they are retained?” (John 20:23) What authority could be greater than this? “The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son?” (John 5:22) But I see it all put into the hands of these men by the Son. For they have been conducted to this dignity as if they were already translated to Heaven, and had transcended human nature, and were released from the passions to which we are liable. Moreover, if a king should bestow this honor upon any of his subjects, authorizing him to cast into prison whom he pleased and to release them again, he becomes an object of envy and respect to all men; but he who has received from God an authority as much greater as heaven is more precious than earth, and souls more precious than bodies, seems to some to have received so small an honor that they are actually able to imagine that one of those who have been entrusted with these things will despise the gift. Away with such madness! For transparent madness it is to despise so great a dignity, without which it is not possible to obtain either our own salvation, or the good things which have been promised to us. For if no one can enter into the kingdom of Heaven except he be regenerate through water and the Spirit, and he who does not eat the flesh of the Lord and drink His blood is excluded from eternal life, and if all these things are accomplished only by means of those holy hands, I mean the hands of the priest, how will any one, without these, be able to escape the fire of hell, or to win those crowns which are reserved for the victorious?

6. These verily are they who are entrusted with the pangs of spiritual travail and the birth which comes through baptism: by their means we put on Christ, and are buried with the Son of God, and become members of that blessed Head. Wherefore they might not only be more justly feared by us than rulers and kings, but also be more honored than parents; since these begat us of blood and the will of the flesh, but the others are the authors of our birth from God, even that blessed regeneration which is the true freedom and the sonship according to grace. The Jewish priests had authority to release the body from leprosy, or, rather, not to release it but only to examine those who were already released, and you know how much the office of priest was contended for at that time. But our priests have received authority to deal, not with bodily leprosy, but spiritual uncleanness—not to pronounce it removed after examination, but actually and absolutely to take it away. Wherefore they who despise these priests would be far more accursed than Dathan and his company, and deserve more severe punishment. For the latter, although they laid claim to the dignity which did not belong to them, nevertheless had an excellent opinion concerning it, and this they evinced by the great eagerness with which they pursued it; but these men, when the office has been better regulated, and has received so great a development, have displayed an audacity which exceeds that of the others, although manifested in a contrary way. For there is not an equal amount of contempt involved in aiming at an honor which does not pertain to one, and in despising such great advantages, but the latter exceeds the

former as much as scorn differs from admiration. What soul then is so sordid as to despise such great advantages? None whatever, I should say, unless it were one subject to some demoniacal impulse. For I return once more to the point from which I started: not in the way of chastising only, but also in the way of benefiting, God has bestowed a power on priests greater than that of our natural parents. The two indeed differ as much as the present and the future life. For our natural parents generate us unto this life only, but the others unto that which is to come. And the former would not be able to avert death from their offspring, or to repel the assaults of disease; but these others have often saved a sick soul, or one which was on the point of perishing, procuring for some a milder chastisement, and preventing others from falling altogether, not only by instruction and admonition, but also by the assistance wrought through prayers. For not only at the time of regeneration, but afterwards also, they have authority to forgive sins. "Is any sick among you?" it is said, "let him call for the elders of the Church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up: and if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him." (James 5:14-15) Again: our natural parents, should their children come into conflict with any men of high rank and great power in the world, are unable to profit them: but priests have reconciled, not rulers and kings, but God Himself when His wrath has often been provoked against them.

Well! after this will any one venture to condemn me for arrogance? For my part, after what has been said, I imagine such religious fear will possess the souls of the hearers that they will no longer condemn those who avoid the office for arrogance and temerity, but rather those who voluntarily come forward and are eager to obtain this dignity for themselves. For if they who have been entrusted with the command of cities, should they chance to be wanting in discretion and vigilance, have sometimes destroyed the cities and ruined themselves in addition, how much power think you both in himself and from above must he need, to avoid sinning, whose business it is to beautify the Bride of Christ?

7. No man loved Christ more than Paul: no man exhibited greater zeal, no man was counted worthy of more grace: nevertheless, after all these great advantages, he still has fears and tremblings concerning this government and those who were governed by him. "I fear," he says, "lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ." (2 Corinthians 11:3) And again, "I was with you in fear and in much trembling;" (1 Corinthians 2:3) and this was a man who had been caught up to the third Heaven, and made partaker of the unspeakable mysteries of God, (2 Corinthians 12:4) and had endured as many deaths as he had lived days after he became a believer—a man, moreover, who would not use the authority given him from Christ lest any of his converts should be offended. (2 Corinthians 11:9, 1 Thessalonians 2:9) If, then, he who went beyond the ordinances of God, and nowhere sought his own advantage, but that of those whom he governed, was always so full of fear when he considered the greatness of his government, what shall our condition be who in many ways seek our own, who not only fail to go beyond the commandments of Christ, but for the most part transgress them? "Who is weak," he says, "and I am not weak? who is offended and I burn not?" (2 Corinthians 11:29) Such an one ought the priest to be, or, rather, not such only: for these are small things, and as nothing compared with what I am about to say. And what is this? "I could wish," he says, "that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." (Romans 9:3) If any one can

utter such a speech, if any one has the soul which attains to such a prayer, he might justly be blamed if he took to flight: but if any one should lack such excellence as much as I do, he would deserve to be hated, not if he avoided the office, but if he accepted it. For if an election to a military dignity was the business in hand, and they who had the right of conferring the honor were to drag forward a brazier, or a shoemaker, or some such artisan, and entrust the army to his hands, I should not praise the wretched man if he did not take to flight, and do all in his power to avoid plunging into such manifest trouble. If, indeed, it be sufficient to bear the name of pastor, and to take the work in hand haphazard, and there be no danger in this, then let whoso pleases accuse me of vainglory; but if it behooves one who undertakes this care to have much understanding, and, before understanding, great grace from God, and uprightness of conduct, and purity of life and superhuman virtue, do not deprive me of forgiveness if I am unwilling to perish in vain without a cause.

Moreover, if any one in charge of a full-sized merchant ship, full of rowers, and laden with a costly freight, were to station me at the helm and bid me cross the Ægean or the Tyrrhene sea, I should recoil from the proposal at once: and if any one asked me why? I should say, “Lest I should sink the ship.” Well, where the loss concerns material wealth, and the danger extends only to bodily death, no one will blame those who exercise great prudence; but where the shipwrecked are destined to fall, not into the ocean, but into the abyss of fire, and the death which awaits them is not that which severs the soul from the body, but one which together with this dismisses it to eternal punishment, shall I incur your wrath and hate because I did not plunge headlong into so great an evil?

**Commentary:** Chrysostom begins, as he says, “4. For the priestly office is indeed discharged on earth, but it ranks amongst heavenly ordinances; and very naturally so: for neither man, nor angel, nor archangel, nor any other created power, but the Paraclete Himself, instituted this vocation, and persuaded men while still abiding in the flesh to represent the ministry of angels. Wherefore the consecrated priest ought to be as pure as if he were standing in the heavens themselves in the midst of those powers. Fearful, indeed, and of most awful import, were the things which were used before the dispensation of grace, as the bells, the pomegranates, the stones on the breastplate and on the ephod, the girdle, the mitre, the long robe, the plate of gold, the holy of holies, the deep silence within. (Exodus 28:4)”

He refers to **Exodus 28 (KJV):4** And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a brodered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

And to **Exodus 26 (NASB):33** You shall hang up the veil under the clasps, and shall bring in the ark of the testimony there within the veil; and the veil shall serve for you as a partition between the holy place and the holy of holies.

And to **Exodus 28 (KJV):15** And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. 16 Foursquare it shall be being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof. 17 And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row. 18 And the second row shall be an emerald, a

sapphire, and a diamond. 19 And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. 20 And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their inclosings. 21 And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes.

But what was fearful was when fire came out from the Lord as we read in **Leviticus 9 (KJV):**24 And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.

And in **2 Chronicles 7 (KJV):**1 Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house.

He continues, “But if any one should examine the things which belong to the dispensation of grace, he will find that, small as they are, yet are they fearful and full of awe, and that what was spoken concerning the law is true in this case also, that “what has been made glorious hath no glory in this respect by reason of the glory which excelleth.” (2 Corinthians 3:10)”

He refers in context to **2 Corinthians 3 (KJV):**5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; 6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. 7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: 8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? 9 For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. 10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. 11 For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

He continues, “For when thou seest the Lord sacrificed, and laid upon the altar, (**Schaff Note:** The Holy Eucharist is frequently called by St. Chrysostom and other Greek Fathers the Sacrifice, sometimes the “unbloody Sacrifice,” partly as being an offering of praise and thanksgiving, partly as being a commemoration or representation of the sacrifice of Christ. We must bear in mind that no controversy had then arisen about this Sacrament, and that writers could freely use expressions which in later times would have been liable to objection or misconstruction. The passage before us must be read in the light of other passages in Chrysostom’s works; but one of these is sufficient to indicate the sense in which it is to be understood. In Homily xvii. c. 3. on the Epistle to the Hebrews, after contrasting the many and ineffectual sacrifices of the Jews with the one perfect and efficient sacrifice of Christ, he proceeds, “What then? do we not make an offering every day? We do, certainly, but by making a memorial of His death; and this memorial is one, not many. How one, not many? Because the sacrifice was offered once for all, as that great sacrifice was in the Holy of Holies. This is a figure of that great sacrifice, as that was of this: for we do not offer one victim today and another tomorrow, but always the same: wherefore the sacrifice is one. Well, then, as He is offered in many places, are there many Christs? No, by no means, but everywhere one Christ, complete both in this world and in the other, one body. As then, though offered in many places, He is but one body, so is there but one sacrifice. Our High Priest is He who offers the sacrifice



which cleanses us. We offer that now which was offered then: which is indeed unconsumable. This takes place now, for a memorial of what took place then. ‘Do this,’ said He, ‘for my memorial.’ We do not then offer a different sacrifice, as the high priest formerly did, but always the same; or rather we celebrate a memorial of a sacrifice.”)

Chrysostom continues, “and the priest standing and praying over the victim, and all the worshippers empurpled with that precious blood, (**Schaff Note:** This may be only a rhetorical expression, but perhaps there is an allusion to a custom which prevailed in some churches, that the worshippers after receiving the cup applied the finger to the moistened lip, and then touched their breast, eyes and ears.) canst thou then think that thou art still amongst men, and standing upon the earth? Art thou not, on the contrary, straightway translated to Heaven, and casting out every carnal thought from the soul, dost thou not with disembodied spirit and pure reason contemplate the things which are in Heaven? Oh! what a marvel! what love of God to man! He who sitteth on high with the Father is at that hour held in the hands of all, (**Schaff Note:** The caution mentioned just now in note 3 must be repeated here. A comparison of passages in the writings of Chrysostom and his contemporaries proves clearly enough that they did not hold that the elements of bread and wine were transmuted into the body and blood of Christ in such a sense as to cease to be bread and wine. The authenticity of the letter of Chrysostom to Cæsarius is doubtful, but whoever the writer may have been, he is clearly representing the current orthodox belief of the Church in his day. He maintains, in opposition to the Apollinarian or perhaps the Eutychian heresy, that there are two complete natures in the one person of God the Son Incarnate, and illustrates it by the following reference to the holy elements in the Eucharist: “Just as the bread before consecration is called bread, but when the Divine Grace sanctifies it through the agency of the priest it is released from the appellation of bread, and is deemed worthy of the appellation of the ‘Lord’s Body,’ *although the nature of bread remains in it*, and we speak not of two bodies, but one body of the Son: so here the Divine nature being seated in the human body, the two together make up but one Son—one Person.”)

Chrysostom continues, “and gives Himself to those who are willing to embrace and grasp Him. And this all do through the eyes of faith. Do these things seem to you fit to be despised, or such as to make it possible for any one to be uplifted against them?”

Although Chrysostom understands that “the sacrifice is one”, and that they “celebrate a memorial of a sacrifice”, he still says, “For when thou seest the Lord sacrificed, and laid upon the altar”, and uses words like “offered” and “sacrifice” together. He does not seem to understand that the offering of Jesus Christ on the cross was once offered for all time, as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):27** Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

And in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):28** So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

And in **Hebrew 10 (KJV):10** By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Though Chrysostom says, “We do not then offer a different sacrifice, as the high priest

formerly did, but always the same; or rather we celebrate a memorial of a sacrifice”, the presence of an altar and a priest, and the word “offer”, make it difficult to understand their ritual as simply “a memorial of a sacrifice”.

Chrysostom continues, “Would you also learn from another miracle the exceeding sanctity of this office? Picture Elijah and the vast multitude standing around him, and the sacrifice laid upon the altar of stones, and all the rest of the people hushed into a deep silence while the prophet alone offers up prayer: then the sudden rush of fire from Heaven upon the sacrifice:—these are marvellous things, charged with terror. Now then pass from this scene to the rites which are celebrated in the present day; they are not only marvellous to behold, but transcendent in terror. There stands the priest, not bringing down fire from Heaven, but the Holy Spirit: and he makes prolonged supplication, (**Schaff Note:** In the Liturgy which bears the name of St. Chrysostom, the following invocation of the Holy Spirit occurs: “Grant that we may find grace in thy sight that our sacrifice may become acceptable to Thee, and that the Good Spirit of thy grace may rest upon us, and upon these gifts spread before Thee, and upon all Thy people,” and presently the deacon bids the people, “Let us pray on behalf of the precious gifts (*i.e.*, the bread and wine) which have been provided, that the merciful God who has received them upon His holy spiritual altar beyond the heavens may in return send down upon us the divine grace and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost.”)”

In this very “Liturgy which bears the name of St. Chrysostom”, he does not mention memorial but sacrifice as he says, “Grant that we may find grace in thy sight that our sacrifice may become acceptable to Thee...” So we are left to believe that it is a sacrifice.

Chrysostom continues, “not that some flame sent down from on high may consume the offerings, but that grace descending on the sacrifice may thereby enlighten the souls of all, and render them more refulgent than silver purified by fire. Who can despise this most awful mystery, unless he is stark mad and senseless? Or do you not know that no human soul could have endured that fire in the sacrifice, but all would have been utterly consumed, had not the assistance of God’s grace been great.”

Again, in that Chrysostom says the priest “makes prolonged supplication...that grace descending on the sacrifice may thereby enlighten the souls of all...”, he adds something to the ritual which is not supported in the Scriptures. It is never called a sacrifice but only the remembrance of a sacrifice. Nothing is mentioned about “grace descending on the sacrifice”. While we can agree with Schaff that “they did not hold that the elements of bread and wine were transmuted into the body and blood of Christ in such a sense as to cease to be bread and wine”, yet the way they celebrate this memorial makes it a ritual that is more than just a remembrance.

Chrysostom continues, “5. For if any one will consider how great a thing it is for one, being a man, and compassed with flesh and blood, to be enabled to draw nigh to that blessed and pure nature, he will then clearly see what great honor the grace of the Spirit has vouchsafed to priests; since by their agency these rites are celebrated, and others nowise inferior to these both in respect of our dignity and our salvation. For they who inhabit the earth and make their abode there are entrusted with the administration of things which are in Heaven, and have received an authority which God has not given to angels or archangels. For it has not been said to them, “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.” (Matthew 18:18)”

He refers to **Matthew 18 (KJV):18** Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

We note here that Jesus was speaking to His disciples as we read in **Matthew 18 (KJV):1** At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

There is no mention of priests here.

Chrysostom continues, “They who rule on earth have indeed authority to bind, but only the body: whereas this binding lays hold of the soul and penetrates the heavens; and what priests do here below God ratifies above, and the Master confirms the sentence of his servants. For indeed what is it but all manner of heavenly authority which He has given them when He says, “Whose sins ye remit they are remitted, and whose sins ye retain they are retained? (John 20:23)”

He refers to **John 20 (KJV):23** Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

He continues, “What authority could be greater than this? “The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son?” (John 5:22)”

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):22** For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

But God alone forgives sins, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

He continues, as he then asserts, “But I see it all put into the hands of these men by the Son. For they have been conducted to this dignity as if they were already translated to Heaven, and had transcended human nature, and were released from the passions to which we are liable.”

We must ask ourselves on what does he base this assertion? Where in the Scripture does it talk about a priesthood that we should regard in this way? We read of all believers in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):9** But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;

And Peter exhorts elders as in **1 Peter 5 (KJV):1** The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

The elders are not to be “lords over God’s heritage”, as in verse 3 above. Rather, they are to be “examples to the flock”.

Chrysostom continues, “Moreover, if a king should bestow this honor upon any of his subjects, authorizing him to cast into prison whom he pleased and to release them again, he becomes an object of envy and respect to all men; but he who has received from God an authority as much greater as heaven is more precious than earth, and souls more precious than bodies, seems to some to have received so small an honor that they are actually able to imagine that one of those who have been entrusted with these things will despise the gift.”

Chrysostom was giving an authority to “priests” that has no basis in the word of God. But this was the assumption that he inherited from the Church in his time.

He continues, as he explains his thinking, "Away with such madness! For transparent madness it is to despise so great a dignity, without which it is not possible to obtain either our own salvation, or the good things which have been promised to us. For if no one can enter into the kingdom of Heaven except he be regenerate through water and the Spirit, and he who does not eat the flesh of the Lord and drink His blood is excluded from eternal life, and if all these things are accomplished only by means of those holy hands, I mean the hands of the priest, how will any one, without these, be able to escape the fire of hell, or to win those crowns which are reserved for the victorious?"

He is basing his thinking on the belief of the Church in his time on baptismal regeneration. That is, when one is baptized, they are born again. The basis of this belief is **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

But Jesus explains what He means in this verse in the very next verse, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Jesus first speaks of the natural birth of flesh, which relates to water surrounding the fetus. The second birth is one of our spirit. The reason we need a birth in our spirit is because we are spiritually dead in our sins, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NKJV):1** And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

So the Spirit of God gives birth to our spirit, and we receive eternal life. This happens when we believe in Jesus Christ as we read in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

The new birth of the Spirit does not happen with observation, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):7** Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

That this is a sovereign work of the Spirit is also revealed in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

We will speak much more about this when we get to the chapter about Baptism.

He continues, “6. These verily are they who are entrusted with the pangs of spiritual travail and the birth which comes through baptism: by their means we put on Christ, and are buried with the Son of God, and become members of that blessed Head. Wherefore they might not only be more justly feared by us than rulers and kings, but also be more honored than parents; since these begat us of blood and the will of the flesh, but the others are the authors of our birth from God, even that blessed regeneration which is the true freedom and the sonship according to grace.”

But as we read before, the priests are not “the authors of our birth from God”, for we are born of God as we read again in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

He continues, “The Jewish priests had authority to release the body from leprosy, or, rather, not to release it but only to examine those who were already released, and you know how much the office of priest was contended for at that time. But our priests have received authority to deal, not with bodily leprosy, but spiritual uncleanness—not to pronounce it removed after examination, but actually and absolutely to take it away. Wherefore they who despise these priests would be far more accursed than Dathan and his company, and deserve more severe punishment.”

He refers to Dathan and Abiram who were Levites but not of the sons of Aaron which was a requirement for one to be a priest under the Old Testament law. Only the sons of Aaron could be priests, as we read in **Exodus 28 (KJV):1** And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. 2 And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty. 3 And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. 4 And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a brodered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

The law gave the Levitical priesthood to Aaron and his sons exclusively as we see in **Numbers 18 (KJV):1** And the LORD said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. 2 And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness. 3 And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die. 4 And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you. 5 And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar: that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel. 6 And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are given as a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. 7 Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for everything of the altar, and within the vail; and ye shall serve: I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

Only Aaron and his sons had the “the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar”. The other Levites were “given as a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation”, that is, for the setup and maintenance of the grounds of the tabernacle.

Dathan and Abiram’s sin is revealed in **Numbers 16 (KJV):8** And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi: 9 Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do

the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? 10 And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also?

Dathan and Abiram were only Levites, and not sons of Aaron, so they could not be priests. There judgment is revealed in **Numbers 16 (KJV)**: 25 And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. 26 And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of their's, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. 27 So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. 28 And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. 29 If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the Lord hath not sent me. 30 But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord. 31 And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: 32 And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. 33 They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. 34 And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also.

Chrysostom continues, referring to “Dathan and his company”, as he says, “For the latter, although they laid claim to the dignity which did not belong to them, nevertheless had an excellent opinion concerning it, and this they evinced by the great eagerness with which they pursued it; but these men, when the office has been better regulated, and has received so great a development, have displayed an audacity which exceeds that of the others, although manifested in a contrary way.”

The men he is speaking of here are “they who despise these priests”, as we read before, and we read again, “Wherefore they who despise these priests would be far more accursed than Dathan and his company, and deserve more severe punishment.”

He continues, “For there is not an equal amount of contempt involved in aiming at an honor which does not pertain to one, and in despising such great advantages, but the latter exceeds the former as much as scorn differs from admiration. What soul then is so sordid as to despise such great advantages? None whatever, I should say, unless it were one subject to some demoniacal impulse. For I return once more to the point from which I started: not in the way of chastising only, but also in the way of benefiting, God has bestowed a power on priests greater than that of our natural parents. The two indeed differ as much as the present and the future life. For our natural parents generate us unto this life only, but the others unto that which is to come.”

Chrysostom is relying on the tradition of baptismal regeneration which the Church had adopted in his time. When we are born again, it is a work of God, and not man. It is God who gives us faith, and God who gives us birth as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB)**: 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been

saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

He continues, “And the former would not be able to avert death from their offspring, or to repel the assaults of disease; but these others have often saved a sick soul, or one which was on the point of perishing, procuring for some a milder chastisement, and preventing others from falling altogether, not only by instruction and admonition, but also by the assistance wrought through prayers. For not only at the time of regeneration, but afterwards also, they have authority to forgive sins.”

Chrysostom hints of the thinking of the Church in his time, that one could lose their salvation. We will discuss this under the heading, **Losing Salvation**. But God alone forgives sins, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

He Himself is our advocate, and the propitiation for our sins as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

He Himself is our Mediator as we read in **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

An elder in the Church, or any other believer, only has the authority to tell us that our sins are remitted if we believe in Jesus Christ. Once we have believed, we maintain our fellowship with the Lord by confessing our sins to Him alone.

Chrysostom continues, ““Is any sick among you?” it is said, “let him call for the elders of the Church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up: and if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him.” (James 5:14-15)”

He refers in context to **James 5 (KJV):14** Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. 16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Our faults in verse 16 relate to anything we may have done to hurt our brethren. And notice James says in verse 14, “Is any sick among you?”. He is not telling people to make confession of sins to anyone. But sometimes sin can be the cause of sickness and disease as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):29** For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

We judge ourselves by keeping short accounts with the Lord. That is, when we sin, we

confess our sins, as we read again in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Chrysostom continues, “Again: our natural parents, should their children come into conflict with any men of high rank and great power in the world, are unable to profit them: but priests have reconciled, not rulers and kings, but God Himself when His wrath has often been provoked against them.

Well! after this will any one venture to condemn me for arrogance? For my part, after what has been said, I imagine such religious fear will possess the souls of the hearers that they will no longer condemn those who avoid the office for arrogance and temerity, but rather those who voluntarily come forward and are eager to obtain this dignity for themselves. For if they who have been entrusted with the command of cities, should they chance to be wanting in discretion and vigilance, have sometimes destroyed the cities and ruined themselves in addition, how much power think you both in himself and from above must he need, to avoid sinning, whose business it is to beautify the Bride of Christ?”

Chrysostom and the Church in his time had exceeded the Scriptures. They had a priesthood which has no basis in the Scripture, and ritual that also exceeded the Scripture.

He continues, “7. No man loved Christ more than Paul: no man exhibited greater zeal, no man was counted worthy of more grace: nevertheless, after all these great advantages, he still has fears and tremblings concerning this government and those who were governed by him. “I fear,” he says, “lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ.” (2 Corinthians 11:3)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):3** But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

He continues, “And again, “I was with you in fear and in much trembling;” (1 Corinthians 2:3) and this was a man who had been caught up to the third Heaven, and made partaker of the unspeakable mysteries of God, (2 Corinthians 12:4) and had endured as many deaths as he had lived days after he became a believer—a man, moreover, who would not use the authority given him from Christ lest any of his converts should be offended. (2 Corinthians 11:9, 1 Thessalonians 2:9)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):3** And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

And to **2 Corinthians 12 (KJV):4** How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

And to **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):9** And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.

And to **1 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):9** For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

He continues, “If, then, he who went beyond the ordinances of God, and nowhere sought his own advantage, but that of those whom he governed, was always so full of fear when he considered the greatness of his government, what shall our condition be who in many ways seek



our own, who not only fail to go beyond the commandments of Christ, but for the most part transgress them? “Who is weak,” he says, “and I am not weak? who is offended and I burn not?” (2 Corinthians 11:29)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):29** Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

He continues, “Such an one ought the priest to be, or, rather, not such only: for these are small things, and as nothing compared with what I am about to say. And what is this? “I could wish,” he says, “that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” (Romans 9:3)”

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):3** For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

But we must remember that Paul was not a priest, but an apostle. He never called himself a priest.

He continues, “If any one can utter such a speech, if any one has the soul which attains to such a prayer, he might justly be blamed if he took to flight: but if any one should lack such excellence as much as I do, he would deserve to be hated, not if he avoided the office, but if he accepted it. For if an election to a military dignity was the business in hand, and they who had the right of conferring the honor were to drag forward a brazier, or a shoemaker, or some such artisan, and entrust the army to his hands, I should not praise the wretched man if he did not take to flight, and do all in his power to avoid plunging into such manifest trouble. If, indeed, it be sufficient to bear the name of pastor, and to take the work in hand haphazard, and there be no danger in this, then let whoso pleases accuse me of vainglory; but if it behooves one who undertakes this care to have much understanding, and, before understanding, great grace from God, and uprightness of conduct, and purity of life and superhuman virtue, do not deprive me of forgiveness if I am unwilling to perish in vain without a cause.

Moreover, if any one in charge of a full-sized merchant ship, full of rowers, and laden with a costly freight, were to station me at the helm and bid me cross the Ægean or the Tyrrhene sea, I should recoil from the proposal at once: and if any one asked me why? I should say, “Lest I should sink the ship.” Well, where the loss concerns material wealth, and the danger extends only to bodily death, no one will blame those who exercise great prudence; but where the shipwrecked are destined to fall, not into the ocean, but into the abyss of fire, and the death which awaits them is not that which severs the soul from the body, but one which together with this dismisses it to eternal punishment, shall I incur your wrath and hate because I did not plunge headlong into so great an evil?”

Chrysostom misunderstood how one is born again. This caused him to believe there was a great weight of responsibility on the priest, and that they were in some way responsible for people’s salvation. He also believed that a believer, that is, one who is born again, could suffer shipwreck and “fall, not into the ocean, but into the abyss of fire”, that is, into “eternal punishment”. He did not understand the security of the believer. We will discuss this more as we progress.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, On the Priesthood, Book IV, page 68-69**

8. Hear also what he says in his charge to his disciple: (1 Timothy 4:13) “Give heed to

reading, to exhortation, to teaching,” and he goes on to show the usefulness of this by adding, “For in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee.” (1 Timothy 4:16) And again he says, “The Lord’s servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing;” (2 Timothy 2:24) and he proceeds to say, “But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation,” (2 Timothy 3:14-15) and again, “Every Scripture is inspired of God, and also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17) Hear what he adds further in his directions to Titus about the appointment of bishops. “The bishop,” he says, “must be holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able to convict the gainsayers.” (Titus 1:7-9) But how shall any one who is unskillful as these men pretend, be able to convict the gainsayers and stop their mouths? or what need is there to give attention to reading and to the Holy Scriptures, if such a state of unskillfulness is to be welcome among us? Such arguments are mere makeshifts and pretexts, the marks of idleness and sloth. But some one will say, “it is to the priests that these charges are given:”—certainly, for they are the subjects of our discourse. But that the apostle gives the same charge to the laity, hear what he says in another epistle to other than the priesthood: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom,” (Colossians 3:16) and again, “Let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one,” (Colossians 4:6) and there is a general charge to all that they “be ready to” (1 Peter 3:15) render an account of their faith, and to the Thessalonians, he gives the following command: “Build each other up, even as also ye do.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11) But when he speaks of priests he says, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word, and in teaching.” (1 Timothy 5:17) For this is the perfection of teaching when the teachers both by what they do, and by what they say as well, bring their disciples to that blessed state of life which Christ appointed for them. For example alone is not enough to instruct others. Nor do I say this of myself; it is our Saviour’s own word. “For whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great. (Matthew 5:19) Now if doing were the same as teaching, the second word here would be superfluous; and it had been enough to have said “whosoever shall do” simply. But now by distinguishing the two, he shows that practice is one thing, and doctrine another, and that each needs the help of the others in order to complete edification. Thou hearest too what the chosen vessel of Christ says to the Ephesian elders: “Wherefore watch ye, remembering that for the space of three years, I ceased not to admonish every one, night and day, with tears.” (Acts 20:31) But what need was there for his tears or for admonition by word of mouth, while his life as an apostle was so illustrious? His holy life might be a great inducement to men to keep the commandments, yet I dare not say that it alone could accomplish everything.

9. But when a dispute arises concerning matters of doctrine, and all take their weapons from the same Scriptures, of what weight will any one’s life be able to prove? What then will be the good of his many austerities, when after such painful exercises, any one from the Priest’s great unskillfulness in argument fall into heresy, and be cut off from the body of the Church, a misfortune which I have myself seen many suffering. Of what profit then will his patience be to him? None; no more than there will be in a sound faith if the life is corrupt. Wherefore, for this reason more than for all others, it concerns him whose office it is to teach others, to be

experienced in disputations of this kind. For though he himself stands safely, and is unhurt by the gainsayers, yet the simple multitude under his direction, when they see their leader defeated, and without any answer for the gainsayers, will be apt to lay the blame of his discomfiture not on his own weakness, but on the doctrines themselves, as though they were faulty; and so by reason of the inexperience of one, great numbers are brought to extreme ruin; for though they do not entirely go over to the adversary, yet they are forced to doubt about matters in which formerly they firmly believed, and those whom they used to approach with unswerving confidence, they are unable to hold to any longer steadfastly, but in consequence of their leader's defeat, so great a storm settles down upon their souls, that the mischief ends in their shipwreck altogether. But how dire is the destruction, and how terrible the fire which such a leader brings upon his own wretched head for every soul which is thus lost, thou wilt not need to learn from me, as thou knowest all this perfectly. Is this then pride, is this vainglory in me, to be unwilling to be the cause of the destruction of so many souls? and of procuring for myself greater punishment in the world to come, than that which now awaits me there? Who would say so? surely no one, unless he should wish to find fault where there is none, and to moralize over other men's calamities.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, "8. Hear also what he says in his charge to his disciple: (1 Timothy 4:13) "Give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching," and he goes on to show the usefulness of this by adding, "For in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee." (1 Timothy 4:16)"

He refers to **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):13** Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

And to **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):16** Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

He continues, "And again he says, "The Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing;" (2 Timothy 2:24) and he proceeds to say, "But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation," (2 Timothy 3:14-15) and again, "Every Scripture is inspired of God, and also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)"

He refers in context to **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):24** And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, **25** In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

And in context to **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):14** But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; **15** And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. **16** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: **17** That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

It is interesting that Chrysostom left out of his writing "through faith which is in Christ Jesus" in verse 15, for it is through faith in Christ Jesus that one is born again. Baptism is only

an outward sign of an inward work. We are baptized because we believe. And Paul says “that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”. He includes all believers in this statement, as he says, “the man of God”.

He continues, “Hear what he adds further in his directions to Titus about the appointment of bishops. “The bishop,” he says, “must be holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able to convict the gainsayers.” (Titus 1:7-9)”

He refers to **Titus 1 (KJV):7** For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

It is evident that the bishops in the Church were holding fast “the faithful word which is according to the teaching”, that is, as they had been taught according to the doctrine of the Church at that time. But it is also evident that the doctrine of the Church at that time was not sound doctrine, but was that which had slipped from that which was taught by the apostles in the New Testament. We have only to read the word of God to see the difference.

He continues, “But how shall any one who is unskillful as these men pretend, be able to convict the gainsayers and stop their mouths? or what need is there to give attention to reading and to the Holy Scriptures, if such a state of unskillfulness is to be welcome among us? Such arguments are mere makeshifts and pretexts, the marks of idleness and sloth. But some one will say, “it is to the priests that these charges are given:”—certainly, for they are the subjects of our discourse. But that the apostle gives the same charge to the laity, hear what he says in another epistle to other than the priesthood: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom,” (Colossians 3:16) and again, “Let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one,” (Colossians 4:6) and there is a general charge to all that they “be ready to” (1 Peter 3:15) render an account of their faith, and to the Thessalonians, he gives the following command: “Build each other up, even as also ye do.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11)”

He refers to **Colossians 3 (KJV):16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

And to **Colossians 4 (KJV):6** Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

And to **1 Peter 3 (KJV):15** But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

And to **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):11** Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

And he is correct. These Scriptures speak to all believers. He continues, “But when he speaks of priests he says, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word, and in teaching.” (1 Timothy 5:17)”

He refers to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):17** Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

But the word “priests” is not found in this Scripture. The elders were simply those believers with the qualifications Paul gives in **1 Timothy 3 (KJV):1** This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) 6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

And a bishop, or overseer, was an elder as, we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):17** And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

And in **Acts 20 (KJV):28** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

The word in the Greek for “overseers” is **ἐπίσκοπος** (pronounced e-pe'-sko-pos), ep-is'-kop-os; from G1909 and G4649 (in the sense of G1983); a superintendent, i.e. Christian officer in genitive case charge of a (or the) church (literally or figuratively):—bishop, overseer.

**Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1985**

This is the same Greek word translated “bishop” in 1 Timothy 3:1 above. So everywhere we read of elders in the New Testament, we read of bishops.

The word in the Greek for “elders” is **πρεσβύτερος** (pronounced pres-bü'-te-ros), comparative of **πρέσβυς** (pronounced présbys) (elderly); older; as noun, a senior; specially, an Israelite Sanhedrist (also figuratively, member of the celestial council) or Christian "presbyter":—elder(-est), old. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4245**

The office of presbyter, or elder, is the same as the office of overseer, or bishop in the Church.

He continues, “For this is the perfection of teaching when the teachers both by what they do, and by what they say as well, bring their disciples to that blessed state of life which Christ appointed for them. For example alone is not enough to instruct others. Nor do I say this of myself; it is our Saviour’s own word. “For whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great. (Matthew 5:19)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):19** Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

He continues, “Now if doing were the same as teaching, the second word here would be superfluous; and it had been enough to have said “whosoever shall do” simply. But now by distinguishing the two, he shows that practice is one thing, and doctrine another, and that each needs the help of the others in order to complete edification. Thou hearest too what the chosen vessel of Christ says to the Ephesian elders: “Wherefore watch ye, remembering that for the space of three years, I ceased not to admonish every one, night and day, with tears.” (Acts 20:31)”

And he refers to **Acts 20 (KJV):31** Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

He continues, “But what need was there for his tears or for admonition by word of mouth, while his life as an apostle was so illustrious? His holy life might be a great inducement to men to keep the commandments, yet I dare not say that it alone could accomplish everything.

9. But when a dispute arises concerning matters of doctrine, and all take their weapons from the same Scriptures, of what weight will any one’s life be able to prove? What then will be the good of his many austerities, when after such painful exercises, any one from the Priest’s great unskillfulness in argument fall into heresy, and be cut off from the body of the Church, a misfortune which I have myself seen many suffering. Of what profit then will his patience be to him? None; no more than there will be in a sound faith if the life is corrupt. Wherefore, for this reason more than for all others, it concerns him whose office it is to teach others, to be experienced in disputations of this kind.”

And he is correct, as he has quoted before in **Titus 1 (KJV):7** For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

And as Paul says in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):2** And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

He continues, “For though he himself stands safely, and is unhurt by the gainsayers, yet the simple multitude under his direction, when they see their leader defeated, and without any answer for the gainsayers, will be apt to lay the blame of his discomfiture not on his own weakness, but on the doctrines themselves, as though they were faulty; and so by reason of the inexperience of one, great numbers are brought to extreme ruin; for though they do not entirely go over to the adversary, yet they are forced to doubt about matters in which formerly they firmly believed, and those whom they used to approach with unswerving confidence, they are unable to hold to any longer steadfastly, but in consequence of their leader’s defeat, so great a storm settles down upon their souls, that the mischief ends in their shipwreck altogether. But how dire is the destruction, and how terrible the fire which such a leader brings upon his own wretched head for every soul which is thus lost, thou wilt not need to learn from me, as thou knowest all this perfectly. Is this then pride, is this vainglory in me, to be unwilling to be the cause of the destruction of so many souls? and of procuring for myself greater punishment in the world to come, than that which now awaits me there? Who would say so? surely no one, unless he should wish to find fault where there is none, and to moralize over other men’s calamities.”

Again, Chrysostom did not understand the security of the believer which we will discuss more as we progress. And we note that it seemed he believed in a “punishment in the world to come”, even for himself, but also for other believers. But we also note his concern for the church and for those he ministered to.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, On the Priesthood, Book VI, page 74-80**

1. Our condition here, indeed, is such as thou hast heard. But our condition hereafter how shall we endure, when we are compelled to give our account for each of those who have been

entrusted to us? For our penalty is not limited to shame, but everlasting chastisement awaits us as well. As for the passage, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them, for they watch in behalf of your souls as they that shall give account;” (Hebrews 13:17) though I have mentioned it once already, yet I will break silence about it now, for the fear of its warning is continually agitating my soul. For if for him who causes one only, and that the least, to stumble, it is profitable that “a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea;” (Matthew 18:6) and if they who wound the consciences of the brethren, sin against Christ Himself, (1 Corinthians 8:12) what then will they one day suffer, what kind of penalty will they pay, who destroy not one only, or two, or three, but so many multitudes? For it is not possible for inexperience to be urged as an excuse, nor to take refuge in ignorance, nor for the plea of necessity or force to be put forward. Yea, if it were possible, one of those under their charge could more easily make use of this refuge for his own sins than bishops in the case of the sins of others. Dost thou ask why? Because he who has been appointed to rectify the ignorance of others, and to warn them beforehand of the conflict with the devil which is coming upon them, will not be able to put forward ignorance as his excuse, or to say, “I have never heard the trumpet sound, I did not foresee the conflict.” For he is set for that very purpose, says Ezekiel, that he may sound the trumpet for others, and warn them of the dangers at hand. And therefore his chastisement is inevitable, though he that perishes happen to be but one. “For if when the sword comes, the watchman does not sound the trumpet to the people, nor give them a sign, and the sword come and take any man away, he indeed is taken away on account of his iniquity, but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hands.” (Ezekiel 33:6)

2. Cease then to urge us on to a penalty so inevitable; for our discourse is not about an army, or a kingdom; but about an office which needs the virtues of an angel. For the soul of the Priest ought to be purer than the very sunbeams, in order that the Holy Spirit may not leave him desolate, in order that he may be able to say, “Now I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me.” (Galatians 2:20) For if they who dwell in the desert, and are removed far from the city and the market place, and the tumult therein, and who enjoy all their time a haven of rest, and of peacefulness, are not willing to rely on the security of that manner of life, but add to it numberless other safeguards, hedging themselves round on every side, and studying both to speak and to act with great circumspection, so that to the utmost extent of human power they may draw near to God with assurance, and with unstained purity, what power and strength, thinkest thou, does the ordained Priest need so as to be able to tear his soul away from every defilement, and to keep its spiritual beauty unsullied? For he has need of far greater purity than they; and whoever has need of greater purity, he too is subject to more pressing temptations than they, which are able to defile him, unless by using constant self-denial and much labor, he renders his soul inaccessible to them. For beauty of face, elegance of movement, an affected gait and lisping voice, pencilled eyebrows and enamelled cheeks, elaborate braiding and dyeing of hair, costliness of dress, variety of golden ornaments, and the glory of precious stones, the scent of perfumes, and all those other matters to which womankind devote themselves, are enough to disorder the mind, unless it happen to be hardened against them, through much austerity of self restraint. Now to be disturbed indeed by such things is nothing wonderful. But on the other hand, that the devil should be able to hit and shoot down the souls of men by the opposite of these—this is a matter which fills us with astonishment and perplexity.

3. For ere now some men who have escaped these snares, have been caught by others widely differing from these. For even a neglected appearance, unkempt hair, squalid dress, and an unpainted face, simple behavior, and homely language, unstudied gait, and unaffected voice, a life of poverty, a despised, unpatronized and lonely condition, have first drawn on the beholder to pity, and next to utter ruin; and many who have escaped the former nets, in the way of gold ornaments and perfumes, and apparel, and all the rest, of which I have spoken as connected with them, have easily fallen into these so widely differing from them, and have perished. When then both by poverty and by riches, both by the adornment and the neglect of the personal appearance, both by studied and unaffected manners, in short by all those means which I have enumerated, war is kindled in the soul of the beholder, and its artifices surround him on every side, how will he be able to breathe freely while so many snares encompass him? and what hiding-place will he be able to find—I do not say so as to avoid being forcibly seized by them (for this is not altogether difficult)—but so as to keep his own soul undisturbed by polluting thoughts?

And I pass by honors, which are the cause of countless evils. For those which come from the hands of women are ruinous to the vigor of self-restraint, and often overthrow it when a man does not know how to watch constantly against such designs; while those which come from the hands of men, unless a man receive them with much nobleness of mind, he is seized with two contrary emotions, servile flattery and senseless pride. To those who patronize him, he is obliged to cringe; and towards his inferiors he is puffed up, on account of the honors which the others confer, and is driven into the gulf of arrogance. We have mentioned these matters indeed, but how harmful they actually are, no one could well learn without experience. For not only these snares, but greater and more delusive than these, he must needs encounter, who has his conversation in the world. But he who is content with solitude, has freedom from all this, and if at any time a strange thought creates a representation of this kind, the image is weak, and capable of being speedily subdued, because there is no fuel added to the flame from without, arising from actual sight. For the recluse has but himself to fear for; or should he be forced to have the care of others they are easily counted: and if they be many, yet they are less than those in our Churches, and they give him who is set over them much lighter anxiety about them, not only on account of their fewness, but because they are all free from worldly concerns, and have neither wife nor children, nor any such thing to care about; and this makes them very deferential to their rulers, and allows them to share the same abode with them, so that they are able to take in their failings accurately at a glance and correct them, seeing that the constant supervision of a teacher is no little help towards advance in virtue.

4. But of those who are subject to the Priest, the greater number are hampered with the cares of this life, and this makes them the slower in the performance of spiritual duties. Whence it is necessary for the teacher to sow every day (so to speak), in order that by its frequency at least, the word of doctrine may be able to be grasped by those who hear. For excessive wealth, and an abundance of power, and sloth the offspring of luxury, and many other things beside these, choke the seeds which have been let fall. Often too the thick growth of thorns does not suffer the seed to drop even upon the surface of the soil. Again, excess of trouble, stress of poverty, constant insults, and other such things, the reverse of the foregoing, take the mind away from anxiety about things divine; and of their people's sins, not even the smallest part can become apparent; for how should it, in the case of those the majority of whom they do not know



even by sight?

The Priest's relations with his people involve thus much difficulty. But if any inquire about his relations with God, he will find the others to be as nothing, since these require a greater and more thorough earnestness. For he who acts as an ambassador on behalf of the whole city—but why do I say the city? on behalf of the whole world indeed—prays that God would be merciful to the sins of all, not only of the living, but also of the departed. (**Schaff Note:** All the ancient Liturgies contained prayers for the departed. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Catech. Mystag., v. n. vi.), speaking of the prayer after consecration, says: “and then we pray for our holy fathers and bishops, and for all that have fallen asleep before us, believing that it will be a very great benefit to their souls to have supplication offered for them whilst the holy and most awful sacrifice is lying upon the altar,” but the practice was not based upon anything like the later Roman doctrine of purgatory. It was the natural expression of a devout belief in the “communion of saints.” See Bingham's Antiquities, Book xv.) What manner of man ought he to be? For my part I think that the boldness of speech of Moses and Elias, is insufficient for such supplication. For as though he were entrusted with the whole world and were himself the father of all men, he draws near to God, beseeching that wars may be extinguished everywhere, that tumults may be quelled; asking for peace and plenty, and a swift deliverance from all the ills that beset each one, publicly and privately; and he ought as much to excel in every respect all those on whose behalf he prays, as rulers should excel their subjects.

And whenever he invokes the Holy Spirit, and offers the most dread sacrifice, and constantly handles the common Lord of all, tell me what rank shall we give him? What great purity and what real piety must we demand of him? For consider what manner of hands they ought to be which minister in these things, and of what kind his tongue which utters such words, (**Schaff Note:** “And we pray and beseech Thee, send down thy Holy Ghost upon us and upon these gifts here outspread, and make this bread to be the precious body of thy Christ, and that which is in the cup the precious blood of Christ, having so changed them by thy Holy Spirit that to us who partake of them they may be for the cleansing of our souls, the remission of sins, the communion of the Holy Spirit.” (Liturgy of St. Chrysostom.)) and ought not the soul which receives so great a spirit to be purer and holier than anything in the world? At such a time angels stand by the Priest; and the whole sanctuary, and the space round about the altar, is filled with the powers of heaven, in honor of Him who lieth thereon. For this, indeed, is capable of being proved from the very rites which are being then celebrated. I myself, moreover, have heard some one once relate, that a certain aged, venerable man, accustomed to see revelations, used to tell him, that he being thought worthy of a vision of this kind, at such a time, saw, on a sudden, so far as was possible for him, a multitude of angels, clothed in shining robes, and encircling the altar, and bending down, as one might see soldiers in the presence of their King, and for my part I believe it. Moreover another told me, without learning it from some one else, but as being himself thought worthy to be both an ear and eye witness of it, that, in the case of those who are about to depart hence, if they happen to be partakers of the mysteries, with a pure conscience, when they are about to breathe their last, angels keep guard over them for the sake of what they have received, and bear them hence. And dost thou not yet tremble to introduce a soul into so sacred a mystery of this kind, and to advance to the dignity of the Priesthood, one robed in filthy raiment, whom Christ has shut out from the rest of the band of guests? (Matthew 22:13) The soul of the Priest should shine like a light beaming over the whole world. But mine

has so great darkness overhanging it, because of my evil conscience, as to be always cast down and never able to look up with confidence to its Lord. Priests are the salt of the earth. (Matthew 5:13) But who would easily put up with my lack of understanding, and my inexperience in all things, but thou, who hast been wont to love me beyond measure. For the Priest ought not only to be thus pure as one who has been dignified with so high a ministry, but very discreet, and skilled in many matters, and to be as well versed in the affairs of this life as they who are engaged in the world, and yet to be free from them all more than the recluses who occupy the mountains. For since he must mix with men who have wives, and who bring up children, who possess servants, and are surrounded with wealth, and fill public positions, and are persons of influence, he too should be a many-sided man—I say many-sided, not unreal, nor yet fawning and hypocritical, but full of much freedom and assurance, and knowing how to adapt himself profitably, where the circumstances of the case require it, and to be both kind and severe, for it is not possible to treat all those under one's charge on one plan, since neither is it well for physicians to apply one course of treatment to all their sick, nor for a pilot to know but one way of contending with the winds. For, indeed, continual storms beset this ship of ours, and these storms do not assail from without only, but take their rise from within, and there is need of much condescension, and circumspection, and all these different matters have one end in view, the glory of God, and the edifying of the Church.

5. Great is the conflict which recluses undergo, and much their toil. (**Schaff Note:** The following descriptions of monastic life were no doubt drawn from the habits of the monks in the neighbourhood of Antioch, who dwelt on the mountainous heights of Silpius and Casius, south of the city. They lived in separate huts or cabins, but were subject to an abbot and a common rule, probably very similar to that which Pachomius had recently established in Egypt, and which became very generally adopted in the East. There are frequent allusions to the habits of these monks in Chrysostom's Homilies. See especially St. Matt. Hom. LXVIII. c. 3, and LXIX. c. 3; also Life of St. Chrysostom by the translator, pp. 59–68, 3d ed.) But if any one compare their exertions with those which the right exercise of the Priesthood involves, he will find the difference as great as the distance between a king and a commoner. For there, if the labor is great indeed, yet the conflict is common to body and soul, or rather the greater part of it is accomplished by the condition of the body, and if this be not strong, the inclination remains undeveloped, and is unable to come out into action. For the habit of intense fasting, and sleeping on the ground, and keeping vigil, and refraining from the bath, and great toil, and all other means which they use for the affliction of the body are given up, when the body to be thus disciplined is not strong. But in this case purity of soul is the business in hand, and no bodily vigor is required to show its excellence. For what does strength of body contribute towards our being not self-willed, or proud, or headstrong, but sober and prudent, and orderly, and all else, wherein St. Paul filled up the picture of the perfect Priest? But no one could say this of the virtues of the recluse.

6. But as in the case of wonder-workers, a large apparatus is required, both wheels and ropes and daggers; while the philosopher has the whole of his art stored up in his mind, not requiring any external appliances: So accordingly in the case before us. The recluse requires both a good condition of body, and a place suitable for his course of life, in order that such may not be settled too far from intercourse with their fellow men, and may have the tranquillity which belongs to desert places, and yet further, may not fail to enjoy the most favorable

climate. For nothing is so unbearable to a body worn with fastings as a climate which is not equable. And what trouble they are compelled to take in the preparation of their clothing and daily food, as they are themselves ambitious of doing all with their own hands, I need not speak of now. But the Priest will require none of these things to supply his wants, but is unconcerned about them, and participates in all things which are harmless, while he has all his skill stored up in the treasure-house of his mind. But if any one admire a solitary life, and retirement from the society of the multitude, I should say myself that such a life was a token of patience, but not a sufficient proof of entire fortitude of soul. For the man who sits at the helm in harbor, does not yet give any certain proof of his art. But if one is able to guide his ship safely in the midst of the sea, no one would deny him to be an excellent steersman.

7. It would be, therefore, in no wise excessively surprising to us, that the recluse, living as he does by himself, is undisturbed and does not commit many and great sins. For he does not meet with things which irritate and excite his mind. But if any one who has devoted himself to whole multitudes, and has been compelled to bear the sins of many, has remained steadfast and firm, guiding his soul in the midst of the storm as if he were in a calm, he is the man to be justly applauded and admired of all, for he has shown sufficient proof of personal manliness. Do not thou, therefore, for thy part wonder if I, who avoid the marketplace and the haunts of the multitude, have not many to accuse me. For I ought not to wonder, if I sinned not when asleep, nor fell when I did not wrestle, nor was hit if I did not fight. For who, tell me, who will be able to speak against me, and reveal my depravity? Can this roof or cell? Nay, they would not be able to give tongue? Would my mother, who best of all knows my affairs? Well, certainly with her I am neither in communication, nor have we ever come to a quarrel, and if this had happened, no mother is so heartless and wanting in affection for her child as to revile and accuse before all him whom she travailed with, and brought forth, and reared, if there were no reason to constrain her, nor any person to urge her to such an act. Nevertheless, if any one desires to make a careful inspection of my mind, he will discover much which is corrupt there. Nor art thou unaware of this who art specially wont to extol me with praises before all. Now that I do not say these things out of mere modesty, recollect how often I said to thee, when this subject was being discussed between us, "If any one were to give me my choice whether I would rather gain distinction in the oversight of the Church, or in the life of the recluse, I would vote a thousand times over for accepting the former. For I have never failed to congratulate those who have been able to discharge this office well, and no one will gainsay that what I counted blessed I would not have shunned were I able to take part in it fitly. But what am I to do? There is nothing so prejudicial to the oversight of the Church as this inactivity and negligence of mine, which others think to be a sort of self-discipline, but which I hold to be a veil as it were of my personal infirmity, covering the greater number of my defects and not suffering them to appear. For he who is accustomed to enjoy such great freedom from business, and to pass his time in much repose, even if he be of a noble nature, is confused by his inexperience, and is disturbed, and his inactivity deprives him of no small part of his natural ability. But when, besides, he is of slow intellect, and ignorant also of these severe trials, which I take it is my case, he will carry on this ministry which he has received no better than a statue. Wherefore of those who have come to such great trial, out of that school, few shine; and the greater part betray themselves, and fall, and undergo much hardship and sufferings; and no wonder. For the trials and the discipline are not concerned with the same things. The man who

is contending in no wise differs from those who are untrained. He who thus enters this list should despise glory, be superior to anger, full of great discretion. But for the exercise of these qualities there is no scope in his case who affects a secluded life. For he does not have many to provoke him in order that he may practise chastising, the force of his anger: nor admirers and applauders in order that he may be trained to despise the praises of the multitudes. And of the discretion which is required in the Church, there is no taking account in their case. Whenever, therefore, they come to the trials of which they have never had practical experience, they get bewildered, their heads are turned, they fall into a state of helplessness, and besides adding nothing to their excellence, may have often lost that which they brought with them.

8. Basil: What then? shall we set over the administration of the Church those who move in society, and who are careful about the concerns of this world, who are adepts at wrangling and vituperation, are full of countless artifices, and versed in luxurious ways?

Chrysostom: Hush, dear friend that thou art! Thou shouldest never entertain in thy thoughts such men as these, when the Priesthood is under discussion, but only such as are able after mixing and associating with all, to keep their purity undefiled, and their unworldliness, their holiness, constancy and sobriety unshaken, and to possess all other virtues which belong to recluses, in a greater degree than they. He who has many defects, but is able to hide them, by means of his seclusion, and to make them ineffectual, because he does not associate with any one, when *he* comes into society will gain nothing, but the position of a laughing stock, and will run greater risks still, which I was very nearly experiencing myself, had not the providence of God quickly warded off such fire from my head. For it is not possible for one in such a position to escape notice when he is so conspicuously placed, but everything then is detected, and as the fire tests the material of metals, so too the trial of the clerical office searches the souls of mortal men; and if any one be passionate or mean, or ambitious of fame, if he be boastful, or anything else of the kind, it unveils all; and speedily lays bare his defects, and not only lays them bare, but increases their painfulness and strength. For the wounds of the body, if they are galled, become harder to heal, and the emotions of the mind when chafed and irritated, are naturally more exasperated, and those who possess them are driven to commit greater sins. For they excite him who does not restrain them, to love of glory, and to boastfulness, and to desire for this world's goods, and draw him downwards, both to luxury and laxity of life, and to laziness, and, little by little, to evils worse than these which result from them. For many are the circumstances in society which have the power to upset the balance of the mind, and to hinder its straightforward course; (**Schaff Note:** Another reading gives its "career towards God.") and first of all is his social intercourse with women. For it is not possible for the Bishop, and one who is concerned with the whole flock, to have a care for the male portion of it, but to pass over the female, which needs more particular forethought, because of its propensity to sins. But the man who is appointed to the administration of a Bishopric must have a care for the moral health of these, if not in a greater, at least in no less a degree than the others. For it is necessary to visit them when they are sick, to comfort them when they are sorrowful, and to reprove them when they are idle, and to help them when they are distressed; and in such cases the evil one would find many opportunities of approach, if a man did not fortify himself with a very strict guard. For the eye, not only of the unchaste, but of the modest woman pierces and disturbs the mind. Flatteries enervate it, and favors enslave it, and fervent love—the spring one may say of all good—becomes the cause of countless evils to those who do not make a right use of it. Constant

cares too have ere now blunted the edge of the understanding, and have made that which was buoyant heavier than lead, while anger has burst in like smoke, and taken possession of all the inner man.

9. Why should any one speak of the injuries that result from grief, (**Schaff Note:** According to a different reading, τὰς λσιπὰς βχέβας, “The injuries which remain.”) the insults, the abuse, the censure from superiors, from inferiors, from the wise, and from fools; for the class who are wanting in right judgment are particularly fond of censuring, and will never readily allow any excuse. But the truly excellent Bishop ought neither to think lightly of these, but to clear himself with all men of the charges which they bring against him, with great forbearance and meekness, pardoning their unreasonable fault-finding, rather than being indignant and angry about it. For if St. Paul feared lest he should incur a suspicion of theft, among his disciples, and therefore procured others for the management of the money, that “no one” he says, “should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us,” (2 Corinthians 8:20) how ought we not to do all so as to remove evil suspicions, even if they happen to be false, and most unreasonable, and very foreign to our thought? For we are not so utterly removed from any sin as St. Paul from theft; notwithstanding, though so far from this evil practice, he did not, therefore, slight the suspicion of the world, although it was very absurd, and even insane. For it was madness to have any such suspicion about that blessed and admirable character. But none the less does he remove far off the causes of this suspicion, unreasonable though it was, and such as no one who was in his senses would entertain, and he neither disdained the folly of the multitudes, nor did he say, “To whose mind did it ever occur to suspect such things of us, after the signs which I have wrought, and the forbearance which has marked my life, and when you all revered and admired us?” Quite the contrary: he foresaw and expected this base suspicion, and pulled it up by the roots, or rather did not suffer it to grow at all. Why? “Because,” saith he, “we provide things honest not only before the Lord, but before all men.” (2 Cor. 8:21; Romans 12:17)

So great, yea and far greater zeal must we use, to uproot and prevent floating reports which are not good, but to see beforehand from afar whence they come, and to remove beforehand the causes from which they are produced, not to wait till they are established and are the common topics in every one’s mouth. For then it is not easy in the future to destroy them, but very difficult, perhaps impossible, and not without mischief, because this is done after many have been injured. But how far shall I continue pursuing the unattainable? For to enumerate all the difficulties in this direction, is nothing more nor less than measuring the ocean. Even when any one should clear himself from every passion (which is a thing impossible) in order to correct the failings of others, he is forced to undergo countless trials, and when his own infirmities are added, behold, an abyss of toil and care, and all that he must suffer, who wishes to subdue the evils in himself and in those around him.

10. Basil: And now, art *thou* free from toils? hast thou no cares while thou livest by thyself?

Chrysostom: I have indeed even now. For how is it possible for one who is a man, and who is living this toilsome life of ours, to be free from cares and conflict? But it is not quite the same thing for man to plunge into a boundless ocean and to cross a river, so great is the difference between these cares and those. For now, indeed, if I were able to become serviceable to others, I should wish it myself, and this would be a matter of prayer with me. But if it is not

possible to help another, yet if it be practicable to save and rescue myself from the waves, I shall be contented.

Basil: Dost thou then think this to be a great thing? and dost thou fancy that thou wilt be saved when thou art not profitable to any other?

Chrysostom: Thou hast spoken well and nobly, for I am not myself able to believe that it is possible for one who has not labored for the salvation of his fellow to be saved, nor did it at all profit the wretched man in the Gospel that he had not diminished his talent; but he perished through not increasing it and bringing it doubled to his master. (Matthew 25:24) Nevertheless, I think that my punishment will be milder when I am called to account, because I have not saved others, than it would be if I should destroy myself and others too by becoming far worse after so great an honor. For now I trust that my chastisement will be proportioned to the amount of my sins, but after receiving this office, I fear it would be not double, or threefold, but manifold, because I should have caused very many to stumble, and after additional honor should have offended the God who honored me.

11. For this very cause God accuses the Israelites more vehemently, and shows that they were worthy of greater chastisement, because they sinned after so many honors had come to them from Him, saying in one place: “But you only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for your iniquities,” (Amos 3:2) and again, “and I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites;” (Amos 2:11) and before the times of the prophets, wishing to show that sins receive sorer punishment by far when they occur in the case of the Priest than in the case of the laity, He enjoins as great a sacrifice to be offered for the Priest as for the whole people, (Leviticus 4:3,14) and this amounts to a proof on his part, that the wounds of the Priesthood need more assistance—that is, as great as those of all the people together, and they would not have needed a greater, except they were worse; and they are not worse in their nature, but are aggravated through the dignity of the Priest, who dares to commit them. And why do I speak of the *men* who follow this ministration. For the daughters of the Priests, (Leviticus 21:9) who have no part in the Priestly office, yet on account of their father’s dignity undergo a far bitterer punishment for the same sins as others, and the offense is the same in their case and in the daughters of the laity; namely, fornication in both; yet the penalty is far severer for the former. Dost thou see with what abundant proof God shows thee that he demands much greater punishment for the ruler than for the ruled? For no doubt he who punishes to a greater degree than others the daughter of a certain man for that man’s sake, will not exact the same penalty from the man who is the cause of her additional chastisement as from others, but a much heavier one; and very reasonably; for the mischief does not merely involve himself, but it destroys the souls of the weaker brethren and of them who look up to him, and Ezekiel, writing to show this, distinguishes from one another the judgment of the rams and of the sheep. (Ezekiel 34:17)

**Commentary:** Chrysostom will be talking with his friend Basil who became a priest while Chrysostom held back for a time. He will offer his excuses to Basil why he himself should forbear from becoming a priest.

Chrysostom begins **BOOK VI**, as he says, “1. Our condition here, indeed, is such as thou hast heard. But our condition hereafter how shall we endure, when we are compelled to give our account for each of those who have been entrusted to us? For our penalty is not limited to

shame, but everlasting chastisement awaits us as well.”

Chrysostom thought a believer could lose their salvation. We discuss this under the heading, **Losing Salvation**.

He continues, “As for the passage, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them, for they watch in behalf of your souls as they that shall give account;” (Hebrews 13:17) though I have mentioned it once already, yet I will break silence about it now, for the fear of its warning is continually agitating my soul.”

He refers to **Hebrews 13 (KJV):17** Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

He continues, “For if for him who causes one only, and that the least, to stumble, it is profitable that “a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea;” (Matthew 18:6) and if they who wound the consciences of the brethren, sin against Christ Himself, (1 Corinthians 8:12) what then will they one day suffer, what kind of penalty will they pay, who destroy not one only, or two, or three, but so many multitudes?”

He refers in context to **Matthew 18 (KJV):2** And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, 3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. 6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

And in context to **1 Corinthians 8 (KJV):6** But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. 7 Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. 8 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. 9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. 10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; 11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. 13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

It is good to know the context of the verse he refers to.

He continues, “For it is not possible for inexperience to be urged as an excuse, nor to take refuge in ignorance, nor for the plea of necessity or force to be put forward. Yea, if it were possible, one of those under their charge could more easily make use of this refuge for his own sins than bishops in the case of the sins of others. Dost thou ask why? Because he who has been appointed to rectify the ignorance of others, and to warn them beforehand of the conflict with the devil which is coming upon them, will not be able to put forward ignorance as his excuse, or to say, “I have never heard the trumpet sound, I did not foresee the conflict.” For he is set for that very purpose, says Ezekiel, that he may sound the trumpet for others, and warn them of the dangers at hand. And therefore his chastisement is inevitable, though he that perishes happen to

be but one. “For if when the sword comes, the watchman does not sound the trumpet to the people, nor give them a sign, and the sword come and take any man away, he indeed is taken away on account of his iniquity, but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hands.” (Ezekiel 33:6)”

He refers in context to **Ezekiel 33 (KJV):**1 Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, 2 Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: 3 If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; 4 Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. 5 He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. 6 But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. 7 So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

Chrysostom took his role as priest, and the role of the bishop very seriously.

He continues, “2. Cease then to urge us on to a penalty so inevitable; for our discourse is not about an army, or a kingdom; but about an office which needs the virtues of an angel. For the soul of the Priest ought to be purer than the very sunbeams, in order that the Holy Spirit may not leave him desolate, in order that he may be able to say, “Now I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me.” (Galatians 2:20)”

He refers to **Galatians 2 (KJV):**20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

He continues, “For if they who dwell in the desert, and are removed far from the city and the market place, and the tumult therein, and who enjoy all their time a haven of rest, and of peacefulness, are not willing to rely on the security of that manner of life, but add to it numberless other safeguards, hedging themselves round on every side, and studying both to speak and to act with great circumspection, so that to the utmost extent of human power they may draw near to God with assurance, and with unstained purity, what power and strength, thinkest thou, does the ordained Priest need so as to be able to tear his soul away from every defilement, and to keep its spiritual beauty unsullied? For he has need of far greater purity than they; and whoever has need of greater purity, he too is subject to more pressing temptations than they, which are able to defile him, unless by using constant self-denial and much labor, he renders his soul inaccessible to them. For beauty of face, elegance of movement, an affected gait and lisping voice, pencilled eyebrows and enamelled cheeks, elaborate braiding and dyeing of hair, costliness of dress, variety of golden ornaments, and the glory of precious stones, the scent of perfumes, and all those other matters to which womankind devote themselves, are enough to disorder the mind, unless it happen to be hardened against them, through much austerity of self restraint. Now to be disturbed indeed by such things is nothing wonderful. But on the other hand, that the devil should be able to hit and shoot down the souls of men by the opposite of these—this is a matter which fills us with astonishment and perplexity.”

We notice the elevation of the Priest in Chrysostom’s thinking. The priest “has need of



greater purity". We will see what caused him to see the position of the priest this way shortly.

He continues, "3. For ere now some men who have escaped these snares, have been caught by others widely differing from these. For even a neglected appearance, unkempt hair, squalid dress, and an unpainted face, simple behavior, and homely language, unstudied gait, and unaffected voice, a life of poverty, a despised, unpatronized and lonely condition, have first drawn on the beholder to pity, and next to utter ruin; and many who have escaped the former nets, in the way of gold ornaments and perfumes, and apparel, and all the rest, of which I have spoken as connected with them, have easily fallen into these so widely differing from them, and have perished. When then both by poverty and by riches, both by the adornment and the neglect of the personal appearance, both by studied and unaffected manners, in short by all those means which I have enumerated, war is kindled in the soul of the beholder, and its artifices surround him on every side, how will he be able to breathe freely while so many snares encompass him? and what hiding-place will he be able to find—I do not say so as to avoid being forcibly seized by them (for this is not altogether difficult)—but so as to keep his own soul undisturbed by polluting thoughts?

And I pass by honors, which are the cause of countless evils. For those which come from the hands of women are ruinous to the vigor of self-restraint, and often overthrow it when a man does not know how to watch constantly against such designs; while those which come from the hands of men, unless a man receive them with much nobleness of mind, he is seized with two contrary emotions, servile flattery and senseless pride. To those who patronize him, he is obliged to cringe; and towards his inferiors he is puffed up, on account of the honors which the others confer, and is driven into the gulf of arrogance. We have mentioned these matters indeed, but how harmful they actually are, no one could well learn without experience. For not only these snares, but greater and more delusive than these, he must needs encounter, who has his conversation in the world. But he who is content with solitude, has freedom from all this, and if at any time a strange thought creates a representation of this kind, the image is weak, and capable of being speedily subdued, because there is no fuel added to the flame from without, arising from actual sight. For the recluse has but himself to fear for; or should he be forced to have the care of others they are easily counted: and if they be many, yet they are less than those in our Churches, and they give him who is set over them much lighter anxiety about them, not only on account of their fewness, but because they are all free from worldly concerns, and have neither wife nor children, nor any such thing to care about; and this makes them very deferential to their rulers, and allows them to share the same abode with them, so that they are able to take in their failings accurately at a glance and correct them, seeing that the constant supervision of a teacher is no little help towards advance in virtue.

4. But of those who are subject to the Priest, the greater number are hampered with the cares of this life, and this makes them the slower in the performance of spiritual duties. Whence it is necessary for the teacher to sow every day (so to speak), in order that by its frequency at least, the word of doctrine may be able to be grasped by those who hear. For excessive wealth, and an abundance of power, and sloth the offspring of luxury, and many other things beside these, choke the seeds which have been let fall. Often too the thick growth of thorns does not suffer the seed to drop even upon the surface of the soil. Again, excess of trouble, stress of poverty, constant insults, and other such things, the reverse of the foregoing, take the mind away from anxiety about things divine; and of their people's sins, not even the smallest part can

become apparent; for how should it, in the case of those the majority of whom they do not know even by sight?

The Priest's relations with his people involve thus much difficulty. But if any inquire about his relations with God, he will find the others to be as nothing, since these require a greater and more thorough earnestness. For he who acts as an ambassador on behalf of the whole city—but why do I say the city? on behalf of the whole world indeed—prays that God would be merciful to the sins of all, not only of the living, but also of the departed. (**Schaff Note:** All the ancient Liturgies contained prayers for the departed. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Catech. Mystag., v. n. vi.), speaking of the prayer after consecration, says: “and then we pray for our holy fathers and bishops, and for all that have fallen asleep before us, believing that it will be a very great benefit to their souls to have supplication offered for them whilst the holy and most awful sacrifice is lying upon the altar,” but the practice was not based upon anything like the later Roman doctrine of purgatory. It was the natural expression of a devout belief in the “communion of saints.” See Bingham's Antiquities, Book xv.)”

But the Scriptures are clear. There is no need for “prayers for the departed”, for to be absent from the body for the believer is to be present with the Lord, as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):**6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Chrysostom continues, “What manner of man ought he to be? For my part I think that the boldness of speech of Moses and Elias, is insufficient for such supplication. For as though he were entrusted with the whole world and were himself the father of all men, he draws near to God, beseeching that wars may be extinguished everywhere, that tumults may be quelled; asking for peace and plenty, and a swift deliverance from all the ills that beset each one, publicly and privately; and he ought as much to excel in every respect all those on whose behalf he prays, as rulers should excel their subjects.

And whenever he invokes the Holy Spirit, and offers the most dread sacrifice, and constantly handles the common Lord of all, tell me what rank shall we give him? What great purity and what real piety must we demand of him? For consider what manner of hands they ought to be which minister in these things, and of what kind his tongue which utters such words, (**Schaff Note:** “And we pray and beseech Thee, send down thy Holy Ghost upon us and upon these gifts here outspread, and make this bread to be the precious body of thy Christ, and that which is in the cup the precious blood of Christ, having so changed them by thy Holy Spirit that to us who partake of them they may be for the cleansing of our souls, the remission of sins, the communion of the Holy Spirit.” (Liturgy of St. Chrysostom.)) and ought not the soul which receives so great a spirit to be purer and holier than anything in the world? At such a time angels stand by the Priest; and the whole sanctuary, and the space round about the altar, is filled with the powers of heaven, in honor of Him who lieth thereon. For this, indeed, is capable of being proved from the very rites which are being then celebrated.”

So in the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, the bread and wine are changed “by thy Holy Spirit that to us who partake of them they may be for the cleansing of our souls, the remission of sins, the communion of the Holy Spirit.” And this change happens “whenever he invokes the Holy Spirit, and offers the most dread sacrifice, and constantly handles the common Lord of all”. That is, it happens when the priest invokes the Holy Spirit.

He continues, “I myself, moreover, have heard some one once relate, that a certain aged, venerable man, accustomed to see revelations, used to tell him, that he being thought worthy of a vision of this kind, at such a time, saw, on a sudden, so far as was possible for him, a multitude of angels, clothed in shining robes, and encircling the altar, and bending down, as one might see soldiers in the presence of their King, and for my part I believe it. Moreover another told me, without learning it from some one else, but as being himself thought worthy to be both an ear and eye witness of it, that, in the case of those who are about to depart hence, if they happen to be partakers of the mysteries, with a pure conscience, when they are about to breathe their last, angels keep guard over them for the sake of what they have received, and bear them hence. And dost thou not yet tremble to introduce a soul into so sacred a mystery of this kind, and to advance to the dignity of the Priesthood, one robed in filthy raiment, whom Christ has shut out from the rest of the band of guests? (Matthew 22:13)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 22 (KJV):12** And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Chrysostom continues, “The soul of the Priest should shine like a light beaming over the whole world. But mine has so great darkness overhanging it, because of my evil conscience, as to be always cast down and never able to look up with confidence to its Lord. Priests are the salt of the earth. (Matthew 5:13)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):13** Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Jesus was speaking to His disciples here, as we read in **Matthew 5 (KJV):1** And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: 2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, 3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

He continues, “But who would easily put up with my lack of understanding, and my inexperience in all things, but thou, who hast been wont to love me beyond measure. For the Priest ought not only to be thus pure as one who has been dignified with so high a ministry, but very discreet, and skilled in many matters, and to be as well versed in the affairs of this life as they who are engaged in the world, and yet to be free from them all more than the recluses who occupy the mountains. For since he must mix with men who have wives, and who bring up children, who possess servants, and are surrounded with wealth, and fill public positions, and are persons of influence, he too should be a many-sided man—I say many-sided, not unreal, nor yet fawning and hypocritical, but full of much freedom and assurance, and knowing how to adapt himself profitably, where the circumstances of the case require it, and to be both kind and severe, for it is not possible to treat all those under one’s charge on one plan, since neither is it well for physicians to apply one course of treatment to all their sick, nor for a pilot to know but one way of contending with the winds. For, indeed, continual storms beset this ship of ours, and these storms do not assail from without only, but take their rise from within, and there is need of much condescension, and circumspection, and all these different matters have one end in view, the glory of God, and the edifying of the Church.”

Chrysostom describes well the office of overseer, or bishop, or elder, or presbyter, but

not priest. There are only three priesthoods mentioned in the Bible. The Levitical priesthood, or order of Aaron, is mentioned in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):11** If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

The priesthood of Melchizedek in **Genesis 14 (KJV):18** And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.

And in **Psalms 110 (KJV):4** The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

And this is the priesthood of which Jesus is the priest, as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):12** For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

And the priesthood of all believers, as we read in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):9** But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;

The priesthood has changed to the order of Melchisedec. This is an eternal priesthood of which Jesus Christ is the High Priest. All believers have direct access to God through Him. He is the only mediator as we read in **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

Chrysostom continues, “5. Great is the conflict which recluses undergo, and much their toil. (**Schaff Note:** The following descriptions of monastic life were no doubt drawn from the habits of the monks in the neighbourhood of Antioch, who dwelt on the mountainous heights of Silpius and Casius, south of the city. They lived in separate huts or cabins, but were subject to an abbot and a common rule, probably very similar to that which Pachomius had recently established in Egypt, and which became very generally adopted in the East. There are frequent allusions to the habits of these monks in Chrysostom’s Homilies. See especially St. Matt. Hom. LXVIII. c. 3, and LXIX. c. 3; also Life of St. Chrysostom by the translator, pp. 59–68, 3d ed.)”

Chrysostom continues, “But if any one compare their exertions with those which the right exercise of the Priesthood involves, he will find the difference as great as the distance between a king and a commoner. For there, if the labor is great indeed, yet the conflict is common to body and soul, or rather the greater part of it is accomplished by the condition of the body, and if this be not strong, the inclination remains undeveloped, and is unable to come out into action. For the habit of intense fasting, and sleeping on the ground, and keeping vigil, and refraining from the bath, and great toil, and all other means which they use for the affliction of the body are given up, when the body to be thus disciplined is not strong. But in this case purity of soul is the business in hand, and no bodily vigor is required to show its excellence. For what does strength of body contribute towards our being not self-willed, or proud, or headstrong, but sober and prudent, and orderly, and all else, wherein St. Paul filled up the picture of the perfect Priest? But no one could say this of the virtues of the recluse.”

Chrysostom learned his lesson well from when he was a recluse, and suffered permanent damage to his stomach and kidneys, as we read in the **Introduction**. And we note that Paul never claimed to be a Priest.

Chrysostom continues, “6. But as in the case of wonder-workers, a large apparatus is required, both wheels and ropes and daggers; while the philosopher has the whole of his art stored up in his mind, not requiring any external appliances: So accordingly in the case before us. The recluse requires both a good condition of body, and a place suitable for his course of life, in order that such may not be settled too far from intercourse with their fellow men, and may have the tranquillity which belongs to desert places, and yet further, may not fail to enjoy the most favorable climate. For nothing is so unbearable to a body worn with fastings as a climate which is not equable. And what trouble they are compelled to take in the preparation of their clothing and daily food, as they are themselves ambitious of doing all with their own hands, I need not speak of now. But the Priest will require none of these things to supply his wants, but is unconcerned about them, and participates in all things which are harmless, while he has all his skill stored up in the treasure-house of his mind. But if any one admire a solitary life, and retirement from the society of the multitude, I should say myself that such a life was a token of patience, but not a sufficient proof of entire fortitude of soul. For the man who sits at the helm in harbor, does not yet give any certain proof of his art. But if one is able to guide his ship safely in the midst of the sea, no one would deny him to be an excellent steersman.

7. It would be, therefore, in no wise excessively surprising to us, that the recluse, living as he does by himself, is undisturbed and does not commit many and great sins. For he does not meet with things which irritate and excite his mind. But if any one who has devoted himself to whole multitudes, and has been compelled to bear the sins of many, has remained steadfast and firm, guiding his soul in the midst of the storm as if he were in a calm, he is the man to be justly applauded and admired of all, for he has shown sufficient proof of personal manliness. Do not thou, therefore, for thy part wonder if I, who avoid the marketplace and the haunts of the multitude, have not many to accuse me. For I ought not to wonder, if I sinned not when asleep, nor fell when I did not wrestle, nor was hit if I did not fight. For who, tell me, who will be able to speak against me, and reveal my depravity? Can this roof or cell? Nay, they would not be able to give tongue? Would my mother, who best of all knows my affairs? Well, certainly with her I am neither in communication, nor have we ever come to a quarrel, and if this had happened, no mother is so heartless and wanting in affection for her child as to revile and accuse before all him whom she travailed with, and brought forth, and reared, if there were no reason to constrain her, nor any person to urge her to such an act. Nevertheless, if any one desires to make a careful inspection of my mind, he will discover much which is corrupt there. Nor art thou unaware of this who art specially wont to extol me with praises before all. Now that I do not say these things out of mere modesty, recollect how often I said to thee, when this subject was being discussed between us, “If any one were to give me my choice whether I would rather gain distinction in the oversight of the Church, or in the life of the recluse, I would vote a thousand times over for accepting the former. For I have never failed to congratulate those who have been able to discharge this office well, and no one will gainsay that what I counted blessed I would not have shunned were I able to take part in it fitly. But what am I to do? There is nothing so prejudicial to the oversight of the Church as this inactivity and negligence of mine, which others think to be a sort of self-discipline, but which I hold to be a

veil as it were of my personal infirmity, covering the greater number of my defects and not suffering them to appear. For he who is accustomed to enjoy such great freedom from business, and to pass his time in much repose, even if he be of a noble nature, is confused by his inexperience, and is disturbed, and his inactivity deprives him of no small part of his natural ability. But when, besides, he is of slow intellect, and ignorant also of these severe trials, which I take it is my case, he will carry on this ministry which he has received no better than a statue. Wherefore of those who have come to such great trial, out of that school, few shine; and the greater part betray themselves, and fall, and undergo much hardship and sufferings; and no wonder. For the trials and the discipline are not concerned with the same things. The man who is contending in no wise differs from those who are untrained. He who thus enters this list should despise glory, be superior to anger, full of great discretion. But for the exercise of these qualities there is no scope in his case who affects a secluded life. For he does not have many to provoke him in order that he may practise chastising, the force of his anger: nor admirers and applauders in order that he may be trained to despise the praises of the multitudes. And of the discretion which is required in the Church, there is no taking account in their case. Whenever, therefore, they come to the trials of which they have never had practical experience, they get bewildered, their heads are turned, they fall into a state of helplessness, and besides adding nothing to their excellence, may have often lost that which they brought with them.

Basil now responds, “8. Basil: What then? shall we set over the administration of the Church those who move in society, and who are careful about the concerns of this world, who are adepts at wrangling and vituperation, are full of countless artifices, and versed in luxurious ways?”

Chrysostom: Hush, dear friend that thou art! Thou shouldest never entertain in thy thoughts such men as these, when the Priesthood is under discussion, but only such as are able after mixing and associating with all, to keep their purity undefiled, and their unworldliness, their holiness, constancy and sobriety unshaken, and to possess all other virtues which belong to recluses, in a greater degree than they. He who has many defects, but is able to hide them, by means of his seclusion, and to make them ineffectual, because he does not associate with any one, when *he* comes into society will gain nothing, but the position of a laughing stock, and will run greater risks still, which I was very nearly experiencing myself, had not the providence of God quickly warded off such fire from my head. For it is not possible for one in such a position to escape notice when he is so conspicuously placed, but everything then is detected, and as the fire tests the material of metals, so too the trial of the clerical office searches the souls of mortal men; and if any one be passionate or mean, or ambitious of fame, if he be boastful, or anything else of the kind, it unveils all; and speedily lays bare his defects, and not only lays them bare, but increases their painfulness and strength. For the wounds of the body, if they are galled, become harder to heal, and the emotions of the mind when chafed and irritated, are naturally more exasperated, and those who possess them are driven to commit greater sins. For they excite him who does not restrain them, to love of glory, and to boastfulness, and to desire for this world’s goods, and draw him downwards, both to luxury and laxity of life, and to laziness, and, little by little, to evils worse than these which result from them. For many are the circumstances in society which have the power to upset the balance of the mind, and to hinder its straightforward course; (**Schaff Note:** Another reading gives its “career towards God.”) and first of all is his social intercourse with women. For it is not possible for the Bishop, and one

who is concerned with the whole flock, to have a care for the male portion of it, but to pass over the female, which needs more particular forethought, because of its propensity to sins. But the man who is appointed to the administration of a Bishopric must have a care for the moral health of these, if not in a greater, at least in no less a degree than the others. For it is necessary to visit them when they are sick, to comfort them when they are sorrowful, and to reprove them when they are idle, and to help them when they are distressed; and in such cases the evil one would find many opportunities of approach, if a man did not fortify himself with a very strict guard. For the eye, not only of the unchaste, but of the modest woman pierces and disturbs the mind. Flatteries enervate it, and favors enslave it, and fervent love—the spring one may say of all good—becomes the cause of countless evils to those who do not make a right use of it. Constant cares too have ere now blunted the edge of the understanding, and have made that which was buoyant heavier than lead, while anger has burst in like smoke, and taken possession of all the inner man.

9. Why should any one speak of the injuries that result from grief, (**Schaff Note:** According to a different reading, τὰς λοιπὰς βλάβας, “The injuries which remain.”) the insults, the abuse, the censure from superiors, from inferiors, from the wise, and from fools; for the class who are wanting in right judgment are particularly fond of censuring, and will never readily allow any excuse. But the truly excellent Bishop ought neither to think lightly of these, but to clear himself with all men of the charges which they bring against him, with great forbearance and meekness, pardoning their unreasonable fault-finding, rather than being indignant and angry about it. For if St. Paul feared lest he should incur a suspicion of theft, among his disciples, and therefore procured others for the management of the money, that “no one” he says, “should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us,” (2 Corinthians 8:20) how ought we not to do all so as to remove evil suspicions, even if they happen to be false, and most unreasonable, and very foreign to our thought?”

He refers in context to **2 Corinthians 8 (KJV):20** Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: 21 Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

He continues, “For we are not so utterly removed from any sin as St. Paul from theft; notwithstanding, though so far from this evil practice, he did not, therefore, slight the suspicion of the world, although it was very absurd, and even insane. For it was madness to have any such suspicion about that blessed and admirable character. But none the less does he remove far off the causes of this suspicion, unreasonable though it was, and such as no one who was in his senses would entertain, and he neither disdained the folly of the multitudes, nor did he say, “To whose mind did it ever occur to suspect such things of us, after the signs which I have wrought, and the forbearance which has marked my life, and when you all revered and admired us?” Quite the contrary: he foresaw and expected this base suspicion, and pulled it up by the roots, or rather did not suffer it to grow at all. Why? “Because,” saith he, “we provide things honest not only before the Lord, but before all men.” (2 Corinthians 8:21; Romans 12:17)”

He refers to 2 Corinthians 8:21 above, and to **Romans 12 (KJV):17** Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

He continues, “So great, yea and far greater zeal must we use, to uproot and prevent floating reports which are not good, but to see beforehand from afar whence they come, and to remove beforehand the causes from which they are produced, not to wait till they are

established and are the common topics in every one's mouth. For then it is not easy in the future to destroy them, but very difficult, perhaps impossible, and not without mischief, because this is done after many have been injured. But how far shall I continue pursuing the unattainable? For to enumerate all the difficulties in this direction, is nothing more nor less than measuring the ocean. Even when any one should clear himself from every passion (which is a thing impossible) in order to correct the failings of others, he is forced to undergo countless trials, and when his own infirmities are added, behold, an abyss of toil and care, and all that he must suffer, who wishes to subdue the evils in himself and in those around him.

Basil then asks, "10. Basil: And now, art *thou* free from toils? hast thou no cares while thou livest by thyself?"

Chrysostom then responds, "Chrysostom: I have indeed even now. For how is it possible for one who is a man, and who is living this toilsome life of ours, to be free from cares and conflict? But it is not quite the same thing for man to plunge into a boundless ocean and to cross a river, so great is the difference between these cares and those. For now, indeed, if I were able to become serviceable to others, I should wish it myself, and this would be a matter of prayer with me. But if it is not possible to help another, yet if it be practicable to save and rescue myself from the waves, I shall be contented."

He saw the ministry of a priest as plunging into a "boundless ocean" and crossing a "river".

Basil then asks, "Basil: Dost thou then think this to be a great thing? and dost thou fancy that thou wilt be saved when thou art not profitable to any other?"

Chrysostom then responds, "Chrysostom: Thou hast spoken well and nobly, for I am not myself able to believe that it is possible for one who has not labored for the salvation of his fellow to be saved, nor did it at all profit the wretched man in the Gospel that he had not diminished his talent; but he perished through not increasing it and bringing it doubled to his master. (Matthew 25:24)"

He refers in context to **Matthew 25 (KJV):24** Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. 26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: 27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. 28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. 29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. 30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

But the "unprofitable servant" had no faith. Therefore the word preached did not profit him as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):2** For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

So the unprofitable servant did not lose his salvation. He never had salvation. So our salvation is not based on how much we "labored for the salvation" of our "fellow to be saved". Our rewards after we have believed in Jesus Christ are dependent on this, but not our salvation.



Chrysostom continues, “Nevertheless, I think that my punishment will be milder when I am called to account, because I have not saved others, than it would be if I should destroy myself and others too by becoming far worse after so great an honor. For now I trust that my chastisement will be proportioned to the amount of my sins, but after receiving this office, I fear it would be not double, or threefold, but manifold, because I should have caused very many to stumble, and after additional honor should have offended the God who honored me.”

The thinking in the time of Chrysostom is that there would be one final judgment of the living and the dead. There was no discerning between the judgment of the righteous which is according to faith, and for rewards, and the judgment of the wicked dead which is according to works. Chrysostom simply did not feel himself ready for the ministry.

In paragraph 11, Chrysostom continues, “11. For this very cause God accuses the Israelites more vehemently, and shows that they were worthy of greater chastisement, because they sinned after so many honors had come to them from Him, saying in one place: “But you only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for your iniquities,” (Amos 3:2) and again, “and I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites;” (Amos 2:11) and before the times of the prophets, wishing to show that sins receive sorer punishment by far when they occur in the case of the Priest than in the case of the laity, He enjoins as great a sacrifice to be offered for the Priest as for the whole people, (Leviticus 4:3,14) and this amounts to a proof on his part, that the wounds of the Priesthood need more assistance—that is, as great as those of all the people together, and they would not have needed a greater, except they were worse;”

He refers to **Amos 3 (KJV):2** You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

And to **Amos 2 (KJV):11** And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith the Lord.

And to **Leviticus 4 (KJV):3** If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the Lord for a sin offering.

And in context to **Leviticus 4 (KJV):13** And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which should not be done, and are guilty; 14 When the sin, which they have sinned against it, is known, then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation.

Chrysostom did not understand that the priesthood had changed, and we in the New Testament are not under the law of the Levitical priesthood, or any other priesthood. The only valid priesthood in the New Testament is the order of Melchisedec, of which Jesus is our High Priest.

He continues, “and they are not worse in their nature, but are aggravated through the dignity of the Priest, who dares to commit them. And why do I speak of the *men* who follow this ministration. For the daughters of the Priests, (Leviticus 21:9) who have no part in the Priestly office, yet on account of their father’s dignity undergo a far bitterer punishment for the same sins as others, and the offense is the same in their case and in the daughters of the laity;”

He refers to **Leviticus 21 (KJV):9** And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire.

He continues, “namely, fornication in both; yet the penalty is far severer for the former. Dost thou see with what abundant proof God shows thee that he demands much greater punishment for the ruler than for the ruled? For no doubt he who punishes to a greater degree than others the daughter of a certain man for that man’s sake, will not exact the same penalty from the man who is the cause of her additional chastisement as from others, but a much heavier one; and very reasonably; for the mischief does not merely involve himself, but it destroys the souls of the weaker brethren and of them who look up to him, and Ezekiel, writing to show this, distinguishes from one another the judgment of the rams and of the sheep. (Ezekiel 34:17)”

He refers in context to **Ezekiel 34 (KJV):2** Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? 3 Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock.

And to **Ezekiel 34 (KJV):11** For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. 13 And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. 15 I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. 16 I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment. 17 And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXXXV, page 509-510**

Let us repent then, and give alms pure from covetousness, and in great abundance. Consider that the Jews used to feed eight thousand Levites, and together with the Levites, widows also and orphans, and they bore many other public charges, and together with these things also served as soldiers; but now there are fields, and houses, and hirings of lodgings, and carriages, and muleteers, and mules, and a great array of this kind in the church on account of you, and your hardness of heart. For this store of the church ought to be with you, and your readiness of mind ought to be a revenue to her; but now two wrong things come to pass, both you continue unfruitful, and God’s priests do not practise their proper duties.

Was it not possible for the houses and the lands to have remained in the time of the apostles? Wherefore then did they sell them and give away? Because this was a better thing.

4. But now a fear seized our fathers (when you were so mad after worldly things, and because of your gatherings, and not dispersing abroad), lest the companies of the widows and

orphans, and of the virgins, should perish of famine; therefore were they constrained to provide these things. For it was not their wish to thrust themselves unto what was so unbecoming; but their desire was that your good will should have been a supply for them, and that they should gather their fruits from thence, and that they themselves should give heed to prayers only. But now ye have constrained them to imitate the houses of them that manage public affairs; whereby all things are turned upside down. For when both you and we are entangled in the same things, who is there to propitiate God? Therefore it is not possible for us to open our mouths, when the state of the church is no better than that of worldly men. Have ye not heard that the apostles would not consent so much as to distribute the money that was collected without any trouble? But now our bishops have gone beyond agents, and stewards, and hucksters in their care about these things; and when they ought to be careful and thoughtful about your souls, they are vexing themselves every day about these things, for which the innkeepers, and tax-gatherers, and accountants, and stewards are careful.

These things I do not mention for nought in the way of complaint, but in order that there may be some amendment and change, in order that we may be pitied for serving a grievous servitude, in order that you may become a revenue and store for the church.

But if ye are not willing, behold the poor before your eyes; as many as it is possible for us to suffice, we will not cease to feed; but those, whom it is not possible, we will leave to you, that ye may not hear those words on the awful day, which shall be spoken to the unmerciful and cruel. "Ye saw me an hungered, and fed me not." (Matthew 25:42)

For together with you this inhumanity makes us laughing stocks, because leaving our prayers, and our teaching, and the other parts of holiness, we are fighting all our time, some with wine merchants, some with corn-factors, others with them that retail other provisions.

Hence come battles, and strifes, and daily revilings, and reproaches, and jeers, and on each of the priests names are imposed more suitable for houses of secular men; when it would have been fit to take other names in the place of these, and to be named from those things, from which also the apostles ordained, from the feeding of the hungry, from the protection of the injured, from the care of strangers, from succoring them that are despitefully used, from providing for the orphans, from taking part with the widows, from presiding over the virgins; and these offices should be distributed amongst us instead of the care of the lands and houses.

These are the stores of the church, these the treasures that become her, and that afford in great degree both ease to us and profit to you; or rather to you ease with the profit. For I suppose that by the grace of God they that assemble themselves here amount to the number of one hundred thousand; (**Schaff Note:** *i.e.*, the sum of all the congregations in Antioch) and if each bestowed one loaf to some one of the poor, all would be in plenty; but if one farthing only, no one would be poor; and we should not undergo so many revilings and jeers, in consequence of our care about the money. For indeed the saying, "Sell thy goods, and give to the poor, and come and follow me," (Matthew 19:21) might be seasonably addressed to the prelates of the church with respect to the property of the church. For in any other way it is not possible to follow Him as we ought, not being freed from all grosser and more worldly care.

But now the priests of God attend at the vintage and harvest, and at the sale and purchase of the produce; and whereas they that served the shadow had an entire immunity from such matters, although entrusted with a more carnal service; we, who are invited to the very inmost shrines of the heavens, and who enter into the true holy of holies, take upon ourselves the cares

of tradesmen and retail dealers.

Hence great neglect of the Scriptures, and remissness in prayers, and indifference about all the other duties; for it is not possible to be split into the two things with due zeal. Where I pray and beseech you that many fountains may spring up to us from all quarters, and that your forwardness may be to us the threshing floor and the wine press.

For in this way both the poor will more easily be supported, and God will be glorified, and ye will advance unto a greater degree of love to mankind, and will enjoy the good things eternal; unto which God grant we may all attain, by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory world without end. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “Let us repent then, and give alms pure from covetousness, and in great abundance. Consider that the Jews used to feed eight thousand Levites, and together with the Levites, widows also and orphans, and they bore many other public charges, and together with these things also served as soldiers; but now there are fields, and houses, and hirings of lodgings, and carriages, and muleteers, and mules, and a great array of this kind in the church on account of you, and your hardness of heart. For this store of the church ought to be with you, and your readiness of mind ought to be a revenue to her; but now two wrong things come to pass, both you continue unfruitful, and God’s priests do not practise their proper duties.”

Chrysostom is saying that the Church had to have “fields, and houses, and hirings of lodgings, and carriages, and muleteers, and mules, and a great array of this kind” in order to fulfill its ministry to the poor because the laity would not give alms. And he says that as a result the laity “continue unfruitful, and God’s priests do not practise their proper duties.”

He continues, “Was it not possible for the houses and the lands to have remained in the time of the apostles? Wherefore then did they sell them and give away? Because this was a better thing.”

He refers to **Acts 4 (KJV):**32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. 36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, 37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

He continues, “4. But now a fear seized our fathers (when you were so mad after worldly things, and because of your gatherings, and not dispersing abroad), lest the companies of the widows and orphans, and of the virgins, should perish of famine; therefore were they constrained to provide these things. For it was not their wish to thrust themselves unto what was so unbecoming; but their desire was that your good will should have been a supply for them, and that they should gather their fruits from thence, and that they themselves should give heed to prayers only. But now ye have constrained them to imitate the houses of them that manage public affairs; whereby all things are turned upside down. For when both you and we are

entangled in the same things, who is there to propitiate God?"

So the priests were having to "to imitate the houses of them that manage public affairs", in order to provide for the poor, and were limited by this in terms of their ministry.

He continues, "Therefore it is not possible for us to open our mouths, when the state of the church is no better than that of worldly men. Have ye not heard that the apostles would not consent so much as to distribute the money that was collected without any trouble?"

He refers to **Acts 6 (KJV):1** And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. **2** Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. **3** Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. **4** But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

He continues, "But now our bishops have gone beyond agents, and stewards, and hucksters in their care about these things; and when they ought to be careful and thoughtful about your souls, they are vexing themselves every day about these things, for which the innkeepers, and tax-gatherers, and accountants, and stewards are careful."

So even the Bishops had "gone beyond agents, and stewards, and hucksters in their care about these things", that is, of "public affairs".

He continues, "These things I do not mention for nought in the way of complaint, but in order that there may be some amendment and change, in order that we may be pitied for serving a grievous servitude, in order that you may become a revenue and store for the church.

But if ye are not willing, behold the poor before your eyes; as many as it is possible for us to suffice, we will not cease to feed; but those, whom it is not possible, we will leave to you, that ye may not hear those words on the awful day, which shall be spoken to the unmerciful and cruel. "Ye saw me an hungered, and fed me not." (Matthew 25:42)"

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):42** For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

He continues, "For together with you this inhumanity makes us laughing stocks, because leaving our prayers, and our teaching, and the other parts of holiness, we are fighting all our time, some with wine merchants, some with corn-factors, others with them that retail other provisions.

Hence come battles, and strifes, and daily revilings, and reproaches, and jeers, and on each of the priests names are imposed more suitable for houses of secular men; when it would have been fit to take other names in the place of these, and to be named from those things, from which also the apostles ordained, from the feeding of the hungry, from the protection of the injured, from the care of strangers, from succoring them that are despitefully used, from providing for the orphans, from taking part with the widows, from presiding over the virgins; and these offices should be distributed amongst us instead of the care of the lands and houses.

These are the stores of the church, these the treasures that become her, and that afford in great degree both ease to us and profit to you; or rather to you ease with the profit. For I suppose that by the grace of God they that assemble themselves here amount to the number of one hundred thousand; (**Schaff Note:** *i.e.*, the sum of all the congregations in Antioch) and if each bestowed one loaf to some one of the poor, all would be in plenty; but if one farthing only,

no one would be poor; and we should not undergo so many revilings and jeers, in consequence of our care about the money. For indeed the saying, “Sell thy goods, and give to the poor, and come and follow me,” (Matthew 19:21) might be seasonably addressed to the prelates of the church with respect to the property of the church. For in any other way it is not possible to follow Him as we ought, not being freed from all grosser and more worldly care.”

He refers to **Matthew 19 (KJV):21** Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

He continues, “But now the priests of God attend at the vintage and harvest, and at the sale and purchase of the produce; and whereas they that served the shadow had an entire immunity from such matters, although entrusted with a more carnal service; we, who are invited to the very inmost shrines of the heavens, and who enter into the true holy of holies, take upon ourselves the cares of tradesmen and retail dealers.”

When he refers to “they that served the shadow”, he speaks of the Levitical priests. But when he speaks of entrance into the “true holy of holies”, he implies that this is what priests in his time do. But this has been granted to all believers, as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):19** Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

He concludes, “Hence great neglect of the Scriptures, and remissness in prayers, and indifference about all the other duties; for it is not possible to be split into the two things with due zeal. Where I pray and beseech you that many fountains may spring up to us from all quarters, and that your forwardness may be to us the threshing floor and the wine press.

For in this way both the poor will more easily be supported, and God will be glorified, and ye will advance unto a greater degree of love to mankind, and will enjoy the good things eternal; unto which God grant we may all attain, by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory world without end. Amen.”

It is evident that Chrysostom did not neglect the Scriptures, but he notes that, in the Church in his time, there was a “great neglect of the Scriptures, and remissness in prayers, and indifference about all the other duties” among the clergy.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY X, page 366-367**

1 Thessalonians v. 12, 13

“But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves.”

It must needs happen that a ruler should have many occasions of enmities. As physicians (Schaff Note: [Literally, “physicians’ boys,” apparently a familiar phrase for physicians, employed also by Lucian. It perhaps originally denoted medical students,—a sense possible here also, and in Lucian (On Writing History, ch. vii.).—J.A.B.]) are compelled to give much

trouble to the sick, preparing for them both diet and medicines that are not pleasant indeed, but attended with benefit; and as fathers are often annoying to their children: so also are teachers, and much more. For the physician, though he be odious to the sick man, yet has the relations and friends on good terms with him, nay, and often the sick man himself. And a father also, both from the force of nature and from external laws, exercises his dominion over his son with great ease; and if he should chastise and chide his son against his will, there is no one to prevent him, nor will the son himself be able to raise a look against him. But in the case of the Priest there is a great difficulty. For in the first place, he ought to be ruling people willing to obey, and thankful to him for his rule; but it is not possible that this should soon come to pass. For he who is convicted and reprov'd, be he what he may, is sure to cease from being thankful, and to become an enemy. In like manner he will act who is advised, and he who is admonished and he who is exhorted. If therefore I should say, empty out wealth on the needy, I say what is offensive and burdensome. If I say, chastise thine anger, quench thy wrath, check thine inordinate desire, cut off a small portion of thy luxury, all is burdensome and offensive. And if I should punish one who is slothful, or should remove him from the Church, or exclude him from the public prayers, he grieves, not because he is deprived of these things, but because of the public disgrace. For this is an aggravation of the evil, that, being interdicted from spiritual things, we grieve not on account of our deprivation of these great blessings, but because of our disgrace in the sight of others. We do not shudder at, do not dread, the thing itself.

For this reason Paul from one end to the other discourses largely concerning these persons. And Christ indeed has subjected them with so strict a necessity, that He says, "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat. All things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe: but do not ye after their works." (Matt. xxiii. 2, 3) And again, when He healed the leper, He said, "Go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a testimony unto them." (Matt. viii. 4) And yet Thou sayest, "Ye make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves." (Matt. xxiii. 15) For this reason I said, answers He, "Do not the things which they do." Therefore he hath shut out all excuse from him that is under rule. In his Epistle to Timothy also this Apostle said, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor." (1 Tim. v. 17) And in his Epistle to the Hebrews also he said, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them." (Heb. xiii. 17) And here again, "But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord." For since he had said, "build each other up," lest they should think that he raised them to the rank of teachers, he has added, See, however, that I gave leave to you also to edify one another, for it is not possible for a teacher to say everything. "Them that labor among you," he says, "and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you." And how, he says, is it not absurd? If a man stand up for thee before a man, thou doest anything, thou confessest thyself much indebted; but he stands up for thee before God, and thou dost not own the favor. And how does he stand up for me? thou sayest. Because he prays for thee, because he ministers to thee the spiritual gift that is by Baptism, he visits, he advises and admonishes thee, he comes at midnight if thou callest for him; he is nothing else than the constant subject of thy mouth, and he bears thy injurious speeches. What necessity had he? Has he done well or ill? Thou indeed hast a wife, and livest luxuriously, and chooseth a life of commerce. But from this the Priest has hindered himself by his occupation; his life is no other than to be employed about the Church. "And to esteem them," he says, "exceeding highly in love for their work's sake; be at peace with them." (Schaff

**Note:** ἐν αὐτοῖς, and so several mss.; Rec. t. ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, “among yourselves,” and so L. [I. Cat.] here, but the comment hardly bears it.) Seest thou how well he is aware that unpleasant feelings arise? He does not merely say “love,” but “very highly,” as children love their fathers. For through them ye were begotten by that eternal generation: through them you have obtained the kingdom: through their hands all things are done, through them the gates of heaven are opened to you. Let no one raise divisions, let no one be contentious. He who loves Christ, whatever the Priest may be, will love him, because through him he has obtained the awful Mysteries. Tell me, if wishing to see a palace resplendent with much gold, and radiant with the brightness of precious stones, thou couldest find him who had the key, and he being called upon immediately opened it, and admitted thee within, wouldest thou not prefer him above all men? Wouldest thou not love him as dearly as thine eyes? Wouldest thou not kiss him? This man hath opened heaven to thee, and thou dost not kiss him, nor pay him court. If thou hast a wife, dost thou not love him above all, who procured her for thee? So if thou lovest Christ, if thou lovest the kingdom of heaven, acknowledge through whom thou obtainedst it. On this account he says, “for their work’s sake, be at peace with them.”

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves.”

He refers to **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):** 12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

He continues, “It must needs happen that a ruler should have many occasions of enmities. As physicians (**Schaff Note:** [Literally, “physicians’ boys,” apparently a familiar phrase for physicians, employed also by Lucian. It perhaps originally denoted medical students,—a sense possible here also, and in Lucian (On Writing History, ch. vii.).—J.A.B.]) are compelled to give much trouble to the sick, preparing for them both diet and medicines that are not pleasant indeed, but attended with benefit; and as fathers are often annoying to their children: so also are teachers, and much more. For the physician, though he be odious to the sick man, yet has the relations and friends on good terms with him, nay, and often the sick man himself. And a father also, both from the force of nature and from external laws, exercises his dominion over his son with great ease; and if he should chastise and chide his son against his will, there is no one to prevent him, nor will the son himself be able to raise a look against him. But in the case of the Priest there is a great difficulty.”

The priests in the time of Chrysostom were those who labored among the brethren. But nothing is mentioned of priests in the verse above.

He continues, “For in the first place, he ought to be ruling people willing to obey, and thankful to him for his rule; but it is not possible that this should soon come to pass. For he who is convicted and reprov'd, be he what he may, is sure to cease from being thankful, and to become an enemy. In like manner he will act who is advised, and he who is admonished and he who is exhorted. If therefore I should say, empty out wealth on the needy, I say what is offensive and burdensome. If I say, chastise thine anger, quench thy wrath, check thine inordinate desire, cut off a small portion of thy luxury, all is burdensome and offensive. And if I should punish one who is slothful, or should remove him from the Church, or exclude him from



the public prayers, he grieves, not because he is deprived of these things, but because of the public disgrace. For this is an aggravation of the evil, that, being interdicted from spiritual things, we grieve not on account of our deprivation of these great blessings, but because of our disgrace in the sight of others. We do not shudder at, do not dread, the thing itself.

For this reason Paul from one end to the other discourses largely concerning these persons. And Christ indeed has subjected them with so strict a necessity, that He says, “The Scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat. All things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe: but do not ye after their works.” (Matt. xxiii. 2, 3)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 23 (KJV):**1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, 2 Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: 3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

He continues, “And again, when He healed the leper, He said, “Go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a testimony unto them.” (Matt. viii. 4)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 8 (KJV):**3 And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. 4 And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

He continues, “And yet Thou sayest, “Ye make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves.” (Matt. xxiii. 15)”

He refers to **Matthew 23 (KJV):**15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

He continues, “For this reason I said, answers He, “Do not the things which they do.” Therefore he hath shut out all excuse from him that is under rule. In his Epistle to Timothy also this Apostle said, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor.” (1 Tim. v. 17)”

He refers to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):**17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

He continues, “And in his Epistle to the Hebrews also he said, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them.” (Heb. xiii. 17)”

He refers to **Hebrews 13 (KJV):**17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

He continues, “And here again, “But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord.” For since he had said, “build each other up,” lest they should think that he raised them to the rank of teachers, he has added, See, however, that I gave leave to you also to edify one another, for it is not possible for a teacher to say everything. “Them that labor among you,” he says, “and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.” And how, he says, is it not absurd? If a man stand up for thee before a man, thou doest anything, thou confessest thyself much indebted; but he stands up for thee before God, and thou dost not own the favor. And how does he stand up for me? thou sayest. Because he prays for thee, because he ministers to thee the spiritual gift that is by Baptism, he visits, he advises and

admonishes thee, he comes at midnight if thou callest for him; he is nothing else than the constant subject of thy mouth, and he bears thy injurious speeches. What necessity had he? Has he done well or ill? Thou indeed hast a wife, and livest luxuriously, and chooseth a life of commerce. But from this the Priest has hindered himself by his occupation; his life is no other than to be employed about the Church.”

Nothing is said about priests in the New Testament except in Matthew 8:4 when Jesus spoke about the Jewish priest. The priesthood in the time of Chrysostom and Augustine was an assumption of the Church in their time. It had been passed down to them from very early on in the development of the Church. Irenaeus was bishop of Lyons in France in 178 AD to approximately 202 AD. He codified the basis for a priesthood in the Church, as it was already present in the Church in his time. He said in his writing, **Adversus Heresies, Book 4: Chapter VIII**, “For David had been appointed a priest by God, although Saul persecuted him. For all the righteous possess the sacerdotal rank,” referring to **Exodus 19 (KJV):6** And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

And to **1 Peter 2 (KJV):5** Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. 9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;

And Irenaeus adds, “And all the apostles of the Lord are priests, who do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually.” He further states, “But who are they that have left father and mother, and have said adieu to all their neighbours, on account of the word of God and His covenant, unless the disciples of the Lord? Of whom again Moses says, “They shall have no inheritance, for the Lord Himself is their inheritance”, referring to **Numbers 18 (KJV):20** And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. 21 And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Again, Irenaeus says, “The priests the Levites shall have no part in the whole tribe of Levi, nor substance with Israel; their substance is the offerings (*fructifications*) of the Lord: these shall they eat”, referring to **Numbers 18 (KJV):1** And the Lord said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood.

Philip Schaff states, “The idea and institution of a special priesthood, distinct from the body of the people, with the accompanying notion of sacrifice and altar, passed imperceptibly from Jewish and heathen reminiscences and analogies into the Christian church. The majority of Jewish converts adhered tenaciously to the Mosaic institutions and rites, and a considerable part never fully attained to the height of spiritual freedom proclaimed by Paul, or soon fell away

from it. He opposed legalistic and ceremonial tendencies in Galatia and Corinth; and although sacerdotalism does not appear among the errors of his Judaizing opponents, the Levitical priesthood, with its three ranks of high priest, priest, and Levite, naturally furnished an analogy for the threefold ministry of bishop, priest, and deacon, and came to be regarded as typical of it. Still less could the Gentile Christians, as a body, at once emancipate themselves from their traditional notions of priesthood, altar, and sacrifice, on which their former religion was based. Whether we regard the change as an apostasy from a higher position attained, or as a reaction of old ideas never fully abandoned, the change is undeniable, and can be traced to the second century. The church could not long occupy the ideal height of the apostolic age, and as the pentecostal illumination passed away with the death of the apostles, the old reminiscences began to reassert themselves.” **History of the Church, Volume II, Clergy and Laity, page 123, Philip Schaff.**

Chrysostom continues, ““And to esteem them,” he says, “exceeding highly in love for their work’s sake; be at peace with them.” (**Schaff Note:** ἐν αὐτοῖς, and so several mss.; Rec. t. ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, “among yourselves,” and so L. [I. Cat.] here, but the comment hardly bears it.) Seest thou how well he is aware that unpleasant feelings arise? He does not merely say “love,” but “very highly,” as children love their fathers. For through them ye were begotten by that eternal generation: through them you have obtained the kingdom: through their hands all things are done, through them the gates of heaven are opened to you. Let no one raise divisions, let no one be contentious. He who loves Christ, whatever the Priest may be, will love him, because through him he has obtained the awful Mysteries.”

Chrysostom makes the Priest another mediator between God and the believers. But we read as in **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

He continues, “Tell me, if wishing to see a palace resplendent with much gold, and radiant with the brightness of precious stones, thou couldest find him who had the key, and he being called upon immediately opened it, and admitted thee within, wouldest thou not prefer him above all men?”

He refers to **Matthew 16 (KJV):19** And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

But the key into the kingdom of heaven is Jesus. He is the door as we read in **John 10 (KJV):7** Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

It is through Him that we are saved as we read in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

When we believe in Him we pass from condemnation to justification, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is

condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

And pass from death to life, as we read again in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

The Gospel message is the proclamation that Jesus saves. Paul gives us a summary of this message in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; **9** That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. **10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

The Lord uses believers to preach the Gospel. And He will reward all those who do so. But our faith is in Jesus Christ who saved us, and not in man. Chrysostom is making a dependency on man that is not supported by the Scriptures.

We are to trust in the Lord as we read in **Proverbs 3 (KJV):5** Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. **6** In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

The Lord is about relationship.

Chrysostom concludes, “Wouldest thou not love him as dearly as thine eyes? Wouldest thou not kiss him? This man hath opened heaven to thee, and thou dost not kiss him, nor pay him court. If thou hast a wife, dost thou not love him above all, who procured her for thee? So if thou lovest Christ, if thou lovest the kingdom of heaven, acknowledge through whom thou obtainedst it. On this account he says, “for their work’s sake, be at peace with them.””

So, let us acknowledge Him who opened heaven for us, as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):11** But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; **12** Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

And to **Hebrews 9 (KJV):24** For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

And it was of Him that we are in Christ, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: **31** That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

The Lord is about relationship. And it is not dependent on man, as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):27** But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

God wants relationship with every individual. And He has made this possible by faith in Jesus Christ.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY VI, page 426-427**

## 1 Timothy ii. 1–4

“I exhort therefore that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” [R.V.: who willeth that all men should be saved, &c.]

The Priest is the common father, as it were, of all the world; it is proper therefore that he should care for all, even as God, Whom he serves. For this reason he says, “I exhort therefore that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.” From this, two advantages result. First, hatred towards those who are without is done away; for no one can feel hatred towards those for whom he prays: and they again are made better by the prayers that are offered for them, and by losing their ferocious disposition towards us. For nothing is so apt to draw men under teaching, as to love, and be loved. Think what it was for those who persecuted, scourged, banished, and slaughtered the Christians, to hear that those whom they treated so barbarously offered fervent prayers to God for them. (**Schaff Note:** This is urged by Tertullian, *Apol.* i. § 30, and *Address to Scapula*, § 2. See also St. Justin, *M. Apol.* i. § 23) Observe how he wishes a Christian to be superior to all ill treatment. As a father who was struck on the face by a little child which he was carrying, would not lose anything of his affection for it; so we ought not to abate in our good will towards those who are without, even when we are stricken by them. What is “first of all”? It means in the daily Service; and the initiated know how this is done every day both in the evening and the morning, how we offer prayers for the whole world, for kings and all that are in authority. But some one perhaps will say, he meant not for all men, but for all the faithful. How then does he speak of kings? for kings were not then worshipers of God, for there was a long succession of ungodly princes. And that he might not seem to flatter them, he says first, “for all men,” then “for kings”; for if he had only mentioned kings, that might have been suspected. And then since the soul of some Christians might be slow at hearing this, and reject the exhortation, if at the celebration of the holy Mysteries it was necessary to offer prayers for a heathen king, he shows them the advantage of it, thus at least to reconcile them to the advice, “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life”; as much as to say, Their safety is a security to us; as also in his Epistle to the Romans, he exhorts them to obey their rulers, “not for wrath but for conscience’ sake.” (*Rom.* xiii. 5.) For God has appointed government for the public good. When therefore they make war for this end, and stand on guard for our security, were it not unreasonable that we should not offer prayers for their safety in wars and dangers? It is not therefore flattery, but agreeable to the rules of justice. For if they were not preserved, and prospered in their wars, our affairs must necessarily be involved in confusion and trouble; and if they were cut off, we must either serve ourselves, or be scattered up and down as fugitives. For they are a sort of bulwarks thrown up before us, within which those who are enclosed are in peace and safety.

He says, “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks.” For we must give thanks to God for the good that befalls others, as that He maketh the sun to shine upon the evil and the good, and sendeth His rain both upon the just and the unjust. Observe how he would unite and bind us together, not only by prayer but by thanksgiving. For he who is urged to thank God for his neighbor’s good, is also bound to love him, and be kindly disposed towards him. And if we must give thanks for our neighbor’s good, much more for what happens to ourselves,

and for what is unknown, and even for things against our will, and such as appear grievous to us, since God dispenses all things for our good.

**Commentary:** He begins as he says, “I exhort therefore that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” [R.V.: who willeth that all men should be saved, &c.]

He refers to **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):1** I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; **2** For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. **3** For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; **4** Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

He continues, “The Priest is the common father, as it were, of all the world; it is proper therefore that he should care for all, even as God, Whom he serves.”

So he is saying that the priest is like God. But Jesus taught us to pray to our Father, as we read in **Matthew 6 (KJV):9** After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. **10** Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. **11** Give us this day our daily bread. **12** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. **13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

We don't pray to a priest, but to God. And Jesus also taught as in **Matthew 23 (KJV):9** And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

All believers are servants of the most high as we read in **Daniel 3 (KJV):26** Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were just everyday believers.

This thinking about the priest made the priest our mediator. But there is only one mediator between God and men, as we read in **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

Chrysostom continues, “For this reason he says, “I exhort therefore that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.” From this, two advantages result. First, hatred towards those who are without is done away; for no one can feel hatred towards those for whom he prays: and they again are made better by the prayers that are offered for them, and by losing their ferocious disposition towards us. For nothing is so apt to draw men under teaching, as to love, and be loved. Think what it was for those who persecuted, scourged, banished, and slaughtered the Christians, to hear that those whom they treated so barbarously offered fervent prayers to God for them. (**Schaff Note:** This is urged by Tertullian, Apol. i. § 30, and Address to Scapula, § 2. See also St. Justin, M. Apol. i. § 23.)

Chrysostom continues, “Observe how he wishes a Christian to be superior to all ill treatment. As a father who was struck on the face by a little child which he was carrying, would not lose anything of his affection for it; so we ought not to abate in our good will towards those who are without, even when we are stricken by them. What is “first of all”? It means in the

daily Service; and the initiated know how this is done every day both in the evening and the morning, how we offer prayers for the whole world, for kings and all that are in authority.”

It was all about ritual in the Church in the time of Chrysostom.

He continues, “But some one perhaps will say, he meant not for all men, but for all the faithful. How then does he speak of kings? for kings were not then worshipers of God, for there was a long succession of ungodly princes. And that he might not seem to flatter them, he says first, “for all men,” then “for kings”; for if he had only mentioned kings, that might have been suspected. And then since the soul of some Christians might be slow at hearing this, and reject the exhortation, if at the celebration of the holy Mysteries it was necessary to offer prayers for a heathen king, he shows them the advantage of it, thus at least to reconcile them to the advice, “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life”; as much as to say, Their safety is a security to us; as also in his Epistle to the Romans, he exhorts them to obey their rulers, “not for wrath but for conscience’ sake.” (Rom. xiii. 5)”

He refers in context to **Romans 13 (KJV)**:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. 2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. 5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

We also pray for the salvation of unbelievers. Chrysostom continues, “For God has appointed government for the public good. When therefore they make war for this end, and stand on guard for our security, were it not unreasonable that we should not offer prayers for their safety in wars and dangers? It is not therefore flattery, but agreeable to the rules of justice. For if they were not preserved, and prospered in their wars, our affairs must necessarily be involved in confusion and trouble; and if they were cut off, we must either serve ourselves, or be scattered up and down as fugitives. For they are a sort of bulwarks thrown up before us, within which those who are enclosed are in peace and safety.”

Chrysostom continues, “He says, “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks.” For we must give thanks to God for the good that befalls others, as that He maketh the sun to shine upon the evil and the good, and sendeth His rain both upon the just and the unjust. Observe how he would unite and bind us together, not only by prayer but by thanksgiving. For he who is urged to thank God for his neighbor’s good, is also bound to love him, and be kindly disposed towards him. And if we must give thanks for our neighbor’s good, much more for what happens to ourselves, and for what is unknown, and even for things against our will, and such as appear grievous to us, since God dispenses all things for our good.”

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TITUS, HOMILY I, page 521-522**

Ver. 4. “To Titus, mine own son after the common faith.”

What is “after the common faith”? After he had called him his own son, and assumed the

dignity of a father, hear how it is that he lessens and lowers that honor. He adds, "After the common faith"; that is, with respect to the faith I have no advantage over thee; for it is common, and both thou and I were born by it. Whence then does he call him his son? Either only wishing to express his affection for him, or his priority in the Gospel, or to show that Titus had been enlightened by him. On this account he calls the faithful both children and brethren; brethren, because they were born by the same faith; children, because it was by his hands. By mentioning the common faith, therefore, he intimates their brotherhood.

Ver. 4. "Grace and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour."

Because he had called him his son, he adds, "from God the Father," to elevate his mind by showing whose son he was, and by not only naming the common faith, but by adding "our Father," he implies that he has this honor equally with himself. Moral. Observe also how he offers the same prayers for the Teacher, as for the disciples and the multitude. For indeed he needs such prayers as much, or rather more than they, by how much he has greater enmities to encounter, and is more exposed to the necessity of offending God. For the higher is the dignity, the greater are the dangers of the priestly office. For one good act in his episcopal office is sufficient to raise him to heaven and one error to sink him to hell itself. For, to pass over all other cases of daily occurrence, if he happens, either from friendship or any other cause, to have advanced an unworthy person to a Bishopric, and have committed to him the rule of a great city, see to how great a flame he renders himself obnoxious. For not only will he have to account for the souls that are lost, for they are lost through the man's irreligion, but for all that is done amiss by the other. For he that is irreligious in a private station will be much more so when he is raised to power. It is much indeed, if a pious man continue such after his elevation to rule. For he is then more strongly assailed by vainglory, and the love of wealth, and self-will, when office gives him the power; and by offenses, insults, and reproaches, and numberless other evils. If therefore any one be irreligious, he will become more so when raised to office; and he who appoints such a ruler will be answerable for all the offenses committed by him, and for the whole people. But if it is said of him who gives offense to one soul, "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. xviii. 6); what will he have to suffer who offends so many souls, whole cities and populations, and multitudes of families, men, women, children, citizens, and husbandmen, the inhabitants of the city itself, and of all places subject to it? To say thrice as much more is to say nothing, so severe is the vengeance and the punishment to which he will be obnoxious. So that a Bishop especially needs the grace and peace of God. For if without these he governs the people, all is ruined and lost, for want of those helms. And though he be skilled in the art of steering, he will sink the vessel and those that sail in it, if he has not these helms, "the grace and peace of God."

Hence I am struck with astonishment at those who desire so great a burden. Wretched and unhappy man, seest thou what it is thou desirest? If thou art by thyself, unknown and undistinguished, though thou committest ten thousand faults, thou hast only one soul for which to give an account, and for it alone wilt thou be answerable. But when thou art raised to this office, consider for how many persons thou art obnoxious to punishment. Hear what Paul says, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that must give account." (Heb. xiii. 17) But dost thou desire honor and power? But what pleasure is there in this honor? I confess, I see not. For to be a ruler indeed is not possible, since



it depends upon those under thy rule to obey or not. And to any one who considers the matter closely; it will appear that a Bishop does not so much come to rule, as to serve a multitude of masters, who are of opposite desires and sentiments. For what one commends, another blames; what this man censures, that admires. To whom therefore shall he listen, with whom shall he comply? It is impossible! And the slave that is bought with money complains if his master's commands are contrary to each other. But shouldest thou grieve, when so many masters give the contrary orders, thou art condemned even for this, and all mouths are opened against thee. Tell me then, is this honor, is this rule, is this power?

One who holds the Episcopal office has required a contribution of money. He who is unwilling to contribute not only withholds it, but that he may not seem to withhold it from indifference, he accuses his Bishop. He is a thief, he says, a robber, he engulfs the goods of the poor, he devours the rights of the needy. Cease thy calumnies! How long wilt thou say these things? Wilt thou not contribute? No one compels thee, there is no constraint. Why dost thou revile him who counsels and advises thee? Is any one reduced to need, and he from inability, or some other hindrance, has not lent a hand? No allowance is made for him, the reproaches in this case are worse than in the other. This then is government! And he cannot avenge himself. For they are his own bowels, and as though the bowels be swollen, and though they give pain to the head and the rest of the body, we venture not on revenge, we cannot take a sword and pierce them; so if one of those under our rule be of such sort, and create trouble and disorder by these accusations, we dare not avenge ourselves, for this would be far from the disposition of a father, but we must endure the grief till he becomes sound and well.

The slave bought with money has an appointed work, which when he has performed, he is afterwards his own master. But the Bishop is distracted on every side and is expected to do many things that are beyond his power. If he knows not how to speak, there is great murmuring; and if he can speak, then he is accused of being vainglorious. If he cannot raise the dead, he is of no worth, they say: such an one is pious, but this man is not. If he eats a moderate meal, for this he is accused, he ought to be strangled, they say. If he is seen at the bath, he is much censured. In short, he ought not to look upon the sun! If he does the same things that I do, if he bathes, eats and drinks, and wears the same clothing, and has the care of a house and servants, on what account is he set over me? But he has domestics to minister to him, and an ass to ride upon, why then is he set over me? But say, ought he then to have no one to wait upon him? Ought he himself to light his own fire, to draw water, to cleave wood, to go to market? How great a degradation would this be! Even the holy Apostles would not that any ministers of the word should attend upon the tables of the widows, but they considered it a business unworthy of them: and would you degrade them to the offices of your own domestics? Why dost not thou, who commandest these things, come and perform these services? Tell me, does not he minister to thee a better service than thine, which is bodily? Why dost thou not send thy domestic to wait upon him? Christ washed the feet of His disciples; is it a great thing for thee to give this service to thy Teacher? But thou art not willing to render it thyself, and thou grudgest it to him. Ought he then to draw his livelihood from heaven? But God wills not so.

But you say, "Had the Apostles free men to serve them?" Would you then hear how the Apostles lived? They made long journeys, and free men and honorable women laid down their lives and souls for their relief. But hear this blessed Apostle thus exhorting; "Hold such in reputation" (Philip. ii. 29, 30): and again, "Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto

death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.” See what he says! but thou hast not a word to throw away upon thy spiritual father, much less wilt thou submit to any danger in his behalf. But thou sayest, “He ought not to frequent the bath.” And where is this forbidden? there is nothing honorable in being unclean.

These are not the things we find blamed or applauded at all. For the qualities which a Bishop is required to possess are different, as to be blameless, sober, orderly, hospitable, apt to teach. These the Apostle requires, and these we ought to look for in a ruler of the Church, but nothing further. Thou art not more strict than Paul, or rather more strict than the Spirit. If he be a striker, or violent, or cruel, and unmerciful, accuse him. These things are unworthy of a Bishop. If he be luxurious, this also is censurable. But if he takes care of his body that he may minister to thee, if he attends to his health that he may be useful, ought he for this to be accused? Knowest thou not that bodily infirmity no less than infirmity of soul injures both us and the Church? Why, otherwise, does Paul attend to this matter, in writing to Timothy, “Use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake, and thy often infirmities”? (1 Tim. v. 23) For if we could practice virtue with the soul alone, we need not take care of the body. And why then were we born at all? But if this has contributed a great share, is it not the extreme of folly to neglect it?

For suppose a man honored with the Bishopric, and intrusted with a public charge of the Church, and let him in other respects be virtuous, and have every quality, which a priest ought to possess, yet let him be always confined to his bed by reason of great infirmity, what service will he be able to render? Upon what mission can he go? what visitation can he undertake? whom can he rebuke or admonish? These things I say, that you may learn not causelessly to accuse him, but rather may receive him favorably; as also that if any one desire rule in the Church, seeing the shower of abuse that attends it, he may quench that desire. Great indeed is the danger of such a station, and it requires “the grace and peace of God.” Which that we may have abundantly, do you pray for us, and we for you, that practicing virtue aright we may so obtain the blessings promised, through Jesus Christ, with whom, &c.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 4. “To Titus, mine own son after the common faith.”

He refers to **Titus 1 (KJV):4** To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

He continues, “What is “after the common faith”? After he had called him his own son, and assumed the dignity of a father, hear how it is that he lessens and lowers that honor. He adds, “After the common faith”; that is, with respect to the faith I have no advantage over thee; for it is common, and both thou and I were born by it. Whence then does he call him his son? Either only wishing to express his affection for him, or his priority in the Gospel, or to show that Titus had been enlightened by him. On this account he calls the faithful both children and brethren; brethren, because they were born by the same faith; children, because it was by his hands. By mentioning the common faith, therefore, he intimates their brotherhood. Ver. 4. “Grace and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.””

When one is born again, they are babes in Christ, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

As children we rejoice in sins forgiven, and because we know the Father, as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV)**:12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. 13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. 14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

As we grow in grace and knowledge, we then progress to young men, and fathers in the Lord. In the case of Paul, he was a spiritual father to Titus because he had preached the Gospel to him, and Titus believed and was born again. We become young men and fathers in the Lord as we walk in the light of God's word, as we read in **Hebrews 5 (KJV)**:13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

It is by reason of use that we grow to discern both good and evil. And Peter encourages in **2 Peter 3 (KJV)**:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

He continues, "Because he had called him his son, he adds, "from God the Father," to elevate his mind by showing whose son he was, and by not only naming the common faith, but by adding "our Father," he implies that he has this honor equally with himself. Moral. Observe also how he offers the same prayers for the Teacher, as for the disciples and the multitude. For indeed he needs such prayers as much, or rather more than they, by how much he has greater enmities to encounter, and is more exposed to the necessity of offending God. For the higher is the dignity, the greater are the dangers of the priestly office. For one good act in his episcopal office is sufficient to raise him to heaven and one error to sink him to hell itself."

Chrysostom seems to think one could lose their salvation. We will discuss this more under the heading, **Losing Salvation**.

He continues, "For, to pass over all other cases of daily occurrence, if he happens, either from friendship or any other cause, to have advanced an unworthy person to a Bishopric, and have committed to him the rule of a great city, see to how great a flame he renders himself obnoxious. For not only will he have to account for the souls that are lost, for they are lost through the man's irreligion, but for all that is done amiss by the other. For he that is irreligious in a private station will be much more so when he is raised to power. It is much indeed, if a pious man continue such after his elevation to rule. For he is then more strongly assailed by vainglory, and the love of wealth, and self-will, when office gives him the power; and by offenses, insults, and reproaches, and numberless other evils. If therefore any one be irreligious, he will become more so when raised to office; and he who appoints such a ruler will be answerable for all the offenses committed by him, and for the whole people. But if it is said of him who gives offense to one soul, "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. xviii. 6); what will he have to suffer who offends so many souls, whole cities and populations, and multitudes of families, men, women, children, citizens, and husbandmen, the inhabitants of the city itself, and of all places subject to it?"

He refers in context to **Matthew 18 (KJV):5** And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. 6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. 7 Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

He continues, “To say thrice as much more is to say nothing, so severe is the vengeance and the punishment to which he will be obnoxious. So that a Bishop especially needs the grace and peace of God. For if without these he governs the people, all is ruined and lost, for want of those helms. And though he be skilled in the art of steering, he will sink the vessel and those that sail in it, if he has not these helms, “the grace and peace of God.”

Hence I am struck with astonishment at those who desire so great a burden. Wretched and unhappy man, seest thou what it is thou desirest? If thou art by thyself, unknown and undistinguished, though thou committest ten thousand faults, thou hast only one soul for which to give an account, and for it alone wilt thou be answerable. But when thou art raised to this office, consider for how many persons thou art obnoxious to punishment. Hear what Paul says, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that must give account.” (Heb. xiii. 17)”

He refers again to **Hebrews 13 (KJV):17** Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

And indeed we shall give account. All believers will appear before the judgment seat of Christ as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

But this judgment is not for salvation but for rewards. This judgment proceeds as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):12** Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

The fire relates to the consequences of sin in this life. It does not mean we will have to suffer in the next life.

Chrysostom continues, “But dost thou desire honor and power? But what pleasure is there in this honor? I confess, I see not. For to be a ruler indeed is not possible, since it depends upon those under thy rule to obey or not. And to any one who considers the matter closely; it will appear that a Bishop does not so much come to rule, as to serve a multitude of masters, who are of opposite desires and sentiments. For what one commends, another blames; what this man censures, that admires. To whom therefore shall he listen, with whom shall he comply? It is impossible! And the slave that is bought with money complains if his master's commands are contrary to each other. But shouldst thou grieve, when so many masters give the contrary orders, thou art condemned even for this, and all mouths are opened against thee. Tell me then, is this honor, is this rule, is this power?”

But we are all answerable to one Lord Jesus Christ. All believers shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ. I am not responsible for what another does. Neither is anyone else responsible for what I have done. The priesthood in the time of Chrysostom had evolved into rulers over the laity, as prophesied in **Revelation 2 (KJV):15** So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

Chrysostom continues, “One who holds the Episcopal office has required a contribution of money. He who is unwilling to contribute not only withholds it, but that he may not seem to withhold it from indifference, he accuses his Bishop. He is a thief, he says, a robber, he engulfs the goods of the poor, he devours the rights of the needy. Cease thy calumnies! How long wilt thou say these things? Wilt thou not contribute? No one compels thee, there is no constraint. Why dost thou revile him who counsels and advises thee? Is any one reduced to need, and he from inability, or some other hindrance, has not lent a hand? No allowance is made for him, the reproaches in this case are worse than in the other. This then is government! And he cannot avenge himself. For they are his own bowels, and as though the bowels be swollen, and though they give pain to the head and the rest of the body, we venture not on revenge, we cannot take a sword and pierce them; so if one of those under our rule be of such sort, and create trouble and disorder by these accusations, we dare not avenge ourselves, for this would be far from the disposition of a father, but we must endure the grief till he becomes sound and well.

The slave bought with money has an appointed work, which when he has performed, he is afterwards his own master. But the Bishop is distracted on every side and is expected to do many things that are beyond his power. If he knows not how to speak, there is great murmuring; and if he can speak, then he is accused of being vainglorious. If he cannot raise the dead, he is of no worth, they say: such an one is pious, but this man is not. If he eats a moderate meal, for this he is accused, he ought to be strangled, they say. If he is seen at the bath, he is much censured. In short, he ought not to look upon the sun! If he does the same things that I do, if he bathes, eats and drinks, and wears the same clothing, and has the care of a house and servants, on what account is he set over me? But he has domestics to minister to him, and an ass to ride upon, why then is he set over me? But say, ought he then to have no one to wait upon him? Ought he himself to light his own fire, to draw water, to cleave wood, to go to market? How great a degradation would this be! Even the holy Apostles would not that any ministers of the word should attend upon the tables of the widows, but they considered it a business unworthy of them: and would you degrade them to the offices of your own domestics?”

He refers to **Acts 6 (KJV):1** And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. **2** Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. **3** Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. **4** But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. **5** And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

And the first deacons of the Church were appointed.

He continues, “Why dost not thou, who commandest these things, come and perform these services? Tell me, does not he minister to thee a better service than thine, which is bodily?”

Why dost thou not send thy domestic to wait upon him? Christ washed the feet of His disciples; is it a great thing for thee to give this service to thy Teacher? But thou art not willing to render it thyself, and thou grudgest it to him. Ought he then to draw his livelihood from heaven? But God wills not so.

But you say, "Had the Apostles free men to serve them?" Would you then hear how the Apostles lived? They made long journeys, and free men and honorable women laid down their lives and souls for their relief. But hear this blessed Apostle thus exhorting; "Hold such in reputation" (Philip. ii. 29, 30): and again, "Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.""

He refers in context to **Philippians 2 (KJV):**25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. 26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. 27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. 29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: 30 Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

He continues, "See what he says! but thou hast not a word to throw away upon thy spiritual father, much less wilt thou submit to any danger in his behalf. But thou sayest, "He ought not to frequent the bath." And where is this forbidden? there is nothing honorable in being unclean.

These are not the things we find blamed or applauded at all. For the qualities which a Bishop is required to possess are different, as to be blameless, sober, orderly, hospitable, apt to teach. These the Apostle requires, and these we ought to look for in a ruler of the Church, but nothing further. Thou art not more strict than Paul, or rather more strict than the Spirit. If he be a striker, or violent, or cruel, and unmerciful, accuse him. These things are unworthy of a Bishop. If he be luxurious, this also is censurable. But if he takes care of his body that he may minister to thee, if he attends to his health that he may be useful, ought he for this to be accused? Knowest thou not that bodily infirmity no less than infirmity of soul injures both us and the Church? Why, otherwise, does Paul attend to this matter, in writing to Timothy, "Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thy often infirmities"? (1 Tim. v. 23)"

He refers to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):**23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

He continues, "For if we could practice virtue with the soul alone, we need not take care of the body. And why then were we born at all? But if this has contributed a great share, is it not the extreme of folly to neglect it?"

For suppose a man honored with the Bishopric, and intrusted with a public charge of the Church, and let him in other respects be virtuous, and have every quality, which a priest ought to possess, yet let him be always confined to his bed by reason of great infirmity, what service will he be able to render? Upon what mission can he go? what visitation can he undertake? whom can he rebuke or admonish? These things I say, that you may learn not causelessly to accuse him, but rather may receive him favorably; as also that if any one desire rule in the Church, seeing the shower of abuse that attends it, he may quench that desire. Great indeed is

the danger of such a station, and it requires “the grace and peace of God.” Which that we may have abundantly, do you pray for us, and we for you, that practicing virtue aright we may so obtain the blessings promised, through Jesus Christ, with whom, &c.”

Chrysostom has spoken of the great responsibility of teachers. And we read as in **James 3 (NASB):**1 Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. 2 For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.

However, to be a teacher is a ministry gift given by God. The teacher must be careful how he hears, as Jesus taught in **Luke 8 (KJV):**18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

Whoever has a disposition to receive truth shall receive more truth. A teacher must study as we read in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):**15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

And in **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):**16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

But in the case of believers, the “stricter judgment” James speaks of is for rewards, and not salvation. However, in the case of false teachers, we must beware, as Peter warns in **2 Peter 2 (KJV):**1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

And we read in **2 Peter 2 (KJV):**9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

The teacher must remember that love builds up as we read in **1 Corinthians 8 (RSV):**1 Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” “Knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up.

## The Ministry of the Word

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, ON THE PRIESTHOOD, BOOK IV, page 64-66**

But my accusers are unwilling to consider any of these things. For otherwise they would cease to blame a person who is unwilling to perish without cause. It is not the management of corn and barley, oxen or sheep, that is now under our consideration, nor any such like matters, but the very Body of Jesus. For the Church of Christ, according to St. Paul, is Christ’s Body, (Col. i. 18, 24) and he who is entrusted with its care ought to train it up to a state of healthiness, and beauty unspeakable, and to look everywhere, lest any spot or wrinkle, (Eph. v. 27) or other like blemish should mar its vigor and comeliness. For what is this but to make it appear worthy, so far as human power can, of the incorruptible and ever blessed Head which is set over it? If

they who are ambitious of reaching an athletic condition of body need the help of physicians and trainers, (Παιδοτριβῶν, literally, those who teach boys wrestling) and exact diet, and constant exercise, and a thousand other rules (for the omission of the merest trifle upsets and spoils the whole), how shall they to whose lot falls the care of the body, which has its conflict not against flesh and blood, but against powers unseen, be able to keep it sound and healthy, unless they far surpass ordinary human virtue, and are versed in all healing proper for the soul?

3. Pray, art thou not aware that that body is subject to more diseases and assaults than this flesh of ours, is more quickly corrupted, and more slow to recover? and by those who have the healing of these bodies, divers medicines have been discovered, and an apparatus of different instruments, and diet suitable for the sick; and often the condition of the atmosphere is of itself enough for the recovery of a sick man; and there are instances of seasonable sleep having saved the physician all further labor. But in the case before us, it is impossible to take any of these things into consideration; nay there is but one method and way of healing appointed, after we have gone wrong, and that is, the powerful application of the Word. This is the one instrument, the only diet, the finest atmosphere. This takes the place of physic, cautery and cutting, and if it be needful to sear and amputate, this is the means which we must use, and if this be of no avail, all else is wasted; with this we both rouse the soul when it sleeps, and reduce it when it is inflamed; with this we cut off excesses, and fill up defects, and perform all manner of other operations which are requisite for the soul's health. Now as regards the ordering of our daily life for the best, it is true that the life of another may provoke us to emulation. But in the matter of spurious doctrine, when any soul is diseased thereby, then there is great need of the Word, not only in view of the safety of our own people, but in view of the enemy without. If, indeed, one had the sword of the spirit, and the shield of faith, (Eph. vi. 16, 17) so as to be able to work miracles, and by means of these marvels to stop the mouths of impudent gainsayers, one would have little need of the assistance of the Word; still in the days of miracles the Word was by no means useless, but essentially necessary. For St. Paul made use of it himself, although he was everywhere so great an object of wonder for his miracles; and another of those who belonged to the "glorious company of the Apostles" exhorts us to apply ourselves to acquiring this power, when he says: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you," and they all, with one accord, committed the care of the poor widows to Stephen, for no other reason than that they themselves might have leisure "for the ministry of the Word. (Acts vi. 4) To this we ought equally to apply ourselves, unless indeed we are endued with a power of working miracles. But if there is not the least sign of such a power being left us, while on every side many enemies are constantly attacking us, why then it necessarily follows that we should arm ourselves with this weapon, both in order that we may not be wounded ourselves with the darts of the enemy, and in order that we may wound him.

4. Wherefore it should be our ambition that the Word of Christ dwell in us richly (Col. iii. 16) For it is not for one kind of battle only that we have to be prepared. This warfare is manifold, and is engaged with a great variety of enemies; neither do all these use the same weapons, nor do they practice the same method of attack; and he who has to join battle with all, must needs know the artifices of all, and be at once both archer and slinger, captain and general, in the ranks and in command, on foot and on horseback, in sea-fight and in siege. In common warfare, indeed, each man repels the enemy by discharging the particular duty which he has undertaken. But here it is otherwise; and if any one wishes to come off conqueror in this



warfare, he must understand all forms of the art, as the devil knows well how to introduce his own assailants through any one spot which may happen to be unguarded, and to carry off the sheep. But not so where he perceives the shepherd coming equipped with accurate knowledge at all points, and well acquainted with his plottings. Wherefore we ought to be well-guarded in all parts: for a city, so long as it happens to be surrounded with a wall, laughs to scorn the besiegers, abiding in great security; but if any one makes a breach in the wall, though but of the size of a gate, the rest of the circuit is of no use, although the whole of it stand quite securely; so it is with the city of God: so long as the presence of mind and wisdom of the shepherd, which answers to the wall, protect it on all sides, all the enemy's devices end in his confusion and ridicule, and they who dwell within the wall abide unmolested, but wherever any one has been able to demolish a single part, though the rest stand never so fast, through that breach ruin will enter upon the whole. For to what purpose does a man contend earnestly with the Greeks, if at the same time he becomes a prey to the Jews? or get the better of both these and then fall into the clutches of the Manichæans? (**Schaff Note:** The followers of Manes, or Manichæus, who was born about 240 A.D. He taught that God was the cause of good, and matter the cause of evil. This theory about matter led him to hold that the body of Jesus was an incorporeal phantom. He eliminated the Old Testament from the Scriptures, and held himself at liberty also to reject such passages in the New Testament as were opposed to his own opinions. See Robertson: Hist. of the Christian Church, vol. i. 139–145) or after he has proved himself superior to them even, if they who introduce fatalism (**Schaff Note:** “οἱ τὴν ὑμάρτυν τὴν εἰσεργοντες,” sc. The Stoics. They were still a numerous body, and St. Chrysostom himself wrote six Homilies against them. 155 Marcion and Valentinus (A.D. 140) were each founders of a form of Gnosticism. Each held that the God of the Old Testament was morally contrary to the God of the New: while the system of Valentinus represented the imaginative and speculative side of Gnosticism, that of Marcion represented its practical side, and was rather religious than theological. The sect of the Valentinians lasted as late as the 5th century; and Marcionism was not extinct till the 6th.) enter in, and make havoc of the flock? But not to enumerate all the heresies of the devil, it will be enough to say that unless the shepherd is well skilled in refuting them all, the wolf, by means of any one of them, can enter, and devour the greater part of the flock. In ordinary warfare we must always look for victory being won or defeat sustained by the soldiers who are on the field of battle. But in the spiritual warfare the case is quite different. For there it often happens that the combat with one set of enemies secures a victory for others who never engaged in battle at all, nor took any trouble, but were sitting still all the while; and he who has not much experience in such occurrences will get pierced, so to say, with his own sword, and become the laughing-stock of friends and foes alike. I will try by an example to make clear what I am saying. They who receive the wild doctrines of Valentinus and Marcion, (**Schaff Note:** Marcion and Valentinus (A.D. 140) were each founders of a form of Gnosticism. Each held that the God of the Old Testament was morally contrary to the God of the New: while the system of Valentinus represented the imaginative and speculative side of Gnosticism, that of Marcion represented its practical side, and was rather religious than theological. The sect of the Valentinians lasted as late as the 5th century; and Marcionism was not extinct till the 6th.) and of all whose minds are similarly diseased, exclude the Law given by God to Moses from the catalogue of the Divine Scriptures. But Jews so revere the Law, that although the time has come which annuls it, they still contend for the observance of all its contents, contrary to the purpose

of God. But the Church of God, avoiding either extreme, has trodden a middle path, and is neither induced on the one hand to place herself under its yoke, nor on the other does she tolerate its being slandered, but commends it, though its day is over, because of its profitableness while its season lasted. Now it is necessary for him who is going to fight with both these enemies, (**Schaff Note:** Sc. Jews and Marcionites.) to be fully conversant with this middle course. For if in wishing to teach the Jews that they are out of date in clinging to the old law, he begins to find fault with it unsparingly, he gives no little handle to those heretics who wish to pull it to pieces; and if in his ambition to stop their mouths he extols it immoderately, and speaks of it with admiration, as necessary for this present time, he unseals the lips of the Jews. Again they who labor under the frenzy of Sabellius and the craze of Arius, (**Schaff Note:** Sabellius was condemned in a Council held in Rome, A.D. 263, for holding that there is but one person in the Godhead, and that the Word and Holy Spirit are only virtues or emanations of the Deity. Arius held that our Lord Jesus Christ existed before His Incarnation, that by Him as by an instrument the Supreme God made the worlds, and that as being the most ancient and the highest of created beings, He is to be worshipped; but that He had a beginning of existence, and so is not God's co-eternally begotten Son, nor of the very substance of the Supreme God. See Liddon, Bampton Lectures, i. p. 25. The heresy of Arius was condemned at the Council of Nicæa, A.D. 325.) have both fallen from a sound faith for want of observing a middle course. The name of Christian is applied to both these heretics; but if any one examines their doctrines, he will find the one sect not much better than the Jews, and differing from them only in name, and the other very nearly holding the heresy of Paul of Samosata, (**Schaff Note:** Paul of Samosata was appointed Bishop of Antioch about 260 A.D. The Humanitarian movement culminated in his teaching, which maintained that the Word was only in the Father, as reason is in man; that Jesus was a mere man, and that he is called Son of God as having, in a certain sense, become such through the influence of the Divine Word which dwelt in him, but without any personal union.)”

Chrysostom continues, “and that both are very wide of the truth. Great, therefore, is the danger in such cases, and the way of orthodoxy is narrow and hemmed in by threatening crags on either side, and there is no little fear lest when intending to strike at one enemy we should be wounded by the other. For if any one assert the unity of the Godhead, Sabellius straightway turns that expression to the advantage of his own mental vagary, (**Schaff Note:** *i.e.*, while he maintained the Unity of the Godhead against the Arians there was danger of slipping into the Sabellian error of “confounding the Persons.”) and if he distinguish the Persons, and say that the Father is one, and the Son another, and the Holy Spirit a third, up gets Arius, ready to wrest that distinction of Persons into a difference of substance; (**Schaff Note:** *i.e.*, while he divided the Persons against the Sabellians he had to guard against the Arian error of “dividing the substance” also.) so we must turn and flee both from the impious confounding of the Persons by the one, and the senseless division of the substance by the other, confessing, indeed, that the Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, while we add thereunto a Trinity of Persons. For then we shall be able to fortify ourselves against the attacks of both heretics. I might tell thee besides these, of several other adversaries against which, except we contend bravely and carefully, we shall leave the field covered with wounds.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “But my accusers are unwilling to consider any of

these things. For otherwise they would cease to blame a person who is unwilling to perish without cause. It is not the management of corn and barley, oxen or sheep, that is now under our consideration, nor any such like matters, but the very Body of Jesus. For the Church of Christ, according to St. Paul, is Christ's Body, (Col. i. 18, 24) and he who is entrusted with its care ought to train it up to a state of healthiness, and beauty unspeakable, and to look everywhere, lest any spot or wrinkle, (Eph. v. 27) or other like blemish should mar its vigor and comeliness."

He refers to **Colossians 1 (KJV):18** And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

And to **Colossians 1 (KJV):24** Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

And to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):27** That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

He continues, "For what is this but to make it appear worthy, so far as human power can, of the incorruptible and ever blessed Head which is set over it? If they who are ambitious of reaching an athletic condition of body need the help of physicians and trainers, (Παιδοτριβῶν, literally, those who teach boys wrestling) and exact diet, and constant exercise, and a thousand other rules (for the omission of the merest trifle upsets and spoils the whole), how shall they to whose lot falls the care of the body, which has its conflict not against flesh and blood, but against powers unseen, be able to keep it sound and healthy, unless they far surpass ordinary human virtue, and are versed in all healing proper for the soul?"

So Chrysostom speaks of his perception of the enormous responsibility of being a priest, in charge of care for the body of Christ.

He continues, "3. Pray, art thou not aware that that body is subject to more diseases and assaults than this flesh of ours, is more quickly corrupted, and more slow to recover?"

The body he is speaking of is the body of Christ.

He continues, "and by those who have the healing of these bodies, divers medicines have been discovered, and an apparatus of different instruments, and diet suitable for the sick; and often the condition of the atmosphere is of itself enough for the recovery of a sick man; and there are instances of seasonable sleep having saved the physician all further labor. But in the case before us, it is impossible to take any of these things into consideration; nay there is but one method and way of healing appointed, after we have gone wrong, and that is, the powerful application of the Word. This is the one instrument, the only diet, the finest atmosphere. This takes the place of physic, cautery and cutting, and if it be needful to sear and amputate, this is the means which we must use, and if this be of no avail, all else is wasted; with this we both rouse the soul when it sleeps, and reduce it when it is inflamed; with this we cut off excesses, and fill up defects, and perform all manner of other operations which are requisite for the soul's health. Now as regards the ordering of our daily life for the best, it is true that the life of another may provoke us to emulation. But in the matter of spurious doctrine, when any soul is diseased thereby, then there is great need of the Word, not only in view of the safety of our own people, but in view of the enemy without. If, indeed, one had the sword of the spirit, and the shield of faith, (Eph. vi. 16, 17) so as to be able to work miracles, and by means of these marvels to stop the mouths of impudent gainsayers, one would have little need of the assistance of the Word;"

He refers to **Ephesians 6 (KJV):16** Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

And we see that “the sword of the Spirit” is the word of God.

He continues, “still in the days of miracles the Word was by no means useless, but essentially necessary. For St. Paul made use of it himself, although he was everywhere so great an object of wonder for his miracles; and another of those who belonged to the “glorious company of the Apostles” exhorts us to apply ourselves to acquiring this power, when he says: “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you,” and they all, with one accord, committed the care of the poor widows to Stephen, for no other reason than that they themselves might have leisure “for the ministry of the Word. (Acts vi. 4)”

He refers to **1 Peter 3 (KJV):15** But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

And in context to **Acts 6 (KJV):2** Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

He continues, “To this we ought equally to apply ourselves, unless indeed we are endued with a power of working miracles. But if there is not the least sign of such a power being left us, while on every side many enemies are constantly attacking us, why then it necessarily follows that we should arm ourselves with this weapon, both in order that we may not be wounded ourselves with the darts of the enemy, and in order that we may wound him.”

We see his esteem for the word of God here. He continues, “4. Wherefore it should be our ambition that the Word of Christ dwell in us richly (Col. iii. 16)”

He refers to **Colossians 3 (KJV):16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

He continues, “For it is not for one kind of battle only that we have to be prepared. This warfare is manifold, and is engaged with a great variety of enemies; neither do all these use the same weapons, nor do they practice the same method of attack; and he who has to join battle with all, must needs know the artifices of all, and be at once both archer and slinger, captain and general, in the ranks and in command, on foot and on horseback, in sea-fight and in siege. In common warfare, indeed, each man repels the enemy by discharging the particular duty which he has undertaken. But here it is otherwise; and if any one wishes to come off conqueror in this warfare, he must understand all forms of the art, as the devil knows well how to introduce his own assailants through any one spot which may happen to be unguarded, and to carry off the sheep. But not so where he perceives the shepherd coming equipped with accurate knowledge at all points, and well acquainted with his plottings. Wherefore we ought to be well-guarded in all parts: for a city, so long as it happens to be surrounded with a wall, laughs to scorn the

besiegers, abiding in great security; but if any one makes a breach in the wall, though but of the size of a gate, the rest of the circuit is of no use, although the whole of it stand quite securely; so it is with the city of God: so long as the presence of mind and wisdom of the shepherd, which answers to the wall, protect it on all sides, all the enemy's devices end in his confusion and ridicule, and they who dwell within the wall abide unmolested, but wherever any one has been able to demolish a single part, though the rest stand never so fast, through that breach ruin will enter upon the whole. For to what purpose does a man contend earnestly with the Greeks, if at the same time he becomes a prey to the Jews? or get the better of both these and then fall into the clutches of the Manichæans? (**Schaff Note:** The followers of Manes, or Manichæus, who was born about 240 A.D. He taught that God was the cause of good, and matter the cause of evil. This theory about matter led him to hold that the body of Jesus was an incorporeal phantom. He eliminated the Old Testament from the Scriptures, and held himself at liberty also to reject such passages in the New Testament as were opposed to his own opinions. See Robertson: Hist. of the Christian Church, vol. i. 139–145)”

Chrysostom continues, “or after he has proved himself superior to them even, if they who introduce fatalism (**Schaff Note:** “οἱ τὴν ἐμαρμυμένην εἰσάγοντες,” sc. The Stoics. They were still a numerous body, and St. Chrysostom himself wrote six Homilies against them.)”

Chrysostom continues, “enter in, and make havoc of the flock? But not to enumerate all the heresies of the devil, it will be enough to say that unless the shepherd is well skilled in refuting them all, the wolf, by means of any one of them, can enter, and devour the greater part of the flock. In ordinary warfare we must always look for victory being won or defeat sustained by the soldiers who are on the field of battle. But in the spiritual warfare the case is quite different. For there it often happens that the combat with one set of enemies secures a victory for others who never engaged in battle at all, nor took any trouble, but were sitting still all the while; and he who has not much experience in such occurrences will get pierced, so to say, with his own sword, and become the laughing-stock of friends and foes alike. I will try by an example to make clear what I am saying. They who receive the wild doctrines of Valentinus and Marcion, (**Schaff Note:** Marcion and Valentinus (A.D. 140) were each founders of a form of Gnosticism. Each held that the God of the Old Testament was morally contrary to the God of the New: while the system of Valentinus represented the imaginative and speculative side of Gnosticism, that of Marcion represented its practical side, and was rather religious than theological. The sect of the Valentinians lasted as late as the 5th century; and Marcionism was not extinct till the 6th.)”

Chrysostom continues, “and of all whose minds are similarly diseased, exclude the Law given by God to Moses from the catalogue of the Divine Scriptures. But Jews so revere the Law, that although the time has come which annuls it, they still contend for the observance of all its contents, contrary to the purpose of God.”

The definition of “annul” is “to declare or make legally invalid or void”. (**Merriam Webster**)

The Law has not been annulled, but fulfilled, as Jesus taught in **Matthew 5 (KJV):17** Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Grace and truth have come as we read in **John 1 (KJV):17** For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

As believers, though we are not under the law, we are still not to sin, as Paul reveals in **Romans 6 (KJV):14** For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

Chrysostom continues, “But the Church of God, avoiding either extreme, has trodden a middle path, and is neither induced on the one hand to place herself under its yoke, nor on the other does she tolerate its being slandered, but commends it, though its day is over, because of its profitableness while its season lasted. Now it is necessary for him who is going to fight with both these enemies, (**Schaff Note:** Sc. Jews and Marcionites.) to be fully conversant with this middle course. For if in wishing to teach the Jews that they are out of date in clinging to the old law, he begins to find fault with it unsparingly, he gives no little handle to those heretics who wish to pull it to pieces; and if in his ambition to stop their mouths he extols it immoderately, and speaks of it with admiration, as necessary for this present time, he unseals the lips of the Jews. Again they who labor under the frenzy of Sabellius and the craze of Arius, (**Schaff Note:** Sabellius was condemned in a Council held in Rome, A.D. 263, for holding that there is but one person in the Godhead, and that the Word and Holy Spirit are only virtues or emanations of the Deity. Arius held that our Lord Jesus Christ existed before His Incarnation, that by Him as by an instrument the Supreme God made the worlds, and that as being the most ancient and the highest of created beings, He is to be worshipped; but that He had a beginning of existence, and so is not God’s co-eternally begotten Son, nor of the very substance of the Supreme God. See Liddon, Bampton Lectures, i. p. 25. The heresy of Arius was condemned at the Council of Nicæa, A.D. 325.)”

Chrysostom continues, “have both fallen from a sound faith for want of observing a middle course. The name of Christian is applied to both these heretics; but if any one examines their doctrines, he will find the one sect not much better than the Jews, and differing from them only in name, and the other very nearly holding the heresy of Paul of Samosata, (**Schaff Note:** Paul of Samosata was appointed Bishop of Antioch about 260 A.D. The Humanitarian movement culminated in his teaching, which maintained that the Word was only in the Father, as reason is in man; that Jesus was a mere man, and that he is called Son of God as having, in a certain sense, become such through the influence of the Divine Word which dwelt in him, but without any personal union.)”

Chrysostom continues, “and that both are very wide of the truth. Great, therefore, is the danger in such cases, and the way of orthodoxy is narrow and hemmed in by threatening crags on either side, and there is no little fear lest when intending to strike at one enemy we should be wounded by the other. For if any one assert the unity of the Godhead, Sabellius straightway turns that expression to the advantage of his own mental vagary, (**Schaff Note:** *i.e.*, while he maintained the Unity of the Godhead against the Arians there was danger of slipping into the Sabellian error of “confounding the Persons.”)”

Chrysostom continues, “and if he distinguish the Persons, and say that the Father is one, and the Son another, and the Holy Spirit a third, up gets Arius, ready to wrest that distinction of Persons into a difference of substance; (**Schaff Note:** *i.e.*, while he divided the Persons against the Sabellians he had to guard against the Arian error of “dividing the substance” also.)”

Chrysostom continues, “so we must turn and flee both from the impious confounding of the Persons by the one, and the senseless division of the substance by the other, confessing, indeed, that the Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, while we add thereunto a Trinity of Persons. For then we shall be able to fortify ourselves against the attacks of both heretics. I might tell thee besides these, of several other adversaries against which, except we contend bravely and carefully, we shall leave the field covered with wounds.”

Chrysostom agrees with the sound doctrine of the Trinity.

## Advice to Bishops and Priests

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, ON THE PRIESTHOOD, BOOK V, page 70-73**

1. How great is the skill required for the teacher in contending earnestly for the truth, has been sufficiently set forth by us. But I have to mention one more matter beside this, which is a cause of numberless dangers, though for my own part I should rather say that the thing itself is not the cause, but they who know not how to use it rightly, since it is of itself a help to salvation and to much good besides, whenever thou findest that earnest and good men have the management of it. What then, do I mean by this? The expenditure of great labor upon the preparation of discourses to be delivered in public. For to begin with, the majority of those who are under the preachers' charge are not minded to behave towards them as towards teachers, but disdain the part of learners, they assume instead the attitude of those who sit and look on at the public games; and just as the multitude there is separated into parties, and some attach themselves to one, and some to another, so here also men are divided, and become the partisans now of this teacher, now of that, listening to them with a view to favor or spite. And not only is there this hardship, but another quite as great. For if it has occurred to any preacher to weave into his sermons any part of other men's works, he is exposed to greater disgrace than those who steal money. Nay, often where he has not even borrowed anything from any one, but is only suspected, he has suffered the fate of a thief. And why do I speak of the works of others when it is not permitted to him to use his own resources without variety? For the public are accustomed to listen not for profit, but for pleasure, sitting like critics of tragedies, and of musical entertainments, and that facility of speech against which we declaimed just now, in this case becomes desirable, even more than in the case of barristers, where they are obliged to contend one against the other. A preacher then should have loftiness of mind, far exceeding my own littleness of spirit, that he may correct this disorderly and unprofitable pleasure on the part of the multitude, and be able to lead them over to a more useful way of hearing, that his people may follow and yield to him, and that he may not be led away by their own humors, and this it is not possible to arrive at, except by two means: indifference to their praise, and the power of preaching well. (**Schaff Note:** Chrysostom's own sermons were often interrupted by applause, which he always severely reprimanded.)

2. For if either of these be lacking, the remaining one becomes useless, owing to its divorce from the other, for if a preacher be indifferent to praise, and yet cannot produce the doctrine “which is with grace seasoned with salt,” (Col. iv. 6) he becomes despised by the

multitude, while he gains nothing from his own nobleness of mind; and if on the other hand he is successful as a preacher, and is overcome by the thought of applause, harm is equally done in turn, both to himself and the multitude, because in his desire for praise he is careful to speak rather with a view to please than to profit. And as he who neither lets good opinion influence him, nor is skillful in speaking, does not yield to the pleasure of the multitude, and is unable to do them any good worth mentioning, because he has nothing to say, so he who is carried away with desire for praise, though he is able to render the multitude better service, rather provides in place of this such food as will suit their taste, because he purchases thereby the tumult of acclamation.

3. The best kind of Bishop must, therefore, be strong in both these points, so that neither may supplant the other. For if when he stands up in the congregation and speaks words calculated to make the careless wince, (**Schaff Note:** ἐπιστύψαι, literally, to purse up the mouth, as at the taste of what is tart or sour.) he then stumbles, and stops short, and is forced to blush at his failure, the good of what he has spoken is immediately wasted. For they who are rebuked, being galled by what has been told them, and unable to avenge themselves on him otherwise, taunt him, with jeers at this ignorance of his, thinking to screen their own reproach thereby. Wherefore he ought, like some very good charioteer, to come to an accurate judgment about both these good things, in order that he may be able to deal with both as he may have need; for when he is irreproachable in the eyes of all, then he will be able, with just so much authority as he wishes, both to correct and to remit from correction all those who are under his rule. But without this it will not be easy for him to do so. But this nobleness of soul should be shown not only up to the limit of indifference to praise, but should go further in order that the gain thus gotten may not in its turn be fruitless.

4. To what else ought he then to be indifferent? Slander and envy. Unseasonable evil speaking, (**Schaff Note:** κακηγορία—if κατηγορία be read, “accusation” will be the meaning.) however (for of course the Bishop undergoes some groundless censure), it is well that he should neither fear nor tremble at excessively, nor entirely pass over; but we ought, though it happen to be false, or to be brought against us by the common herd, to try and extinguish it immediately. For nothing so magnifies both an evil and a good report as the undisciplined mob. For accustomed to hear and to speak without stopping to make inquiry, they repeat at random everything which comes in their way, without any regard to the truth of it. Therefore the Bishop ought not to be unconcerned about the multitude, but straightway to nip their evil surmisings in the bud; persuading his accusers, even if they be the most unreasonable of all men, and to omit nothing which is able to dispel an ill-favored report. But if, when we do all this, they who blame us will not be persuaded, thenceforward we should give them no concern. Since if any one be too quick to be dejected by these accidents, he will not be able at any time to produce anything noble and admirable. For despondency and constant cares are mighty for destroying the powers of the mind, and for reducing it to extreme weakness. Thus then must the Priest behave towards those in his charge, as a father would behave to his very young children; and as such are not disturbed either by their insults or their blows, or their lamentations, nor even if they laugh and rejoice with us, do we take much account of it; so should we neither be puffed up by the promises of these persons nor cast down at their censure, when it comes from them unseasonably. But this is hard, my good friend; and perhaps, methinks, even impossible. For I know not whether any man ever succeeded in the effort not to be pleased when he is praised,



and the man who is pleased at this is likely also to desire to enjoy it, and the man who desires to enjoy it will, of necessity, be altogether vexed and beside himself whenever he misses it. For as they who revel in being rich, when they fall into poverty are grieved, and they who have been used to live luxuriously cannot bear to live shabbily; so, too, they who long for applause, not only when they are blamed without a cause, but when they are not constantly being praised, become, as by some famine, wasted in soul, particularly when they happen themselves to have been used to praise, or if they hear others being praised. He who enters upon the trial of preaching with desires of this kind, how many annoyances and how many pangs dost thou think that he has? It is no more possible for the sea to be without waves than that man to be without cares and grief.

5. For though the preacher may have great ability (and this one would only find in a few), not even in this case is he released from perpetual toil. For since preaching does not come by nature, but by study, suppose a man to reach a high standard of it, this will then forsake him if he does not cultivate his power by constant application and exercise. So that there is greater labor for the wiser than for the unlearned. For there is not the same degree of loss attending negligence on the part of the one and the other, but the loss is in exact proportion to the difference between the two possessions. For the latter (**Schaff Note:** Sc. The unlearned) no one would blame, as they furnish nothing worth regarding. But the former, unless they are constantly producing matter beyond the reputation in which all hold them, great censure attends on all hands; and besides these things, the latter would meet with considerable praise, even for small performances, while the efforts of the former, unless they be specially wonderful and startling, not only fail to win applause, but meet with many fault-finders. For the audience set themselves to be critics, not so much in judgment of what is said as of the reputation of the speaker, so that whenever any one excels all others in oratorical powers, then especially of all others does he need laborious study. For this man is not allowed to avail himself of the usual plea which human nature urges, that one cannot succeed in everything; but if his sermons do not throughout correspond to the greatness of the expectations formed, he will go away without having gained anything but countless jeers and censures; and no one takes this into consideration about him, that dejection and pain, and anxiety, and often anger, may step in, and dim the clearness of his thoughts and prevent his productions from coming from him unalloyed, (**Schaff Note:** εἰλικρινῆ—literally, so that the sunlight fails to discern a flaw in them.) and that on the whole, being but a man, he cannot be constantly the same, nor at all times acquit himself successfully, but naturally must sometimes fall short of the mark, and appear on a lower level of ability than usual. None of these things, as I said, are they willing to take into consideration, but charge him with faults as if they were sitting in judgment on an angel; though in other cases, too, a man is apt to overlook the good performances of his neighbor, though they be many and great, and if anywhere a defect appears, even if it be accidental, even if it only occur at long intervals, it is quickly perceived, and always remembered, and thus small and trifling matters have often lessened the glory of many and great doings.

6. Thou seest, my excellent friend, that the man who is powerful in preaching has peculiar need of greater study than others; and besides study, of forbearance also greater than what is needed by all those whom I have already mentioned. For thus are many constantly springing up against him, in a vain and senseless spirit, and having no fault to find with him, but that he is generally approved of, hate him; and he must bear their bitter malice nobly, for as they

are not able to hide this cursed hatred, which they so unreasonably entertain, they both revile, and censure, and slander in private, and defame in public, and the mind which has begun to be pained and exasperated, on every one of these occasions, will not escape being corrupted by grief. For they will not only revenge themselves upon him by their own acts, but will try to do so by means of others, and often having chosen some one of those who are unable to speak a word, will extol him with their praises and admire him beyond his worth. Some do this through ignorance alone, some through ignorance and envy, in order that they may ruin the reputation of the other, not that they may prove the man to be wonderful who is not so, and the noble-minded man has not only to struggle against these, but often against the ignorance of the whole multitude; for since it is not possible that all those who come together should consist of learned men, but the chances are that the larger part of the congregation is composed of unlearned people, and that even the rest, who are clearer headed than they, fall as far short of being able to criticize sermons as the remainder again fall short of them; so that only one or two are seated there who possess this power; it follows, of necessity, that he who preaches better than others carries away less applause, and possibly goes home without being praised at all, and he must be prepared to meet such anomalies nobly, and to pardon those who commit them in ignorance, and to weep for those who acquiesce in them on account of envy as wretched and pitiable creatures, and not to consider that his powers have become less on either of these accounts. For if a man, being a pre-eminently good painter, and superior to all in his art, sees the portrait which he has drawn with great accuracy held up to ridicule, he ought not to be dejected, and to consider the picture poor, because of the judgment of the ignorant; as he would not consider the drawing that is really poor to be something wonderful and lovely, because of the astonishment of the inartistic.

7. For let the best artificer be himself the critic of his own designs, and let his performances be determined to be good or poor, according as the mind which designed them gives sentence upon them. But let him not even consider the opinion, so erroneous and inartistic, of the outside world. Let, therefore, the man who undertakes the strain of teaching never give heed to the good opinion of the outside world, nor be dejected in soul on account of such persons; but laboring at his sermons so that he may please God, (For let this alone be his rule and determination, in discharging this best kind of workmanship, not acclamation, nor good opinions,) if, indeed, he be praised by men, let him not repudiate their applause, and when his hearers do not offer this, let him not seek it, let him not be grieved. For a sufficient consolation in his labors, and one greater than all, is when he is able to be conscious of arranging and ordering his teaching with a view to pleasing God.

8. For if he be first carried away with the desire for indiscriminate praise, he will reap no advantage from his labors, or from his power in preaching, for the mind being unable to bear the senseless censures of the multitude is dispirited, and casts aside all earnestness about preaching. Therefore it is especially necessary to be trained to be indifferent to all kinds of praise. For to know how to preach is not enough for the preservation of that power, if this be not added: and if any one would examine accurately the man who is destitute of this art, he will find that he needs to be indifferent to praise no less than the other, (**Schaff Note:** *i.e.*, The skillful preacher.) for he will be forced to do many wrong things in placing himself under the control of popular opinion. For not having the energy to equal those who are in repute for the quality of their preaching, he will not refrain from forming ill designs against them, from envying them,

and from blaming them without reason, and from many such discreditable practices, but will venture everything, even if it be needful to ruin his own soul, for the sake of bringing down their fame to the level of his own insignificance. And in addition to this, he will leave off his exertions about his work; a kind of numbness, as it were, spreading itself over his mind. For much toil, rewarded by scanty praise, is sufficient to cast down a man who cannot despise praise, and put him into a deep lethargy, since the husbandman even when he spends time over some sorry piece of land, and is forced to till a rock, quickly desists from his work, unless he is possessed of much earnestness about the matter, or has a fear of famine impending over him. For if they who are able to speak with considerable power, need such constant exercise for the preservation of their talent, he who collects no materials at all, but is forced in the midst of his efforts to meditate; what difficulty, what confusion, what trouble will he experience, in order that he may be able at great labor to collect a few ideas! and if any of those clergy who are under his authority, and who are placed in the inferior order, be able in that position to appear to better advantage than he; what a divine mind must he have, so as not to be seized with envy or cast down by despondency. For, for one to be placed in a station of higher dignity, and to be surpassed by his inferior in rank, and to bear this nobly, would not be the part of any ordinary mind, nor of such as my own, but of one as hard as adamant; and if, indeed, the man who is in greater repute be very forbearing and modest, the suffering becomes so much the more easily borne. But if he is bold and boastful and vainglorious, a daily death would be desirable for the other; he will so embitter his life, insulting him to his face, and laughing at him behind his back, wresting much of his authority from him, and wishing to be everything himself. But he is possessed of the greatest security, in all these circumstances, who has fluency in preaching, and the earnest attention of the multitude about him, and the affection of all those who are under his charge. Dost not thou know what a passion for sermons has burst in upon the minds of Christians now-a-days? and that they who practice themselves in preaching are in especial honor, not only among the heathen, but among them of the household of the faith? How then could any one bear such disgrace as to find that all are mute when he is preaching, and think that they are oppressed, and wait for the end of the sermon, as for some release from work; while they listen to another with eagerness though he preach long, and are sorry when he is about to conclude; and almost angry when it is his purpose to be silent. If these matters seem to thee to be small, and easily to be despised, it is because of thine inexperience. They are truly enough to quench zeal, and to paralyze the powers of the mind, unless a man withdraw himself from all human passions, and study to frame his conduct after the pattern of those incorporeal powers, who are neither pursued by envy, nor by longing for fame, nor by any other morbid feeling. If then there be any man so constituted as to be able to subdue this wild beast, so difficult to capture, so unconquerable, so fierce; that is to say, public fame, and to cut off its many heads, or rather to forbid their growth altogether; he will easily be able to repel these many violent assaults, and to enjoy a kind of quiet haven of rest. But he who has not freed himself from this monster, involves his soul in struggles of various kinds, and perpetual agitation, and the burden both of despondency and of other passions. But why need I detail the rest of these difficulties, which no one will be able to describe, or to learn unless he has had actual experience of them.

**Commentary:** In summary, he begins in paragraph 1, as he says, “How great is the skill required for the teacher in contending earnestly for the truth, has been sufficiently set forth by us.”

And in paragraph 1, he also says, “A preacher then should have loftiness of mind, far exceeding my own littleness of spirit, that he may correct this disorderly and unprofitable pleasure on the part of the multitude, and be able to lead them over to a more useful way of hearing, that his people may follow and yield to him, and that he may not be led away by their own humors, and this it is not possible to arrive at, except by two means: indifference to their praise, and the power of preaching well. (**Schaff Note:** Chrysostom’s own sermons were often interrupted by applause, which he always severely reprimanded.)”

And in paragraph 4, he says, “Thus then must the Priest behave towards those in his charge, as a father would behave to his very young children; and as such are not disturbed either by their insults or their blows, or their lamentations, nor even if they laugh and rejoice with us, do we take much account of it; so should we neither be puffed up by the promises of these persons nor cast down at their censure, when it comes from them unseasonably.”

In paragraph 5, he also says, “For though the preacher may have great ability (and this one would only find in a few), not even in this case is he released from perpetual toil. For since preaching does not come by nature, but by study, suppose a man to reach a high standard of it, this will then forsake him if he does not cultivate his power by constant application and exercise.”

Teaching does require study. But today, as then, teaching is often confused with preaching. Preaching has to do with proclaiming the good news that Jesus Christ has died for our sins, and that He offers eternal life in heaven to all who will believe in Him. Teaching has to do with explaining doctrine, that is, Biblical truths.

And he notes correctly in paragraph 5, “So that there is greater labor for the wiser than for the unlearned”.

And in paragraph 7, he rightly advises, “Let, therefore, the man who undertakes the strain of teaching never give heed to the good opinion of the outside world, nor be dejected in soul on account of such persons; but laboring at his sermons so that he may please God, (For let this alone be his rule and determination, in discharging this best kind of workmanship, not acclamation, nor good opinions,) if, indeed, he be praised by men, let him not repudiate their applause, and when his hearers do not offer this, let him not seek it, let him not be grieved. For a sufficient consolation in his labors, and one greater than all, is when he is able to be conscious of arranging and ordering his teaching with a view to pleasing God.”

And in paragraph 8, he rightly judges, “For to know how to preach is not enough for the preservation of that power, if this be not added: and if any one would examine accurately the man who is destitute of this art, he will find that he needs to be indifferent to praise no less than the other, (**Schaff Note:** *i.e.*, The skillful preacher) for he will be forced to do many wrong things in placing himself under the control of popular opinion.”

In paragraph 8, he concludes, “If then there be any man so constituted as to be able to subdue this wild beast, so difficult to capture, so unconquerable, so fierce; that is to say, public fame, and to cut off its many heads, or rather to forbid their growth altogether; he will easily be able to repel these many violent assaults, and to enjoy a kind of quiet haven of rest. But he who has not freed himself from this monster, involves his soul in struggles of various kinds, and

perpetual agitation, and the burden both of despondency and of other passions. But why need I detail the rest of these difficulties, which no one will be able to describe, or to learn unless he has had actual experience of them.”

This is good advice to those who preach, and to those who teach. And we must remember what Jesus taught in **John 15 (KJV):5** I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

## Commentary Summary

Concerning **The Priesthood**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, On the Priesthood, Book III, page 46-49**, Chrysostom says that “the Paraclete Himself, instituted this vocation, and persuaded men while still abiding in the flesh to represent the ministry of angels. Wherefore the consecrated priest ought to be as pure as if he were standing in the heavens themselves in the midst of those powers.”

Although Chrysostom understands that “the sacrifice is one”, and that they “celebrate a memorial of a sacrifice”, he still says, “For when thou seest the Lord sacrificed, and laid upon the altar”. He also uses words like “offered” and “sacrifice” together.

Though Chrysostom says, “We do not then offer a different sacrifice, as the high priest formerly did, but always the same; or rather we celebrate a memorial of a sacrifice”, the presence of an altar, and a priest and the word “offer”, make it difficult to understand their ritual as simply “a memorial of a sacrifice”.

In the very “Liturgy which bears the name of St. Chrysostom”, he does not mention memorial but sacrifice as he says, “Grant that we may find grace in thy sight that our sacrifice may become acceptable to Thee...” So we are left to believe that it is a sacrifice.

While we can agree with Schaff that “they did not hold that the elements of bread and wine were transmuted into the body and blood of Christ in such a sense as to cease to be bread and wine”, yet the way they celebrated this memorial makes it a ritual that is more than just a remembrance.

And Chrysostom says, “They who rule on earth have indeed authority to bind, but only the body: whereas this binding lays hold of the soul and penetrates the heavens; and what priests do here below God ratifies above, and the Master confirms the sentence of his servants. For indeed what is it but all manner of heavenly authority which He has given them when He says, “Whose sins ye remit they are remitted, and whose sins ye retain they are retained? (John 20:23)”

But Jesus was telling His disciples that they should tell those who had believed in Him that their sins had been remitted, or forgiven. The disciples were to tell those who did not believe in Him that their sins had been retained.

Chrysostom also explains his thinking about priests, as he says, "Away with such madness! For transparent madness it is to despise so great a dignity, without which it is not possible to obtain either our own salvation, or the good things which have been promised to us. For if no one can enter into the kingdom of Heaven except he be regenerate through water and the Spirit, and he who does not eat the flesh of the Lord and drink His blood is excluded from eternal life, and if all these things are accomplished only by means of those holy hands, I mean

the hands of the priest, how will any one, without these, be able to escape the fire of hell, or to win those crowns which are reserved for the victorious?”

However, the priests are not “the authors of our birth from God”, for we are born of God as we read again in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

It is not the priest who gives us faith, but faith is the gift of God, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NKJV):8** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

And Chrysostom also says of priests, “For not only at the time of regeneration, but afterwards also, they have authority to forgive sins.”

Chrysostom misunderstood how one is born again. This caused him to believe that there was a great weight of responsibility on the priest, and that they were in some way responsible for people’s salvation.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, On the Priesthood, Book IV, page 68-69**, he calls “elders” priests. But he lays great stress on the need for skill in handling the word of God on the priest. The priest must be able to refute the heretics, in order to keep the laity from falling into heresy.

And he says, “But that the apostle gives the same charge to the laity, hear what he says in another epistle to other than the priesthood: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom,” (Colossians 3:16) and again, “Let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one,”

He also encourages the laity to “Build each other up”, and to “be ready to render an account of their faith”,

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, On the Priesthood, Book VI, page 74-80**, Chrysostom points out the stricter judgment levied on priests. The reason for this stricter judgment was because of the responsibility of the priest. According to Chrysostom, the priest was responsible to give their “account for each of those who have been entrusted to us”, as in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):17** Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

And so the penalty of the priest is “not limited to shame, but everlasting chastisement awaits us as well.”

The office of the priest is “an office which needs the virtues of an angel”, and “the soul of the Priest ought to be purer than the very sunbeams, in order that the Holy Spirit may not leave him desolate”.

And he asks, “And whenever he invokes the Holy Spirit, and offers the most dread sacrifice, and constantly handles the common Lord of all, tell me what rank shall we give him? What great purity and what real piety must we demand of him?”

And he asks, “ought not the soul which receives so great a spirit to be purer and holier than anything in the world?”

But Chrysostom did not understand that the priesthood had changed, and we in the New Testament are not under the law of the Levitical priesthood, or any other priesthood.

And in the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, the bread and wine are changed “by thy Holy

Spirit that to us who partake of them they may be for the cleansing of our souls, the remission of sins, the communion of the Holy Spirit.” And this change happens “whenever he invokes the Holy Spirit, and offers the most dread sacrifice, and constantly handles the common Lord of all”. That is, it happens when the priest invokes the Holy Spirit.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXXXV, page 509-510**, he says that the Church had to have “fields, and houses, and hirings of lodgings, and carriages, and muleteers, and mules, and a great array of this kind” in order to fulfill its ministry to the poor because the laity would not give alms. And he says that as a result they “continue unfruitful, and God’s priests do not practise their proper duties.”

So the priests were having to “to imitate the houses of them that manage public affairs”, in order to provide for the poor, and were limited by this in terms of their ministry.

And even the Bishops had “gone beyond agents, and stewards, and hucksters in their care about these things”, that is, of “public affairs”. He notes there was “great neglect of the Scriptures, and remissness in prayers, and indifference about all the other duties” among the clergy in his time. But it is evident from his writing that Chrysostom himself did not neglect the Scriptures.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY X, page 366-367**, Chrysostom says, “He does not merely say “love,” but “very highly,” as children love their fathers. For through them ye were begotten by that eternal generation: through them you have obtained the kingdom: through their hands all things are done, through them the gates of heaven are opened to you. Let no one raise divisions, let no one be contentious. He who loves Christ, whatever the Priest may be, will love him, because through him he has obtained the awful Mysteries.”

And he says, “Tell me, if wishing to see a palace resplendent with much gold, and radiant with the brightness of precious stones, thou couldest find him who had the key, and he being called upon immediately opened it, and admitted thee within, wouldest thou not prefer him above all men?”

He refers to **Matthew 16 (KJV):19** And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

But the key into the kingdom of heaven is Jesus. He is the door. He is the way, the truth, and the life.

When we believe in Him we pass from condemnation to justification. We pass from death to life as we read again in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

The Lord is about relationship. It is not by man. God wants relationship with every individual. And He has made this possible by faith in Jesus Christ.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY VI, page 426-427**, Chrysostom says, “The Priest is the common father, as it were, of all the world; it is proper therefore that he should care for all, even as God, Whom he serves.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TITUS, HOMILY I, page 521-522**, Chrysostom says, “Observe also how he offers the same prayers for the Teacher, as for the disciples and the multitude. For indeed he needs such prayers as much, or

rather more than they, by how much he has greater enmities to encounter, and is more exposed to the necessity of offending God. For the higher is the dignity, the greater are the dangers of the priestly office. For one good act in his episcopal office is sufficient to raise him to heaven and one error to sink him to hell itself.”

And he says, “These are not the things we find blamed or applauded at all. For the qualities which a Bishop is required to possess are different, as to be blameless, sober, orderly, hospitable, apt to teach. These the Apostle requires, and these we ought to look for in a ruler of the Church, but nothing further.”

Chrysostom speaks of a ruler in the Church. But this was the apostolic ministry. The concept of the individuality of the believer, and a ministry gift for every believer, had been lost to the Church in the time of Chrysostom. This principle of ministry still needs recovery in the churches today. We must encourage the individuality of believers, and the principle of ministry gifts which are still valid in the Church today, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):11** And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

And we see the consequences of the hierarchy of ministry that had developed in the Church in Chrysostom’s time. The elevation of a priest to a Bishop, and then the elevation of a Bishop to Archbishop, are not ministries that are defined in the word of God. The ministry of a Bishop or an Archbishop, in the sense in which it is described by Chrysostom, is the ministry of the apostle. The apostle is responsible for planting churches, establishing sound doctrine, and then caring for all the churches. We see this in the apostle Paul’s ministry in **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):28** Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

With the persecutions that the Church went through for the first three hundred years, the loss of doctrine was preceded by the loss of the apostolic ministry. Jesus Christ is still building His Church, and the reformation recovered much that was lost. The Church is growing but there is still more sound doctrine that needs to be recovered by many of the local churches.

It is true that teachers will be held to a stricter judgment, as James says in **James 3 (NASB):1** Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. 2 For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.

But in the case of believers, the “stricter judgment” James speaks of is for rewards, and not salvation.

Concerning **The Ministry of the Word**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, ON THE PRIESTHOOD, BOOK IV, page 64-66**, he says, “there is but one method and way



of healing appointed, after we have gone wrong, and that is, the powerful application of the Word.”

And in speaking of the “power of working miracles”, he says, “But if there is not the least sign of such a power being left us, while on every side many enemies are constantly attacking us, why then it necessarily follows that we should arm ourselves with this weapon, both in order that we may not be wounded ourselves with the darts of the enemy, and in order that we may wound him.”

And referring to Colossians 3:16, he says, “Wherefore it should be our ambition that the Word of Christ dwell in us richly”.

And we must be prepared for battle, as he says, “For it is not for one kind of battle only that we have to be prepared. This warfare is manifold, and is engaged with a great variety of enemies; neither do all these use the same weapons, nor do they practice the same method of attack; and he who has to join battle with all, must needs know the artifices of all, and be at once both archer and slinger, captain and general, in the ranks and in command, on foot and on horseback, in sea-fight and in siege.”

And the shepherd must be “coming equipped with accurate knowledge at all points”.

Concerning **Advice to Bishops and Priests**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, ON THE PRIESTHOOD, BOOK V, page 70-73**, he says, “How great is the skill required for the teacher in contending earnestly for the truth, has been sufficiently set forth by us.”

And in order that “his people may follow and yield to him”, the preacher must have “indifference to their praise, and the power of preaching well”.

And he says, “Thus then must the Priest behave towards those in his charge, as a father would behave to his very young children; and as such are not disturbed either by their insults or their blows, or their lamentations, nor even if they laugh and rejoice with us, do we take much account of it.”

And he says, “For since preaching does not come by nature, but by study, suppose a man to reach a high standard of it, this will then forsake him if he does not cultivate his power by constant application and exercise.”

And he notes, “So that there is greater labor for the wiser than for the unlearned”.

And he says of the preacher, “For a sufficient consolation in his labors, and one greater than all, is when he is able to be conscious of arranging and ordering his teaching with a view to pleasing God.”

And so we read in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):15** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

## Salvation

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XVII, page 473-474

Ver. 6, 7, 8, 9. “But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above): or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

To prevent the Jews then from saying, How came they who had not found the lesser righteousness to find the greater? he gives a reason there was no answering, that this way was easier than that. For that requires the fulfillment of all things (for when thou doest all, then thou shalt live); but the righteousness which is of faith doth not say this, but what?

“If thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Then again that we may not seem to be making it contemptible by showing it to be easy and cheap, observe how he expands his account of it. For he does not come immediately to the words just given, but what does he say? “But the righteousness which is of faith saith on this wise; Say not in thine heart, Who shall go up into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down); or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)” For as to the virtue manifested in works there is opposed a listlessness, which relaxeth our labors, and it requireth a very wakeful soul not to yield to it: thus, when one is required to believe, there are reasonings which confuse and make havoc of the minds of most men, and it wants a soul of some vigor to shake them thoroughly off. And this is just why he brings the same before one. And as he did in Abraham’s case, so he does here also. For having there shown that he was justified by faith, lest he should seem to have gotten so great a crown by a mere chance, as if it were a thing of no account, to extol the nature of faith, he says, “Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations. And being not weak in faith, he considered his own body now dead, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able also to perform” (Rom. iv. 18–21): so he showed that there is need of vigor, and a lofty soul, that takes in things beyond expectation, and stumbles not at appearances. This then he does here also, and shows that it requires a wise mind, and a spirit heavenly (Gr. heaven-reaching) and great. And he does not say merely, “Say not,” but, “Say not in thine heart,” that is, do not so much as think of doubting and saying with thyself, And how can this be? You see that this is a chief characteristic of faith, to leave all the consequences of this lower world, and so to seek for that which is above nature, and to cast out the feebleness of calculation, and so to accept everything from the Power of God. The Jews, however, did not merely assert this, but that it was not possible to be justified by faith. But himself turns even what had taken place to another account, that having shown the thing to be so great, that even after it had taken place it required faith, he might seem with good reason to bestow a crown on these: and he uses the words which

are found in the Old Testament, being always at pains to keep quite clear of the charges of love of novelties, and of opposition to it. For this, which he here says of faith, Moses says to them of the commandment, so showing that they had enjoyed at God's hand a great benefit. For there is no need to say, he means, that one must go up to heaven, or cross a great sea, and then receive the commandments, but things so great and grand hath God made of easy access to us. And what meaneth the phrase, "The Word is nigh thee?" That is, It is easy. For in thy mind and in thy tongue is thy salvation. There is no long journey to go, no seas to sail over, no mountains to pass, to get saved. But if you be not minded to cross so much as the threshold, you may even while you sit at home be saved. For "in thy mouth and in thy heart" is the source of salvation. And then on another score also he makes the word of faith easy, and says, that "God raised Him from the dead." For just reflect upon the worthiness of the Worker, and you will no longer see any difficulty in the thing. That He is Lord then, is plain from the resurrection. And this he said at the beginning even of the Epistle. "Which was declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. i. 4) But that the resurrection is easy too, has been shown even to those who are very unbelieving, from the might of the Worker of it. Since then the righteousness is greater, and light and easy to receive, is it not a sign of the utmost contentiousness to leave what is light and easy, and set about impossibilities? For they could not say that it was a thing they declined as burdensome. See then how he deprives them of all excuse. For what do they deserve to have said in their defense, who choose what is burdensome and impracticable, and pass by what is light, and able to save them, and to give them those things which the Law could not give? All this can come only from a contentious spirit, which is in a state of rebellion against God. For the Law is galling (*ἐπαχθής*), but grace is easy. The Law, though they dispute never so much, does not save; Grace yieldeth the righteousness resulting from itself, and that from the Law likewise. What plea then is to rescue them, since they are disposed to be contentious against this, but cling to that to no purpose whatever? Then, since he had made a strong assertion, he again confirms it from the Scripture.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, "Ver. 6, 7, 8, 9. "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above): or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

He refers in context to **Romans 10 (KJV):**6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) 7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) 8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Chrysostom continues, "To prevent the Jews then from saying, How came they who

had not found the lesser righteousness to find the greater? he gives a reason there was no answering, that this way was easier than that. For that requires the fulfillment of all things (for when thou doest all, then thou shalt live); but the righteousness which is of faith doth not say this, but what?"

He refers to **Leviticus 18 (KJV):5** Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord.

But salvation has always been by faith, as we read of Abraham in **Genesis 15 (KJV):6** And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

And in **Romans 4 (KJV):1** What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. 3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Chrysostom continues, "“If thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Then again that we may not seem to be making it contemptible by showing it to be easy and cheap, observe how he expands his account of it. For he does not come immediately to the words just given, but what does he say? “But the righteousness which is of faith saith on this wise; Say not in thine heart, Who shall go up into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down); or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.”) For as to the virtue manifested in works there is opposed a listlessness, which relaxeth our labors, and it requireth a very wakeful soul not to yield to it: thus, when one is required to believe, there are reasonings which confuse and make havoc of the minds of most men, and it wants a soul of some vigor to shake them thoroughly off. And this is just why he brings the same before one. And as he did in Abraham’s case, so he does here also. For having there shown that he was justified by faith, lest he should seem to have gotten so great a crown by a mere chance, as if it were a thing of no account, to extol the nature of faith, he says, “Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations. And being not weak in faith, he considered his own body now dead, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able also to perform” (Rom. iv. 18–21): so he showed that there is need of vigor, and a lofty soul, that takes in things beyond expectation, and stumbles not at appearances.”

He correctly refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):18** Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. 19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: 20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

He continues, “This then he does here also, and shows that it requires a wise mind, and a spirit heavenly (Gr. heaven-reaching) and great. And he does not say merely, “Say not,” but, “Say not in thine heart,” that is, do not so much as think of doubting and saying with thyself, And how can this be? You see that this is a chief characteristic of faith, to leave all the consequences of this lower world, and so to seek for that which is above nature, and to cast out the feebleness of calculation, and so to accept everything from the Power of God. The Jews, however, did not merely assert this, but that it was not possible to be justified by faith. But

himself turns even what had taken place to another account, that having shown the thing to be so great, that even after it had taken place it required faith, he might seem with good reason to bestow a crown on these: and he uses the words which are found in the Old Testament, being always at pains to keep quite clear of the charges of love of novelties, and of opposition to it.”

He is speaking of Paul in his epistle to the Romans. He continues, “For this, which he here says of faith, Moses says to them of the commandment, so showing that they had enjoyed at God’s hand a great benefit. For there is no need to say, he means, that one must go up to heaven, or cross a great sea, and then receive the commandments, but things so great and grand hath God made of easy access to us. And what meaneth the phrase, “The Word is nigh thee?” That is, It is easy. For in thy mind and in thy tongue is thy salvation. There is no long journey to go, no seas to sail over, no mountains to pass, to get saved. But if you be not minded to cross so much as the threshold, you may even while you sit at home be saved. For “in thy mouth and in thy heart” is the source of salvation. And then on another score also he makes the word of faith easy, and says, that “God raised Him from the dead.””

Chrysostom agrees with the Scripture here. He continues, “For just reflect upon the worthiness of the Worker, and you will no longer see any difficulty in the thing. That He is Lord then, is plain from the resurrection. And this he said at the beginning even of the Epistle. “Which was declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead.” (Rom. i. 4)”

He refers in context to **Romans 1 (KJV):1** Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

He continues, “But that the resurrection is easy too, has been shown even to those who are very unbelieving, from the might of the Worker of it. Since then the righteousness is greater, and light and easy to receive, is it not a sign of the utmost contentiousness to leave what is light and easy, and set about impossibilities? For they could not say that it was a thing they declined as burdensome. See then how he deprives them of all excuse. For what do they deserve to have said in their defense, who choose what is burdensome and impracticable, and pass by what is light, and able to save them, and to give them those things which the Law could not give? All this can come only from a contentious spirit, which is in a state of rebellion against God. For the Law is galling (*ἐπαχθής*), but grace is easy. The Law, though they dispute never so much, does not save; Grace yieldeth the righteousness resulting from itself, and that from the Law likewise. What plea then is to rescue them, since they are disposed to be contentious against this, but cling to that to no purpose whatever? Then, since he had made a strong assertion, he again confirms it from the Scripture.”

The law was a great burden as Peter testifies in **Acts 15 (KJV):7** And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; 9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon

the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

Salvation has always been through grace, by faith, and not by works of the law, as we read in **Romans 9 (KJV):**30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; 33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

And in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):**8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

The Jews had only to believe in Him who was to come to be saved. We believe now in Him who has come, and we are saved.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY XVI, page 125-126**

Ephesians iv. 31, 32

“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.”

If we are to attain to the kingdom of Heaven, it is not enough to abandon wickedness, but there must be abundant practice of that which is good also. To be delivered indeed from hell we must abstain from wickedness; but to attain to the kingdom we must cleave fast to virtue. Know ye not that even in the tribunals of the heathen, when examination is made of men’s deeds, and the whole city is assembled, this is the case? Nay, there was an ancient custom amongst the heathen, to crown with a golden crown,—not the man who had done no evil to his country, for this were in itself no more than enough to save him from punishment;—but him who had displayed great public services. It was thus that a man was to be advanced to this distinction. But what I had especial need to say, had, I know not how, well nigh escaped me. Accordingly having made some slight correction of what I have said, I retract the first portion of this division.

For as I was saying that the departure from evil is sufficient to prevent our falling into hell, whilst I was speaking, there stole upon me a certain awful sentence, which does not merely bring down vengeance on them that dare to commit evil, but which also punishes those who omit any opportunity of doing good. What sentence then is this? When the day, the dreadful day, He saith, was arrived, and the set time was come, the Judge, seated on the judgment seat, set the sheep on the right hand and the goats on the left; and to the sheep He said, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat.” (Matt. xxv. 34) So far, well. For it was meet that for such compassion they should receive this reward. That those, however, who did not communicate of their own possessions to them that were in need, that they should be punished, not merely by the loss of blessings, but by being also sent to hell-fire, what just reason, I say, can there be in this? Most certainly this too will have a fair show of reason, no less than the

other case: for we are hence instructed, that they that have done good shall enjoy those good things that are in heaven, but they, who, though they have no evil indeed to be charged with, yet have omitted to do good, will be hurried away with them that have done evil into hell-fire. Unless one might indeed say this, that the very not doing good is a part of wickedness, inasmuch as it comes of indolence, and indolence is a part of vice, or rather, not a part, but a source and baneful root of it. For idleness is the teacher of all vice. Let us not then foolishly ask such questions as these, what place shall he occupy, who has done neither any evil nor any good? For the very not doing good, is in itself doing evil. Tell me, if thou hadst a servant, who should neither steal, nor insult, nor contradict thee, who moreover should keep from drunkenness and every other kind of vice, and yet should sit perpetually in idleness, and not doing one of those duties which a servant owes to his master, wouldest thou not chastise him, wouldest thou not put him to the rack? Tell me. And yet forsooth he has done no evil. No, but this is in itself doing evil. But let us, if you please, apply this to other cases in life. Suppose then that of an husbandman. He does no damage to our property, he lays no plots against us, and he is not a thief, he only ties his hands behind him, and sits at home, neither sowing, nor cutting a single furrow, nor harnessing oxen to the yoke, nor looking after a vine, nor in fact discharging any one of those other labors required in husbandry. Now, I say, should we not punish such a man? And yet he has done no wrong to any one; we have no charge to make against him. No, but by this very thing has he done wrong. He does wrong in that he does not contribute his own share to the common stock of good. And what again, tell me, if every single artisan or mechanic were only to do no harm, say to one of a different craft,—nay, were to do no harm, even to one of his own, but only were to be idle, would not our whole life at that rate be utterly at an end and perish? Do you wish that I yet further extend the discourse with reference to the body also? Let the hand then neither strike the head, nor cut out the tongue, nor pluck out the eye, nor do any evil of this sort, but only remain idle, and not render its due service to the body at large; would it not be more fitting that it should be cut off, than that one should carry it about in idleness, and a detriment to the whole body? And what too, if the mouth, without either devouring the hand, or biting the breast, should nevertheless fail in all its proper duties; were it not far better that it should be stopped up? If therefore both in the case of servants, and of mechanics, and of the whole body, not only the commission of evil, but also the omission of what is good, is great unrighteousness, much more will this be the case in regard to the body of Christ.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ephesians iv. 31, 32

“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.””

He refers to **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

He continues, “If we are to attain to the kingdom of Heaven, it is not enough to abandon wickedness, but there must be abundant practice of that which is good also. To be delivered indeed from hell we must abstain from wickedness; but to attain to the kingdom we must cleave fast to virtue.”

It sounds like he is saying that we must have good works in addition to faith to be saved. He continues, “Know ye not that even in the tribunals of the heathen, when examination is made of men’s deeds, and the whole city is assembled, this is the case? Nay, there was an ancient custom amongst the heathen, to crown with a golden crown,—not the man who had done no evil to his country, for this were in itself no more than enough to save him from punishment;—but him who had displayed great public services. It was thus that a man was to be advanced to this distinction. But what I had especial need to say, had, I know not how, well nigh escaped me. Accordingly having made some slight correction of what I have said, I retract the first portion of this division.”

He continues, “For as I was saying that the departure from evil is sufficient to prevent our falling into hell, whilst I was speaking, there stole upon me a certain awful sentence, which does not merely bring down vengeance on them that dare to commit evil, but which also punishes those who omit any opportunity of doing good. What sentence then is this? When the day, the dreadful day, He saith, was arrived, and the set time was come, the Judge, seated on the judgment seat, set the sheep on the right hand and the goats on the left; and to the sheep He said, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat.” (Matt. xxv. 34)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 25 (KJV):**31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

He continues, “So far, well. For it was meet that for such compassion they should receive this reward. That those, however, who did not communicate of their own possessions to them that were in need, that they should be punished, not merely by the loss of blessings, but by being also sent to hell-fire, what just reason, I say, can there be in this? Most certainly this too will have a fair show of reason, no less than the other case: for we are hence instructed, that they that have done good shall enjoy those good things that are in heaven, but they, who, though they have no evil indeed to be charged with, yet have omitted to do good, will be hurried away with them that have done evil into hell-fire. Unless one might indeed say this, that the very not doing good is a part of wickedness, inasmuch as it comes of indolence, and indolence is a part of vice, or rather, not a part, but a source and baneful root of it. For idleness is the teacher of all vice.”

He is basing his assertion on **Matthew 25 (KJV):**41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no



drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

But Jesus is speaking of the judgment of the nations, and who will inherit the kingdom, and this will happen at His second coming just after the tribulation period. Israel will resume its position as head of the nations, and all nations will be judged as to how they treated the Jews during the tribulation period, for this judgment is based on how they treated Christ's brethren, the Jews. Those nations who treated the Jews accordingly will be granted entrance into the Kingdom Age, and the thousand year reign of Christ. Those nations who did not treat the Jews accordingly during the tribulation period will "go away into everlasting punishment". We will discuss the timing of the judgments more under the heading, **The Resurrection**.

Chrysostom then continues, and argues, "Let us not then foolishly ask such questions as these, what place shall he occupy, who has done neither any evil nor any good? For the very not doing good, is in itself doing evil. Tell me, if thou hadst a servant, who should neither steal, nor insult, nor contradict thee, who moreover should keep from drunkenness and every other kind of vice, and yet should sit perpetually in idleness, and not doing one of those duties which a servant owes to his master, wouldest thou not chastise him, wouldest thou not put him to the rack? Tell me. And yet forsooth he has done no evil. No, but this is in itself doing evil. But let us, if you please, apply this to other cases in life. Suppose then that of an husbandman. He does no damage to our property, he lays no plots against us, and he is not a thief, he only ties his hands behind him, and sits at home, neither sowing, nor cutting a single furrow, nor harnessing oxen to the yoke, nor looking after a vine, nor in fact discharging any one of those other labors required in husbandry. Now, I say, should we not punish such a man? And yet he has done no wrong to any one; we have no charge to make against him. No, but by this very thing has he done wrong. He does wrong in that he does not contribute his own share to the common stock of good. And what again, tell me, if every single artisan or mechanic were only to do no harm, say to one of a different craft,—nay, were to do no harm, even to one of his own, but only were to be idle, would not our whole life at that rate be utterly at an end and perish?"

Chrysostom seems to agree with James, as we read in **James 2 (KJV):**14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? 17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. 18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. 19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. 20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? 22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. 24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. 25 Likewise

also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Good works are the evidence of a genuine faith. But we must understand that we are saved by grace through faith as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Good works will follow a genuine faith, but they are not a requirement to be saved.

Chrysostom concludes, “Do you wish that I yet further extend the discourse with reference to the body also? Let the hand then neither strike the head, nor cut out the tongue, nor pluck out the eye, nor do any evil of this sort, but only remain idle, and not render its due service to the body at large; would it not be more fitting that it should be cut off, than that one should carry it about in idleness, and a detriment to the whole body? And what too, if the mouth, without either devouring the hand, or biting the breast, should nevertheless fail in all its proper duties; were it not far better that it should be stopped up? If therefore both in the case of servants, and of mechanics, and of the whole body, not only the commission of evil, but also the omission of what is good, is great unrighteousness, much more will this be the case in regard to the body of Christ.”

We shall all be judged for the things done in the body as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

But even if we only build wood, hay, or stubble, we will still be saved as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):12** Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

The fire relates to the consequences of our bad choices we make in this life. We will suffer for the bad choices we make in this life. But when we pass to the next life, we are with the Lord as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):8** We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XVII, page 473-474**, Chrysostom quotes Romans 10:9, as he says, ““If thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

And referring to the faith of Abraham he says that, “he showed that there is need of vigor, and a lofty soul, that takes in things beyond expectation, and stumbles not at appearances.”

And he explains, “And what meaneth the phrase, “The Word is nigh thee?” That is, It is easy. For in thy mind and in thy tongue is thy salvation. There is no long journey to go, no seas to sail over, no mountains to pass, to get saved. But if you be not minded to cross so much as the threshold, you may even while you sit at home be saved. For “in thy mouth and in thy heart” is the source of salvation. And then on another score also he makes the word of faith easy, and says, that “God raised Him from the dead.””

Chrysostom does not even mention Baptism here, but in other writings, he says that baptism is necessary for salvation.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY XVI, page 125-126**, he says, “If we are to attain to the kingdom of Heaven, it is not enough to abandon wickedness, but there must be abundant practice of that which is good also. To be delivered indeed from hell we must abstain from wickedness; but to attain to the kingdom we must cleave fast to virtue.”

However, entrance into the kingdom of Heaven is given to those who are born again. And one is born again when they believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord. This is what we read in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

He also says, “Most certainly this too will have a fair show of reason, no less than the other case: for we are hence instructed, that they that have done good shall enjoy those good things that are in heaven, but they, who, though they have no evil indeed to be charged with, yet have omitted to do good, will be hurried away with them that have done evil into hell-fire.”

He bases his assertion on Matthew 25:31-46, which is the judgment of the nations. But the judgment of the nations is to determine which nations will be allowed into the Kingdom of one thousand years. We are saved by our faith in Christ, and not by our works.

He also says, “Let us not then foolishly ask such questions as these, what place shall he occupy, who has done neither any evil nor any good? For the very not doing good, is in itself doing evil.”

And he reasons, “Tell me, if thou hadst a servant, who should neither steal, nor insult, nor contradict thee, who moreover should keep from drunkenness and every other kind of vice, and yet should sit perpetually in idleness, and not doing one of those duties which a servant owes to his master, wouldest thou not chastise him, wouldest thou not put him to the rack?”

And as sons and daughters, the Lord chastens us, as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):5** And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

But He will never forsake us, as we read in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):5** Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

If all we build is wood, hay, or stubble, we will still be saved, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):12** Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

## Faith

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY XXXI, page 206

On account then of all these things He brings her forward, and saith, "Daughter, be of good cheer," (Matt. ix. 22; see verse 2) even as He had said also to the paralyzed person, "Son, be of good cheer." Because in truth the woman was exceedingly alarmed; therefore He saith, "be of good cheer," and He calls her "daughter;" for her faith had made her a daughter. After that comes also her praise: "Thy faith hath made thee whole."

**Commentary:** In summary, he refers first to **Matthew 9 (KJV):**18 While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. 19 And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples. 20 And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: 21 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. 22 But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

And then to **Matthew 9 (KJV):**1 And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city. 2 And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. 3 And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. 4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? 5 For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? 6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. 7 And he arose, and departed to his house. 8 But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

Chrysostom very astutely noticed that Jesus called the paralyzed man, "Son", and the woman with an issue of blood, "Daughter" because their faith had made them a son and a daughter.

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY XXVIII, page 492-493

[4.] In the next place as the sum and substance of his exhortation, which he puts both first and last, even Christ. (Ver. 2) "Looking" (he says) "unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith"; The very thing which Christ Himself also continually said to His disciples, "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of His household?" (Matt. x. 25) And again, "The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord." (Matt. x.

24)

“Looking” (he says), that is, that we may learn to run. For as in all arts and games, we impress the art upon our mind by looking to our masters, receiving certain rules through our sight, so here also, if we wish to run, and to learn to run well, let us look to Christ, even to Jesus “the author and finisher of our faith.” What is this? He has put the Faith within us. For He said to His disciples, “Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you” (John xv. 16); and Paul too says, “But then shall I know, even as also I have been known.” (1 Cor. xiii. 12) He put the Beginning into us, He will also put on the End.

**Commentary:** We begin where he says, “[4.] In the next place as the sum and substance of his exhortation, which he puts both first and last, even Christ. (Ver. 2) “Looking” (he says) “unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith”;

He refers in context to **Hebrews 12 (KJV):1** Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

He continues, “The very thing which Christ Himself also continually said to His disciples, “If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of His household?” (Matt. x. 25) And again, “The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord.” (Matt. x. 24)”

He refers to **Matthew 10 (KJV):24** The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. 25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?

He continues, ““Looking” (he says), that is, that we may learn to run. For as in all arts and games, we impress the art upon our mind by looking to our masters, receiving certain rules through our sight, so here also, if we wish to run, and to learn to run well, let us look to Christ, even to Jesus “the author and finisher of our faith.” What is this? He has put the Faith within us. For He said to His disciples, “Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you” (John xv. 16);”

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):16** Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

He continues, “and Paul too says, “But then shall I know, even as also I have been known.” (1 Cor. xiii. 12)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):12** For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

He concludes, “He put the Beginning into us, He will also put on the End.”

And we read in **Philippians 1 (KJV):6** Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

## Commentary Summary

Concerning **Faith**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY XXXI, page 206**, Chrysostom very astutely noticed that Jesus called the paralyzed man, “Son”, and the woman with an issue of blood, “Daughter” because their faith had made them a son and a daughter.

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY XXVIII, page 492-493**, he says, referring to Hebrews 12:1, “if we wish to run, and to learn to run well, let us look to Christ, even to Jesus “the author and finisher of our faith.” What is this? He has put the Faith within us.”

And he concludes, “He put the Beginning into us, He will also put on the End.”

We will understand more about his thinking on faith under the heading, **Faith Alone Is Not Enough**.

## Free Will

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY XLV, page 284-285**

*“And the disciples came and said unto Him, Why speakest Thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you (Schaff Note: [R.V., “Unto you it is given,” omitting “Because.”]) to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given.”*

We have good cause to admire the disciples, how, longing as they do to learn, they know when they ought to ask. For they do it not before all: and this Matthew shows by saying, “And they came.” And, as to this assertion not being conjecture, Mark hath expressed it more distinctly, by saying, that “they came to Him privately.” (Mark 4:10) This then His brethren and His mother should also have done, and not have called Him out, and made a display.

But mark their kindly affection also, how they have much regard for the others, and seek their good first, and then their own. “For why,” it is said, “speakest Thou unto them in parables?” They did not say, why speakest thou unto us in parables? Yea, and on other occasions also their kindness towards men appears in many ways; as when they say, “Send the multitude away;” (Luke 9:12) and, “Knowest thou that they were offended? (Matthew 15:12)

What then saith Christ? “Because it is given unto you,” so He speaks, “to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given.” (Schaff Note: Matthew 13:11 [R.V., “Unto you it is given,” etc.]) But this He said, not bringing in necessity, or any allotment (ἀποκλῶσι) made causelessly and at random, but implying them to be the authors of all their own evils, and wishing to represent that the thing is a gift, and a grace bestowed from above.

It by no means follows, however, because it is a gift, that therefore free will is taken away; and this is evident from what comes after. To this purpose, in order that neither the one sort may despair, nor the other grow careless, upon being told that “it is given,” He signifies the beginning to be with ourselves.

“For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that which he seemeth to have.” (Schaff Note: Matthew 13:12, See Luke 8:18 [δοκε is inserted from the latter passage, and

repeated in the comments.—R.)

And although the saying be full of much obscurity, yet it indicates unspeakable justice. For what He saith is like this: When any one hath forwardness and zeal, there shall be given unto him all things on God's part also: but if he be void of these, and contribute not his own share, neither are God's gifts bestowed. For even "what he seemeth to have," so He saith, "shall be taken away from him;" God not so much taking it away, as counting him unworthy of His gifts. This we also do; when we see any one listening carelessly, and when with much entreaty we cannot persuade him to attend, it remains for us to be silent. For if we are still to go on, his carelessness is aggravated. But him that is striving to learn, we lead on, and pour in much.

And well said He, "Even that which he seemeth to have." For he hath not really even this.

Then He also made what He had said more distinct, pointing out the meaning of, "To him that hath, shall be given, but from him that hath not, even that which he seemeth to have, shall be taken away."

"Therefore," saith He, "speak I to them in parables; because they seeing see not."  
(Matthew 13:13)

"It were meet then," one may say, "to have opened their eyes, if they see not." Nay, if the blindness were natural, it were meet to open them; but because it was a voluntary and self-chosen blindness, therefore He said not simply, "They see not," but, "seeing, they see not;" so that the blindness is of their own wickedness. For they saw even devils cast out, and said, "By Beelzebub, prince of the devils, He casteth out the devils." (Matthew 12:14) They heard Him guiding them unto God, and evincing His great unanimity with Him, and they say, "This man is not of God." (John 9:16) Since then the judgment they pronounced was contrary both to their sight and hearing, therefore, saith He, the very hearing do I take away from them. For they derive thence no advantage, but rather greater condemnation. For they not only disbelieved, but found fault also, and accused, and laid snares. However, He saith not this, for it is not His will to give disgust in accusing them. Therefore neither at the beginning did He so discourse to them, but with much plainness; but because they perverted themselves, thenceforth He speaks in parables.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, "*And the disciples came and said unto Him, Why speakest Thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you (Schaff Note: [R.V., "Unto you it is given," omitting "Because."]) to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given.*"

We have good cause to admire the disciples, how, longing as they do to learn, they know when they ought to ask. For they do it not before all: and this Matthew shows by saying, "And they came." And, as to this assertion not being conjecture, Mark hath expressed it more distinctly, by saying, that "they came to Him privately." (Mark 4:10) This then His brethren and His mother should also have done, and not have called Him out, and made a display."

He refers to **Mark 4 (KJV):10** And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.

He continues, "But mark their kindly affection also, how they have much regard for the others, and seek their good first, and then their own. "For why," it is said, "speakest Thou unto them in parables?" They did not say, why speakest thou unto us in parables? Yea, and on other occasions also their kindness towards men appears in many ways; as when they say, "Send the

multitude away;” (Luke 9:12) and, “Knowest thou that they were offended? (Matthew 15:12)”

He refers to **Luke 9 (KJV):12** And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.

And to **Matthew 15 (KJV):12** Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?

What then saith Christ? “Because it is given unto you,” so He speaks, “to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given.” (**Schaff Note:** Matthew 13:11 [R.V., “Unto you it is given,” etc.]”

He refers to **Matthew 13 (KJV):11** He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

And as in **Matthew 13 (NASB):11** Jesus answered them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.

He continues, “But this He said, not bringing in necessity, or any allotment (ἀποκλωσι) made causelessly and at random, but implying them to be the authors of all their own evils, and wishing to represent that the thing is a gift, and a grace bestowed from above.

It by no means follows, however, because it is a gift, that therefore free will is taken away; and this is evident from what comes after. To this purpose, in order that neither the one sort may despair, nor the other grow careless, upon being told that “it is given,” He signifies the beginning to be with ourselves.

“For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that which he seemeth to have.” (**Schaff Note:** Matthew 13:12, See Luke 8:18 [δοκε is inserted from the latter passage, and repeated in the comments.—R.]”

He refers to **Matthew 13 (KJV):12** For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

And to **Luke 8 (KJV):18** Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

And to **Luke 8 (NASB):18** So take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him *more* will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken away from him.”

The word “thinks” in the Greek is **δοκέω** (pronounced dok-eh'-o); a prolonged form of a primary verb, **δόκω** (pronounced dok'-o) (used only in an alternate in certain tenses; compare the base of G1166) of the same meaning; to think; by implication, to seem (truthfully or uncertainly):—be accounted, (of own) please(-ure), be of reputation, seem (good), suppose, think, trow. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1380**

He continues, “And although the saying be full of much obscurity, yet it indicates unspeakable justice. For what He saith is like this: When any one hath forwardness and zeal, there shall be given unto him all things on God’s part also: but if he be void of these, and contribute not his own share, neither are God’s gifts bestowed. For even “what he seemeth to have,” so He saith, “shall be taken away from him;” God not so much taking it away, as counting him unworthy of His gifts. This we also do; when we see any one listening carelessly,



and when with much entreaty we cannot persuade him to attend, it remains for us to be silent. For if we are still to go on, his carelessness is aggravated. But him that is striving to learn, we lead on, and pour in much.

And well said He, “Even that which he seemeth to have.” For he hath not really even this.

Then He also made what He had said more distinct, pointing out the meaning of, “To him that hath, shall be given, but from him that hath not, even that which he seemeth to have, shall be taken away.”

“Therefore,” saith He, “speak I to them in parables; because they seeing see not.” (Matthew 13:13)”

He refers to **Matthew 13 (KJV):13** Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

He continues, ““It were meet then,” one may say, “to have opened their eyes, if they see not.” Nay, if the blindness were natural, it were meet to open them; but because it was a voluntary and self-chosen blindness, therefore He said not simply, “They see not,” but, “seeing, they see not;” so that the blindness is of their own wickedness. For they saw even devils cast out, and said, “By Beelzebub, prince of the devils, He casteth out the devils.” (Matthew 12:14)”

He refers to **Matthew 12 (KJV):14** Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

He continues, “They heard Him guiding them unto God, and evincing His great unanimity with Him, and they say, “This man is not of God.” (John 9:16)”

He refers to **John 9 (KJV):16** Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

He continues, “Since then the judgment they pronounced was contrary both to their sight and hearing, therefore, saith He, the very hearing do I take away from them. For they derive thence no advantage, but rather greater condemnation. For they not only disbelieved, but found fault also, and accused, and laid snares. However, He saith not this, for it is not His will to give disgust in accusing them. Therefore neither at the beginning did He so discourse to them, but with much plainness; but because they perverted themselves, thenceforth He speaks in parables.”

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXXXII, page 494-495**

What mean these things, O Peter? When He was saying, “One of you shall betray me,” thou didst fear lest thou shouldst be the traitor, and didst constrain the disciple to ask, although conscious to thyself of no such thing; but now, when He is plainly crying out, and saying, “All shall be offended,” art thou gainsaying it, and not once only, but twice and often? For this is what Luke saith.

Whence then did this come to him? From much love, from much pleasure. I mean, that after that he was delivered from that distressing fear about the betrayal, and knew the traitor, he then spoke confidently, and lifted himself up over the rest, saying, “Though all men shall be offended, yet will I not be offended.” (Matthew 26:33 [Slightly changed]) And in some degree too his conduct sprung from jealousy, for at supper they reasoned “which of them is the

greater,” (Luke 22:24) to such a degree did this passion trouble them. Therefore He checked him, not compelling him to the denial, God forbid! but leaving him destitute of His help, and convicting human nature.

See at any rate after these things how he was subdued. For after the resurrection, when he had said, “And what shall this man do?” (John 21:21) and was silenced, he ventured no more to gainsay as here, but held his peace. Again, towards the assumption, (i.e., the Ascension) when he heard, “It is not for you to know times or seasons,” (Acts 1:7) again he holds his peace, and contradicts not. After these things, on the house, and by the sheet, when he heard a voice saying to him, “What God hath cleansed, call not thou common,” (Acts 10:15) even though he knew not for the time what the saying could be, he is quiet, and strives not.

4. All these things did that fall effect, and whereas before that he attributes all to himself, saying, “Though all men shall be offended, yet will I not be offended;” and, “If I should die, I will not deny Thee” (when he should have said, If I receive the assistance from Thee);—yet after these things altogether the contrary, “Why do ye give heed to us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made him to walk?” (Acts 3:12 [Slightly altered])

Hence we learn a great doctrine, that a man’s willingness is not sufficient, unless any one receive the succor from above; and that again we shall gain nothing by the succor from above, if there be not a willingness. And both these things do Judas and Peter show; for the one, though he had received much help, was profited nothing, because he was not willing, neither contributed his part; but this one, though he was ready in mind, because he received no assistance, fell. For indeed of these two things is virtue’s web woven.

Wherefore I entreat you neither (when you have cast all upon God) to sleep yourselves, nor, when laboring earnestly, to think to accomplish all by your own toils. For neither is it God’s will that we should be supine ourselves, therefore He worketh it not all Himself; nor yet boasters, therefore He did not give all to us; but having removed what was hurtful in either way, left that which is useful for us. Therefore He suffered even the chief apostle to fall, both rendering him more humbled in mind, and training him thenceforth to greater love. “For to whom more is forgiven,” it is said, “he loveth more.” (Luke 7:47)

**Commentary:** In this **Homily LXXXII**, we start where Chrysostom says, “What mean these things, O Peter? When He was saying, “One of you shall betray me,” thou didst fear lest thou shouldest be the traitor, and didst constrain the disciple to ask, although conscious to thyself of no such thing; but now, when He is plainly crying out, and saying, “All shall be offended,” art thou gainsaying it, and not once only, but twice and often? For this is what Luke saith.

He refers to **John 13 (KJV):21** When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. 22 Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. 23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. 24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. 25 He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? 26 Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

And to **Matthew 26 (KJV):33** Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.

He continues, “Whence then did this come to him? From much love, from much pleasure. I mean, that after that he was delivered from that distressing fear about the betrayal, and knew the traitor, he then spoke confidently, and lifted himself up over the rest, saying, “Though all men shall be offended, yet will I not be offended.” (Matthew 26:33 [Slightly changed]) And in some degree too his conduct sprung from jealousy, for at supper they reasoned “which of them is the greater,” (Luke 22:24) to such a degree did this passion trouble them.”

He refers to **Luke 22 (KJV):24** And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

He continues, “Therefore He checked him, not compelling him to the denial, God forbid! but leaving him destitute of His help, and convicting human nature.

See at any rate after these things how he was subdued. For after the resurrection, when he had said, “And what shall this man do?” (John 21:21) and was silenced, he ventured no more to gainsay as here, but held his peace.”

He refers in context to **John 21 (KJV):20** Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? 21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? 22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

He continues, “Again, towards the assumption, (i.e., the Ascension) when he heard, “It is not for you to know times or seasons,” (Acts 1:7) again he holds his peace, and contradicts not.”

He refers in context to **Acts 1 (KJV):6** When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

He continues, “After these things, on the house, and by the sheet, when he heard a voice saying to him, “What God hath cleansed, call not thou common,” (Acts 10:15) even though he knew not for the time what the saying could be, he is quiet, and strives not.”

He refers to **Acts 10 (KJV):15** And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

He continues, referring to Peter’s denial three times that he knew the Lord, “4. All these things did that fall effect, and whereas before that he attributes all to himself, saying, “Though all men shall be offended, yet will I not be offended;” and, “If I should die, I will not deny Thee” (when he should have said, If I receive the assistance from Thee);—yet after these things altogether the contrary, “Why do ye give heed to us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made him to walk?” (Acts 3:12 [Slightly altered])”

He refers in context to **Acts 3 (KJV):11** And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon’s, greatly wondering. 12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

He continues, “Hence we learn a great doctrine, that a man’s willingness is not sufficient, unless any one receive the succor from above; and that again we shall gain nothing by the succor from above, if there be not a willingness. And both these things do Judas and Peter show; for the one, though he had received much help, was profited nothing, because he was not willing, neither contributed his part; but this one, though he was ready in mind, because he

received no assistance, fell. For indeed of these two things is virtue's web woven."

So Chrysostom says "that a man's willingness is not sufficient, unless any one receive the succor from above", and yet he says, "and that again we shall gain nothing by the succor from above, if there be not a willingness."

He continues, "Wherefore I entreat you neither (when you have cast all upon God) to sleep yourselves, nor, when laboring earnestly, to think to accomplish all by your own toils. For neither is it God's will that we should be supine ourselves, therefore He worketh it not all Himself;"

The word "supine" in this context means "exhibiting indolent or apathetic inertia or passivity *especially* : mentally or morally slack".

**(Merriam Webster)**

Chrysostom continues, "nor yet boasters, therefore He did not give all to us; but having removed what was hurtful in either way, left that which is useful for us. Therefore He suffered even the chief apostle to fall, both rendering him more humbled in mind, and training him thenceforth to greater love. "For to whom more is forgiven," it is said, "he loveth more." (Luke 7:47)"

Chrysostom esteemed Peter to be the "chief apostle".

And he refers to **Luke 7 (KJV):47** Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIX, page 486-487**

Rom. XI. 7

*"What then? Israel hath not obtained that, which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it and the rest were blinded."*

He had said that God did not cast off His people; and to show in what sense He had not cast them off, he takes refuge in the Prophets again. And having shown by them that the more part of the Jews were lost, that he might not seem to be again bringing forward an accusation of his own, and to make his discourse offensive, and to be attacking them as enemies, he takes refuge in David and Isaiah, and says,

Ver. 8. "According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber." (Is. xxix. 10)

Or rather we should go back to the beginning of his argument. Having then mentioned the state of things in Elijah's time, and shown what grace is, he proceeds, "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for." Now this is as much what an accuser would say, as what one who was putting a question. For the Jew, he means, is inconsistent with himself when he seeketh for righteousness, which he will not accept. Then to leave them with no excuse, he shows, from those who have accepted it, their unfeeling spirit, as he says, "But the election hath obtained it," and they are the condemnation of the others. And this is what Christ says, "But if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Wherefore they shall be your judges." (Luke xi. 19) For to prevent any one from accusing the nature of the thing, and not their own temper, he points out those who had obtained it. Hence he uses the word with great propriety, to show at once the grace from above and the zeal of these. For it is not to deny

freewill that he speaks of their having “obtained” (**Schaff Note:** as by chance, Gr. ἐπέτυχε) it, but to show the greatness of the good things, and that the greater part was of grace, though not the whole. For we too are in the habit of saying, “so and so chanced to get” (same word), “so and so met with,” when the gain has been a great one. Because it is not by man’s labors, but by God’s gift, that the greater part was brought about.

“And the rest was blinded.”

See how he has been bold enough to tell with his own voice the casting off of the rest. For he had indeed spoken of it already, but it was by bringing the prophets in as accusers. But from this point he declares it in his own person. Still even here he is not content with his own declaration, but brings Isaiah the prophet in again. For after saying, “were blinded,” he proceeds; “according as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber.” Now whence came this blinding? He had indeed mentioned the causes of it before, and turned it all upon their own heads, to show that it was from their unseasonable obstinacy that they had to bear this. And now he speaks of it too. For when he says, “Eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear,” he is but finding fault with their contentious spirit. For when they had “eyes to see” the miracles, and were possessed of “ears to hear” that marvellous Teaching, they never used these as were fitting. And the “He gave,” do not imagine to mean here an agency, but a permission only. But “slumber” (καταάνυξις lit. piercing) is a name he here gives to the habit of soul inclinable to the worse, when incurably and unchangeably so. For in another passage David says, “that my glory may sing unto Thee, and I may not be put to slumber” (Ps. xxx. 12, LXX): that is, I may not alter, may not be changed. For as a man who is hushed to slumber in a state of pious fear would not easily be made to change his side; so too he that is slumbering in wickedness would not change with facility. For to be hushed to slumber here is nothing else but to be fixed and riveted to a thing. In pointing then to the incurable and unchangeable character of their spirit, he calls it “a spirit of slumber.” Then to show that for this unbelief they will be most severely punished, he brings the Prophet forward again, threatening the very things which in the event came to pass.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes “Rom. XI. 7

*“What then? Israel hath not obtained that, which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it and the rest were blinded.”*

He refers in context to **Romans 11 (KJV):** 1 I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel saying, 3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. 4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. 5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. 7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

He continues, “He had said that God did not cast off His people; and to show in what sense He had not cast them off, he takes refuge in the Prophets again. And having shown by

them that the more part of the Jews were lost, that he might not seem to be again bringing forward an accusation of his own, and to make his discourse offensive, and to be attacking them as enemies, he takes refuge in David and Isaiah, and says,

Ver. 8. “According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber.” (Is. xxix. 10)”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):8** (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.

And to **Isaiah 29 (KJV):10** For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.

He continues, “Or rather we should go back to the beginning of his argument. Having then mentioned the state of things in Elijah’s time, and shown what grace is, he proceeds, “What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for.” Now this is as much what an accuser would say, as what one who was putting a question. For the Jew, he means, is inconsistent with himself when he seeketh for righteousness, which he will not accept. Then to leave them with no excuse, he shows, from those who have accepted it, their unfeeling spirit, as he says, “But the election hath obtained it,” and they are the condemnation of the others. And this is what Christ says, “But if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Wherefore they shall be your judges.” (Luke xi. 19)”

He refers to **Luke 11 (KJV):19** And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.

He continues, “For to prevent any one from accusing the nature of the thing, and not their own temper, he points out those who had obtained it. Hence he uses the word with great propriety, to show at once the grace from above and the zeal of these. For it is not to deny freewill that he speaks of their having “obtained” (**Schaff Note:** as by chance, Gr. ἐπέτυχε) it, but to show the greatness of the good things, and that the greater part was of grace, though not the whole. For we too are in the habit of saying, “so and so chanced to get” (same word), “so and so met with,” when the gain has been a great one. Because it is not by man’s labors, but by God’s gift, that the greater part was brought about.”

The word “obtained” in Romans 11:7 in the Greek is ἐπιτυγχάνω (pronounced ep-ee-toong-khan'-o); from G1909 and G5177; to chance upon, i.e. (by implication) to attain:—obtain. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2013**

But the Scripture does not say that the “greater part” was done by God, and the lesser part by man, but it says “of Him are you in Christ Jesus” in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):26** For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

That is, it is not about us, but about Him.

Chrysostom continues, ““And the rest was blinded.”

See how he has been bold enough to tell with his own voice the casting off of the rest. For he had indeed spoken of it already, but it was by bringing the prophets in as accusers. But from this point he declares it in his own person. Still even here he is not content with his own declaration, but brings Isaiah the prophet in again. For after saying, “were blinded,” he proceeds; “according as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber.” Now whence came this blinding? He had indeed mentioned the causes of it before, and turned it all upon their own heads, to show that it was from their unseasonable obstinacy that they had to bear this. And now he speaks of it too. For when he says, “Eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear,” he is but finding fault with their contentious spirit. For when they had “eyes to see” the miracles, and were possessed of “ears to hear” that marvellous Teaching, they never used these as were fitting. And the “He gave,” do not imagine to mean here an agency, but a permission only. But “slumber” (καταάνυξις lit. piercing) is a name he here gives to the habit of soul inclinable to the worse, when incurably and unchangeably so. For in another passage David says, “that my glory may sing unto Thee, and I may not be put to slumber” (Ps. xxx. 12, LXX): that is, I may not alter, may not be changed.”

He refers in context to **Psalm 30 (Septuagint)**: 11 Thou hast turned my mourning into joy for me: thou hast rent off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; 12 that my glory may sing praise to thee, and I may not be pierced with sorrow. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to thee for ever.

And in context to **Psalm 30 (KJV)**: 11 Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; 12 To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

Chrysostom continues, “For as a man who is hushed to slumber in a state of pious fear would not easily be made to change his side; so too he that is slumbering in wickedness would not change with facility. For to be hushed to slumber here is nothing else but to be fixed and riveted to a thing. In pointing then to the incurable and unchangeable character of their spirit, he calls it “a spirit of slumber.” Then to show that for this unbelief they will be most severely punished, he brings the Prophet forward again, threatening the very things which in the event came to pass.”

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY II, page 13**

### Chapter I. Verses 11–14

“In whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will.”

Paul earnestly endeavors on all occasions to display the unspeakable lovingkindness of God towards us, to the utmost of his power. For that it is impossible to do so adequately, hear his own words. “O! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out.” (Rom. xi. 33) Still, notwithstanding, so far as it is possible, he does display it. What then is this which he is saying; “In whom also we were made a heritage, being predestinated?” Above he used the word, “He chose us;” here he saith, “we were made a heritage.” But inasmuch as a lot is a matter of

chance, not of deliberate choice, nor of virtue, (for it is closely allied to ignorance and accident, and oftentimes passing over the virtuous, brings forward the worthless into notice,) observe how he corrects this very point: “having been foreordained,” saith he, “according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things.” That is to say, not merely have we been made a heritage, as, again, we have not merely been chosen, (for it is God who chooses,) and so neither have we merely been allotted, (for it is God who allots,) but it is “according to a purpose.” This is what he says also in the Epistle to the Romans, (Rom. viii. 28–30) “To them that are called according to His purpose;” and “whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them he also glorified.” Having first used the expression, “to them that are called according to a purpose,” and at the same time wishing to declare their privilege compared with the rest of mankind, he speaks also of inheritance by lot, yet so as not to divest them of free will. That point then, which more properly belongs to happy fortune, is the very point he insists upon. For this inheritance by lot depends not on virtue, but, as one might say, on fortuitous circumstances. It is as though he had said, lots were cast, and He hath chosen us; but the whole is of deliberate choice. Men predestinated, that is to say, having chosen them to Himself, He hath separated. He saw us, as it were, chosen by lot before we were born. For marvelous is the foreknowledge of God, and acquainted with all things before their beginning.

But mark now how on all occasions he takes pains to point out, that it is not the result of any change of purpose, but that these matters had been thus modeled from the very first, so that we are in no wise inferior to the Jews in this respect; and how, in consequence, he does every thing with this view. How then is it that Christ Himself saith, “I was not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel?” (Mat. xv. 24) And said again to his disciples, “Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans.” (Mat. x. 5) And Paul again himself says, “It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” (Acts xiii. 46) These expressions, I say, are used with this design, that no one may suppose that this work came to pass incidentally only. “According to the purpose,” he says, “of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will.” That is to say, He had no after workings; having modeled all things from the very first, thus he leads forward all things “according to the counsel of His will.” So that it was not merely because the Jews did not listen that He called the Gentiles, nor was it of mere necessity, nor was it on any inducement arising from them.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes from “Chapter I. Verses 11–14

“In whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will.”

He refers in context to **Ephesians 1 (KJV):** 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

He continues, “Paul earnestly endeavors on all occasions to display the unspeakable lovingkindness of God towards us, to the utmost of his power. For that it is impossible to do so



adequately, hear his own words. “O! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out.” (Rom. xi. 33)”

He refers in context to **Romans 11 (KJV):33** O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Note in verse 36, we read, “of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.” What could be more clear?

Chrysostom continues, “Still, notwithstanding, so far as it is possible, he does display it. What then is this which he is saying; “In whom also we were made a heritage, being predestinated?” Above he used the word, “He chose us;” here he saith, “we were made a heritage.””

Actually, the verse in Ephesians 1:11 reads literally as in **Ephesians 1 (NASB):11** In Him we also have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things in accordance with the plan of His will,...

Chrysostom continues, “But inasmuch as a lot is a matter of chance, not of deliberate choice, nor of virtue, (for it is closely allied to ignorance and accident, and oftentimes passing over the virtuous, brings forward the worthless into notice,) observe how he corrects this very point: “having been foreordained,” saith he, “according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things.” That is to say, not merely have we been made a heritage, as, again, we have not merely been chosen, (for it is God who chooses,) and so neither have we merely been allotted, (for it is God who allots,) but it is “according to a purpose.” This is what he says also in the Epistle to the Romans, (Rom. viii. 28–30) “To them that are called according to His purpose;” and “whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them he also glorified.””

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

He continues, as he then argues, “Having first used the expression, “to them that are called according to a purpose,” and at the same time wishing to declare their privilege compared with the rest of mankind, he speaks also of inheritance by lot, yet so as not to divest them of free will. That point then, which more properly belongs to happy fortune, is the very point he insists upon. For this inheritance by lot depends not on virtue, but, as one might say, on fortuitous circumstances. It is as though he had said, lots were cast, and He hath chosen us; but the whole is of deliberate choice. Men predestinated, that is to say, having chosen them to Himself, He hath separated. He saw us, as it were, chosen by lot before we were born. For marvelous is the foreknowledge of God, and acquainted with all things before their beginning.”

So Chrysostom is saying that God foreknew who would say “yes” to Him, and it is these He predestinated, called, justified, and glorified. But freewill is nowhere mentioned in any of these verses, or even the will of man. The clear statement of Scripture reads as in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God,

even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

He continues, “But mark now how on all occasions he takes pains to point out, that it is not the result of any change of purpose, but that these matters had been thus modeled from the very first, so that we are in no wise inferior to the Jews in this respect; and how, in consequence, he does every thing with this view. How then is it that Christ Himself saith, “I was not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel?” (Mat. xv. 24) And said again to his disciples, “Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans.” (Mat. x. 5)”

He refers to **Matthew 15 (KJV):24** But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

And to **Matthew 10 (KJV):5** These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

He continues, “And Paul again himself says, “It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” (Acts xiii. 46)”

He refers to **Acts 13 (KJV):46** Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

He concludes, “These expressions, I say, are used with this design, that no one may suppose that this work came to pass incidentally only. “According to the purpose,” he says, “of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will.” That is to say, He had no after workings; having modeled all things from the very first, thus he leads forward all things “according to the counsel of His will.” So that it was not merely because the Jews did not listen that He called the Gentiles, nor was it of mere necessity, nor was it on any inducement arising from them.”

The counsel of the Lord shall stand as we read in **Isaiah 46 (KJV):9** Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

And we read in **Acts 15 (KJV):18** Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY I, page 416-418**

1 Timothy i. 12–14

*“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry [R.V.: to his service, εἰς διακονίαν]; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”*

The advantages arising from humility are generally acknowledged, and yet it is a thing not easily to be met with. There is affectation of humble talking enough and to spare, but

humbleness of mind is nowhere to be found. This quality was so cultivated by the blessed Paul, that he is ever looking out for inducements to be humble. They who are conscious to themselves of great merits must struggle much with themselves if they would be humble. And he too was one likely to be under violent temptations, his own good conscience swelling him up like a gathering humor. Observe therefore his method in this place. "I was entrusted," he had said, "with the glorious Gospel of God, of which they who still adhere to the law have no right to partake; for it is now opposed to the Gospel, and their difference is such, that those who are actuated by the one, are as yet unworthy to partake of the other; as we should say, that those who require punishments, and chains, have no right to be admitted into the train of philosophers." Being filled therefore with high thoughts, and having used magnificent expressions, he at once depresses himself, and engages others also to do the like. Having said therefore that "the Gospel was committed to his trust"; lest this should seem to be said from pride, he checks himself at once, adding by way of correction, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." Thus everywhere, we see, he conceals his own merit, and ascribes everything to God, yet so far only, as not to take away free will. For the unbeliever might perhaps say, If everything is of God, and we contribute nothing of ourselves, while He turns us, as if we were mere wood and stone, from wickedness to the love of wisdom, why then did He make Paul such as he was, and not Judas? To remove this objection, mark the prudence of his expression, "Which was committed," he says, "to my trust." This was his own excellence and merit, but not wholly his own; for he says, "I thank Christ Jesus, who enabled me." This is God's part: then his own again, "Because He counted me faithful." Surely because he would be serviceable of his own part.

Ver. 13. "Putting me into his service, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."

Thus we see him acknowledge both his own part and that of God, and whilst he ascribes the greater part to the providence of God, he extenuates his own, yet so far only, as we said before, as was consistent with free will. And what is this, "Who enabled me"? I will tell you. He had so heavy a burden to sustain, that he needed much aid from above. For think what it was to be exposed to daily insults, and mockeries, and snares, and dangers, scoffs, and reproaches, and deaths; and not to faint, or slip, or turn backward, but though assaulted every day with darts innumerable, to bear up manfully, and remain firm and imperturbable. This was the effect of no human power, and yet not of Divine influence alone, but of his own resolution also. For that Christ chose him with a foreknowledge of what he would be, is plain from the testimony He bore to him before the commencement of his preaching. "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings." (Acts ix. 15) For as those who bear the royal standard in war (**Schaff Note:** One copy has, "which is usually called Laburum," perhaps a mistake for Labarum, but Socrates has Laborum. The first standard known to have been so called was that of Constantine, which bore the Christian symbol. [See Schaff, *Church Hist.* III. 27.]) require both strength and address, that they may not let it fall into the hands of the enemy; so those who sustain the name of Christ, not only in war but in peace, need a mighty strength, to preserve it uninjured from the attacks of accusers. Great indeed is the strength required to bear the name of Christ, and to sustain it well, and bear the Cross. For he who in action, or word, or thought, does anything unworthy of Christ, does not sustain His name, and has not Christ dwelling in him. For he that sustains that name bears it in triumph, not in the concourse of men, but through the very

heavens, while all angels stand in awe, and attend upon him, and admire him.

“I thank the Lord, who hath enabled me.” Observe how he thanks God even for that which was his own part. For he acknowledges it as a favor from Him that he was “a chosen vessel.” For this, O blessed Paul, was thy own part. “For God is no respecter of persons.” **(Schaff Note:** He would be a respecter of persons who, without regard to a man’s qualities, should arbitrarily (or on external grounds, such as birth, wealth, &c.) prefer him to others; God therefore does not do this. Rom. ii. 11; Col. iii. 25; Acts x. 34) But I thank Him that he “thought me worthy of this ministry.” For this is a proof that He esteemed me faithful. The steward in a house is not only thankful to his master that he is trusted, but considers it as a sign that he holds him more faithful than others: so it is here. Then observe how he magnifies the mercy and loving-kindness of God, in describing his former life, “who was formerly,” he says, “a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious.” And when he speaks of the still unbelieving Jews, he rather extenuates their guilt. “For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.” (Rom. x. 2) But of himself he says, “Who was a blasphemer and a persecutor.” Observe his lowering of himself! So free was he from self-love, so full of humility, that he is not satisfied to call himself a persecutor and a blasphemer, but he aggravates his guilt, showing that it did not stop with himself, that it was not enough that he was a blasphemer, but in the madness of his blasphemy he persecuted those who were willing to be godly. **(Schaff Note:** εὐσεβεῖν, “to worship aright.”)

“But I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.”

Why then did other Jews not obtain mercy? Because what they did, they did not ignorantly, but willfully, well knowing what they did. For this we have the testimony of the Evangelist. “Many of the Jews believed on Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him. For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” (John xii. 42, 43) And Christ again said to them, “How can ye believe, who receive honor one of another” (John v. 44)? and the parents of the blind man “said these things for fear of the Jews, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.” (John ix. 22) Nay the Jews themselves said, “Perceive ye how we avail nothing? behold, the world is gone after Him.” (John xii. 19) Thus their love of power was everywhere in their way. When they admitted that no one can forgive sins but God only, and Christ immediately did that very thing, **(Schaff Note:** i.e. proved that He had done it, by a direct appeal to God.) which they had confessed to be a sign of divinity, this could not be a case of ignorance. But where was Paul then? Perhaps one should say he was sitting at the feet of Gamaliel, and took no part with the multitude who conspired against Jesus: for Gamaliel does not appear to have been an ambitious man. Then how is it that afterwards Paul was found joining with the multitude? He saw the doctrine growing, and on the point of prevailing, and being generally embraced. For in the lifetime of Christ, the disciples consorted with Him, and afterwards with their teachers, **(Schaff Note:** i.e. Jewish teachers.) but when they were completely separated, Paul did not act as the other Jews did, from the love of power, but from zeal. For what was the motive of his journey to Damascus? He thought the doctrine pernicious, and was afraid that the preaching of it would spread everywhere. But with the Jews it was no concern for the multitude, but the love of power, that influenced their actions. Hence they say, “The Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.” (John xi. 48) What fear was this that agitated them, but that of man? But it is worthy of enquiry, how one so skillful in the law as Paul could be ignorant? For it is he who says, “which He had promised before by His

holy prophets.” (Rom. i. 2) How is it then that thou knowest not, thou who art zealous of the law of their fathers, who wert brought up at the feet of Gamaliel? Yet they who spent their days on lakes and rivers, and the very publicans, have embraced the Gospel, whilst thou that studiest the law art persecuting it! It is for this he condemns himself, saying, “I am not meet to be called an Apostle.” (1 Cor. xv. 9) It is for this he confesses his ignorance, which was produced by unbelief. For this cause, he says, that he obtained “mercy.” What then does he mean when he says, “He counted me faithful”? He would give up no right of his Master’s: even his own part he ascribed to Him, and assumed nothing to himself, nor claimed for his own the glory which was due to God. Hence in another place we find him exclaiming, “Sirs, why do ye these things to us? we also are men of like passions with you.” (Acts xiv. 15) So again, “He counted me faithful.” And again, “I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” (1 Cor. xv. 10) And again, “It is He that worketh in us both to will and to do.” (Philip. ii. 13) Thus in acknowledging that he “obtained mercy,” he owns that he deserved punishment, since mercy is for such. And again in another place he says of the Jews, “Blindness in part is happened to Israel.” (Rom. xi. 25)

Ver. 14. “And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

This is added, lest hearing that he obtained mercy, we should understand by it only, that being deserving of punishment, as a persecutor and blasphemer, nevertheless he was not punished. But mercy was not confined to this, that punishment was not inflicted; many other great favors are implied by it. For not only has God released us from the impending punishment, but He has made us “righteous” too, and “sons,” and “brethren,” and “heirs,” and “joint-heirs.” Therefore it is he says, that “grace was exceeding abundant.” For the gifts bestowed were beyond mercy, since they are not such as would come of mercy only, but of affection and excessive love. Having thus enlarged upon the love of God which, not content with showing mercy to a blasphemer and persecutor, conferred upon him other blessings in abundance, he has guarded against that error of the unbelievers which takes away free will, by adding, “with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” Thus much only, he says, did we contribute. We have believed that He is able to save us.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “1 Timothy i. 12–14

*“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry [R.V.: to his service, εἰς διακονίαν]; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”*

He refers in context to **1 Timothy 1 (KJV):** 1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; 2 Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. 3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. 5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: 6 From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain

jangling; 7 Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. 8 But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; 9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; 11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. 12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; 13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

He continues, “The advantages arising from humility are generally acknowledged, and yet it is a thing not easily to be met with. There is affectation of humble talking enough and to spare, but humbleness of mind is nowhere to be found. This quality was so cultivated by the blessed Paul, that he is ever looking out for inducements to be humble. They who are conscious to themselves of great merits must struggle much with themselves if they would be humble. And he too was one likely to be under violent temptations, his own good conscience swelling him up like a gathering humor. Observe therefore his method in this place. “I was entrusted,” he had said, “with the glorious Gospel of God, of which they who still adhere to the law have no right to partake; for it is now opposed to the Gospel, and their difference is such, that those who are actuated by the one, are as yet unworthy to partake of the other; as we should say, that those who require punishments, and chains, have no right to be admitted into the train of philosophers.”

Chrysostom is speaking of those who desire to be teachers of the law, as in verse 7 above. He continues, “Being filled therefore with high thoughts, and having used magnificent expressions, he at once depresses himself, and engages others also to do the like. Having said therefore that “the Gospel was committed to his trust”;

He refers to verse 11 above. He continues, “lest this should seem to be said from pride, he checks himself at once, adding by way of correction, “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.”

He refers to verse 12 above. He continues, “Thus everywhere, we see, he conceals his own merit, and ascribes everything to God, yet so far only, as not to take away free will. For the unbeliever might perhaps say, If everything is of God, and we contribute nothing of ourselves, while He turns us, as if we were mere wood and stone, from wickedness to the love of wisdom, why then did He make Paul such as he was, and not Judas? To remove this objection, mark the prudence of his expression, “Which was committed,” he says, “to my trust.” This was his own excellence and merit, but not wholly his own; for he says, “I thank Christ Jesus, who enabled me.” This is God’s part: then his own again, “Because He counted me faithful.” Surely because he would be serviceable of his own part.

Ver. 13. “Putting me into his service, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.”

Thus we see him acknowledge both his own part and that of God, and whilst he ascribes the greater part to the providence of God, he extenuates his own, yet so far only, as we said before, as was consistent with free will.”

However, Paul admits his unworthiness in verse 13. But God had mercy on Him. He had no merit until after he had believed. He studied three years in Arabia as we read in **Galatians 1 (KJV):15** But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: 17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. 18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. 19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

In his seeking, after he was saved, the Lord counted him faithful, and put him into the ministry.

Chrysostom continues, “And what is this, “Who enabled me”? I will tell you. He had so heavy a burden to sustain, that he needed much aid from above. For think what it was to be exposed to daily insults, and mockeries, and snares, and dangers, scoffs, and reproaches, and deaths; and not to faint, or slip, or turn backward, but though assaulted every day with darts innumerable, to bear up manfully, and remain firm and imperturbable. This was the effect of no human power, and yet not of Divine influence alone, but of his own resolution also. For that Christ chose him with a foreknowledge of what he would be, is plain from the testimony He bore to him before the commencement of his preaching. “He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings.” (Acts ix. 15)”

He refers to **Acts 9 (KJV):15** But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

Yes, Paul was chosen to do this, but his works did not save him, as he himself testifies in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

And the works Paul did were ordained for him by God.

Chrysostom continues, “For as those who bear the royal standard in war (**Schaff Note:** One copy has, “which is usually called Laburum,” perhaps a mistake for Labarum, but Socrates has Laborum. The first standard known to have been so called was that of Constantine, which bore the Christian symbol. [See Schaff, *Church Hist.* III. 27.])”

Chrysostom continues, “require both strength and address, that they may not let it fall into the hands of the enemy; so those who sustain the name of Christ, not only in war but in peace, need a mighty strength, to preserve it uninjured from the attacks of accusers. Great indeed is the strength required to bear the name of Christ, and to sustain it well, and bear the Cross. For he who in action, or word, or thought, does anything unworthy of Christ, does not sustain His name, and has not Christ dwelling in him.”

But doing “anything unworthy of Christ” is just sin, for which Christ is our advocate as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

We have only to confess our sins and He is faithful and just to forgive us as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And He has promised to never leave us, as we read in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):5** Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

He continues, “For he that sustains that name bears it in triumph, not in the concourse of men, but through the very heavens, while all angels stand in awe, and attend upon him, and admire him.

“I thank the Lord, who hath enabled me.”” He refers to 1 Timothy 1:12 above.

He continues, “Observe how he thanks God even for that which was his own part. For he acknowledges it as a favor from Him that he was “a chosen vessel.” For this, O blessed Paul, was thy own part. “For God is no respecter of persons.” (**Schaff Note:** He would be a respecter of persons who, without regard to a man’s qualities, should arbitrarily (or on external grounds, such as birth, wealth, &c.) prefer him to others; God therefore does not do this. Rom. ii. 11; Col. iii. 25; Acts x. 34)

And we read in **Romans 2 (KJV):11** For there is no respect of persons with God.

And in **Colossians 3 (KJV):25** But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

And in context to **Acts 10 (KJV):34** Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

Chrysostom continues, “But I thank Him that he “thought me worthy of this ministry.” For this is a proof that He esteemed me faithful. The steward in a house is not only thankful to his master that he is trusted, but considers it as a sign that he holds him more faithful than others: so it is here. Then observe how he magnifies the mercy and lovingkindness of God, in describing his former life, “who was formerly,” he says, “a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious.””

Paul here speaks of his unworthiness. It was only after he believed that God counted him faithful. Chrysostom continues, “And when he speaks of the still unbelieving Jews, he rather extenuates their guilt. “For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.” (Rom. x. 2)”

He refers to **Romans 10 (KJV):2** For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

He continues, “But of himself he says, “Who was a blasphemer and a persecutor.” Observe his lowering of himself! So free was he from self-love, so full of humility, that he is not satisfied to call himself a persecutor and a blasphemer, but he aggravates his guilt, showing that it did not stop with himself, that it was not enough that he was a blasphemer, but in the madness of his blasphemy he persecuted those who were willing to be godly. (**Schaff Note:** εὐσεβεῖν, “to worship aright.”)

“But I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.”

Why then did other Jews not obtain mercy? Because what they did, they did not ignorantly, but willfully, well knowing what they did.”

But Paul says they did do it ignorantly as we read again in **Romans 10 (KJV):3** For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

He continues, “For this we have the testimony of the Evangelist. “Many of the Jews



believed on Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him. For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” (John xii. 42, 43) And Christ again said to them, “How can ye believe, who receive honor one of another” (John v. 44)? and the parents of the blind man “said these things for fear of the Jews, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.” (John ix. 22)”

He refers to **John 12 (KJV):42** Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: 43 For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

And to **John 5 (KJV):44** How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

And to **John 9 (KJV):22** These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

He continues, “Nay the Jews themselves said, “Perceive ye how we avail nothing? behold, the world is gone after Him.” (John xii. 19)”

He refers to **John 12 (KJV):19** The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

He continues, “Thus their love of power was everywhere in their way. When they admitted that no one can forgive sins but God only, and Christ immediately did that very thing, (**Schaff Note:** i.e. proved that He had done it, by a direct appeal to God) which they had confessed to be a sign of divinity, this could not be a case of ignorance. But where was Paul then? Perhaps one should say he was sitting at the feet of Gamaliel, and took no part with the multitude who conspired against Jesus: for Gamaliel does not appear to have been an ambitious man. Then how is it that afterwards Paul was found joining with the multitude? He saw the doctrine growing, and on the point of prevailing, and being generally embraced. For in the lifetime of Christ, the disciples consorted with Him, and afterwards with their teachers, (**Schaff Note:** i.e. Jewish teachers.) but when they were completely separated, Paul did not act as the other Jews did, from the love of power, but from zeal. For what was the motive of his journey to Damascus? He thought the doctrine pernicious, and was afraid that the preaching of it would spread everywhere. But with the Jews it was no concern for the multitude, but the love of power, that influenced their actions. Hence they say, “The Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.” (John xi. 48)”

He refers to **John 11 (KJV):48** If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

He continues, “What fear was this that agitated them, but that of man? But it is worthy of enquiry, how one so skillful in the law as Paul could be ignorant? For it is he who says, “which He had promised before by His holy prophets.” (Rom. i. 2)”

He refers in context to **Romans 1 (KJV):1** Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

He continues, “How is it then that thou knowest not, thou who art zealous of the law of their fathers, who wert brought up at the feet of Gamaliel? Yet they who spent their days on

lakes and rivers, and the very publicans, have embraced the Gospel, whilst thou that studiest the law art persecuting it! It is for this he condemns himself, saying, "I am not meet to be called an Apostle." (1 Cor. xv. 9)"

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):9** For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

He continues, "It is for this he confesses his ignorance, which was produced by unbelief. For this cause, he says, that he obtained "mercy." What then does he mean when he says, "He counted me faithful"? He would give up no right of his Master's: even his own part he ascribed to Him, and assumed nothing to himself, nor claimed for his own the glory which was due to God. Hence in another place we find him exclaiming, "Sirs, why do ye these things to us? we also are men of like passions with you." (Acts xiv. 15)"

He refers to **Acts 14 (KJV):15** And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

He continues, "So again, "He counted me faithful." And again, "I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (1 Cor. xv. 10) And again, "It is He that worketh in us both to will and to do." (Philip. ii. 13)"

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):10** But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

And to **Philippians 2 (KJV):13** For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

By Paul's own confession, it was all by the grace of God that he was who he was. Chrysostom continues, "Thus in acknowledging that he "obtained mercy," he owns that he deserved punishment, since mercy is for such. And again in another place he says of the Jews, "Blindness in part is happened to Israel." (Rom. xi. 25)"

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):25** For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

He continues, "Ver. 14. "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.""

He refers to **1 Timothy 1 (KJV):14** And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

He continues, "This is added, lest hearing that he obtained mercy, we should understand by it only, that being deserving of punishment, as a persecutor and blasphemer, nevertheless he was not punished. But mercy was not confined to this, that punishment was not inflicted; many other great favors are implied by it. For not only has God released us from the impending punishment, but He has made us "righteous" too, and "sons," and "brethren," and "heirs," and "joint-heirs."

And that this is so, we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

And in **John 1 (KJV):**12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):**4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

And in **Romans 8 (KJV):**17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

He continues, “Therefore it is he says, that “grace was exceeding abundant.” For the gifts bestowed were beyond mercy, since they are not such as would come of mercy only, but of affection and excessive love. Having thus enlarged upon the love of God which, not content with showing mercy to a blasphemer and persecutor, conferred upon him other blessings in abundance, he has guarded against that error of the unbelievers which takes away free will, by adding, “with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” Thus much only, he says, did we contribute. We have believed that He is able to save us.”

But faith was given to us as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):**8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

We believed because God opened our hearts.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY XV, page 463-464**

Would you again have another ground for cheerfulness? Go to the public buildings, in which you share equally with others. For the most magnificent private houses, after all, are less splendid than the public edifices. There you may remain, as long as you please. They belong to you as much as to others, since they are common to you with others; they are common, and not private. But those, you say, delight you not. They delight you not, partly because you are familiar with them, and partly from your covetousness. So the pleasantness is not in the beauty, but in the appropriating! So the pleasure is in greediness, and in the wish to make every man’s goods your own! How long are we to be nailed to these things? How long are we to be fastened to the earth, and grovel, like worms, in the dirt? God hath given us a body of earth, that we might carry it with us up to heaven, not that we should draw our soul down with it to earth. Earthy it is, but if we please, it may be heavenly. See how highly God has honored us, in committing to us so excellent a frame. I made heaven and earth, He says, and to you I give the power of creation. Make your earth heaven. For it is in thy power. “I am He that maketh and transformeth all things” (Amos v. 8, Sept.), saith God of Himself. And He hath given to men a similar power; as a painter, being an affectionate father, teaches his own art to his son. I formed thy body beautiful, he says, but I give thee the power of forming something better. Make thy soul beautiful. I said, “Let the earth bring forth grass, and every fruitful tree.” (Gen. i. 11) Do thou also say, Let this earth bring forth its proper fruit, and what thou willest to produce will be produced. “I make the summer and the cloud. I create the lightning and the wind.” (Amos iv. 13; Ps. lxxiv. 17) I formed the dragon, that is, the devil, to make sport with him. (Ps. civ. 26)

Nor have I grudged thee the like power. Thou, if thou wilt, canst sport with him, and bind him as thou wouldest a sparrow. I make the sun to rise upon the evil and the good: do thou imitate Me, by imparting of that is thine to the good and the evil. When mocked I bear with it, and do good to those who mock Me: do thou imitate Me, as thou canst. I do good, not to be requited; do thou imitate Me, and do good, not to be repaid. I have lighted luminaries in the heavens. Do thou light others brighter than these, for thou canst, by enlightening those that are in error. For to know Me is a greater benefit than to behold the sun. Thou canst not create a man, but thou canst make him just and acceptable to God. I formed his substance, do thou beautify his will. See how I love thee, and have given thee the power in the greater things.

Beloved, see how we are honored! yet some are so unreasonable and so ungrateful as to say, "Why are we endowed with free will?" But how in all the particulars which we have mentioned could we have imitated God, if there had been no free will? I rule Angels, He says, and so dost thou, through Him who is the First-fruits. (1 Cor. xv. 23) I sit on a royal throne, and thou art seated with Me in Him who is the First-fruits. As it is said, "He hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 6) Through Him who is the First-fruits, Cherubim and Seraphim adore thee, with all the heavenly host, principalities and powers, thrones and dominions. Disparage not thy body, to which such high honors appertain, that the unbodied Powers tremble at it.

But what shall I say? It is not in this way only that I have shown My love to thee, but by what I have suffered. For thee I was spit upon, I was scourged. I emptied myself of glory, I left My Father and came to thee, who dost hate Me, and turn from Me, and art loath to hear My Name. I pursued thee, I ran after thee, that I might overtake thee. I united and joined thee to myself, "eat Me, drink Me," I said. Above I hold thee, and below I embrace thee. Is it not enough for thee that I have thy First-fruits above? Doth not this satisfy thy affection? I descended below: I not only am mingled with thee, I am entwined in thee. I am masticated, broken into minute particles, that the interspersion, and commixture, and union may be more complete. Things united remain yet in their own limits, but I am interwoven with thee. I would have no more any division between us. I will that we both be one.

Therefore knowing these things and remembering His abundant care for us, let us do all things which may prove us not unworthy of His great gift, which God grant that we may all obtain, through the grace and lovingkindness of Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom, &c.

**Commentary:** "Would you again have another ground for cheerfulness? Go to the public buildings, in which you share equally with others. For the most magnificent private houses, after all, are less splendid than the public edifices. There you may remain, as long as you please. They belong to you as much as to others, since they are common to you with others; they are common, and not private. But those, you say, delight you not. They delight you not, partly because you are familiar with them, and partly from your covetousness. So the pleasantness is not in the beauty, but in the appropriating! So the pleasure is in greediness, and in the wish to make every man's goods your own! How long are we to be nailed to these things? How long are we to be fastened to the earth, and grovel, like worms, in the dirt? God hath given us a body of earth, that we might carry it with us up to heaven, not that we should draw our soul down with it to earth. Earthy it is, but if we please, it may be heavenly. See how highly God has honored us, in committing to us so excellent a frame. I made heaven and earth, He says, and to you I give

the power of creation. Make your earth heaven. For it is in thy power. "I am He that maketh and transformeth all things" (Amos v. 8, Sept.), saith God of Himself."

He refers in context to **Amos 5 (Septuagint):7** It is he that executes judgment in the height above, and he has established justice on the earth: 8 who makes all things, and changes them, and turns darkness into the morning, and darkens the day into night: who calls for the water of the sea, and pours it out on the face of the earth: the Lord is his name:

And to **Amos 5 (KJV):7** Ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth, 8 Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The Lord is his name:

He continues, "And He hath given to men a similar power; as a painter, being an affectionate father, teaches his own art to his son. I formed thy body beautiful, he says, but I give thee the power of forming something better. Make thy soul beautiful. I said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, and every fruitful tree." (Gen. i. 11)"

He refers to **Genesis 1 (KJV):11** And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

He continues, "Do thou also say, Let this earth bring forth its proper fruit, and what thou willest to produce will be produced. "I make the summer and the cloud. I create the lightning and the wind." (Amos iv. 13; Ps. lxxiv. 17)"

He refers to **Amos 4 (Septuagint):13** For, behold, I am he that strengthens the thunder, and creates the wind, and proclaims to men his Christ, forming the morning and the darkness, and mounting on the high places of the earth, The Lord God Almighty is his name.

And to **Amos 4 (KJV):13** For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The Lord, The God of hosts, is his name.

And to **Psalms 74 (KJV):17** Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter.

He continues, "I formed the dragon, that is, the devil, to make sport with him. (Ps. civ. 26)"

He refers to **Psalms 104 (KJV):26** There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.

He continues, "Nor have I grudged thee the like power. Thou, if thou wilt, canst sport with him, and bind him as thou wouldest a sparrow. I make the sun to rise upon the evil and the good: do thou imitate Me, by imparting of that is thine to the good and the evil. When mocked I bear with it, and do good to those who mock Me: do thou imitate Me, as thou canst. I do good, not to be requited; do thou imitate Me, and do good, not to be repaid. I have lighted luminaries in the heavens. Do thou light others brighter than these, for thou canst, by enlightening those that are in error. For to know Me is a greater benefit than to behold the sun. Thou canst not create a man, but thou canst make him just and acceptable to God. I formed his substance, do thou beautify his will. See how I love thee, and have given thee the power in the greater things.

Beloved, see how we are honored! yet some are so unreasonable and so ungrateful as to say, "Why are we endowed with free will?" But how in all the particulars which we have mentioned could we have imitated God, if there had been no free will? I rule Angels, He says,

and so dost thou, through Him who is the First-fruits. (1 Cor. xv. 23)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):23** But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

But before Christ, our minds are carnal, and we cannot please God, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

So our will is not free in this state or condition. But when we come to Christ, He sets us free as we read in **Galatians 5 (NASB):1** It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

And in **John 8 (KJV):31** As he spake these words, many believed on him. 31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

It is after we believe in Jesus Christ that we are truly His disciples, and we know the truth which sets us free. Christ sets our will free.

He continues, “I sit on a royal throne, and thou art seated with Me in Him who is the First-fruits. As it is said, “He hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” (Eph. ii. 6)”

He refers in context to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):5** Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

He continues, “Through Him who is the First-fruits, Cherubim and Seraphim adore thee, with all the heavenly host, principalities and powers, thrones and dominions. Disparage not thy body, to which such high honors appertain, that the unbodied Powers tremble at it.”

He is not clear here, but let us be clear. “Cherubim and Seraphim” do not adore us but Him who died for us.

He continues, “But what shall I say? It is not in this way only that I have shown My love to thee, but by what I have suffered. For thee I was spit upon, I was scourged. I emptied myself of glory, I left My Father and came to thee, who dost hate Me, and turn from Me, and art loath to hear My Name. I pursued thee, I ran after thee, that I might overtake thee. I united and joined thee to myself, “eat Me, drink Me,” I said. Above I hold thee, and below I embrace thee. Is it not enough for thee that I have thy First-fruits above? Doth not this satisfy thy affection? I descended below: I not only am mingled with thee, I am entwined in thee. I am masticated, broken into minute particles, that the interspersion, and commixture, and union may be more complete. Things united remain yet in their own limits, but I am interwoven with thee. I would have no more any division between us. I will that we both be one.

Therefore knowing these things and remembering His abundant care for us, let us do all things which may prove us not unworthy of His great gift, which God grant that we may all obtain, through the grace and lovingkindness of Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom, &c.”

But let us also remember that the one who believes in Jesus Christ has passed from

death to life, as we read in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

The one who has believed has eternal life as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XLV, page 162**

But perhaps some one will say, “If all that the Father giveth, and whomsoever He shall draw, cometh unto Thee, if none can come unto Thee except it be given him from above, then those to whom the Father giveth not are free from any blame or charges.” These are mere words and pretenses. For we require our own deliberate choice also, because whether we will be taught is a matter of choice, and also whether we will believe. And in this place, by the “which the Father giveth Me,” He declareth nothing else than that “the believing on Me is no ordinary thing, nor one that cometh of human reasonings, but needeth a revelation from above, and a well-ordered soul to receive that revelation.” And the, “He that cometh to Me shall be saved,” meaneth that he shall be greatly cared for. “For on account of these,” He saith, “I came, and took upon Me the flesh, and entered into the form of a servant.” Then He addeth;

Ver. 38. “I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.”

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “But perhaps some one will say, “If all that the Father giveth, and whomsoever He shall draw, cometh unto Thee, if none can come unto Thee except it be given him from above, then those to whom the Father giveth not are free from any blame or charges.” These are mere words and pretenses. For we require our own deliberate choice also, because whether we will be taught is a matter of choice, and also whether we will believe.”

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):44** No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

And no one is free from “any blame or charges”. Before accepting Christ we stand condemned, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

The wrath of God abides on us before we accept Christ, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):36** He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

The reason for God’s wrath is because all have sinned, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

He continues, “And in this place, by the “which the Father giveth Me,” He declareth nothing else than that “the believing on Me is no ordinary thing, nor one that cometh of human reasonings, but needeth a revelation from above, and a well-ordered soul to receive that revelation.””

He is referring to **John 6 (KJV):37** All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

And we read in **James 1 (KJV):18** Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

And we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):17** So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

He continues, “And the, “He that cometh to Me shall be saved,” meaneth that he shall be greatly cared for. “For on account of these,” He saith, “I came, and took upon Me the flesh, and entered into the form of a servant.”

But once we have believed, and we are born again of the Spirit of God, we have eternal life in our spirit. Therefore, being of those whom the Father gives to Jesus, we are in their hands, as we read in **John 10 (KJV):27** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and my Father are one.

Being in the hands of the Father and Jesus, our salvation is secure when we believe in Jesus.

Chrysostom continues, “Then He addeth;

Ver. 38. “I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.””

He is referring to **John 6 (KJV):38** For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

Chrysostom did not understand that before Christ, we are dead in trespasses and sins. Our will is subject to the desires of our flesh. Our mind is carnal, and at enmity to God. But when we hear the Gospel message, our minds are enlightened by the truth. The Holy Spirit opens our hearts to believe, and we willingly surrender to Him, and receive Him. By His will, His choice, we are born of God, as we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Being born of God, our will is made free. Whatever good works we do are ordained of God, and we will be rewarded accordingly at the judgment seat of Christ. But our salvation is secure once we have believed in Jesus Christ.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XLVI, page 164**

John vi. 41, 42

“The Jews then murmured at Him, because He said, I am the Bread which came down from heaven; and they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He saith, I came down from heaven?”

[1.] “Whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame” (Philip. iii. 19), said Paul of certain persons, writing to the Philippians. Now that the Jews were of this character is clear, both from what has gone before, and from what they came and said to Christ. For when He gave them bread, and filled their bellies, they said that He was a Prophet, and sought to



make Him a King: but when He taught them concerning spiritual food, concerning eternal life, when He led them away from objects of sense, and spake to them of a resurrection, and raised their thoughts to higher matters, when most they ought to have admired, they murmur and start away. And yet, if He was that Prophet as they before asserted, declaring that he it was of whom Moses had said, "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me, unto Him shall ye hearken" (Deut. xviii. 15); they ought to have hearkened to Him when He said, "I came down from heaven"; yet they hearkened not, but murmured. They still revered Him, because the miracle of the loaves was recent, and therefore they did not openly gainsay Him, but by murmuring expressed their displeasure, that He did not give them the meal which they desired. And murmuring they said, "Is not this the son of Joseph?" Whence it is plain, that as yet they knew not of His strange and marvelous Generation. And so they still say that He is the son of Joseph, and are not rebuked; and He saith not to them, "I am not the Son of Joseph"; not because He was his son, but because they were not as yet able to hear of that marvelous Birth. And if they could not bear to hear in plain terms of His birth according to the flesh, much less could they hear of that ineffable Birth which is from above. If He revealed not that which was lower to them, much less would He commit to them the other. Although this greatly offended them, that He was born from a mean and common father, still He revealed not to them the truth, lest in removing one cause of offense He should create another. What then said He when they murmured?

Ver. 44. "No man can come unto Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw Him."

The Manichæans spring upon these words, saying, "that nothing lies in our own power"; yet the expression showeth that we are masters of our will. "For if a man cometh to Him," saith some one, "what need is there of drawing?" But the words do not take away our free will, but show that we greatly need assistance. And He implieth not an unwilling comer, but one enjoying much succor. Then He showeth also the manner in which He draweth; for that men may not, again, form any material idea of God, He addeth,

Ver. 46. "Not that any man hath seen God, save He which is of God, He hath seen the Father."

"How then," saith some one, "doth the Father draw?" This the Prophet explained of old, when he proclaimed beforehand, and said,

Ver. 45. "They shall all be taught of God." (Isa. liv. 13)

Seest thou the dignity of faith, and that not of men nor by man, but by God Himself they shall learn this? And to make this assertion credible, He referred them to their prophets. "If then 'all shall be taught of God,' how is it that some shall not believe?" Because the words are spoken of the greater number. Besides, the prophecy meaneth not absolutely all, but all that have the will. For the teacher sitteth ready to impart what he hath to all, and pouring forth his instruction unto all.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes "John vi. 41, 42

"The Jews then murmured at Him, because He said, I am the Bread which came down from heaven; and they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He saith, I came down from heaven?"

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):41** The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. 42 And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

He continues, “[1.] “Whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame” (Philip. iii. 19), said Paul of certain persons, writing to the Philippians.”

He refers to **Philippians 3 (KJV):19** Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

He continues, “Now that the Jews were of this character is clear, both from what has gone before, and from what they came and said to Christ. For when He gave them bread, and filled their bellies, they said that He was a Prophet, and sought to make Him a King: but when He taught them concerning spiritual food, concerning eternal life, when He led them away from objects of sense, and spake to them of a resurrection, and raised their thoughts to higher matters, when most they ought to have admired, they murmur and start away. And yet, if He was that Prophet as they before asserted, declaring that he it was of whom Moses had said, “A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me, unto Him shall ye hearken” (Deut. xviii. 15);”

He refers to **Deuteronomy 18 (KJV):15** The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

He continues, “they ought to have hearkened to Him when He said, “I came down from heaven”; yet they hearkened not, but murmured. They still revered Him, because the miracle of the loaves was recent, and therefore they did not openly gainsay Him, but by murmuring expressed their displeasure, that He did not give them the meal which they desired. And murmuring they said, “Is not this the son of Joseph?” Whence it is plain, that as yet they knew not of His strange and marvelous Generation. And so they still say that He is the son of Joseph, and are not rebuked; and He saith not to them, “I am not the Son of Joseph”; not because He was his son, but because they were not as yet able to hear of that marvelous Birth. And if they could not bear to hear in plain terms of His birth according to the flesh, much less could they hear of that ineffable Birth which is from above.”

He refers to **Luke 1 (KJV):30** And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. 34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

He continues, “If He revealed not that which was lower to them, much less would He commit to them the other. Although this greatly offended them, that He was born from a mean and common father, still He revealed not to them the truth, lest in removing one cause of offense He should create another. What then said He when they murmured?

Ver. 44. “No man can come unto Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw Him.””

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):44** No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

He continues, “The Manichæans spring upon these words, saying, “that nothing lies in

our own power”; yet the expression showeth that we are masters of our will. “For if a man cometh to Him,” saith some one, “what need is there of drawing?” But the words do not take away our free will, but show that we greatly need assistance.”

But Jesus also confirmed what he meant in **John 6 (KJV):64** But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

No man can come to Jesus unless “it were given unto him of my Father”. The gift of faith is not just a great assistance, but the gift whereby we believe.

Chrysostom continues, “And He implieth not an unwilling comer, but one enjoying much succor. Then He showeth also the manner in which He draweth; for that men may not, again, form any material idea of God, He addeth,

Ver. 46. “Not that any man hath seen God, save He which is of God, He hath seen the Father.””

He refers in context to **John 6 (KJV):45** It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. 46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

Chrysostom continues, ““How then,” saith some one, “doth the Father draw?” This the Prophet explained of old, when he proclaimed beforehand, and said,

Ver. 45. “They shall all be taught of God.” (Isa. liv. 13)”

He refers also to **Isaiah 54 (KJV):13** And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

He continues, “Seest thou the dignity of faith, and that not of men nor by man, but by God Himself they shall learn this? And to make this assertion credible, He referred them to their prophets. “If then ‘all shall be taught of God,’ how is it that some shall not believe?” Because the words are spoken of the greater number. Besides, the prophecy meaneth not absolutely all, but all that have the will. For the teacher sitteth ready to impart what he hath to all, and pouring forth his instruction unto all.”

But as we read above in John 6:64-65, those who did not believe were those to whom it had not been given by the Father, as we read again in **John 6 (KJV):64** But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

This is not to say that we don’t willingly accept the Lord. Jesus warns in **Luke 13 (KJV):3** I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, you shall all likewise perish.

Repentance is absolutely necessary for salvation. But repentance is not something which one can work up within oneself. It is an absolute work of God. God grants, or brings forth, repentance by a special work of the Holy Spirit, as we read in **Acts 11 (KJV):18** When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

And we read also in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):25** In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

And also in **Acts 5 (KJV):31** He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

The goodness of God leads us to repentance, as we read in **Romans 2 (KJV):4** Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

This is so that we willingly agree with God, and believe in Jesus Christ who saves us by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

So then it is not of our free will, as we read again in **Romans 9 (KJV):16** So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

And in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY XII, page 424-426**

(Ver. 8) “And here men that die receive tithes: but there he of whom it is testified that he liveth.” But lest we should say, Tell us, why goest thou so far back? He says, (ver. 9) “And as I may so say” (and he did well in softening it) “Levi also who receiveth tithes payed tithes in Abraham.” How? (Ver. 10) “For he was yet in his loins when Melchisedec met him,” i.e. Levi was in him, although he was not yet born. And he said not the Levites but Levi.

Hast thou seen the superiority? Hast thou seen how great is the interval between Abraham and Melchisedec, who bears the type of our High Priest? And he shows that the superiority had been caused by authority, not necessity. For the one paid the tithe, which indicates the priest: the other gave the blessing, which indicates the superior. This superiority passes on also to the descendants.

In a marvelous and triumphant way he cast out the Jewish [system]. On this account he said, “Ye are become dull,” (c. v. 12), because he wished to lay these foundations, that they might not start away. Such is the wisdom of Paul, first preparing them well, he so leads them into what he wishes. For the human race is hard to persuade, and needs much attention, even more than plants. Since in that case there is [only] the nature of material bodies, and earth, which yields to the hands of the husbandmen: but in this there is will, which is liable to many alterations, and now prefers this, now that. For it quickly turns to evil.

[5.] Wherefore we ought always to “guard” ourselves, lest at any time we should fall asleep. For “Lo” (it is said) “he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep” (Ps. cxxi. 4), and “Do not suffer thy foot to be moved.” (Ps. cxxi. 3) He did not say, ‘be not moved’ but “do not thou suffer,” &c. The suffering depends then on ourselves, and not on any other. For if we will stand “steadfast and unmoveable” (1 Cor. xv. 58), we shall not be shaken.

What then? Does nothing depend on God? All indeed depends on God, but not so that our freewill is hindered. ‘If then it depend on God,’ (one says), ‘why does He blame us?’ On this account I said, ‘so that our freewill is not hindered.’ It depends then on us, and on Him. For we

must first choose the good; and then He leads us to His own. He does not anticipate our choice, lest our freewill should be outraged. But when we have chosen, then great is the assistance he brings to us.

How is it then that Paul says, “not of him that willeth,” if it depend on ourselves also “nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.” (Rom. ix. 16)

In the first place, he did not introduce it as his own opinion, but inferred it from what was before him and from what had been put forward [in the discussion]. For after saying, “It is written, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion” (Rom. ix. 15), he says, “It follows then that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.” “Thou wilt say then unto me, why doth He yet find fault?” (Rom. ix. 16, 19)

And secondly the other explanation may be given, that he speaks of all as His, whose the greater part is. For it is ours to choose and to wish; but God’s to complete and to bring to an end. Since therefore the greater part is of Him, he says all is of Him, speaking according to the custom of men. For so we ourselves also do. I mean for instance: we see a house well built, and we say the whole is the Architect’s [doing], and yet certainly it is not all his, but the workmen’s also, and the owner’s, who supplies the materials, and many others’, but nevertheless since he contributed the greatest share, we call the whole his. So then [it is] in this case also. Again, with respect to a number of people, where the many are, we say All are: where few, nobody. So also Paul says, “not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.” How is it then that Paul says, “not of him that willeth,” if it depend on ourselves also “nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.” (Rom. ix. 16)

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And herein he establishes two great truths: one, that we should not be lifted up: even shouldst thou run (he would say), even shouldst thou be very earnest, do not consider that the well doing is thine own. For if thou obtain not the impulse that is from above, all is to no purpose. Nevertheless that thou wilt attain that which thou earnestly strivest after is very evident; so long as thou runnest, so long as thou willest.

He did not then assert this, that we run in vain, but that, if we think the whole to be our own, if we do not assign the greater part to God, we run in vain. For neither hath God willed

that the whole should be His, lest He should appear to be crowning us without cause: nor again our's, lest we should fall away to pride. For if when we have the smaller [share], we think much of ourselves, what should we do if the whole depended on us?

[6.] Indeed God hath done away many things for the purpose of cutting away our boastfulness, and still there is the high hand. With how many afflictions hath He encompassed us, so as to cut away our proud spirit! With how many wild beasts hath He encircled us! For indeed when some say, 'why is this?' 'Of what use is this?' They utter these things against the will of God. He hath placed thee in the midst of so great fear, and yet not even so art thou lowly-minded; but if thou ever attain a little success, thou reachest to Heaven itself in pride.

For this cause [come] rapid changes and reverses; and yet not even so are we instructed. For this cause are there continual and untimely deaths, but are minded as if we were immortal, as if we should never die. We plunder, we over-reach, as though we were never to give account. We build as if we were to abide here always. And not even the word of God daily sounded into our ears, nor the events themselves instruct us. Not a day, not an hour can be mentioned, in which we may not see continual funerals. But all in vain: and nothing reaches our hardness [of heart]: nor are we even able to become better by the calamities of others; or rather, we are not willing. When we ourselves only are afflicted, then we are subdued, and yet if God take off His hand, we again lift up our hand: no one considers what is proper for man, no one despises the things on earth; no one looks to Heaven. But as swine turn their heads downwards, stooping towards their belly, wallowing in the mire; so too the great body of mankind defile themselves with the most intolerable filth, without being conscious of it.

[7.] For better were it to be defiled with unclean mud than with sins; for he who is defiled with the one, washes it off in a little time, and becomes like one who had never from the first fallen into that slough; but he who has fallen into the deep pit of sin has contracted a defilement that is not cleansed by water, but needs long time, and strict repentance, and tears and lamentations, and more wailing, and that more fervent, than we show over the dearest friends. For this defilement attaches to us from without, wherefore we also speedily put it away; but the other is generated from within, wherefore also we wash it off with difficulty, and cleanse ourselves from it. "For from the heart" (it is said) "proceed evil thoughts, fornications, adulteries, thefts, false witnesses." (Matt. xv. 19) Wherefore also the Prophet said, "Create in me a clean heart, O God." (Ps. li. 10) And another, "Wash thine heart from wickedness, O Jerusalem." (Jer. iv. 14) (Thou seest that it is both our [work] and God's.) And again, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matt. v. 8)

Let us become clean to the utmost of our power. Let us wipe away our sins. And how to wipe them away, the prophet teaches, saying, "Wash you, make you clean, put away your wickedness from your souls, before Mine eyes." (Isa. i. 16) What is "before Mine eyes"? Because some seem to be free from wickedness, but only to men, while to God they are manifest as being "whited sepulchers." Therefore He says, so put them away as I see. "Learn to do well, seek judgment, do justice for the poor and lowly." "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: and though your sins be as scarlet, I will make you white as snow, and if they be as crimson, I will make you white as wool." (Isa. i. 17, 18) Thou seest that we must first cleanse ourselves, and then God cleanses us. For having said first, "Wash you, make you clean," He then added "I will make you white."

Let no one then, [even] of those who are come to the extremest wickedness, despair of

himself. For (He says) even if thou hast passed into the habit, yea and almost into the nature of wickedness itself, be not afraid. Therefore taking [the instance of] colors that are not superficial but almost of the substance of the materials, He said that He would bring them into the opposite state. For He did not simply say that He would “wash” us, but that He would “make” us “white, as snow and as wool,” in order to hold out good hopes before us. Great then is the power of repentance, at least if it makes us as snow, and whitens us as wool, even if sin have first got possession and dyed our souls.

Let us labor earnestly then to become clean; He has enjoined nothing burdensome. “Judge the fatherless, and do justice for the widow.” (Isa. i. 17) Thou seest everywhere how great account God makes of mercy, and of standing forward in behalf of those that are wronged. These good deeds let us pursue after, and we shall be able also, by the grace of God, to attain to the blessings to come: which may we all be counted worthy of, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “(Ver. 8) “And here men that die receive tithes: but there he of whom it is testified that he liveth.” But lest we should say, Tell us, why goest thou so far back? He says, (ver. 9) “And as I may so say” (and he did well in softening it) “Levi also who receiveth tithes payed tithes in Abraham.” How? (Ver. 10) “For he was yet in his loins when Melchisedec met him,” i.e. Levi was in him, although he was not yet born. And he said not the Levites but Levi.”

He refers to **Hebrews 7 (KJV):8** And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. 9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. 10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

He continues, “Hast thou seen the superiority? Hast thou seen how great is the interval between Abraham and Melchisedec, who bears the type of our High Priest? And he shows that the superiority had been caused by authority, not necessity. For the one paid the tithe, which indicates the priest: the other gave the blessing, which indicates the superior. This superiority passes on also to the descendants.”

The “superiority” is explained in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):15** And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Because Jesus is our high priest forever, His priesthood is unchangeable as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):22** By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. 23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Chrysostom continues, “In a marvelous and triumphant way he cast out the Jewish [system]. On this account he said, “Ye are become dull,” (c. v. 12), because he wished to lay these foundations, that they might not start away.”

He refers in context to **Hebrews 5 (KJV):**11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

He continues, “Such is the wisdom of Paul, first preparing them well, he so leads them into what he wishes. For the human race is hard to persuade, and needs much attention, even more than plants. Since in that case there is [only] the nature of material bodies, and earth, which yields to the hands of the husbandmen: but in this there is will, which is liable to many alterations, and now prefers this, now that. For it quickly turns to evil.”

Chrysostom was convinced that Paul wrote the epistle of Hebrews, and I agree with him because of the salutation in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):**23 Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. 24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. 25 Grace be with you all. Amen.

He continues, “[5.] Wherefore we ought always to “guard” ourselves, lest at any time we should fall asleep. For “Lo” (it is said) “he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep” (Ps. cxxi. 4), and “Do not suffer thy foot to be moved.” (Ps. cxxi. 3)”

He refers to **Psalms 121 (Septuagint):**3 Let not thy foot be moved; and let not thy keeper slumber. 4 Behold, he that keeps Israel shall not slumber nor sleep.

But we read in context as in **Psalms 121 (KJV):**1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. 2 My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. 3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. 4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

He continues, “He did not say, ‘be not moved’ but “do not thou suffer,” &c. The suffering depends then on ourselves, and not on any other. For if we will stand “steadfast and unmoveable” (1 Cor. xv. 58), we shall not be shaken.

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):**58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

But in the **King James Version**, it says in verse 121:3 that, “He will not suffer thy foot to be moved”. He helps those who lift up their eyes to him, “from whence cometh my help”.

Chrysostom continues, “What then? Does nothing depend on God? All indeed depends on God, but not so that our freewill is hindered. ‘If then it depend on God,’ (one says), ‘why does He blame us?’ On this account I said, ‘so that our freewill is not hindered.’ It depends then on us, and on Him. For we must first choose the good; and then He leads us to His own. He does not anticipate our choice, lest our freewill should be outraged. But when we have chosen, then great is the assistance he brings to us.

How is it then that Paul says, “not of him that willeth,” if it depend on ourselves also “nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.” (Rom. ix. 16)

In the first place, he did not introduce it as his own opinion, but inferred it from what was before him and from what had been put forward [in the discussion]. For after saying, “It is written, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion” (Rom. ix. 15), he says, “It follows then that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.” “Thou wilt say then unto me, why doth He yet find fault?” (Rom. ix. 16, 19)”



He refers in context to **Romans 9 (KJV):**15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. 17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. 19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? 20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Chrysostom continues, “And secondly the other explanation may be given, that he speaks of all as His, whose the greater part is. For it is ours to choose and to wish; but God’s to complete and to bring to an end. Since therefore the greater part is of Him, he says all is of Him, speaking according to the custom of men. For so we ourselves also do. I mean for instance: we see a house well built, and we say the whole is the Architect’s [doing], and yet certainly it is not all his, but the workmen’s also, and the owner’s, who supplies the materials, and many others’, but nevertheless since he contributed the greatest share, we call the whole his. So then [it is] in this case also. Again, with respect to a number of people, where the many are, we say All are: where few, nobody. So also Paul says, “not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.”

Chrysostom’s explanation is an invention of his own. The word of God is the word of God, and not the “custom of men”. Chrysostom is trying to support his assertion, “All indeed depends on God, but not so that our freewill is hindered”, as he says above.

Chrysostom assumes that man has freewill before accepting Christ. This is a common perception of those who are newly saved. But when we look into the Scriptures, we find that man before accepting Christ is dead in trespasses and sins as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):**1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Before Christ, we were as in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

We were foolish without the Spirit of God, as we read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

But God chose us to receive Him and to be born again, as we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

In other words, it was God's choice that we were born again. And we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

When we were dead in our trespasses and sins, the Spirit of God enlightened our minds, and opened our hearts to believe in Him. And so we received Him willingly. But it is only after we have believed in Him, and become His disciples that we find true freedom as we read in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Chrysostom continues, as he then argues, "How is it then that Paul says, "not of him that willeth," if it depend on ourselves also "nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." (Rom. ix. 16)

He refers again in context to **Romans 9 (KJV):15** For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

Chrysostom continues, "In the first place, he did not introduce it as his own opinion, but inferred it from what was before him and from what had been put forward [in the discussion]. For after saying, "It is written, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Rom. ix. 15), he says, "It follows then that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." "Thou wilt say then unto me, why doth He yet find fault?" (Rom. ix. 16, 19)"

He continues, and explains his thinking, "And secondly the other explanation may be given, that he speaks of all as His, whose the greater part is. For it is ours to choose and to wish; but God's to complete and to bring to an end. Since therefore the greater part is of Him, he says all is of Him, speaking according to the custom of men. For so we ourselves also do. I mean for instance: we see a house well built, and we say the whole is the Architect's [doing], and yet certainly it is not all his, but the workmen's also, and the owner's, who supplies the materials, and many others', but nevertheless since he contributed the greatest share, we call the whole his. So then [it is] in this case also. Again, with respect to a number of people, where the many are, we say All are: where few, nobody. So also Paul says, "not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."

But the context does not support his thinking as we read again in **Romans 9 (KJV):15** For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have

compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. 17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. 19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? 20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? 22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, 24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

It is clear that, if God chose us to be vessels of mercy which he had “afore prepared unto glory”, and whom He made willing, having enlightened our minds by the word of truth in the Gospel, that He opened our hearts to believe, as He did with Lydia in **Acts 16 (KJV):14** And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. 15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

Chrysostom continues, “And herein he establishes two great truths: one, that we should not be lifted up: even shouldst thou run (he would say), even shouldst thou be very earnest, do not consider that the well doing is thine own. For if thou obtain not the impulse that is from above, all is to no purpose. Nevertheless that thou wilt attain that which thou earnestly strivest after is very evident; so long as thou runnest, so long as thou willest.”

Our walk with the Lord is one of surrender. After we receive Him by faith, we continue by faith, as we read in **Colossians 2 (KJV):6** As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

He continues, “He did not then assert this, that we run in vain, but that, if we think the whole to be our own, if we do not assign the greater part to God, we run in vain. For neither hath God willed that the whole should be His, lest He should appear to be crowning us without cause: nor again our’s, lest we should fall away to pride. For if when we have the smaller [share], we think much of ourselves, what should we do if the whole depended on us?”

But the whole is of God as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Even the good works that we may do, after having received faith from God, were “ordained of God that we should walk in them”.

Chrysostom continues, “[6.] Indeed God hath done away many things for the purpose of cutting away our boastfulness, and still there is the high hand. With how many afflictions hath He encompassed us, so as to cut away our proud spirit! With how many wild beasts hath He encircled us! For indeed when some say, ‘why is this?’ ‘Of what use is this?’ They utter these

things against the will of God. He hath placed thee in the midst of so great fear, and yet not even so art thou lowly-minded; but if thou ever attain a little success, thou reachest to Heaven itself in pride.

For this cause [come] rapid changes and reverses; and yet not even so are we instructed. For this cause are there continual and untimely deaths, but are minded as if we were immortal, as if we should never die. We plunder, we over-reach, as though we were never to give account. We build as if we were to abide here always. And not even the word of God daily sounded into our ears, nor the events themselves instruct us. Not a day, not an hour can be mentioned, in which we may not see continual funerals. But all in vain: and nothing reaches our hardness [of heart]: nor are we even able to become better by the calamities of others; or rather, we are not willing. When we ourselves only are afflicted, then we are subdued, and yet if God take off His hand, we again lift up our hand: no one considers what is proper for man, no one despises the things on earth; no one looks to Heaven. But as swine turn their heads downwards, stooping towards their belly, wallowing in the mire; so too the great body of mankind defile themselves with the most intolerable filth, without being conscious of it.”

The unsaved are on a downward spiral as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV):**18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

And in **Romans 3 (KJV):**9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their

tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes. 19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

It may seem that we have free will in this state, for we have freedom to do whatsoever we please. But we cannot please God until we are born again. The only way out of this downward spiral is faith in Jesus Christ, as we continue in **Romans 3 (KJV)**: 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Chrysostom continues, “[7.] For better were it to be defiled with unclean mud than with sins; for he who is defiled with the one, washes it off in a little time, and becomes like one who had never from the first fallen into that slough; but he who has fallen into the deep pit of sin has contracted a defilement that is not cleansed by water, but needs long time, and strict repentance, and tears and lamentations, and more wailing, and that more fervent, than we show over the dearest friends. For this defilement attaches to us from without, wherefore we also speedily put it away; but the other is generated from within, wherefore also we wash it off with difficulty, and cleanse ourselves from it. “For from the heart” (it is said) “proceed evil thoughts, fornications, adulteries, thefts, false witnesses.” (Matt. xv. 19)”

He refers to **Matthew 15 (KJV)**: 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

And before we are saved, our heart is as in **Jeremiah 17 (KJV)**: 9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

He continues, “Wherefore also the Prophet said, “Create in me a clean heart, O God.” (Ps. li. 10) And another, “Wash thine heart from wickedness, O Jerusalem.” (Jer. iv. 14) (Thou seest that it is both our [work] and God’s.) And again, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matt. v. 8)”

He refers to **Psalms 51 (KJV)**: 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

And to **Jeremiah 4 (KJV)**: 14 O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?

And to **Matthew 5 (KJV)**: 8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

He continues, “Let us become clean to the utmost of our power. Let us wipe away our sins. And how to wipe them away, the prophet teaches, saying, “Wash you, make you clean, put away your wickedness from your souls, before Mine eyes.” (Isa. i. 16)”

He refers to **Isaiah 1 (KJV)**: 16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

He continues, “What is “before Mine eyes”? Because some seem to be free from wickedness, but only to men, while to God they are manifest as being “whited sepulchers.”

Therefore He says, so put them away as I see. “Learn to do well, seek judgment, do justice for the poor and lowly.” “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: and though your sins be as scarlet, I will make you white as snow, and if they be as crimson, I will make you white as wool.” (Isa. i. 17, 18) Thou seest that we must first cleanse ourselves, and then God cleanses us. For having said first, “Wash you, make you clean,” He then added “I will make you white.”

He refers to **Isaiah 1 (KJV):17** Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. 18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

And we must confess our sins, and He is then faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness, as in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

He continues, “Let no one then, [even] of those who are come to the extremest wickedness, despair of himself. For (He says) even if thou hast passed into the habit, yea and almost into the nature of wickedness itself, be not afraid. Therefore taking [the instance of] colors that are not superficial but almost of the substance of the materials, He said that He would bring them into the opposite state. For He did not simply say that He would “wash” us, but that He would “make” us “white, as snow and as wool,” in order to hold out good hopes before us. Great then is the power of repentance, at least if it makes us as snow, and whitens us as wool, even if sin have first got possession and dyed our souls.”

And we read in **Isaiah 30 (KJV):15** For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.

Chrysostom concludes, “Let us labor earnestly then to become clean; He has enjoined nothing burdensome. “Judge the fatherless, and do justice for the widow.” (Isa. i. 17) Thou seest everywhere how great account God makes of mercy, and of standing forward in behalf of those that are wronged. These good deeds let us pursue after, and we shall be able also, by the grace of God, to attain to the blessings to come: which may we all be counted worthy of, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.”

## Commentary Summary

Concerning **Free Will**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY XLV, page 284-285**, he says, “What then saith Christ? “Because it is given unto you,” so He speaks, “to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given.” (Matthew 13:11 [R.V., “Unto you it is given,” etc.]”

And he says, “But this He said, not bringing in necessity, or any allotment (ἀποκλῶσι) made causelessly and at random, but implying them to be the authors of all their own evils, and wishing to represent that the thing is a gift, and a grace bestowed from above.

It by no means follows, however, because it is a gift, that therefore free will is taken away; and this is evident from what comes after. To this purpose, in order that neither the one

sort may despair, nor the other grow careless, upon being told that “it is given,” He signifies the beginning to be with ourselves.”

That is, he is saying that we have to exercise our “free will” to receive the gift.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXXXII, page 494-495**, he says, “Hence we learn a great doctrine, that a man’s willingness is not sufficient, unless any one receive the succor from above; and that again we shall gain nothing by the succor from above, if there be not a willingness. And both these things do Judas and Peter show; for the one, though he had received much help, was profited nothing, because he was not willing, neither contributed his part; but this one, though he was ready in mind, because he received no assistance, fell. For indeed of these two things is virtue’s web woven.”

So Chrysostom says “that a man’s willingness is not sufficient, unless any one receive the succor from above”, and yet he says, “and that again we shall gain nothing by the succor from above, if there be not a willingness.”

Then in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIX, page 486-487**, he says, “For it is not to deny freewill that he speaks of their having “obtained” (as by chance, Gr. ἐπέτυχε) it, but to show the greatness of the good things, and that the greater part was of grace, though not the whole. For we too are in the habit of saying, “so and so chanced to get” (same word), “so and so met with,” when the gain has been a great one. Because it is not by man’s labors, but by God’s gift, that the greater part was brought about.”

But the Scripture does not say that the “greater part” was done by God, and the lesser part by man, but it says “of Him are you in Christ Jesus”, as in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY II, page 13**, he says, ““Having first used the expression, “to them that are called according to a purpose,” and at the same time wishing to declare their privilege compared with the rest of mankind, he speaks also of inheritance by lot, yet so as not to divest them of free will.”

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY I, page 416-418**, he says, in speaking of Paul in 1 Timothy 1:12, “Thus everywhere, we see, he conceals his own merit, and ascribes everything to God, yet so far only, as not to take away free will.”

But Paul never speaks of the free will of man.

And again, speaking of Paul, he says, “Thus we see him acknowledge both his own part and that of God, and whilst he ascribes the greater part to the providence of God, he extenuates his own, yet so far only, as we said before, as was consistent with free will.”

He refers to **1 Timothy 1 (KJV):13** Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

The word “extenuates” means “to lessen or to try to lessen the seriousness or extent of (something, such as a fault or offense) by making partial excuses : MITIGATE (Merriam Webster)

Paul is very bold to point out his unworthiness as a blasphemer and a persecutor. And he humbles himself again as he says, “but I obtained mercy”. God had mercy on him, and opened his heart to believe in Him.

And Chrysostom adds, “For he who in action, or word, or thought, does anything unworthy of Christ, does not sustain His name, and has not Christ dwelling in him.”

This would make our salvation dependent on our works, which cannot be according to Scripture. And doing “anything unworthy of Christ” is to sin. And He has provided a way for us to deal with sin. That is, we have only to confess our sins and He is faithful to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Our sin does not affect our standing with God, for God has justified us, and put His righteousness down to our account. And He has promised to never leave us.

Then in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY XV, page 463-464**, he says, “Beloved, see how we are honored! yet some are so unreasonable and so ungrateful as to say, “Why are we endowed with free will?” But how in all the particulars which we have mentioned could we have imitated God, if there had been no free will?”

We have been set free for freedom, as we read in **Galatians 5 (NASB):1** It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

We were slaves of sin, as we read in **Romans 6 (KJV):17** But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

What free will does a slave have? But when we are born again we are freed from sin, and then our will is free.

Then in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XLV, page 162**, he says, “But perhaps some one will say, “If all that the Father giveth, and whomsoever He shall draw, cometh unto Thee, if none can come unto Thee except it be given him from above, then those to whom the Father giveth not are free from any blame or charges.” These are mere words and pretenses. For we require our own deliberate choice also, because whether we will be taught is a matter of choice, and also whether we will believe.”

We believe after God gives us faith by His grace, and we then willingly receive Him. It is true that we willingly accept Christ. But faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. God is under no obligation to save us for we are all under sin.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XLVI, page 164**, referring to Jesus’ words in John 6:44, that no man can come to Him except the Father draw him, he says, “The Manichæans spring upon these words, saying, “that nothing lies in our own power”; yet the expression showeth that we are masters of our will. “For if a man cometh to Him,” saith some one, “what need is there of drawing?” But the words do not take away our free will, but show that we greatly need assistance.”

But Jesus explains in John 6:64 that no man can come to Him unless “it were given unto him of my Father”. The gift of faith is not just a great assistance, but the gift whereby we believe. So then it is not of our free will, as we read again in **Romans 9 (KJV):16** So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.



And in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY XII, page 424-426**, he says, ““What then? Does nothing depend on God? All indeed depends on God, but not so that our freewill is hindered.”

And he says, “On this account I said, ‘so that our freewill is not hindered.’ It depends then on us, and on Him. For we must first choose the good; and then He leads us to His own. He does not anticipate our choice, lest our freewill should be outraged. But when we have chosen, then great is the assistance he brings to us.”

And he explains, “Since therefore the greater part is of Him, he says all is of Him, speaking according to the custom of men. For so we ourselves also do. I mean for instance: we see a house well built, and we say the whole is the Architect’s [doing], and yet certainly it is not all his, but the workmen’s also, and the owner’s, who supplies the materials, and many others’, but nevertheless since he contributed the greatest share, we call the whole his. So then [it is] in this case also. Again, with respect to a number of people, where the many are, we say All are: where few, nobody. So also Paul says, “not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.”

However, Chrysostom’s explanation is an invention of his own. The word of God is the word of God, and not the “custom of men”. So we do not interpret it based upon the “custom of men”.

He also says, “He did not then assert this, that we run in vain, but that, if we think the whole to be our own, if we do not assign the greater part to God, we run in vain. For neither hath God willed that the whole should be His, lest He should appear to be crowning us without cause: nor again our’s, lest we should fall away to pride.”

The lesser part then which would be our own is what he would call our freewill.

But even the good works that we may do, after having received faith from God, were “ordained of God that we should walk in them”.

## **Election**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XXI, page 504-506**

Ver. 11–13. “For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”

What was the cause then why one was loved and the other hated? why was it that one served, the other was served? It was because one was wicked, and the other good. And yet the children being not yet born, one was honored and the other condemned. For when they were not as yet born, God said, “the elder shall serve the younger.” With what intent then did God say this? Because He doth not wait, as man doth, to see from the issue of their acts the good and

him who is not so, but even before these He knoweth which is the wicked and which not such. And this took place in the Israelites' case also, in a still more wonderful way. Why, he says, do I speak of Esau and of Jacob, of whom one was wicked and the other good? For in the Israelites' case, the sin belonged to all, since they all worshipped the calf. Yet notwithstanding some had mercy shown them, and others had not.

Ver. 15. "For I will have mercy, He says, on whom I will have mercy, and I will show compassion on whom I will show compassion." (Ex. xxxiii. 19)

This one may see also in the case of those who are punished, for what would you say of Pharaoh who was punished, and had to pay so heavy a penalty? You say he was hardened and disobedient. Was he then alone such, and not even one person else? How came he then to be so severely punished? Why even in the case of the Jews did he call that a people which was no people, or again, why not count all worthy of equal honor? "For if they be" (it says) "as the sand of the sea, yet shall a remnant be saved." (Is. x. 22) And why is it to be only a remnant? You see what difficulty he has filled the subject with. And with great propriety. For when you have power to throw your adversary into perplexity, do not at once bring forward the answer, because if he be found himself responsible for the same ignorance, why take unnecessary dangers upon yourself? Why make him more bold, by drawing it all upon yourself? Now tell me, O thou Jew, that hast so many perplexing questions, and art unable to answer any of them, how thou comest to annoy us on account of the call of the Gentiles? I, however, have a good reason to give you why the Gentiles were justified and ye were cast out. And what is the reason? It is that they are of faith, ye of the works of the Law. And it is owing to this obstinacy of yours that ye have in every way (**Schaff Note:** Mar. and several mss. all) been given up. For, "they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." (Rom. x. 3) The clearing up then of the whole passage, to give the whole sense summarily, is here brought out by that blessed person. But that this may be clearer, let us investigate the things he says also one by one; this knowing, that what the blessed Paul aimed at was, to show by all that he said that God only knoweth who are worthy, and no man whatever knoweth, even if he seem to know ever so well, but that in this sentence of his there are sundry aberrations. For He that knoweth the secrets of the hearts, He only knoweth for a certainty who deserve a crown, and who punishment and vengeance. Hence it is that many of those, by men esteemed good, He convicts and punishes, and those suspected to be bad He crowns, after showing it not to be so; thus forming his sentence not after the judgment of us slaves, but after his own keen and uncorrupt decision, and not waiting for the issue of actions to look at the wicked and him who is not so therefrom. But that we may not make the subject more obscure, again let us go to the very words of the Apostle.

Ver. 10. "And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one."

I might, he implies, have mentioned the children by Keturah besides, but I do not. But to gain the victory from a vantage ground it is those born of one and the same father, and mother too, that I bring forward. For they were both sprung from Rebecca, and from Isaac the true-born, the elect, the son honored above all, of whom He said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," who became "the father of us all;" but if he was our father, then should his sons have been our fathers; yet it was not so. You see how this happens not in Abraham's case only, but also in that of his son himself, and how it is faith and virtue in all cases that is conspicuous, and gives the

real relationship its character. For hence we learn that it is not only from the manner of birth, but owing to their being worthy of the father's virtue, that the children are called children of him. For if it were only owing to the manner of the birth, then ought Esau to have enjoyed the same as Jacob did. For he also was from a womb as good as dead, and his mother was barren. Yet this was not the only thing required, but the character too, which fact contributes no common amount of practical instruction for us. And he does not say that one is good and another bad, and so the former was honored; lest this kind of argument should be wielded against him, "What, are those of the Gentiles good men rather than those of the circumcision?" For even supposing the truth of the matter was so, still he does not state it yet, as that would have seemed to be vexatious. But it is upon God's knowledge that he has cast the whole, and this no one would venture to gainsay, though he were ever so frantic. "For the children being not yet born," he says, "it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger." And he shows that noble birth after the flesh is of no avail, but we must seek for virtue of soul, which even before the works of it God knoweth of. For "the children," he says, "being not yet born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, it was said unto her that the elder shall serve the younger:" for this was a sign of foreknowledge, that they were chosen from the very birth. That the election made according to foreknowledge, might be manifestly of God, from the first day He at once saw and proclaimed which was good and which not. Do not then tell me that thou hast read the Law (he means) and the Prophets, and hast been a servant for such a long time. For He that knoweth how to assay the soul, knoweth which is worthy of being saved. Yield then to the incomprehensibility of the election. For it is He alone Who knoweth how to crown aright. How many, for instance, seemed better than St. Matthew; to go by the exhibition of works then visible. But He that knoweth things undeclared, and is able to assay the mind's aptitude, knew the pearl though lying in the mire, and after passing by others, and being well pleased with the beauty of this, He elected it, and by adding to the noble born freewill grace from Himself, He made it approved. For if in the case of these arts which are perishable, and indeed in other matters, those that are good judges do not use the grounds on which the uninstructed form their decision, in selecting out of what is put before them; but from points which they are themselves well aware of, they many times disparage that which the uninstructed approve, and decide upon what they disparage: and horse-breakers often do this with horses, and so the judges of precious stones, and workmen in other arts: much more will the God that loveth man, the infinite Wisdom, Who alone hath a clear knowledge of all things, not allow of man's guesses, but will out of His own exact and unfailing Wisdom pass his sentence upon all men. Hence it was that He chose the publican, the thief, and the harlot; but dishonored priests, and elders, and rulers, and cast them out. And this one may see happening in the martyrs' case also. Many accordingly of those who were utterly cast aside, have in the time of trial been crowned. And, on the other hand, some that have been held great ones by many have stumbled and fallen.

Do not then call the Creator to account, nor say, Why is it that one was crowned and another punished? For He knoweth how to do these things with exactness. Whence also he says, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated." That it was with justice, you indeed know from the result: but Himself even before the result knew it clearly. For it is not a mere exhibition of works that God searcheth after, but a nobleness of choice and an obedient temper (γνώμην εὐγνώμονα) besides. For a man of this kind, if he should ever sin through some surprise,

(**Schaff Note:** Literally under some circumstance, but περιστάσις implies surrounding and assault.) will speedily recover himself. And if he should even stay long haply in a state of vice, he will not be overlooked, but God Who knoweth all things will speedily draw him out. And so he that is herein corrupted, even if he seem to do some good things, will perish, in that he doth this with an ill intention. Hence even David, after committing murder and adultery, since he did this as being carried away by surprise, and not from habitual practice of wickedness, speedily washed it out. The Pharisee, however, who had not perpetrated any such crime (Luke xviii. 11), but even had good deeds besides to boast of, lost all by the bad spirit he had chosen.

Ver. 14. “What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.”

Hence there is no such thing in the case of us and the Jews. And then he goes on with another thing, a more clear than this. And of what sort is it?

Ver. 15. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

Here again he adds force to the objection by dividing it in two and meeting it, and starting another fresh difficulty. But to make what I have said clearer, one must needs explain it. God, he means, said that “the elder shall serve the younger,” before the travail. What then? “Is God unrighteous?” By no means. Now listen to what follows also. For in that case the virtue or the vice, might be the decisive thing. But here there was one sin on which all the Jews joined, that of the molten calf, and still some were punished, and some were not punished. And this is why He says, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” (Ex. xxxiii. 19: observe context.) For it is not thine to know, O Moses, he means, which are deserving of My love toward man, but leave this to Me. But if Moses had no right to know, much less have we. And this is why he did not barely quote the passage, but also called to our minds to whom it was said. For it is Moses, he means, that he is speaking to, that at least by the dignity of the person he might make the objector modest. Having then given a solution of the difficulties raised, he divides it in two, by bringing forward another objection besides, as follows:

Ver. 16, 17. “So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. (**Schaff Note:** One ms. adds, “Isaac, for his part, wished to bless Esau, he ran to the field (παίδιον, by a common mistake for πεδίων) to do his father’s bidding, desirous of the blessing. But God brought in Jacob who was worthy, and by a just judgment declared him deserving of the blessing.”) For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.”

As then in the one case, he means, some were saved and some were punished, so here also. This man was reserved for this very purpose. And then he again urges the objection.

Ver. 18, 19. “Therefore He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he then find fault? For who hath resisted His will?”

See what pains he takes to embarrass the subject in every way. And the answer he does not produce forthwith, it being a useful thing not to do so, but he first stops the disputant’s mouth, saying as follows,

Ver. 20. “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?”

This he does to take down the objector’s unseasonable inquisitiveness, and excessive

curiosity, and to put a check upon it, and teach him to know what God is, and what man, and how incomprehensible His foreknowledge is, and how far above our reason, and how obedience to Him in all points is binding. So when he has made this preparatory step in his hearer, and has hushed and softened down his spirit, then with great felicity he introduces the answer, having made what he says easy of admittance with him. And he does not say, it is impossible to answer questions of this kind, but that **(Schaff Note: 5 mss. No, but what? that)** it is presumptuous to raise them. For our business is to obey what God does, not to be curious even if we do not know the reason of them. Wherefore he said, “Who art thou that repliest against God?” You see how very light he makes of him, how he bears down his swelling spirit! “Who art thou?” art thou a sharer of His power? **(Schaff Note: compare Job xxxviii)** nay, art thou sitting in judgment upon God? Why in comparison with Him thou canst not have a being even! nor this or that sort of being, but absolutely none! For the expression, “who art thou?” doth much more set him at naught than “thou art nothing.” And he takes other ways of showing further his indignation in the question, and does not say, “Who art thou that” answerest “God?” but, “that repliest against,” that is, that gainsayest, and that opposeth. For the saying things ought to be so, and ought not to be so, is what a man does that “replieth against.” See how he scares them, how he terrifies them, how he makes them tremble rather than be questioning and curious. This is what an excellent teacher does; he does not follow his disciples’ fancy everywhere, but leads them to his own mind, and pulls up the thorns, and then puts the seed in, and does not answer at once in all cases to the questions put to him.

Ver. 20, 21. “Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus? Hath not the potter **(Schaff Note: Read Jer. xviii. 1–10)** power, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?”

Here it is not to do away with freewill that he says this, but to show, up to what point we ought to obey God. For in respect of calling God to account, we ought to be as little disposed to it as the clay is. For we ought to abstain not from gainsaying or questioning only, but even from speaking or thinking of it at all, and to become like that lifeless matter, which followeth the potter’s hands, and lets itself be drawn about anywhere he may please. And this is the only point he applied the illustration to, not, that is, to any enunciation of the rule of life, but to the complete obedience and silence enforced upon us. And this we ought to observe in all cases, that we are not to take the illustrations quite entire, but after selecting the good of them, and that for which they were introduced, to let the rest alone. As, for instance, when he says, “He couched, he lay down as a lion;” (Numb. xxiv. 9) let us take out the indomitable and fearful part, not the brutality, nor any other of the things belonging to a lion. And again, when He says, “I will meet them as a bereaved bear” (Hos. xiii. 8), let us take the vindictiveness. And when he says, “our God is a consuming fire” (Deut. iv. 24; and Heb. xii. 29), the wasting power exerted in punishing. So also here must we single out the clay, the potter, and the vessels. And when he does go on to say, “Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?” do not suppose that this is said by Paul as an account of the creation, nor as implying a necessity over the will, but to illustrate the sovereignty and difference of dispensations; for if we do not take it in this way, divers incongruities will follow, for if here he were speaking about the will, and those who are good and those not so, He will be Himself the Maker of these, and man will be free from all responsibility. And at this rate, Paul will also be shown to be at variance with himself, as he

always bestows chief honor upon free choice. There is nothing else then which he here wishes to do, save to persuade the hearer to yield entirely to God, and at no time to call Him to account for anything whatever. For as the potter (he says) of the same lump makes what he pleaseth, and no one forbids it; thus also when God, of the same race of men, punisheth some, and honoreth others, be not thou curious nor meddling herein, but worship only, and imitate the clay. And as it followeth the hands of the potter, so do thou also the mind of Him that so ordereth things. For He worketh nothing at random, or mere hazard, though thou be ignorant of the secret of His Wisdom. Yet thou allowest the other of the same lump to make divers things, and findest no fault: but of Him you demand an account of His punishments and honors, and will not allow Him to know who is worthy and who is not so; but since the same lump is of the same substance, you assert that there are the same dispositions. And, how monstrous this is! And yet not even is it on the potter that the honor and the dishonor of the things made of the lump depends, but upon the use made by those that handle them, so here also it depends on the free choice. Still, as I said before, one must take this illustration to have one bearing only, which is that one should not contravene God, but yield to His incomprehensible Wisdom. For the examples ought to be greater than the subject, and than the things on account of which they are brought forward, so as to draw on the hearer better. Since if they were not greater and did not mount far above it, he could not attack as he ought, and shame the objectors. However, their ill-timed obstinacy he silenced in this way with becoming superiority. And then he introduces his answer. Now what is the answer?

Ver. 22, 23, 24. "What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath chosen, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles."

What he means is somewhat as follows. Pharaoh was a vessel of wrath, that is, a man who by his own hard-heartedness had kindled the wrath of God. For after enjoying much longsuffering, he became no better, but remained unimproved. Wherefore he calleth him not only "a vessel of wrath," but also one "fitted for destruction." That is, fully fitted indeed, but by his own proper self. For neither had God left out aught of the things likely to recover him, nor did he leave out aught of those that would ruin him, and put him beyond any forgiveness. Yet still, though God knew this, "He endured him with much longsuffering," being willing to bring him to repentance. For had He not willed this, then He would not have been thus longsuffering. But as he would not use the longsuffering in order to repentance, but fully fitted himself for wrath, He used him for the correction of others, through the punishment inflicted upon him making them better, and in this way setting forth His power. For that it is not God's wish that His power be so made known, but in another way, by His benefits, namely, and kindnesses, he had shown above in all possible ways. For if Paul does not wish to appear powerful in this way ("not that we should appear approved," he says, "but that ye should do that which is honest,") (2 Cor. xiii. 7), much less doth God. But after that he had shown longsuffering, that He might lead to repentance, but he did not repent, He suffered him a long time, that He might display at once His goodness and His power, even if that man were not minded to gain anything from this great longsuffering. As then by punishing this man, who continued incorrigible, He showed His power, so by having pitied those who had done many sins but repented, He manifested His love toward man. But it does not say, love towards man, but glory, to show that this is especially

God's glory, and for this He was above all things earnest. But in saying, "which He had afore prepared unto glory," he does not mean that all is God's doing. Since if this were so, there were nothing to hinder all men from being saved. But he is setting forth again His foreknowledge, and doing away with the difference between the Jews and the Gentiles. And on this topic again he grounds a defense of his statement, which is no small one. For it was not in the case of the Jews only that some men perished, and some were saved, but with the Gentiles also this was the case. Wherefore he does not say, all the Gentiles, but, "of the Gentiles," nor, all the Jews, but, "of the Jews." As then Pharaoh became a vessel of wrath by his own lawlessness, so did these become vessels of mercy by their own readiness to obey. For though the more part is of God, still they also have contributed themselves some little. Whence he does not say either, vessels of well-doing, or vessels of boldness (*παρρησίας*), but "vessels of mercy," to show that the whole is of God. For the phrase, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth," even if it comes in the course of the objection, still, were it said by Paul, would create no difficulty. Because when he says, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth," he does not deprive us of freewill, but shows that all is not one's own, for that it requires grace from above. For it is binding on us to will, and also to run: but to confide not in our own labors, but in the love of God toward man. And this he has expressed elsewhere. "Yet not I, but the grace which was with me." (1 Cor. xv. 10) And he well says, "Which He had afore prepared unto glory." For since they reproached them with this, that they were saved by grace, and thought to make them ashamed, he far more than sets aside this insinuation. For if the thing brought glory even to God, much more to them through whom God was glorified. But observe his forbearance, and unspeakable wisdom. For when he had it in his power to adduce, as an instance of those punished, not Pharaoh, but such of the Jews as had sinned, and so make his discourse much clearer, and show that where there were the same fathers, and the same sins, some perished, and some had mercy shown them, and persuade them not to be doubtful-minded, even if some of the Gentiles were saved, while the Jews were perishing; that he might not make his discourse irksome, the showing forth of the punishment he draws from the foreigner, so that he may not be forced to call them "vessels of wrath." But those that obtained mercy he draws from the people of the Jews. And besides, he also has spoken in a sufficient way in God's behalf, because though He knew very well that the nation was fitting itself as a vessel of destruction, still He contributed all on His part, His patience, His longsuffering, and that not merely longsuffering, but "much longsuffering;" yet still he was not minded to state it barely against the Jews. Whence then are some vessels of wrath, and some of mercy? Of their own free choice. God, however, being very good, shows the same kindness to both. For it was not those in a state of salvation only to whom He showed mercy, but also Pharaoh, as far as His part went. For of the same longsuffering, both they and he had the advantage. And if he was not saved, it was quite owing to his own will: since, as for what concerneth God, he had as much done for him as they who were saved. Having then given to the question that answer which was furnished by facts, in order to give his discourse the advantage of other testimony in its favor, he introduces the prophets also making the same declarations aforetime. For Hosea, he says, of old put this in writing, as follows:

Ver. 25. "I will call them My people, which were not My people; and her beloved, which was not beloved."

Here to prevent their saying, that you are deceiving us here with specious reasoning, he

calls Hosea to witness, who crieth and saith, “I will call them My people, who were not My people.” (Hos. ii. 23) Who then are the not people? Plainly, the Gentiles. And who the not beloved? The same again. However, he says, that they shall become at once people, and beloved, and sons of God.

Ver. 26. “For even they shall be called,” he says, “the children of the living God.”

But if they should assert that this was said of those of the Jews who believed, even then the argument stands. For if with those who after so many benefits were hard-hearted and estranged, and had lost their being as a people, so great a change was wrought, what is there to prevent even those who were not estranged after being taken to Him, but were originally aliens, from being called, and, provided they obey, from being counted worthy of the same blessings? Having then done with Hosea, he does not content himself with him only, but also brings Isaiah in after him, sounding in harmony with him.

Ver. 27. “For Esaias,” he says, “crieth concerning Israel.”

That is, speaks out boldly, and uses no dissimulation. Why then lay a charge against us, when they afore declared the same thing with more than trumpet’s loudness? And what does Isaiah cry? “Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.” (Is. x. 22)

Do you see that he too does not say that all are to be saved, but that those that are worthy shall? For I regard not the multitude, he means, nor does a race diffused so far distress me, but those only do I save that yield themselves worthy of it. And he does not mention the “sand of the sea” without a reason, but to remind them of the ancient promise whereof they had made themselves unworthy. Why then are you troubled, as though the promise had failed, when all the Prophets show that it is not all that are to be saved? Then he mentions the mode of the salvation also. Observe the accuracy of the Prophet, and the judgment of the Apostle, what a testimony he has cited, how exceedingly apposite! For it not only shows us that those to be saved are some and not all, but also adds the way they are to be saved. How then are they to be saved, and how will God count them worthy of the benefit?

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 11–13. “For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”

He is referring to **Romans 9 (KJV):**11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

He continues, “What was the cause then why one was loved and the other hated? Why was it that one served, the other was served? It was because one was wicked, and the other good. And yet the children being not yet born, one was honored and the other condemned. For when they were not as yet born, God said, “the elder shall serve the younger.” With what intent then did God say this? Because He doth not wait, as man doth, to see from the issue of their acts the good and him who is not so, but even before these He knoweth which is the wicked and which not such. And this took place in the Israelites’ case also, in a still more wonderful way. Why, he says, do I speak of Esau and of Jacob, of whom one was wicked and the other good?



For in the Israelites' case, the sin belonged to all, since they all worshipped the calf. Yet notwithstanding some had mercy shown them, and others had not."

In the "purpose of God according to election", there was one vote. It was God's. He did not choose those He knew would be good, but He chose those He would make to be good.

Chrysostom continues, "Ver. 15. "For I will have mercy, He says, on whom I will have mercy, and I will show compassion on whom I will show compassion." (Ex. xxxiii. 19)"

He refers in context to **Romans 9 (KJV):14** What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

And to **Exodus 33 (KJV):19** And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

He continues, "This one may see also in the case of those who are punished, for what would you say of Pharaoh who was punished, and had to pay so heavy a penalty? You say he was hardened and disobedient. Was he then alone such, and not even one person else? How came he then to be so severely punished? Why even in the case of the Jews did he call that a people which was no people, or again, why not count all worthy of equal honor? "For if they be" (it says) "as the sand of the sea, yet shall a remnant be saved." (Is. x. 22)"

He refers to **Isaiah 10 (KJV):22** For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

He continues, "And why is it to be only a remnant? You see what difficulty he has filled the subject with. And with great propriety. For when you have power to throw your adversary into perplexity, do not at once bring forward the answer, because if he be found himself responsible for the same ignorance, why take unnecessary dangers upon yourself? Why make him more bold, by drawing it all upon yourself? Now tell me, O thou Jew, that hast so many perplexing questions, and art unable to answer any of them, how thou comest to annoy us on account of the call of the Gentiles? I, however, have a good reason to give you why the Gentiles were justified and ye were cast out. And what is the reason? It is that they are of faith, ye of the works of the Law. And it is owing to this obstinacy of yours that ye have in every way (**Schaff Note:** Mar. and several mss. all) been given up. For, "they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." (Rom. x. 3)"

He refers in context to **Romans 10 (KJV):1** Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

He continues, "The clearing up then of the whole passage, to give the whole sense summarily, is here brought out by that blessed person. But that this may be clearer, let us investigate the things he says also one by one; this knowing, that what the blessed Paul aimed at was, to show by all that he said that God only knoweth who are worthy, and no man whatever knoweth, even if he seem to know ever so well, but that in this sentence of his there are sundry aberrations. For He that knoweth the secrets of the hearts, He only knoweth for a certainty who deserve a crown, and who punishment and vengeance. Hence it is that many of those, by men

esteemed good, He convicts and punishes, and those suspected to be bad He crowns, after showing it not to be so; thus forming his sentence not after the judgment of us slaves, but after his own keen and uncorrupt decision, and not waiting for the issue of actions to look at the wicked and him who is not so therefrom. But that we may not make the subject more obscure, again let us go to the very words of the Apostle.”

But we all deserve punishment, for we all have sinned as we read again in **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

He continues, “Ver. 10. “And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one.”

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):10** And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

He continues, “I might, he implies, have mentioned the children by Keturah besides, but I do not. But to gain the victory from a vantage ground it is those born of one and the same father, and mother too, that I bring forward. For they were both sprung from Rebecca, and from Isaac the true-born, the elect, the son honored above all, of whom He said, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called,” who became “the father of us all;” but if he was our father, then should his sons have been our fathers; yet it was not so. You see how this happens not in Abraham’s case only, but also in that of his son himself, and how it is faith and virtue in all cases that is conspicuous, and gives the real relationship its character. For hence we learn that it is not only from the manner of birth, but owing to their being worthy of the father’s virtue, that the children are called children of him. For if it were only owing to the manner of the birth, then ought Esau to have enjoyed the same as Jacob did. For he also was from a womb as good as dead, and his mother was barren. Yet this was not the only thing required, but the character too, which fact contributes no common amount of practical instruction for us. And he does not say that one is good and another bad, and so the former was honored; lest this kind of argument should be wielded against him, “What, are those of the Gentiles good men rather than those of the circumcision?” For even supposing the truth of the matter was so, still he does not state it yet, as that would have seemed to be vexatious. But it is upon God’s knowledge that he has cast the whole, and this no one would venture to gainsay, though he were ever so frantic. “For the children being not yet born,” he says, “it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.” And he shows that noble birth after the flesh is of no avail, but we must seek for virtue of soul, which even before the works of it God knoweth of. For “the children,” he says, “being not yet born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, it was said unto her that the elder shall serve the younger:””

He refers again to **Romans 9 (KJV):11** (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

God chose us before we were born, before we had done any good or evil, that His purpose according to election might stand, not of works. Chrysostom believes that God knows there would be “virtue of soul” in the ones He has chosen, so this is why God chose us. But the Scripture clearly states that He chose us not on the basis of our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, as we read in **2 Timothy 1 (KJV):9** Who hath saved us, and called us with

an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began...

He continues, “for this was a sign of foreknowledge, that they were chosen from the very birth. That the election made according to foreknowledge, might be manifestly of God, from the first day He at once saw and proclaimed which was good and which not. Do not then tell me that thou hast read the Law (he means) and the Prophets, and hast been a servant for such a long time. For He that knoweth how to assay the soul, knoweth which is worthy of being saved. Yield then to the incomprehensibleness of the election. For it is He alone Who knoweth how to crown aright. How many, for instance, seemed better than St. Matthew; to go by the exhibition of works then visible. But He that knoweth things undeclared, and is able to assay the mind’s aptitude, knew the pearl though lying in the mire, and after passing by others, and being well pleased with the beauty of this, He elected it, and by adding to the noble born freewill grace from Himself, He made it approved.”

Chrysostom evidently believed that God adds grace to “the noble born freewill grace from Himself”, to make the elect approved. So all have this “freewill grace”, the saved, and the unsaved, as God’s creation.

He continues, “For if in the case of these arts which are perishable, and indeed in other matters, those that are good judges do not use the grounds on which the uninstructed form their decision, in selecting out of what is put before them; but from points which they are themselves well aware of, they many times disparage that which the uninstructed approve, and decide upon what they disparage: and horse-breakers often do this with horses, and so the judges of precious stones, and workmen in other arts: much more will the God that loveth man, the infinite Wisdom, Who alone hath a clear knowledge of all things, not allow of man’s guesses, but will out of His own exact and unfailing Wisdom pass his sentence upon all men. Hence it was that He chose the publican, the thief, and the harlot; but dishonored priests, and elders, and rulers, and cast them out. And this one may see happening in the martyrs’ case also. Many accordingly of those who were utterly cast aside, have in the time of trial been crowned. And, on the other hand, some that have been held great ones by many have stumbled and fallen.

Do not then call the Creator to account, nor say, Why is it that one was crowned and another punished? For He knoweth how to do these things with exactness. Whence also he says, “Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.” That it was with justice, you indeed know from the result: but Himself even before the result knew it clearly. For it is not a mere exhibition of works that God searcheth after, but a nobleness of choice and an obedient temper (γνώμην εὐγνώμονα) besides.”

Chrysostom would have us believe that it is ultimately by a man’s good works and “a nobleness of choice and an obedient temper” that God chooses him.

He continues, “For a man of this kind, if he should ever sin through some surprise, **(Schaff Note: Literally under some circumstance, but περιστάσις implies surrounding and assault.)** will speedily recover himself. And if he should even stay long haply in a state of vice, he will not be overlooked, but God Who knoweth all things will speedily draw him out. And so he that is herein corrupted, even if he seem to do some good things, will perish, in that he doth this with an ill intention. Hence even David, after committing murder and adultery, since he did this as being carried away by surprise, and not from habitual practice of wickedness, speedily washed it out. The Pharisee, however, who had not perpetrated any such crime (Luke xviii. 11),

but even had good deeds besides to boast of, lost all by the bad spirit he had chosen.”

He refers in context to **Luke 18 (KJV):11** The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

He continues, “Ver. 14. “What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.”

Hence there is no such thing in the case of us and the Jews. And then he goes on with another thing, a more clear than this. And of what sort is it?

Ver. 15. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):14** What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

But we note that the Scripture is saying that it was God’s choice to have compassion on whom He would have compassion.

Chrysostom continues, “Here again he adds force to the objection by dividing it in two and meeting it, and starting another fresh difficulty. But to make what I have said clearer, one must needs explain it. God, he means, said that “the elder shall serve the younger,” before the travail. What then? “Is God unrighteous?” By no means. Now listen to what follows also. For in that case the virtue or the vice, might be the decisive thing. But here there was one sin on which all the Jews joined, that of the molten calf, and still some were punished, and some were not punished. And this is why He says, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” (Ex. xxxiii. 19: observe context)”

He refers in context to **Exodus 33 (KJV):13** Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. 14 And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. 15 And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. 16 For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. 17 And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. 18 And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. 19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

Chrysostom continues, “For it is not thine to know, O Moses, he means, which are deserving of My love toward man, but leave this to Me. But if Moses had no right to know, much less have we. And this is why he did not barely quote the passage, but also called to our minds to whom it was said. For it is Moses, he means, that he is speaking to, that at least by the dignity of the person he might make the objector modest. Having then given a solution of the difficulties raised, he divides it in two, by bringing forward another objection besides, as

follows:

Ver. 16, 17. “So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. (**Schaff Note:** One ms. adds, “Isaac, for his part, wished to bless Esau, he ran to the field (παιδίον, by a common mistake for πεδίον) to do his father’s bidding, desirous of the blessing. But God brought in Jacob who was worthy, and by a just judgment declared him deserving of the blessing.”) For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.””

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):16** So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. 17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

He continues, “As then in the one case, he means, some were saved and some were punished, so here also. This man was reserved for this very purpose. And then he again urges the objection.

Ver. 18, 19. “Therefore He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he then find fault? For who hath resisted His will?””

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):18** Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. 19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

He continues, “See what pains he takes to embarrass the subject in every way. And the answer he does not produce forthwith, it being a useful thing not to do so, but he first stops the disputant’s mouth, saying as follows,

Ver. 20. “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?””

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):20** Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

He continues, “This he does to take down the objector’s unseasonable inquisitiveness, and excessive curiosity, and to put a check upon it, and teach him to know what God is, and what man, and how incomprehensible His foreknowledge is, and how far above our reason, and how obedience to Him in all points is binding. So when he has made this preparatory step in his hearer, and has hushed and softened down his spirit, then with great felicity he introduces the answer, having made what he says easy of admittance with him. And he does not say, it is impossible to answer questions of this kind, but that (**Schaff Note:** 5 mss. No, but what? that) it is presumptuous to raise them. For our business is to obey what God does, not to be curious even if we do not know the reason of them. Wherefore he said, “Who art thou that repliest against God?” You see how very light he makes of him, how he bears down his swelling spirit! “Who art thou?” art thou a sharer of His power? (compare Job xxxviii)”

He refers in part to **Job 38 (KJV):1** Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, 2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? 3 Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. 4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. 5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? 6 Whereupon are the

foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; 7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

He continues, “nay, art thou sitting in judgment upon God? Why in comparison with Him thou canst not have a being even! nor this or that sort of being, but absolutely none! For the expression, “who art thou?” doth much more set him at naught than “thou art nothing.” And he takes other ways of showing further his indignation in the question, and does not say, “Who art thou that” answerest “God?” but, “that repliest against,” that is, that gainsayest, and that opposest. For the saying things ought to be so, and ought not to be so, is what a man does that “replieth against.” See how he scares them, how he terrifies them, how he makes them tremble rather than be questioning and curious. This is what an excellent teacher does; he does not follow his disciples’ fancy everywhere, but leads them to his own mind, and pulls up the thorns, and then puts the seed in, and does not answer at once in all cases to the questions put to him.

Ver. 20, 21. “Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus? Hath not the potter (Read Jer. xviii. 1–10) power, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?””

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):20** Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

And to **Jeremiah 18 (KJV):1** The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. 4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. 5 Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. 7 At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; 8 If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. 9 And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; 10 If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.

Chrysostom continues, as he then argues, “Here it is not to do away with freewill that he says this, but to show, up to what point we ought to obey God. For in respect of calling God to account, we ought to be as little disposed to it as the clay is. For we ought to abstain not from gainsaying or questioning only, but even from speaking or thinking of it at all, and to become like that lifeless matter, which followeth the potter’s hands, and lets itself be drawn about anywhere he may please. And this is the only point he applied the illustration to, not, that is, to any enunciation of the rule of life, but to the complete obedience and silence enforced upon us.”

It is the perception of man in his unsaved state that he has freewill, and is in control of his own destiny. But as the potter has power to make one vessel to honor, and another to dishonor, so the Lord has chosen us, and so we believe and are vessels of honor.

Chrysostom continues, “And this we ought to observe in all cases, that we are not to take the illustrations quite entire, but after selecting the good of them, and that for which they were introduced, to let the rest alone. As, for instance, when he says, “He couched, he lay down as a

lion;” (Numb. xxiv. 9) let us take out the indomitable and fearful part, not the brutality, nor any other of the things belonging to a lion.”

He refers in context to **Numbers 24 (KJV):5** How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! 6 As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. 7 He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. 8 God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows. 9 He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.

He continues, “And again, when He says, “I will meet them as a bereaved bear” (Hos. xiii. 8), let us take the vindictiveness.”

He refers in context to **Hosea 13 (KJV):6** According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me. 7 Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: as a leopard by the way will I observe them: 8 I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion: the wild beast shall tear them.

He continues, “And when he says, “our God is a consuming fire” (Deut. iv. 24; and Heb. xii. 29), the wasting power exerted in punishing.”

He refers to **Deuteronomy 4 (KJV):24** For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.

And to **Hebrews 12 (KJV):29** For our God is a consuming fire.

He continues, “So also here must we single out the clay, the potter, and the vessels. And when he does go on to say, “Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?” do not suppose that this is said by Paul as an account of the creation, nor as implying a necessity over the will, but to illustrate the sovereignty and difference of dispensations; for if we do not take it in this way, divers incongruities will follow, for if here he were speaking about the will, and those who are good and those not so, He will be Himself the Maker of these, and man will be free from all responsibility. And at this rate, Paul will also be shown to be at variance with himself, as he always bestows chief honor upon free choice.”

Chrysostom does not take into account that all are guilty, and unworthy of honor, because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. God is not unrighteous then to choose some out of the lot of the unrighteous to be saved, and to leave the rest. And Paul includes himself in the lot of the unrighteous before he was saved, as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):18** For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of

this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Paul speaks of his inward man who delighted in the law of God. He was speaking of his spirit which had been born again of the Spirit of God. He now had a new nature in his spirit as Peter reveals in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

He had realized that, before accepting Christ as his Lord and Savior, he was a “wretched man” in verse 24. But he then thanked God who had delivered him from the body of this death which was bound by the law of sin. All unbelievers are bound by this law of sin in their flesh. What free will can one have who is bound by such a law of sin? It is only after we come to Christ that we are set free because of the Spirit’s presence in our spirit.

Chrysostom continues, “There is nothing else then which he here wishes to do, save to persuade the hearer to yield entirely to God, and at no time to call Him to account for anything whatever. For as the potter (he says) of the same lump makes what he pleaseth, and no one forbids it; thus also when God, of the same race of men, punisheth some, and honoreth others, be not thou curious nor meddling herein, but worship only, and imitate the clay. And as it followeth the hands of the potter, so do thou also the mind of Him that so ordereth things. For He worketh nothing at random, or mere hazard, though thou be ignorant of the secret of His Wisdom. Yet thou allowest the other of the same lump to make divers things, and findest no fault: but of Him you demand an account of His punishments and honors, and will not allow Him to know who is worthy and who is not so; but since the same lump is of the same substance, you assert that there are the same dispositions. And, how monstrous this is! And yet not even is it on the potter that the honor and the dishonor of the things made of the lump depends, but upon the use made by those that handle them, so here also it depends on the free choice.”

Chrysostom does not understand that the whole lump of clay is bad. There are none righteous as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):10** As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

It is God’s grace that enlightens our minds, opens our hearts, and causes us to be born again by the word of truth, as we read in **James 1 (KJV):18** Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Chrysostom continues, “Still, as I said before, one must take this illustration to have one bearing only, which is that one should not contravene God, but yield to His incomprehensible Wisdom. For the examples ought to be greater than the subject, and than the things on account of which they are brought forward, so as to draw on the hearer better. Since if they were not greater and did not mount far above it, he could not attack as he ought, and shame the objectors. However, their ill-timed obstinacy he silenced in this way with becoming superiority. And then he introduces his answer. Now what is the answer?



Ver. 22, 23, 24. "What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath chosen, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles."

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):**22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, 24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

He continues, "What he means is somewhat as follows. Pharaoh was a vessel of wrath, that is, a man who by his own hard-heartedness had kindled the wrath of God. For after enjoying much longsuffering, he became no better, but remained unimproved. Wherefore he calleth him not only "a vessel of wrath," but also one "fitted for destruction." That is, fully fitted indeed, but by his own proper self. For neither had God left out aught of the things likely to recover him, nor did he leave out aught of those that would ruin him, and put him beyond any forgiveness. Yet still, though God knew this, "He endured him with much longsuffering," being willing to bring him to repentance. For had He not willed this, then He would not have been thus longsuffering. But as he would not use the longsuffering in order to repentance, but fully fitted himself for wrath, He used him for the correction of others, through the punishment inflicted upon him making them better, and in this way setting forth His power. For that it is not God's wish that His power be so made known, but in another way, by His benefits, namely, and kindnesses, he had shown above in all possible ways. For if Paul does not wish to appear powerful in this way ("not that we should appear approved," he says, "but that ye should do that which is honest,") (2 Cor. xiii. 7), much less doth God."

He refers to **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):**7 Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.

He continues, "But after that he had shown longsuffering, that He might lead to repentance, but he did not repent, He suffered him a long time, that He might display at once His goodness and His power, even if that man were not minded to gain anything from this great longsuffering. As then by punishing this man, who continued incorrigible, He showed His power, so by having pitied those who had done many sins but repented, He manifested His love toward man. But it does not say, love towards man, but glory, to show that this is especially God's glory, and for this He was above all things earnest. But in saying, "which He had afore prepared unto glory," he does not mean that all is God's doing. Since if this were so, there were nothing to hinder all men from being saved. But he is setting forth again His foreknowledge, and doing away with the difference between the Jews and the Gentiles. And on this topic again he grounds a defense of his statement, which is no small one. For it was not in the case of the Jews only that some men perished, and some were saved, but with the Gentiles also this was the case. Wherefore he does not say, all the Gentiles, but, "of the Gentiles," nor, all the Jews, but, "of the Jews." As then Pharaoh became a vessel of wrath by his own lawlessness, so did these become vessels of mercy by their own readiness to obey. For though the more part is of God, still they also have contributed themselves some little."

But the Scripture reads as in **Titus 3 (KJV):**4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but

according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

It is not by works of righteousness which we have done, or that God knew we would do, but it was “according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost”.

Chrysostom continues, “Whence he does not say either, vessels of well-doing, or vessels of boldness (παρρησία), but “vessels of mercy,” to show that the whole is of God.”

It is difficult to know what Chrysostom means here. Just before he said, “the more part is of God, still they also have contributed themselves some little.” Now he says, “the whole is of God”.

He continues, “For the phrase, “it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth,” even if it comes in the course of the objection, still, were it said by Paul, would create no difficulty. Because when he says, “it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth,” he does not deprive us of freewill, but shows that all is not one’s own, for that it requires grace from above. For it is binding on us to will, and also to run: but to confide not in our own labors, but in the love of God toward man. And this he has expressed elsewhere. “Yet not I, but the grace which was with me.” (1 Cor. xv. 10)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):10** But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

But Paul speaks as one who has already received mercy to be saved, and born again.

Chrysostom continues, “And he well says, “Which He had afore prepared unto glory.” For since they reproached them with this, that they were saved by grace, and thought to make them ashamed, he far more than sets aside this insinuation. For if the thing brought glory even to God, much more to them through whom God was glorified. But observe his forbearance, and unspeakable wisdom. For when he had it in his power to adduce, as an instance of those punished, not Pharaoh, but such of the Jews as had sinned, and so make his discourse much clearer, and show that where there were the same fathers, and the same sins, some perished, and some had mercy shown them, and persuade them not to be doubtful-minded, even if some of the Gentiles were saved, while the Jews were perishing; that he might not make his discourse irksome, the showing forth of the punishment he draws from the foreigner, so that he may not be forced to call them “vessels of wrath.” But those that obtained mercy he draws from the people of the Jews. And besides, he also has spoken in a sufficient way in God’s behalf, because though He knew very well that the nation was fitting itself as a vessel of destruction, still He contributed all on His part, His patience, His longsuffering, and that not merely longsuffering, but “much longsuffering;” yet still he was not minded to state it barely against the Jews. Whence then are some vessels of wrath, and some of mercy? Of their own free choice. God, however, being very good, shows the same kindness to both. For it was not those in a state of salvation only to whom He showed mercy, but also Pharaoh, as far as His part went. For of the same longsuffering, both they and he had the advantage. And if he was not saved, it was quite owing to his own will: since, as for what concerneth God, he had as much done for him as they who were saved. Having then given to the question that answer which was furnished by facts, in order to give his discourse the advantage of other testimony in its favor, he introduces

the prophets also making the same declarations aforetime. For Hosea, he says, of old put this in writing, as follows:

Ver. 25. "I will call them My people, which were not My people; and her beloved, which was not beloved."

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):25** As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

He continues, "Here to prevent their saying, that you are deceiving us here with specious reasoning, he calls Hosea to witness, who crieth and saith, "I will call them My people, who were not My people." (Hos. ii. 23)"

He refers to **Hosea 2 (KJV):23** And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

He continues, "Who then are the not people? Plainly, the Gentiles. And who the not beloved? The same again. However, he says, that they shall become at once people, and beloved, and sons of God.

Ver. 26. "For even they shall be called," he says, "the children of the living God."

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):26** And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

He continues, "But if they should assert that this was said of those of the Jews who believed, even then the argument stands. For if with those who after so many benefits were hardhearted and estranged, and had lost their being as a people, so great a change was wrought, what is there to prevent even those who were not estranged after being taken to Him, but were originally aliens, from being called, and, provided they obey, from being counted worthy of the same blessings? Having then done with Hosea, he does not content himself with him only, but also brings Isaiah in after him, sounding in harmony with him.

Ver. 27. "For Esaias," he says, "crieth concerning Israel."

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):27** Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

He continues, "That is, speaks out boldly, and uses no dissimulation. Why then lay a charge against us, when they afore declared the same thing with more than trumpet's loudness? And what does Isaiah cry? "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." (Is. x. 22)"

He refers to **Isaiah 10 (KJV):22** For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

He concludes, "Do you see that he too does not say that all are to be saved, but that those that are worthy shall? For I regard not the multitude, he means, nor does a race diffused so far distress me, but those only do I save that yield themselves worthy of it. And he does not mention the "sand of the sea" without a reason, but to remind them of the ancient promise whereof they had made themselves unworthy. Why then are you troubled, as though the promise had failed, when all the Prophets show that it is not all that are to be saved? Then he mentions the mode of the salvation also. Observe the accuracy of the Prophet, and the judgment of the Apostle, what a testimony he has cited, how exceedingly apposite! For it not only shows us that those to be saved are some and not all, but also adds the way they are to be saved. How then are they to be saved, and how will God count them worthy of the benefit?"

There is only one way to be counted worthy, and that is to believe in Jesus Christ, as Paul reveals in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

But in regards to our election and calling, we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

And in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

### Commentary Summary

Concerning **Election**, he says, “But it is upon God’s knowledge that he has cast the whole, and this no one would venture to gainsay, though he were ever so frantic. “For the children being not yet born,” he says, “it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.” And he shows that noble birth after the flesh is of no avail, but we must seek for virtue of soul, which even before the works of it God knoweth of. For “the children,” he says, “being not yet born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, it was said unto her that the elder shall serve the younger:””

But God chose us before we were born, before we had done any good or evil, that His purpose according to election might stand, not of works, or even “virtue of soul”.

Chrysostom believes that God knows there would be “virtue of soul” in the ones He has chosen, so this is why God chose us. But the Scripture clearly states that He chose us not on the basis of our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, as we read in **2 Timothy 1 (KJV):9** Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began...

Chrysostom also says, “For He that knoweth how to assay the soul, knoweth which is worthy of being saved. Yield then to the incomprehensibleness of the election. For it is He alone Who knoweth how to crown aright.”

That is, he is saying that God knows a good soul from a bad soul, even before they are born.

And he says, “But He that knoweth things undeclared, and is able to assay the mind’s aptitude, knew the pearl though lying in the mire, and after passing by others, and being well

pleased with the beauty of this, He elected it, and by adding to the noble born freewill grace from Himself, He made it approved.”

By the “noble born freewill grace from Himself” he means the freewill which he believes even the unsaved have.

Chrysostom evidently believed that God adds grace to “the noble born freewill grace from Himself”, to make the elect approved. So all have this “freewill grace”, the saved, and the unsaved, as God’s creation.

Chrysostom would have us believe that it is ultimately by a man’s good works and “a nobleness of choice and an obedient temper” that God chooses him.

And he reasons, “And when he does go on to say, “Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?” do not suppose that this is said by Paul as an account of the creation, nor as implying a necessity over the will, but to illustrate the sovereignty and difference of dispensations; for if we do not take it in this way, divers incongruities will follow, for if here he were speaking about the will, and those who are good and those not so, He will be Himself the Maker of these, and man will be free from all responsibility. And at this rate, Paul will also be shown to be at variance with himself, as he always bestows chief honor upon free choice.”

So he is saying that if man does not have free will, that would mean then that God made some good and some bad.

Chrysostom does not take into account that all are guilty, and unworthy of honor, because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. God is not unrighteous then to choose some out of the lot of the unrighteous to be saved, and to leave the rest.

And he says, “And yet not even is it on the potter that the honor and the dishonor of the things made of the lump depends, but upon the use made by those that handle them, so here also it depends on the free choice.”

So after the pot is made, whether a pot is honored or not depends on the free choice of it’s owner. However, it is the perception of man in his unsaved state that he has freewill, and is in control of his own destiny. But as the potter has power to make one vessel to honor, and another to dishonor, so the Lord has chosen us, and so we believe and we are vessels of honor.

And he says, “Because when he says, “it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth,” he does not deprive us of freewill, but shows that all is not one’s own, for that it requires grace from above. For it is binding on us to will, and also to run: but to confide not in our own labors, but in the love of God toward man. And this he has expressed elsewhere. “Yet not I, but the grace which was with me,” referring to 1 Corinthians 15:10.

So he is saying that we are saved by our freewill, and by God’s grace from above.

And he says “Whence then are some vessels of wrath, and some of mercy? Of their own free choice.”

And he says, “Because when he says, “it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth,” he does not deprive us of freewill, but shows that all is not one’s own, for that it requires grace from above.”

And he says, “Do you see that he too does not say that all are to be saved, but that those that are worthy shall? For I regard not the multitude, he means, nor does a race diffused so far distress me, but those only do I save that yield themselves worthy of it.”

To “yield themselves worthy of it”, that is, of salvation, would mean we are worthy of salvation based on our merit. But grace is the unmerited favor of God, and we are saved by grace, through faith, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Chrysostom did not understand that the whole lump of clay of mankind is bad. There are none righteous as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):10** As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

There is none who are worthy. But by God’s grace, we willingly accept Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Savior. It is after we come to Christ, and yield to the Holy Spirit in a progressive sanctification, that our will is set free.

## **Drunkenness**

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY I, page 335-336**

12. When, therefore, we hear men saying such things, we should stop their mouths; for it is not the use of wine, but the want of moderation which produces drunkenness, Drunkenness! that root of all evils. Wine was given to restore the body’s weakness, not to overturn the soul’s strength; to remove the sickness of the flesh, not to destroy the health of the spirit. Do not then, by using the gift of God immoderately, afford a handle to the foolish and the impudent. For what is a more wretched thing than drunkenness! The drunken man is a living corpse. Drunkenness is a demon self-chosen, a disease without excuse, an overthrow that admits of no apology; a common shame to our kind. The drunken man is not only useless in our assemblies; not only in public and private affairs; but the bare sight of him is the most disgusting of all things, his breath being stench. The belchings, and gapings, and speech of the intoxicated, are at once unpleasant and offensive, and are utterly abhorrent to those who see and converse with them; and the crown of these evils is, that this disease makes heaven inaccessible to drunkards, and does not suffer them to win eternal blessedness: for besides the shame attending those who labour under this disease here, a grievous punishment is also awaiting them there! Let us cut off then this evil habit, and let us hear Paul saying, “Use a little wine.” For even this little he permits him on account of his infirmity; so that if infirmity had not troubled him, he would not have forced his disciple to allow himself even a small quantity, since it is fitting that we should always mete out even the needful meat and drink, which are given us, by occasions and necessities; and by no means go beyond our need, nor do anything unmeaningly and to no purpose.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “12. When, therefore, we hear men saying such things, we should stop their mouths; for it is not the use of wine, but the want of moderation which produces drunkenness, Drunkenness! that root of all evils. Wine was given to restore the body’s weakness, not to overturn the soul’s strength; to remove the sickness of the flesh, not to destroy the health of the spirit. Do not then, by using the gift of God immoderately, afford a handle to the foolish and the impudent. For what is a more wretched thing than drunkenness! The drunken man is a living corpse. Drunkenness is a demon self-chosen, a disease without excuse, an overthrow that admits of no apology; a common shame to our kind. The drunken man is not only useless in our assemblies; not only in public and private affairs; but the bare sight of him is the most disgusting of all things, his breath being stench. The belchings, and gapings, and speech of the intoxicated, are at once unpleasant and offensive, and are utterly abhorrent to those who see and converse with them; and the crown of these evils is, that this disease makes heaven inaccessible to drunkards, and does not suffer them to win eternal blessedness: for besides the shame attending those who labour under this disease here, a grievous punishment is also awaiting them there!”

Drunkenness is a work of the flesh, as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):**19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

What Paul is saying here is that they who do such things will not be present in the kingdom of God, because those who inherit the kingdom of God will be in a glorified state. This is what Paul is explaining in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):**47 The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

And in **Romans 8 (KJV):**30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

This will happen at the resurrection. Now there is no mortal sin, or sin whereby we lose our salvation. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the unpardonable sin, but this is only committed by those who attribute the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan, and die without repentance and being born again. We will discuss his thinking more in the chapter, **Losing Salvation.**

He continues, “Let us cut off then this evil habit, and let us hear Paul saying, “Use a little wine.”

He refers to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):23** Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

He continues, “For even this little he permits him on account of his infirmity; so that if infirmity had not troubled him, he would not have forced his disciple to allow himself even a small quantity, since it is fitting that we should always mete out even the needful meat and drink, which are given us, by occasions and necessities; and by no means go beyond our need, nor do anything unmeaningly and to no purpose.”

But we read in **Psalms 104 (KJV):15** And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.

Paul is not saying not to partake of alcoholic beverages, but to use moderation in all, as he exhorts in **Philippians 4 (KJV):5** Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

## Commentary Summary

Concerning **Drunkenness**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY I, page 335-336**, he says, “The belchings, and gapings, and speech of the intoxicated, are at once unpleasant and offensive, and are utterly abhorrent to those who see and converse with them; and the crown of these evils is, that this disease makes heaven inaccessible to drunkards, and does not suffer them to win eternal blessedness: for besides the shame attending those who labour under this disease here, a grievous punishment is also awaiting them there!”

But drunkenness is a work of the flesh, as we read in Galatians 5:19. What Paul is saying here is that they who do such things will not be present in the kingdom of God, because those who inherit the kingdom of God will be in a glorified state. He is not saying that the sin of drunkenness is not covered by the blood of Jesus.

## Slander

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY III, page 335-336**

*On the departure of Flavian, (Schaff Note: This Flavianus was one of those who maintained the true faith against the Arians, but allowed himself to be ordained Bishop of Antioch as successor to Meletius, who was placed there by the Arians, but afterwards became orthodox. Paulinus had been consecrated Bishop for the orthodox by Lucifer, and should have had full possession of the see at the death of Meletius, to whom many of the orthodox had adhered. Hence Flavianus was not acknowledged by the Roman and Alexandrian patriarchs till after the death of Paulinus, and of another who succeeded him, and the elevation of his friend St. John Chrysostom to the see of Constantinople. Socr. iii. 6, v. 9, 15. St. Chrysostom may allude to these circumstances in Rom. iii. 11; Hom. VII. Tr.) Bishop of Antioch, who was gone on an embassy to the Emperor Theodosius, on behalf of the city. Of the dignity of the Priesthood.*



*What is true fasting. Slander worse than devouring the human body. And finally of those who had been put to death on account of the sedition; and against those who complained that many innocent persons were apprehended.*

16. Let us flee then, beloved, let us flee slander! knowing that it is the very gulph of Satan, and the place where he lurks with his snares. For in order that we may be careless of our own state, and may thus render our account heavier, the devil leads us into this custom. But more than this it is not only a very serious matter, that we shall hereafter have to give account of what we have spoken, but that we shall make our own offences the heavier by these means; depriving ourselves of all excuse. For he who scans with bitterness the conduct of others, can never obtain pardon for the sins committed by himself. For God will determine the sentence, not only from the nature of our transgressions, but from the judgment which thou hast passed upon others. Therefore He gave the admonition, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” (Matthew 7:1) For the sin, of whatever kind, will not there appear any more such as it was when committed, but will receive a great and unpardonable addition from the judgment passed by thee upon thy fellow servants. For as he who is humane, and merciful, and forgiving, cuts away the greater mass of his sins, so he who is bitter, and cruel, and implacable, greatly increases the magnitude of his own offences. Let us then expel from our mouth all slander, knowing that if we do not abstain from it, though we might feed upon ashes, this austerity would avail us nothing. “For not that which entereth into, but that which cometh out of the mouth defileth the man.” (Matthew 15:17-18) If any one were to stir up a cesspool, when you were passing, say, would you not reproach and rate the man who did it? This then also do with respect to the slanderer. For the stirred cesspool does not so grossly offend the sense of those who smell that ill savour, as the stirring up other men’s sins, and the exposure of an impure life, offends and disturbs the soul of those who hear of it. Therefore let us abstain from evil speaking, from foul language, from blasphemy; and let us not speak ill of our neighbour, nor of God!

17. For many of our evil speakers have run into such madness, as to lift up their own tongue from their fellow servants against their Master. But how great an evil this is, you may learn from the affairs in which we are now involved. A man is insulted, and, lo! we are all fearing and trembling, both those who were guilty of the insult, and those who are conscious of nothing of the kind! But God is insulted every day! Why do I say every day?—every hour rather, by the rich, by the poor, by those who are at ease, by the afflicted, by those who calumniate, and those who are calumniated, and yet no one ever hears a word of this! Therefore He has permitted our fellow servant (**Schaff Note:** The Emperor) to be insulted, in order that from the danger which has happened through this insult, thou mayest learn the benignity of the Lord! And notwithstanding that this is our first and only offence, we do not on that account expect to gain an excuse, or pardon. But we provoke God every day, and we show no signs of returning to Him, and yet He endures it with all longsuffering! Seest thou then how great the benignity of the Lord is? Yet, in this present outrage, those who had done amiss were taken and thrust into prison, and paid the penalty; nevertheless we are still in fear, for he who has been insulted has not as yet heard (**Schaff Note:** The two capitals of Antioch and Constantinople were separated by the distance of 800 miles. See Gibbon, c. 27) what has taken place, nor pronounced sentence, and we are all trembling. But God every day hears of the insults offered Him, and no one heeds it, although God is thus merciful and loving toward man. With Him it

suffices only to acknowledge the sin, and so to cancel the accusation. But with man it is altogether the reverse. When those who have sinned confess, then they are punished the more; which indeed has happened in the present instance. And some have perished by the sword, some by fire; some given to wild beasts, and not men only, but children. And neither this immaturity of age, nor the tumult of the people, nor the circumstance that they were infuriated by demons when they perpetrated these deeds; (**Schaff Note:** He clearly means the same persons. See Soz. vii. 23. This might be pleaded as an excuse where demoniacal possession was a commonly acknowledged fact.) nor that the exaction was thought to be intolerable; (**Schaff Note:** He probably refers to a tax which had been imposed on the citizens to defray the expenses of celebrating the 10th year of Theodosius, whose treasury was exhausted by the late war with the Goths. (Sozomen and Theodoret mistake the date. See Pref. Ed.) See Gibbon, c. 27) nor poverty, nor having offended in company with all; nor promising that they would never hereafter dare to repeat such deeds; nor anything else, could at all rescue them; but they were led away to the pit, (**Schaff Note:** ὁ βεραθρον. Xen. Hell. i. 7, 21, seems to imply that criminals at Athens were first put to death, and then thrown into the Barathrum. But they were sometimes thrown in alive, to be killed by the fall. The places so called may have differed both in nature and in use.) without reprieve; armed soldiers conducting and guarding them on either side, lest any one should carry off the criminals; whilst mothers also followed afar off, seeing their children beheaded, but not daring to bewail their calamity; for terror conquered grief, and fear overcame nature! And just as when men beholding from the land those who are shipwrecked, are deeply distressed, but are not able to approach and to rescue the drowning, so too here, the mothers restrained through fear of the soldiers, as it were by so many waves, not only dared not go near to their children, and rescue them from condemnation, but were afraid even to shed tears?

18. Assuredly ye gather from thence the mercy of God, how unspeakable, how boundless, how transcending all description! Here indeed the person who has been insulted is of the same nature; and only once in all his lifetime has experienced this; and then it was not done to his face; nor while he was present to see or hear it; and nevertheless, none of those who perpetrated these deeds obtained pardon. But with regard to God nothing of the kind can be said; for the interval between man and God, is so great, as no language can at all express; and throughout every day He is insulted, although present, and seeing and hearing it: and yet He sends not forth the lightning, nor commands the sea to overflow the land, and submerge all men; nor does He bid the earth to cleave asunder and swallow up all the contumelious; but He forbears, and suffers long, and still offers to pardon those who have insulted Him, if they only repent and promise to do these things no more! Truly now is the season to proclaim, “Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can show forth all His praise?” (Psalm 106:2) How many men have not only cast down, but also trodden under foot the images of God! For when thou throttlest a debtor, when thou strippest him, when thou draggest him away, thou tramplest under foot God’s image. Hear for a certainty Paul saying, that “a man ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God.” 1 Corinthians 11:7) And again, hear God Himself saying, “Let us make man in Our Image, after Our likeness.” (Genesis 1:26) But if thou sayest that man is not of the same substance as God,—what matters that? For neither was the brazen statue of the same substance as the Emperor; yet nevertheless, they who defied it paid the penalty. Thus also with regard to mankind, if men are not of the same substance as God, (as

indeed they are not), still they have been called His image; and it were fitting they should receive honour on account of the appellation. But thou for the sake of a little gold dost trample them under foot, dost throttle them, and drag them away; and hast not to this day in any wise paid the penalty!

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “16. Let us flee then, beloved, let us flee slander! knowing that it is the very gulph of Satan, and the place where he lurks with his snares. For in order that we may be careless of our own state, and may thus render our account heavier, the devil leads us into this custom. But more than this it is not only a very serious matter, that we shall hereafter have to give account of what we have spoken, but that we shall make our own offences the heavier by these means; depriving ourselves of all excuse. For he who scans with bitterness the conduct of others, can never obtain pardon for the sins committed by himself. For God will determine the sentence, not only from the nature of our transgressions, but from the judgment which thou hast passed upon others. Therefore He gave the admonition, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” (Matthew 7:1)”

He refers to **Matthew 7 (KJV):1** Judge not, that ye be not judged.

He continues, “For the sin, of whatever kind, will not there appear any more such as it was when committed, but will receive a great and unpardonable addition from the judgment passed by thee upon thy fellow servants. For as he who is humane, and merciful, and forgiving, cuts away the greater mass of his sins, so he who is bitter, and cruel, and implacable, greatly increases the magnitude of his own offences. Let us then expel from our mouth all slander, knowing that if we do not abstain from it, though we might feed upon ashes, this austerity would avail us nothing. “For not that which entereth into, but that which cometh out of the mouth defileth the man.” (Matthew 15:17-18)”

He refers to **Matthew 15 (KJV):17** Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? 18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

He continues, “If any one were to stir up a cesspool, when you were passing, say, would you not reproach and rate the man who did it? This then also do with respect to the slanderer. For the stirred cesspool does not so grossly offend the sense of those who smell that ill savour, as the stirring up other men’s sins, and the exposure of an impure life, offends and disturbs the soul of those who hear of it. Therefore let us abstain from evil speaking, from foul language, from blasphemy; and let us not speak ill of our neighbour, nor of God!”

And so James encourages in **James 3 (KJV):10** Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

And as Peter encourages in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):1** Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

And as Paul encourages in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):29** Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

Chrysostom continues, “17. For many of our evil speakers have run into such madness, as to lift up their own tongue from their fellow servants against their Master. But how great an evil this is, you may learn from the affairs in which we are now involved. A man is insulted, and, lo!

we are all fearing and trembling, both those who were guilty of the insult, and those who are conscious of nothing of the kind! But God is insulted every day! Why do I say every day?—every hour rather, by the rich, by the poor, by those who are at ease, by the afflicted, by those who calumniate, and those who are calumniated, and yet no one ever hears a word of this! Therefore He has permitted our fellow servant (**Schaff Note:** The Emperor) to be insulted, in order that from the danger which has happened through this insult, thou mayest learn the benignity of the Lord!”

The Emperor Theodosius, and his wife Flacilla, had been insulted because the people in Antioch had thrown down the statues of him and his wife in this city because of the continual increase in taxes he had imposed.

Chrysostom continues, “And notwithstanding that this is our first and only offence, we do not on that account expect to gain an excuse, or pardon. But we provoke God every day, and we show no signs of returning to Him, and yet He endures it with all longsuffering! Seest thou then how great the benignity of the Lord is? Yet, in this present outrage, those who had done amiss were taken and thrust into prison, and paid the penalty; nevertheless we are still in fear, for he who has been insulted has not as yet heard (**Schaff Note:** The two capitals of Antioch and Constantinople were separated by the distance of 800 miles. See Gibbon, c. 27) what has taken place, nor pronounced sentence, and we are all trembling. But God every day hears of the insults offered Him, and no one heeds it, although God is thus merciful and loving toward man. With Him it suffices only to acknowledge the sin, and so to cancel the accusation. But with man it is altogether the reverse. When those who have sinned confess, then they are punished the more; which indeed has happened in the present instance. And some have perished by the sword, some by fire; some given to wild beasts, and not men only, but children. And neither this immaturity of age, nor the tumult of the people, nor the circumstance that they were infuriated by demons when they perpetrated these deeds; (**Schaff Note:** He clearly means the same persons. See Soz. vii. 23. This might be pleaded as an excuse where demoniacal possession was a commonly acknowledged fact.) nor that the exaction was thought to be intolerable; (**Schaff Note:** He probably refers to a tax which had been imposed on the citizens to defray the expenses of celebrating the 10th year of Theodosius, whose treasury was exhausted by the late war with the Goths. (Sozomen and Theodoret mistake the date. See Pref. Ed.) See Gibbon, c. 27) nor poverty, nor having offended in company with all; nor promising that they would never hereafter dare to repeat such deeds; nor anything else, could at all rescue them; but they were led away to the pit, (**Schaff Note:** ὁ βεραθρον. Xen. Hell. i. 7, 21, seems to imply that criminals at Athens were first put to death, and then thrown into the Barathrum. But they were sometimes thrown in alive, to be killed by the fall. The places so called may have differed both in nature and in use.) without reprieve; armed soldiers conducting and guarding them on either side, lest any one should carry off the criminals; whilst mothers also followed afar off, seeing their children beheaded, but not daring to bewail their calamity; for terror conquered grief, and fear overcame nature! And just as when men beholding from the land those who are shipwrecked, are deeply distressed, but are not able to approach and to rescue the drowning, so too here, the mothers restrained through fear of the soldiers, as it were by so many waves, not only dared not go near to their children, and rescue them from condemnation, but were afraid even to shed tears?

18. Assuredly ye gather from thence the mercy of God, how unspeakable, how boundless,

how transcending all description! Here indeed the person who has been insulted is of the same nature; and only once in all his lifetime has experienced this; and then it was not done to his face; nor while he was present to see or hear it; and nevertheless, none of those who perpetrated these deeds obtained pardon. But with regard to God nothing of the kind can be said; for the interval between man and God, is so great, as no language can at all express; and throughout every day He is insulted, although present, and seeing and hearing it: and yet He sends not forth the lightning, nor commands the sea to overflow the land, and submerge all men; nor does He bid the earth to cleave asunder and swallow up all the contumelious; but He forbears, and suffers long, and still offers to pardon those who have insulted Him, if they only repent and promise to do these things no more! Truly now is the season to proclaim, “Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can show forth all His praise?” (Psalm 106:2)”

He refers to **Psalm 106 (KJV):2** Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can shew forth all his praise?

He continues, “How many men have not only cast down, but also trodden under foot the images of God! For when thou throttlest a debtor, when thou strippest him, when thou draggest him away, thou tramplest under foot God’s image. Hear for a certainty Paul saying, that “a man ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God.” 1 Corinthians 11:7)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):7** For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

He continues, “And again, hear God Himself saying, “Let us make man in Our Image, after Our likeness.” (Genesis 1:26)”

He refers to **Genesis 1 (KJV):26** And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

He continues, “But if thou sayest that man is not of the same substance as God,—what matters that? For neither was the brazen statue of the same substance as the Emperor; yet nevertheless, they who defied it paid the penalty. Thus also with regard to mankind, if men are not of the same substance as God, (as indeed they are not), still they have been called His image; and it were fitting they should receive honour on account of the appellation. But thou for the sake of a little gold dost trample them under foot, dost throttle them, and drag them away; and hast not to this day in any wise paid the penalty!”

Chrysostom was very much against slandering our fellow man.

## Commentary Summary

Concerning **Slander**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY III, page 335-336**, he says, “Let us flee then, beloved, let us flee slander! knowing that it is the very gulph of Satan, and the place where he lurks with his snares.”

The definition of slander is “the utterance of false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another's reputation”.

## (Merriam Webster)

He says that “the devil leads us into this custom”. And he says, “For God will determine the sentence, not only from the nature of our transgressions, but from the judgment which thou hast passed upon others. Therefore He gave the admonition, “Judge not, that ye be not judged,” referring to Matthew 7:1.

And we read in **James 4 (KJV):**11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. 12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

## Giving to the Poor

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XXI, page 504-506

Ver. 13. “Sharing with the necessity (χρείαις, al. μνείαις, memories) of the saints.”

He does not say, Bestow upon, but “share with the necessity of the saints,” to show that they receive more than they give, that it is a matter of merchandise, because it is a community. Do you bring in money? They bring you in boldness toward God. “Given to (Gr. pursuing) hospitality.” He does not say doing it, but “given” to it, so to instruct us not to wait for those that shall ask it, and see when they will come to us, but to run to them, and be given to finding them.

Thus did Lot, thus Abraham. For he spent the whole day upon it, waiting for this goodly prey, and when he saw it, leaped upon it, and ran to meet them, and worshipped upon the ground, and said, “My Lord, if now I have found favor in Thy sight, pass not away from Thy servant.” (Gen. xviii. 3) Not as we do, if we happen to see a stranger or a poor man, knitting our brows, and not deigning even to speak to them. And if after thousands of entreaties we are softened, and bid the servant give them a trifle, we think we have quite done our duty. But he did not so, but assumed the fashion of a suppliant and a servant, though he did not know who he was going to take under his roof. But we, who have clear information that it is Christ Whom we take in, do not grow gentle even for this. But he both beseeches, and entreats, and falls on his knees to them, yet we insult those that come to us. And he indeed did all by himself and his wife, whereas we do it not even by our attendants. But if you have a mind to see the table that he set before them, there too you will see great bounteousness, but the bounteousness came not from excess of wealth, but of the riches of a ready will. Yet how many rich persons were there not then? Still none did anything of the kind. How many widows were there in Israel? Yet none showed hospitality to Elijah. How many wealthy persons again were there not in Elisha’s day? But the Shunamite alone gathered in the fruits of hospitality; as did Abraham also, whom beside his largeness and ready mind it is just especially to admire, on this ground, that when he had no knowledge who they were that had come, yet he so acted. Do not thou then be curious either: since for Christ thou dost receive him. And if thou art always so scrupulous, many a time wilt thou pass by a man of esteem, and lose thy reward from him. And yet he that receiveth one that is not of esteem, hath no fault found with him, but is even rewarded. For “he that receiveth a

prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward." (Matt. x. 41) But he who out of this ill timed scrupulousness passeth one that should be admired, shall even suffer punishment. Do not then busy thyself with men's lives and doings. For this is the very extreme of niggardliness, for one loaf to be exact about a man's entire life. For if this person be a murderer, if a robber, or what not, does he therefore seem to thee not to deserve a loaf and a few pence? And yet thy Master causeth even the sun to rise upon him! And dost thou judge him unworthy of food even for a day? I will put another case to you besides. Now even if you were positively certain that he were laden with countless iniquities, not even then wouldest thou have an excuse for depriving him of this day's sustenance. For thou art the servant of Him Who said, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of." (Luke ix. 55) Thou art servant to Him Who healed those that stoned Him, or rather Who was crucified for them. And do not tell me that he killed another, for even if he were going to kill thee thyself, even then thou shouldest not neglect him when starving. For thou art a disciple of Him Who desired the salvation even of them that crucified Him Who said upon the Cross itself, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke xxiii. 34) Thou art the servant of Him Who healed him that smote Him, Who upon the Cross itself crowned the man who had scorned Him. And what can equal this? For both the robbers at first scorned Him. Still to one of these He opened Paradise. And He bewails those who were upon the point of killing Him, and is troubled and confounded at seeing the traitor, not because He was going to be crucified, but because he was lost. He was troubled then as having foreknowledge of the hanging, and the punishment after the hanging. And though He knelt his wickedness, He bore with him to the last hour, and thrust not away the traitor, but even kissed him. Thy Master kisseth, and with His lips receiveth him who was on the very point of shedding His precious Blood. And dost thou count the poor not worthy even of a loaf, and reverencest not the Law which Christ laid down? Now by this He shows that we ought not to turn aside, not only from the poor, but not even from those that would lead us away to death. Do not tell me then, that so and so hath done me grievous mischief, but just consider what Christ did near the Cross itself, wishing to amend by His kiss the traitor by whom He was on the point of being betrayed. And see with how much power to shame him. For He says, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" (ib. 48) Who is there He would not have softened? who is there that this address would not have made yielding? What beast? what adamant? yet not that wretched man. Do not then say, that such an one murdered such an one, and that is why I turn aside from him. For even if he were upon the point of thrusting a sword down into thee, and to plunge his hand into thy neck itself, kiss this very right hand! since even Christ kissed that mouth which wrought His death! And therefore do not thou either hate, but bewail and pity him that plotteth against thee. For such an one deserveth pity at our hands, and tears. For we are the servants of Him Who kissed even the traitor (I will not leave off dwelling over that continually), and spoke words unto him more gentle than the kiss. For He did not even say, O thou foul and villanous traitor, is this the sort of recompense thou returnest us for so great a benefit? But in what words? "Judas;" using his own name, which is more like a person bemoaning, and recalling him, than one wroth at him. And he does not say, thy Teacher, thy Master, and Benefactor, but, "the Son of Man." For though He were neither Teacher nor Master, yet is it with One Who is so gently, so unfeignedly affected towards thee, as even to kiss thee at the time of betrayal, and that when a kiss too was the signal for the betrayal; is it with Him that thou playest the traitor's part? Blessed art Thou, O Lord! What lowliness of mind, what



forbearance hast Thou given us ensamples of! And to him He so behaved. But to those who came with staves and swords to Him, was it not so too? What can be more gentle than the words spoken to them? For when He had power to demolish them all in an instant, He did nothing of the kind, but as expostulating (ἐντρεπτικῶς), addressed them in the words, “Why, are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves?” (Matt. xxvi. 55) And having cast them down backwards (John xviii. 6), as they continued insensible, He of His own accord gave Himself up next, and forbore while He saw them putting manacles upon His holy hands, while He had the power at once to confound all things, and overthrow them. But dost thou even after this deal fiercely with the poor? And even were he guilty of ten thousand sins, want and famine were enough to soften down a soul ever so blunted. But thou standest brutalized, and imitating the rage of lions. Yet they never taste of dead bodies. But thou, while thou seest him a very corpse (τεταριχευμένον lit. salter, or, a mummy) for distresses, yet leapest upon him now that he is down, and tearest his body by thine insults, and gatherest storm after storm, and makest him as he is fleeing to the haven for refuge to split upon a rock, and bringest a shipwreck about more distressing than those in the sea. And how wilt thou say to God, Have mercy upon me, and ask of Him remission of sins, when thou art insolent to one who hath done no sin, and callest him to account for this hunger and great necessity, and throwest all the brute beasts into the shade by thy cruelty. For they indeed by the compulsion of their belly lay hold of the food needful for them. But thou, when nothing either thrusts thee on or compels thee, devourest thy brother, bitest, and tearest him, if not with thy teeth, yet with words that bite more cuttingly. How then wilt thou receive the sacred Host (προσφορὰν), when thou hast empurpled thy tongue in human gore? how give the kiss of peace, with mouth gorged with war? Nay, how enjoy every common nourishment, when thou art gathering so much venom? Thou dost not relieve the poverty, why make it even more grinding? thou dost not lift up him that is fallen, why throw him down also? thou dost not remove despondency, why even increase it? thou givest no money, why use insulting words besides? Hast thou not heard what punishment they suffer that feed not the poor? to what vengeance they are condemned? For He says, “Depart to the fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matt. xxv. 41) If then they that feed not are so condemned, what punishment are they to suffer, who besides not feeding, even insult? What punishment shall they undergo? what hell? That we kindle not so great evils against ourselves, whiles we have it in our power, let us correct this evil complaint also, and put a bridle on the tongue. And let us be so far from insulting, as even to invite them, both by words and actions, that by laying up much mercy for ourselves, we may obtain the blessings promised us. Which God grant that we may all attain unto by the grace and love towards man, etc.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “Ver. 13. “Sharing with the necessity (χρείαις, al. μνείαις, memories) of the saints.”

He refers in context to **Romans 12 (KJV):**10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; 11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; 12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; 13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. 14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

He continues, “He does not say, Bestow upon, but “share with the necessity of the saints,” to show that they receive more than they give, that it is a matter of merchandise,



because it is a community. Do you bring in money? They bring you in boldness toward God. “Given to (Gr. pursuing) hospitality.” He does not say doing it, but “given” to it, so to instruct us not to wait for those that shall ask it, and see when they will come to us, but to run to them, and be given to finding them.

Thus did Lot, thus Abraham. For he spent the whole day upon it, waiting for this goodly prey, and when he saw it, leaped upon it, and ran to meet them, and worshipped upon the ground, and said, “My Lord, if now I have found favor in Thy sight, pass not away from Thy servant.” (Gen. xviii. 3)”

He refers in context to **Genesis 18 (KJV)**: 1 And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; 2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, 3 And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: 4 Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: 5 And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said. 6 And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. 7 And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. 8 And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

He continues, “Not as we do, if we happen to see a stranger or a poor man, knitting our brows, and not deigning even to speak to them. And if after thousands of entreaties we are softened, and bid the servant give them a trifle, we think we have quite done our duty. But he did not so, but assumed the fashion of a suppliant and a servant, though he did not know who he was going to take under his roof. But we, who have clear information that it is Christ Whom we take in, do not grow gentle even for this.”

It is quite clear that Abraham knew who he was setting a meal for, as we read above. Chrysostom continues, “But he both beseeches, and entreats, and falls on his knees to them, yet we insult those that come to us. And he indeed did all by himself and his wife, whereas we do it not even by our attendants. But if you have a mind to see the table that he set before them, there too you will see great bounteousness, but the bounteousness came not from excess of wealth, but of the riches of a ready will. Yet how many rich persons were there not then? Still none did anything of the kind. How many widows were there in Israel? Yet none showed hospitality to Elijah. How many wealthy persons again were there not in Elisha’s day? But the Shunamite alone gathered in the fruits of hospitality; as did Abraham also, whom beside his largeness and ready mind it is just especially to admire, on this ground, that when he had no knowledge who they were that had come, yet he so acted.”

It is quite clear that Abraham knew who his guest was, for he called him “My Lord” in Genesis 18:3 above. Chrysostom continues, “Do not thou then be curious either: since for Christ thou dost receive him. And if thou art always so scrupulous, many a time wilt thou pass by a man of esteem, and lose thy reward from him. And yet he that receiveth one that is not of esteem, hath no fault found with him, but is even rewarded. For “he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet’s reward.” (Matt. x. 41)”

He refers to **Matthew 10 (KJV):41** He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

He continues, "But he who out of this ill timed scrupulousness passeth one that should be admired, shall even suffer punishment. Do not then busy thyself with men's lives and doings. For this is the very extreme of niggardliness, for one loaf to be exact about a man's entire life. For if this person be a murderer, if a robber, or what not, does he therefore seem to thee not to deserve a loaf and a few pence? And yet thy Master causeth even the sun to rise upon him! And dost thou judge him unworthy of food even for a day? I will put another case to you besides. Now even if you were positively certain that he were laden with countless iniquities, not even then wouldest thou have an excuse for depriving him of this day's sustenance. For thou art the servant of Him Who said, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of." (Luke ix. 55)"

He refers in context to **Luke 9 (KJV):52** And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. 53 And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. 54 And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? 55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. 56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

He continues, "Thou art servant to Him Who healed those that stoned Him, or rather Who was crucified for them. And do not tell me that he killed another, for even if he were going to kill thee thyself, even then thou shouldest not neglect him when starving. For thou art a disciple of Him Who desired the salvation even of them that crucified Him Who said upon the Cross itself, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke xxiii. 34)"

He refers to **Luke 23 (KJV):34** Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

He continues, "Thou art the servant of Him Who healed him that smote Him, Who upon the Cross itself crowned the man who had scorned Him. And what can equal this? For both the robbers at first scorned Him. Still to one of these He opened Paradise."

He refers to **Matthew 27 (KJV):41** Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, 42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. 43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. 44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

And to **Luke 23 (KJV):39** And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Chrysostom continues, "And He bewails those who were upon the point of killing Him, and is troubled and confounded at seeing the traitor, not because He was going to be crucified, but because he was lost. He was troubled then as having foreknowledge of the hanging, and the punishment after the hanging. And though He knelt his wickedness, He bore with him to the last

hour, and thrust not away the traitor, but even kissed him. Thy Master kisseth, and with His lips receiveth him who was on the very point of shedding His precious Blood.”

But it was Judas who kissed Jesus, yet Jesus still called him friend, as we read in **Matthew 26 (KJV):**47 And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. 48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. 49 And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him. 50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus and took him.

And in **Luke 22 (KJV):**47 And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. 48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

Chrysostom continues, “And dost thou count the poor not worthy even of a loaf, and reverencest not the Law which Christ laid down? Now by this He shows that we ought not to turn aside, not only from the poor, but not even from those that would lead us away to death. Do not tell me then, that so and so hath done me grievous mischief, but just consider what Christ did near the Cross itself, wishing to amend by His kiss the traitor by whom He was on the point of being betrayed. And see with how much power to shame him. For He says, “Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?” (ib. 48.) Who is there He would not have softened? who is there that this address would not have made yielding? What beast? what adamant? yet not that wretched man. Do not then say, that such an one murdered such an one, and that is why I turn aside from him. For even if he were upon the point of thrusting a sword down into thee, and to plunge his hand into thy neck itself, kiss this very right hand! since even Christ kissed that mouth which wrought His death! And therefore do not thou either hate, but bewail and pity him that plotteth against thee. For such an one deserveth pity at our hands, and tears. For we are the servants of Him Who kissed even the traitor (I will not leave off dwelling over that continually), and spoke words unto him more gentle than the kiss. For He did not even say, O thou foul and villanous traitor, is this the sort of recompense thou returnest us for so great a benefit? But in what words? “Judas;” using his own name, which is more like a person bemoaning, and recalling him, than one wroth at him. And he does not say, thy Teacher, thy Master, and Benefactor, but, “the Son of Man.” For though He were neither Teacher nor Master, yet is it with One Who is so gently, so unfeignedly affected towards thee, as even to kiss thee at the time of betrayal, and that when a kiss too was the signal for the betrayal; is it with Him that thou playest the traitor’s part? Blessed art Thou, O Lord! What lowliness of mind, what forbearance hast Thou given us ensamples of! And to him He so behaved. But to those who came with staves and swords to Him, was it not so too? What can be more gentle than the words spoken to them? For when He had power to demolish them all in an instant, He did nothing of the kind, but as expostulating (ἐντροπετικῶς), addressed them in the words, “Why, are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves?” (Matt. xxvi. 55)”

He refers to **Matthew 26 (KJV):**55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

He continues, “And having cast them down backwards (John xviii. 6), as they continued insensible, He of His own accord gave Himself up next, and forbore while He saw them putting

manacles upon His holy hands, while He had the power at once to confound all things, and overthrow them.”

He refers in context to **John 18 (KJV):**4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? 5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. 6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. 7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. 8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

He continues, “But dost thou even after this deal fiercely with the poor? And even were he guilty of ten thousand sins, want and famine were enough to soften down a soul ever so blunted. But thou standest brutalized, and imitating the rage of lions. Yet they never taste of dead bodies. But thou, while thou seest him a very corpse (τεταριχενυμένον lit. salter, or, a mummy) for distresses, yet leapest upon him now that he is down, and tearest his body by thine insults, and gatherest storm after storm, and makest him as he is fleeing to the haven for refuge to split upon a rock, and bringest a shipwreck about more distressing than those in the sea. And how wilt thou say to God, Have mercy upon me, and ask of Him remission of sins, when thou art insolent to one who hath done no sin, and callest him to account for this hunger and great necessity, and throwest all the brute beasts into the shade by thy cruelty. For they indeed by the compulsion of their belly lay hold of the food needful for them. But thou, when nothing either thrusts thee on or compels thee, devourest thy brother, bitest, and tearest him, if not with thy teeth, yet with words that bite more cuttingly. How then wilt thou receive the sacred Host (προσφορὰν), when thou hast empurpled thy tongue in human gore? how give the kiss of peace, with mouth gorged with war? Nay, how enjoy every common nourishment, when thou art gathering so much venom? Thou dost not relieve the poverty, why make it even more grinding? thou dost not lift up him that is fallen, why throw him down also? thou dost not remove despondency, why even increase it? thou givest no money, why use insulting words besides? Hast thou not heard what punishment they suffer that feed not the poor? to what vengeance they are condemned? For He says, “Depart to the fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matt. xxv. 41)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 25 (KJV):**41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

He concludes, “If then they that feed not are so condemned, what punishment are they to suffer, who besides not feeding, even insult? What punishment shall they undergo? what hell? That we kindle not so great evils against ourselves, whiles we have it in our power, let us correct this evil complaint also, and put a bridle on the tongue. And let us be so far from insulting, as even to invite them, both by words and actions, that by laying up much mercy for ourselves, we may obtain the blessings promised us. Which God grant that we may all attain

unto by the grace and love towards man, etc.”

But we are not saved, nor do we keep our salvation, by our works as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):**8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

And in **Titus 3 (KJV):**5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Chrysostom, like many in the Church in his time, confused the judgment of the nations in Matthew 25:31-46 with the final judgment in Revelation 20:11-15. The Church in his time thought that there would be one final judgment, and that Matthew 25:31-46, Revelation 20:11-15, and the judgment seat of Christ mentioned in 2 Corinthians 5:10 all referred to the same final judgment. But the judgment in Matthew 25:31-46 takes place on earth when Christ shall come just after the great tribulation, and He shall sit on the throne of His glory as we read in **Matthew 25 (KJV):**31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

The righteous nations shall go into the Kingdom age of one thousand years mentioned in **Revelation 20 (KJV):**1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

The judgment of the righteous at the judgment seat of Christ will occur during the great tribulation, and this judgment is not for salvation but for rewards given to the righteous. This relates to the first resurrection mentioned in Revelation 20:5-6 above. The final judgment mentioned in Revelation 20 is for only the wicked dead, after the thousand year reign of Christ. This is the great white throne judgment when the earth and the heaven are made new, and the wicked dead are judged, as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):**11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea

gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

## Commentary Summary

Concerning **Giving to the Poor**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XXI, page 504-506**, he says, “Hast thou not heard what punishment they suffer that feed not the poor? to what vengeance they are condemned? For He says, “Depart to the fire prepared for the devil and his angels”, referring to Matthew 25:41-46.

But this judgment relates to the judgment of the nations in order to determine which nations will go into the kingdom of one thousand years. The early Church misunderstood the teaching about judgments in the word of God. They thought that there would be one final judgment of the righteous and the unrighteous. And so they thought that Matthew 25:41-46 referred to the final judgment. But the judgment in Matthew 25:41-46 happens after the tribulation of 7 years that was prophesied by Daniel as the seventieth week of seventy for Israel, as we read in **Daniel 9 (KJV):24** Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

The command “to restore and to build Jerusalem” occurred in 445 B.C. in the Fourth Decree of Artaxerxes I (Artaxerxes Longimanus), that is, in Ancient Greek: **μακρόχειρ** (pronounced *Makrókheir*), and in Latin: *Longimanus*.

Artaxerxes I commanded to build Jerusalem, as we read in **Nehemiah 2 (KJV):1** And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. 2 Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, 3 And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? 4 Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. 5 And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I

may build it. 6 And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time. 7 Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; 8 And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

In verse 1, the “month Nisan” on the Hebrew calendar corresponds to March-April on the Gregorian calendar. So in Daniel 9:25, “from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks”, that is, 7 weeks and 62 weeks. In Daniel 9:25, a week stands for 7 years, so  $((7 \times 7) + (62 \times 7)) = 483$  years. A Biblical year is 360 days in the Biblical calendar, or  $(483 \times 360)$ , we get 173,880 days. We then divide  $(173,880 / 365.25)$  to get 476.05 years, which are the actual years of 365.25 days. However, if Jesus died in A.D. 30, we B.C. 445 to A.D. 30 is 475 years.

If we now take into account the exact month of the decree in B.C. 445 which is some time in March, say March 14 as Clarence Larkin counts, and we subtract days in January and February up to March 14 which equal  $(173,880 - (31 + 28 + 14))$ , or  $(173,880 - 73)$ , we get 173,807 days. We can then do the same for the year Jesus died, and since He died on Passover, which would be April 14, we can subtract the rest of the days of the months in A.D. 30, which would be the days in the rest of April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, and December, which would equal  $(173,807 - (16 + 31 + 30 + 31 + 31 + 30 + 31 + 31 + 31))$ , or  $(173,807 - 262)$ , and we get 173,545. Then if we divide 173,545 by the actual days in a year, 365.25, we get 475.14 years which is very close to our mark of 475 years when we take into account the Biblical calendar.

We also have to consider the fact that the secular chronology is possibly not without error as well. Nevertheless, the prophecy in Daniel 9:26 that Messiah would be cut off was fulfilled when Jesus died on the cross. This leaves one more week of the 70 prophesied in Daniel 9:24 to be fulfilled for Israel.

So in Daniel 9:27, this week will be fulfilled when Antichrist will “confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate”. That is, the Antichrist will confirm the covenant with Israel, but in the middle of the week, he will set himself up in the temple and proclaim himself to be God. This is also mentioned in **Matthew 24 (KJV):15** When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

And in **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):3** Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

The faithful remnant in Israel will then be given protection by the Lord for the final  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years, as we read in **Revelation 12 (KJV):14** And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

The final battle of Armageddon will then take place, when the nations shall come against Israel in **Revelation 16 (KJV):**16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

But these nations will be defeated by the Lord Jesus at the second coming, as we read in **Revelation 19 (KJV):**11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

And in **Revelation 19 (KJV):**19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

After this Jesus will sit on the throne of His glory on earth, as we read in **Matthew 25 (KJV):**31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

The nations will be judged on how they treated the Jews, Christ's brethren, during the tribulation. Christ will be King over all the earth during the millennium, and He will rule with a rod of iron, as we read in **Psalms 2 (KJV):**1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, 3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. 4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. 5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. 6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. 7 I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. 8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. 10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. 11 Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.



We continue to read in **Matthew 25 (KJV):**41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

We are not saved, nor do we keep our salvation, by our works. We are saved by faith in Jesus Christ. Our salvation is a surrender to the Lord, and a surrender to what He has done for us which we could not do for ourselves.

## Alms

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY XLVII, page 295**

Wilt thou that in her actual deeds also I show thee her image? Consider, I pray thee, this very evangelist: although we have not his whole life in writing, nevertheless even from a few facts one may see his image shine forth.

First, as to his having been lowly and contrite, hear him, after his gospel, calling himself a publican; for his being also merciful, see him stripping himself of all and following Jesus; and as to his piety, it is evident from his doctrines. And his wisdom again it is easy to see from the gospel which he composed, and his charity (**Schaff Note:** [ἀγαπήν.]) (for he cared for the whole world); and the manifestation of his good works, from the throne on which he is to sit; (Luke 22:30) and his courage too, “by his departing with joy from the presence of the council.” (Acts 5:41)

Let us imitate then this virtue, and most of all his humility and almsgiving, without which one cannot be saved. And this is shown by the five virgins, and together with them by the Pharisee. For without virginity indeed it is possible to see the kingdom, but without almsgiving it cannot be. For this is among the things that are essential, and hold all together. Not unnaturally then have we called it the heart of virtue. But this heart, unless it supply breath to all, is soon extinguished. In the same way then as the fountain also, if it confine its streams to itself, grows putrid; so it is with the rich also, when they keep their possessions to themselves. Wherefore even in our common conversation we say, “great is the consumption (**Schaff Note:** σψι, q.d. “the wear and tear.”) of wealth with such a man;” instead of saying, “great is the abundance, great the treasure.” For in truth there is a consumption, not of the possessors only, but of the riches themselves. Since both garments laid by spoil, and gold is cankered, and corn is eaten up, and the soul too of their owner is more than they all cankered and corrupted by the cares of them.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “Wilt thou that in her actual deeds also I show thee

her image? Consider, I pray thee, this very evangelist: although we have not his whole life in writing, nevertheless even from a few facts one may see his image shine forth.”

He speaks of Matthew.

He continues, “First, as to his having been lowly and contrite, hear him, after his gospel, calling himself a publican; for his being also merciful, see him stripping himself of all and following Jesus; and as to his piety, it is evident from his doctrines. And his wisdom again it is easy to see from the gospel which he composed, and his charity (**Schaff Note:** [ἀγαπῆν.] (for he cared for the whole world); and the manifestation of his good works, from the throne on which he is to sit; (Luke 22:30) and his courage too, “by his departing with joy from the presence of the council.” (Acts 5:41)”

He refers to **Luke 22 (KJV):30** That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

And to **Acts 5 (KJV):41** And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

He continues, “Let us imitate then this virtue, and most of all his humility and almsgiving, without which one cannot be saved.”

Chrysostom based his doctrine of salvation on the judgment of the nations in Matthew 25:31-46. The root meaning of the Greek word translated “alms” in the New Testament is compassion, and showing mercy. At the judgment of the nations, the sheep nations are those who had compassion, or showed mercy to Christ’s brethren during the tribulation period. The goat nations are those who did not have compassion, or show mercy, to Christ’s brethren during the tribulation. But Chrysostom interpreted this reference in Scripture to mean that one could not be saved if they had not had compassion, or shown mercy to anyone.

He then continues, as he adds, “And this is shown by the five virgins, and together with them by the Pharisee. For without virginity indeed it is possible to see the kingdom, but without almsgiving it cannot be. For this is among the things that are essential, and hold all together. Not unnaturally then have we called it the heart of virtue.”

So to Chrysostom, almsgiving is “essential”, that is, to salvation. He refers to the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13, which is about being ready to enter the kingdom. Jesus revealed the way into the Kingdom in **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

And in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

And in reference to the need to imitate his humility, he refers to the Pharisee in **Luke 18 (KJV):9** And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be

merciful to me a sinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

He continues, “But this heart, unless it supply breath to all, is soon extinguished. In the same way then as the fountain also, if it confine its streams to itself, grows putrid; so it is with the rich also, when they keep their possessions to themselves. Wherefore even in our common conversation we say, “great is the consumption (**Schaff Note:** σψι, q.d. “the wear and tear.”) of wealth with such a man;” instead of saying, “great is the abundance, great the treasure.” For in truth there is a consumption, not of the possessors only, but of the riches themselves. Since both garments laid by spoil, and gold is cankered, and corn is eaten up, and the soul too of their owner is more than they all cankered and corrupted by the cares of them.”

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXIV, page 395-396**

Wherefore I entreat you let us use much diligence both to stand in the right faith, and to show forth an excellent life. For unless we add also a life suitable to our faith, we shall suffer the extremest punishment.

And this the blessed Paul showed even from times of old, when he said, that “They did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink:” and added, that they were not saved; “for they were overthrown in the wilderness.” (1 Corinthians 10:3-5) And Christ declared it even in the evangelists, when He brought in some that had cast out devils and prophesied, and are led away to punishment. And all His parables also, as that of the virgins, that of the net, that of the thorns, that of the tree not bringing forth fruit, demand virtue in our works. For concerning doctrines He discourses seldom, for neither doth the subject need labor, but of life often or rather everywhere, for the war about this is continual, wherefore also so is the labor.

And why do I speak of the whole code. For even a part of it overlooked brings upon one great evils; as, for instance, almsgiving overlooked casts into hell them that have come short in it; and yet this is not the whole of virtue, but a part thereof. But nevertheless both the virgins were punished for not having this, and the rich man was for this cause tormented, and they that have not fed the hungry, are for this condemned with the devil. Again, not to revile is a very small part of it, nevertheless this too casts out them that have not attained to it. “For he that saith to his brother, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.” (Matthew 5:22) Again, even continence itself is a part, but nevertheless, without this no one shall see the Lord. For, “Follow peace,” it is said, “and holiness, (**Schaff Note:** ἁγιασμον, comp. 1 Thess. iv. 3. [R.V., “sanctification.”]) without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Hebrews 12:14) And humility too in like manner is a part of virtue; but nevertheless though any one should fulfill other good works, but have not attained to this, he is unclean with God. And this is manifest from the Pharisee, who though abounding with numberless good works, by this lost all.

But I have also something more than these things to say again. I mean, that not only one of them overlooked shuts Heaven against us, but though it be done, yet not in due perfection and abundance, it produces the selfsame effect again. “For except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of

Heaven.” (Matthew 5:20) So that though thou give alms, but not more than they, thou shalt not enter in.

And how much did they bestow in alms? one may ask. For this very thing, I am minded to say now, that they who do not give may be roused to give, and they that give may not pride themselves, but may make increase of their gifts. What then did they give? A tenth of all their possessions, and again another tenth, and after this a third, so that they almost gave away the third part, for three tenths put together make up this. And together with these, first fruits, and first born, and other things besides, as, for instance, the offerings for sins, those for purification, those at feasts, those in the jubilee, (**Schaff Note:** Ἰωβηλα) those by the cancelling of debts, and the dismissals of servants, and the lendings that were clear of usury. But if he who gave the third part of his goods, or rather the half (for those being put together with these are the half), if then he who is giving the half, achieves no great thing, he who doth not bestow so much as the tenth, of what shall he be worthy? With reason He said, “There are few that be saved.”

5. Let us not, then, despise the care of our life. For if one portion of it despised brings so great a destruction, when on every hand we are subject to the sentence of condemnation, how shall we escape the punishment? and what manner of penalty shall we not suffer? and what manner of hope of salvation have we, one may ask, if each of the things we have numbered threatens us with hell? I too say this; nevertheless, if we give heed we may be saved, preparing the medicines of almsgiving, and attending to our wounds.

For oil does not so strengthen a body, as benevolence at once strengthens a soul, and makes it invincible to all and impregnable to the devil. For wheresoever he may seize us, his hold then slips, this oil not suffering his grasp to fix on our back.

With this oil therefore let us anoint ourselves continually. For it is the cause of health, and a supply of light, and a source of cheerfulness. “But such a one,” thou wilt say, “hath talents of gold so many and so many, and gives away nothing.” And what is that to thee? For thus shalt thou appear more worthy of admiration, when in poverty thou art more munificent than he. It was on this ground Paul marvelled at the Macedonians, not because they gave, but because even though they were in poverty they gave. (2 Corinthians 8:1-3)

Look not then at these, but at the common Teacher of all, who “had not where to lay His head.” (Matthew 8:20) And why, you say, doth not this and that person do so? Do not judge another, but deliver thyself from the charge against thee. Since the punishment is greater when thou at the same time blamest others, and thyself doest not, when judging other men, thou art again thyself also subject to the same judgment. For if even them who do right He permits not to judge others, much more will He not permit offenders. Let us not therefore judge others, neither let us look to others who are taking their ease, but unto Jesus, and from thence let us draw our examples.

Why! have I been thy benefactor? Why! did I redeem thee, that thou lookest to me? It is another who hath bestowed these things on thee. Why dost thou let go thy Master, and look unto thy fellow-servant? Heardest thou not Him saying, “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart?” (Matthew 11:29) And again, “He that would be first amongst you, let him be servant of all:” and again, “Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” (Matthew 20:27-28) And after these things again, lest taking offense at them who are remiss amongst thy fellow-servants, thou continue in contemptuousness; to draw thee off from that, He saith, “I have made myself an example to you, that as I have done, ye should do also.” (John

13:15) But hast thou no teacher of virtue amongst those persons that are with thee, neither such a one as to lead thee on to these things? More abundant then will be the praise, the commendation greater, when not even being supplied with teachers thou hast become one to be marvelled at.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “Wherefore I entreat you let us use much diligence both to stand in the right faith, and to show forth an excellent life. For unless we add also a life suitable to our faith, we shall suffer the extremest punishment.

And this the blessed Paul showed even from times of old, when he said, that “They did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink.” and added, that they were not saved; “for they were overthrown in the wilderness.” (1 Corinthians 10:3-5)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):3** And did all eat the same spiritual meat; **4** And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. **5** But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

He continues, “And Christ declared it even in the evangelists, when He brought in some that had cast out devils and prophesied, and are led away to punishment. And all His parables also, as that of the virgins, that of the net, that of the thorns, that of the tree not bringing forth fruit, demand virtue in our works. For concerning doctrines He discourses seldom, for neither doth the subject need labor, but of life often or rather everywhere, for the war about this is continual, wherefore also so is the labor.

And why do I speak of the whole code.”

By “code” his is speaking of the “entire code of laws” of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

He continues, “For even a part of it overlooked brings upon one great evils; as, for instance, almsgiving overlooked casts into hell them that have come short in it; and yet this is not the whole of virtue, but a part thereof.”

He continues, “But nevertheless both the virgins were punished for not having this, and the rich man was for this cause tormented, and they that have not fed the hungry, are for this condemned with the devil.”

He speaks of the parable of the virgins in Matthew 25:1-13. To Chrysostom, doing alms was like having oil in your lamp. And he speaks of the rich man in Luke 16:19-31. Lazarus was a beggar who desired “to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table”. The rich man went to hell, but Lazarus went to Abraham’s bosom. “They that have not fed the hungry” refers to the judgment of the nations in Matthew 25:31-46. But this judgment is of the nations, and how they treated Christ’s brethren during the tribulation period.

He continues, “Again, not to revile is a very small part of it, nevertheless this too casts out them that have not attained to it. “For he that saith to his brother, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.” (Matthew 5:22)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):22** But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

He continues, “Again, even continence itself is a part, but nevertheless, without this no one shall see the Lord. For, “Follow peace,” it is said, “and holiness, (**Schaff Note:** ἁγιασμῶν, comp. 1 Thess. iv. 3. [R.V., “sanctification.”]) without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Hebrews 12:14)”

He refers to **Hebrews 12 (KJV):14** Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

Chrysostom did not understand the standing of the believer. Once we have believed in Jesus Christ, and have been born again, God justifies us and puts His righteousness down to our account. He also sanctifies us, or sets us apart as His own. And so we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

And in **1 Corinthians 1 (NASB):30** But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, “Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

The word “sanctification” in the Greek is ἁγιασμός (pronounced hä-ge-äs-mo's), from G37; properly, purification, i.e. (the state) purity; concretely (by Hebraism) a purifier:—holiness, sanctification. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G38**

Jesus is holiness to us. In our standing before God, we are righteous. In our state, we are being progressively sanctified. We will not achieve perfection in this life. But when we see Him, we will be like Him, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

He continues, “And humility too in like manner is a part of virtue; but nevertheless though any one should fulfill other good works, but have not attained to this, he is unclean with God. And this is manifest from the Pharisee, who though abounding with numberless good works, by this lost all.

He refers to **Luke 18 (KJV):9** And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

But the Pharisee trusted in himself that he was righteous. He did not understand that he needed God’s righteousness which he could only obtain by faith.

Chrysostom continues, “But I have also something more than these things to say again. I mean, that not only one of them overlooked shuts Heaven against us, but though it be done, yet not in due perfection and abundance, it produces the selfsame effect again. “For except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.” (Matthew 5:20)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):20** For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The scribes and the Pharisees were unbelievers who had not been born again. For example, Nicodemus was a Pharisee, and he did not know this, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):7** Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

When we are born again, God justifies us, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

He continues, “So that though thou give alms, but not more than they, thou shalt not enter in.”

Chrysostom did not understand that we do not enter in because of our own righteousness, but because of His righteousness.

He continues, “And how much did they bestow in alms? one may ask. For this very thing, I am minded to say now, that they who do not give may be roused to give, and they that give may not pride themselves, but may make increase of their gifts. What then did they give? A tenth of all their possessions, and again another tenth, and after this a third, so that they almost gave away the third part, for three-tenths put together make up this. And together with these, first fruits, and first born, and other things besides, as, for instance, the offerings for sins, those for purification, those at feasts, those in the jubilee, (**Schaff Note:** ἰωβηλα) those by the cancelling of debts, and the dismissals of servants, and the lendings that were clear of usury. But if he who gave the third part of his goods, or rather the half (for those being put together with these are the half), if then he who is giving the half, achieves no great thing, he who doth not bestow so much as the tenth, of what shall he be worthy? With reason He said, “There are few that be saved.””

When he doesn't really say how much in alms one must give, Chrysostom was laying a terrible burden on believers by making almsgiving a requirement to be saved.

He continues, “5. Let us not, then, despise the care of our life. For if one portion of it despised brings so great a destruction, when on every hand we are subject to the sentence of condemnation, how shall we escape the punishment? and what manner of penalty shall we not suffer? and what manner of hope of salvation have we, one may ask, if each of the things we have numbered threatens us with hell? I too say this; nevertheless, if we give heed we may be saved, preparing the medicines of almsgiving, and attending to our wounds.

For oil does not so strengthen a body, as benevolence at once strengthens a soul, and makes it invincible to all and impregnable to the devil. For wheresoever he may seize us, his hold then slips, this oil not suffering his grasp to fix on our back.

With this oil therefore let us anoint ourselves continually. For it is the cause of health,

and a supply of light, and a source of cheerfulness. “But such a one,” thou wilt say, “hath talents of gold so many and so many, and gives away nothing.” And what is that to thee? For thus shalt thou appear more worthy of admiration, when in poverty thou art more munificent than he. It was on this ground Paul marvelled at the Macedonians, not because they gave, but because even though they were in poverty they gave. (2 Corinthians 8:1-3)”

He refers in context to **2 Corinthians 8 (NIV):1** And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. **2** In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. **3** For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, **4** they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people. **5** And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.

The Macedonian believers gave because they were saved, not to be saved.

Chrysostom continues, “Look not then at these, but at the common Teacher of all, who “had not where to lay His head.” (Matthew 8:20)”

He refers to **Matthew 8 (KJV):20** And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

He continues, “And why, you say, doth not this and that person do so? Do not judge another, but deliver thyself from the charge against thee. Since the punishment is greater when thou at the same time blamest others, and thyself doest not, when judging other men, thou art again thyself also subject to the same judgment. For if even them who do right He permits not to judge others, much more will He not permit offenders. Let us not therefore judge others, neither let us look to others who are taking their ease, but unto Jesus, and from thence let us draw our examples.

Why! have I been thy benefactor? Why! did I redeem thee, that thou lookest to me? It is another who hath bestowed these things on thee. Why dost thou let go thy Master, and look unto thy fellow-servant? Heardest thou not Him saying, “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart?” (Matthew 11:29) And again, “He that would be first amongst you, let him be servant of all.” and again, “Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” (Matthew 20:27-28)”

He refers to **Matthew 11 (KJV):29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

And to **Matthew 20 (KJV):27** And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: **28** Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

He continues, “And after these things again, lest taking offense at them who are remiss amongst thy fellow-servants, thou continue in contemptuousness; to draw thee off from that, He saith, “I have made myself an example to you, that as I have done, ye should do also.” (John 13:15)”

He refers to **John 13 (KJV):15** For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. **16** Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. **17** If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

He concludes, “But hast thou no teacher of virtue amongst those persons that are with



thee, neither such a one as to lead thee on to these things? More abundant then will be the praise, the commendation greater, when not even being supplied with teachers thou hast become one to be marvelled at.”

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XXIII, page 135-136**

Ver. 12. “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

Again, he casts down their pride who thought highly of their knowledge. For if they who had so great privileges suffered such things; and some for murmuring alone were visited with such punishment, and others for tempting, and neither their multitude moved God to repent, nor their having attained to such things; much more shall it be so in our case, except we be sober. And well said he, “he that thinketh he standeth:” for this is not even standing as one ought to stand, to rely on yourself: for quickly will such an one fall: since they too, had they not been high-minded and self-confident, but of a subdued frame of mind, would not have suffered these things. Whence it is evident, that chiefly pride, and carelessness from which comes gluttony also, are the sources of these evils. Wherefore even though thou stand, yet take heed lest thou fall. For our standing here is not secure standing, no not until we be delivered out of the waves of this present life and have sailed into the tranquil haven. Be not therefore high-minded at thy standing, but guard against thy falling; for if Paul feared who was firmer than all, much more ought we to fear.

[6.] Now the Apostle’s word, as we have seen, was, “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall;” but we cannot say even this; all of us, so to speak, having fallen, and lying prostrate on the ground. For to whom am I to say this? To him that committeth extortion every day? Nay, he lies prostrate with a mighty fall. To the fornicator? He too is cast down to the ground. To the drunkard? He also is fallen, and knoweth not even that he is fallen. So that it is not the season for this word, but for that saying of the prophet which he spake even to the Jews, (Jer. viii. 4)—“He that falleth, doth he not rise again?” For all are fallen, and to rise again they have no mind. So that our exhortation is not concerning the not falling, but concerning the ability of them that are fallen to arise. Let us rise again then, late though it be, beloved, let us rise again, and let us stand nobly. How long do we lie prostrate? How long are we drunken, besotted with the excessive desire of the things of this life? It is a meet opportunity now to say, (Jer. vi. 10) “To whom shall I speak and testify?” So deaf are all men become even to the very instruction of virtue, and thence filled with abundance of evils. And were it possible to discern their souls naked; as in armies when the battle is ended one may behold some dead, and some wounded, so also in the Church we might see. Wherefore I beseech and implore you, let us stretch out a hand to each other and thoroughly raise ourselves up. For I myself am of them that are smitten, and require one to apply some remedies.

Do not however despair on this account. For what if the wounds be severe? yet are they not incurable; such is our physician: only let us feel our wounds. Although we be arrived at the very extreme of wickedness, many are the ways of safety which He strikes out for us. Thus, if thou forbear to be angry with thy neighbor, thine own sins shall be forgiven. “For if ye forgive men,” saith He, “your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” (Matt. vi. 14) And if thou give alms, He will remit thee thy sins; for, “break off thy sins,” saith He, “by alms.” (Dan. iv. 24)

And if thou pray earnestly, thou shalt enjoy forgiveness: and this the widow signifieth who prevailed upon that cruel judge by the importunity of her prayer. And if thou accuse thine own sins, thou hast relief: for “declare thou thine iniquities first, that thou mayest be justified:” (Is. xliii. 26) and if thou art sorrowful on account of these things, this too will be to thee a powerful remedy: “for I saw,” saith He, “that he was grieved and went sorrowful, and I healed his ways.” (Is. lvii. 17) And if, when thou sufferest any evil, thou bear it nobly, thou hast put away the whole. For this also did Abraham say to the rich man, that “Lazarus received his evil things, and here he is comforted.” And if thou hast pity on the widow, thy sins are washed away. For, “Judge,” saith He, “the orphan, and plead for the widow, and come and let us reason together, saith the Lord. And if your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow; and if they be as crimson, I will make them white as wool.” (Is. i. 17) For not even a single scar of the wounds doth He suffer to appear. Yea, and though we be come to that depth of misery into which he fell, who devoured his father’s substance and fed upon husks, and should repent, we are undoubtedly saved. And though we owe ten thousand talents, if we fall down before God and bear no malice, all things are forgiven us. Although we have wandered away to that place whither the sheep strayed from his keeper, even thence He recovers us again: only let us be willing, beloved. For God is merciful. Wherefore both in the case of him that owed ten thousand talents, He was content with His falling down before Him; and in the case of him who had devoured his father’s goods, with his return only; and in the case of the sheep, with its willingness to be borne.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 12. “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):12** Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

He continues, “Again, he casts down their pride who thought highly of their knowledge. For if they who had so great privileges suffered such things; and some for murmuring alone were visited with such punishment, and others for tempting, and neither their multitude moved God to repent, nor their having attained to such things; much more shall it be so in our case, except we be sober. And well said he, “he that thinketh he standeth:” for this is not even standing as one ought to stand, to rely on yourself: for quickly will such an one fall: since they too, had they not been high-minded and self-confident, but of a subdued frame of mind, would not have suffered these things. Whence it is evident, that chiefly pride, and carelessness from which comes gluttony also, are the sources of these evils. Wherefore even though thou stand, yet take heed lest thou fall. For our standing here is not secure standing, no not until we be delivered out of the waves of this present life and have sailed into the tranquil haven. Be not therefore high-minded at thy standing, but guard against thy falling; for if Paul feared who was firmer than all, much more ought we to fear.”

He is referring to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):1** Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; **2** And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; **3** And did all eat the same spiritual meat; **4** And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. **5** But with many of them God was not well

pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. 7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. 8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. 9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. 10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

He continues, “[6.] Now the Apostle’s word, as we have seen, was, “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall;” but we cannot say even this; all of us, so to speak, having fallen, and lying prostrate on the ground. For to whom am I to say this? To him that committeth extortion every day? Nay, he lies prostrate with a mighty fall. To the fornicator? He too is cast down to the ground. To the drunkard? He also is fallen, and knoweth not even that he is fallen. So that it is not the season for this word, but for that saying of the prophet which he spake even to the Jews, (Jer. viii. 4)—“He that falleth, doth he not rise again?””

He refers to **Jeremiah 8 (KJV):4** Moreover thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord; Shall they fall, and not arise? shall he turn away, and not return?

He continues, “For all are fallen, and to rise again they have no mind. So that our exhortation is not concerning the not falling, but concerning the ability of them that are fallen to arise. Let us rise again then, late though it be, beloved, let us rise again, and let us stand nobly. How long do we lie prostrate? How long are we drunken, besotted with the excessive desire of the things of this life? It is a meet opportunity now to say, (Jer. vi. 10) “To whom shall I speak and testify?””

He refers to **Jeremiah 6 (KJV):10** To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it.

He continues, “So deaf are all men become even to the very instruction of virtue, and thence filled with abundance of evils. And were it possible to discern their souls naked; as in armies when the battle is ended one may behold some dead, and some wounded, so also in the Church we might see. Wherefore I beseech and implore you, let us stretch out a hand to each other and thoroughly raise ourselves up. For I myself am of them that are smitten, and require one to apply some remedies.

Do not however despair on this account. For what if the wounds be severe? yet are they not incurable; such is our physician: only let us feel our wounds. Although we be arrived at the very extreme of wickedness, many are the ways of safety which He strikes out for us. Thus, if thou forbear to be angry with thy neighbor, thine own sins shall be forgiven. “For if ye forgive men,” saith He, “your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” (Matt. vi. 14)”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):14** For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

He continues, “And if thou give alms, He will remit thee thy sins; for, “break off thy sins,” saith He, “by alms.” (Dan. iv. 24)”

He refers to **Daniel 4 (Septuagint):24** Therefore, O king, let my counsel please thee, and atone for thy sins by alms, and *thine* iniquities by compassion on the poor: it may be God will be longsuffering to thy trespasses.

And to **Daniel 4 (KJV):27** Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

In the Septuagint the words “atone for thy sins” is used, which could explain why Chrysostom thought that meant “remit thee thy sins”. In the Hebrew, the words “break off” are a translation of פָּרַק (pronounced per·ak'), (Aramaic) corresponding to H6561; to discontinue:—break off. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H6562**

The word translated “alms” in the Septuagint is, in the Hebrew, צְדָקָה (pronounced tsid·käh), tsid-kaw'; (Aramaic) corresponding to H6666; beneficence:—righteousness.

**Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H6665**

So the sense is to stop doing what you have been doing, and do what is right. Chrysostom continues, “And if thou pray earnestly, thou shalt enjoy forgiveness: and this the widow signifieth who prevailed upon that cruel judge by the importunity of her prayer.”

He refers to **Luke 18 (KJV):1** And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; 2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: 3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. 4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. 6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. 7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? 8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

But this parable does not speak of forgiveness, but of the Lord’s faithfulness to answer our prayers. He continues, “And if thou accuse thine own sins, thou hast relief: for “declare thou thine iniquities first, that thou mayest be justified:” (Is. xliii. 26)”

He refers in context to **Isaiah 43 (Septuagint):25** I, even I, am he that blots out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and thy sins; and I will not remember them. 26 But do thou remember, and let us plead together: do thou first confess thy transgressions, that thou mayest be justified.

He refers in context to **Isaiah 43 (KJV):25** I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. 26 Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.

He continues, “and if thou art sorrowful on account of these things, this too will be to thee a powerful remedy: “for I saw,” saith He, “that he was grieved and went sorrowful, and I healed his ways.” (Is. lvii. 17)”

He refers in context to **Isaiah 57 (Septuagint):17** On account of sin for a little while I grieved him, and smote him, and turned away my face from him; and he was grieved, and he went on sorrowful in his ways. 18 I have seen his ways, and healed him, and comforted him, and given him true comfort; 19 peace upon peace to them that are far off, and to them that are nigh: and the Lord has said, I will heal them.

And to **Isaiah 57 (KJV):**17 For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. 18 I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.

He continues, “And if, when thou sufferest any evil, thou bear it nobly, thou hast put away the whole. For this also did Abraham say to the rich man, that “Lazarus received his evil things, and here he is comforted.””

He refers to **Luke 16 (KJV):**25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

He continues, “And if thou hast pity on the widow, thy sins are washed away. For, “Judge,” saith He, “the orphan, and plead for the widow, and come and let us reason together, saith the Lord. And if your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow; and if they be as crimson, I will make them white as wool.” (Is. i. 17)”

He refers in context to **Isaiah 1 (KJV):**16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; 17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. 18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

The context of these verses is not about atoning for one’s sins, but about repenting from our sins, and instead of sinning, learning to do well. Repentance has to do with confessing our sins, and turning to God. And God’s promise to those who do so is that their sins will be forgiven, that is, they will be white as snow.

He continues, “For not even a single scar of the wounds doth He suffer to appear. Yea, and though we be come to that depth of misery into which he fell, who devoured his father’s substance and fed upon husks, and should repent, we are undoubtedly saved.”

He refers to **Luke 15 (KJV):**11 And he said, A certain man had two sons: 12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. 13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. 14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. 15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. 17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. 20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Chrysostom continues, “And though we owe ten thousand talents, if we fall down before God and bear no malice, all things are forgiven us.”

He refers to **Matthew 18 (KJV):**23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. 24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. 28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. 29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. 31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: 33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? 34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. 35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

This is a parable about forgiveness. God is willing to forgive us, but we have to be willing to forgive others. Chrysostom continues, “Although we have wandered away to that place whither the sheep strayed from his keeper, even thence He recovers us again: only let us be willing, beloved.”

He refers to **Luke 15 (KJV):**3 And he spake this parable unto them, saying, 4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? 5 And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. 7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

He concludes, “For God is merciful. Wherefore both in the case of him that owed ten thousand talents, He was content with His falling down before Him; and in the case of him who had devoured his father’s goods, with his return only; and in the case of the sheep, with its willingness to be borne.”

Chrysostom has more to say about alms.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XXX, page 180**

[9.] Well: these things we are always saying and never leave off saying them: but whether our sayings do any good, the day will declare, even that day which is revealed by fire, which trieth every man’s work, (1 Cor. iii. 13) which showeth what lamps are bright and what are not so. Then shall he who hath oil, and he who hath it not, be manifest. But may none then be found

destitute of the comfort; rather may all, bringing in with them abundance of mercy, and having their lamps bright, enter in together with the Bridegroom.

Since nothing is more fearful and full of anguish than that voice which they who departed without abundant almsgiving shall then hear the Bridegroom, "I know you not." (S. Matt. xxv. 12) But may we never hear this voice, but rather that most pleasant and desirable one, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (S. Matt. xxv. 34) For thus shall we live the happy life, and enjoy all the good things which even pass man's understanding: unto which may we all attain, through the grace and mercy, &c.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, "[9.] Well: these things we are always saying and never leave off saying them: but whether our sayings do any good, the day will declare, even that day which is revealed by fire, which trieth every man's work, (1 Cor. iii. 13) which showeth what lamps are bright and what are not so."

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):** 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

But in this Scripture, Paul is speaking of the judgment seat of Christ, at the resurrection of the righteous when we shall be rewarded according to our works. This judgment is not for salvation, but for works as is evident in verse 15 where even the one who's works were burned up was saved, yet so as by fire. The fire would relate to what he had to go through in this life because of his bad choices.

Chrysostom continues, "Then shall he who hath oil, and he who hath it not, be manifest." He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):** 1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

And we read in **Matthew 25 (KJV):** 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

This parable is all about being ready for the coming of the Son of man, Jesus. When He comes, if we are not ready, there are no second chances. So don't put off believing in Jesus Christ, and confessing Him as Lord that you may be saved, as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):** 8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Chrysostom continues, "But may none then be found destitute of the comfort; rather may all, bringing in with them abundance of mercy, and having their lamps bright, enter in together with the Bridegroom.

Since nothing is more fearful and full of anguish than that voice which they who departed without abundant almsgiving shall then hear the Bridegroom, "I know you not." (S. Matt. xxv.

12)”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):5** While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

But nothing is mentioned about “bringing in with them abundance of mercy”, or departing “without abundant almsgiving”, in this parable. The Lord is only telling us not to put off our faith in Him.

Chrysostom continues, “But may we never hear this voice, but rather that most pleasant and desirable one, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (S. Matt. xxv. 34)”

He refers again to the judgment of the nations in **Matthew 25 (KJV):31** When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

The alms he is referring to are giving meat to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, help to the homeless, clothing to the naked, visiting the sick, and those in prison. While these are all good works, they do not save us, as we read in again in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

The judgment of the nations is only to show which nations will go into the Kingdom age of one thousand years. Chrysostom confused this judgment with the judgment of the righteous at the judgment seat of Christ, and the white throne judgment of the wicked dead. To him and the Church in his time, there was only one final judgment.

He concludes, “For thus shall we live the happy life, and enjoy all the good things which even pass man’s understanding: unto which may we all attain, through the grace and mercy, &c.”

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILIPPIANS, HOMILY I, page 187-188**

There is indeed no one like Paul. No, not even but a little approaching to that blessed one. But the preaching is the same as it was then.

And not only in his bonds did they have fellowship with him, but also from the



beginning. For hear him saying, “And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the Gospel, no Church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving, but ye only.” (Philip. iv. 15) And even apart from trials, the teacher has much labor, watching, toiling in the word, teaching, complaints, accusations, imputations, envyings. Is this a little matter, to bear ten thousand tongues, when one might have but one’s own anxieties? Alas! what shall I do? for I am in a strait between two things. I long to urge you on and encourage you to the alliance and succor of the saints of God; but I fear lest some one should suspect another thing, that I say this not for your sakes, but for theirs. But know that it is not for their sakes I say these things, but for your own. And if ye are willing to attend, I convince you by my very words; the gain is not equal to you and to them. For ye, if ye give, will give those things from which, willing or unwilling, ye must soon after part, and give place to others; but what thou receivest is great and far more abundant. Or, are ye not so disposed, that in giving ye will receive? For if ye are not so disposed, I do not even wish you to give. So far am I from making a speech for them! Except one have first so disposed himself, as receiving rather than giving, as gaining ten thousand fold, as benefited rather than a benefactor, let him not give. If as one granting a favor to the receiver, let him not give. For this is not so much my care, that the saints may be supported. For even if thou give not, another will give. So that what I want is this, that you may have a relief from your own sins. But he that gives not so will have no relief. For it is not giving that is doing alms, but the doing it with readiness; the rejoicing, the feeling grateful to him that receives. For, “not grudgingly,” saith he, “or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver.” (2 Cor. ix. 7) Except then one so give, let him not give: for that is loss, not alms. If then ye know that ye will gain, not they, know that your gain becomes greater. For as for them the body is fed, but your soul is approved; for them, not one of their sins is forgiven when they receive, but for you, the more part of your offenses is removed. Let us then share with them in their great prizes. When men adopt kings they do not think they give more than they receive. Adopt thou Christ, and thou shalt have great security. Wilt thou also share with Paul? Why do I say Paul when it is Christ that receiveth?

But that ye may know that all is for your sakes that I say and do, and not of care for the comfort of others, if there is any of the rulers of the church that lives in abundance and wants nothing, though he be a saint, give not, but prefer to him one that is in want, though he be not so admirable. And wherefore? Because Christ too so willeth, as when He saith, “If thou make a supper or a dinner, call not thy friends, neither thy kinsmen, but the maimed, the lame, the blind, that cannot recompense thee.” (Luke xiv. 12) For it is not indiscriminately that one should pay such attentions, but to the hungry, but to the thirsty, but to those who need clothing, but to strangers, but to those who from riches have been reduced to poverty. For He said not simply, “I was fed,” but “I was an hungered,” for, “Ye saw me an hungered,” He says, “and fed me.” (Matt. xxv. 35) Twofold is the claim, both that he is a saint and that he is hungry. For if he that is simply hungry ought to be fed, much more when he is a saint too that is hungry. If then he is a saint, but not in need, give not; for this were no gain. For neither did Christ enjoin it; or rather, neither is he a saint that is in abundance and receiveth. Seest thou that it is not for filthy lucre that these things have been said to you, but for your profit? Feed the hungry, that thou mayest not feed the fire of hell. He, eating of what is thine, sanctifies also what remains. (Luke xi. 41) Think how the widow maintained Elias; and she did not more feed than she was fed: she did not more give than receive. This now also takes place in a much greater thing. For it is not a

“barrel of meal,” nor “a cruse of oil” (1 Kings xvii. 14), but what? “An hundred fold, and eternal life” (Matt. xix. 21, 29), is the recompense for such—the mercy of God thou becomest; the spiritual food; a pure leaven. She was a widow, famine was pressing, and none of these things hindered her. Children too she had, and not even so was she withheld. (1 Kings xvii. 12) This woman is become equal to her that cast in the two mites. She said not to herself, “What shall I receive from this man? He stands in need of me. If he had any power he had not hungered, he had broken the drought, he had not been subject to like sufferings. Perchance he too offends God.” None of these things did she think of. Seest thou how great a good it is to do well with simplicity, and not to be over curious about the person benefited? If she had chosen to be curious she would have doubted; she would not have believed. So, too, Abraham, if he had chosen to be curious, would not have received angels. For it cannot, indeed it cannot be, that one who is exceeding nice in these matters, should ever meet with them. No, such an one usually lights on impostors; and how that is, I will tell you. The pious man is not desirous to appear pious, and does not clothe himself in show, and is likely to be rejected. But the impostor, as he makes a business of it, puts on a deal of piety that is hard to see through. So that while he who does good, even to those who seem not pious, will fall in with those who are so, he who seeks out those who are thought to be pious, will often fall in with those who are not so. Wherefore, I beseech you, let us do all things in simplicity. For let us even suppose that he is an impostor that comes; you are not bidden to be curious about this. For, “Give,” saith he, “to every one that asketh thee” (Luke vi. 30); and, “Forbear not to redeem him that is to be slain.” (Prov. xxiv. 11) Yet most of those that are slain suffer this for some evil they are convicted of; still he saith, “Forbear not.” For in this shall we be like God, thus shall we be admired, and shall obtain those immortal blessings, which may we all be thought worthy of, through the grace and lovingkindness of Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom, to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, power, honor, now and forever, and world without end. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “There is indeed no one like Paul. No, not even but a little approaching to that blessed one. But the preaching is the same as it was then.

And not only in his bonds did they have fellowship with him, but also from the beginning. For hear him saying, “And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the Gospel, no Church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving, but ye only.” (Philip. iv. 15)”

He refers to **Philippians 4 (KJV):15** Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

He continues, “And even apart from trials, the teacher has much labor, watching, toiling in the word, teaching, complaints, accusations, imputations, envyings. Is this a little matter, to bear ten thousand tongues, when one might have but one’s own anxieties? Alas! what shall I do? for I am in a strait between two things. I long to urge you on and encourage you to the alliance and succor of the saints of God; but I fear lest some one should suspect another thing, that I say this not for your sakes, but for theirs.”

He refers in context to **Philippians 1 (KJV):21** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not.

23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: 24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. 25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;

He continues, “But know that it is not for their sakes I say these things, but for your own. And if ye are willing to attend, I convince you by my very words; the gain is not equal to you and to them. For ye, if ye give, will give those things from which, willing or unwilling, ye must soon after part, and give place to others; but what thou receivest is great and far more abundant. Or, are ye not so disposed, that in giving ye will receive? For if ye are not so disposed, I do not even wish you to give. So far am I from making a speech for them! Except one have first so disposed himself, as receiving rather than giving, as gaining ten thousand fold, as benefited rather than a benefactor, let him not give. If as one granting a favor to the receiver, let him not give. For this is not so much my care, that the saints may be supported. For even if thou give not, another will give. So that what I want is this, that you may have a relief from your own sins. But he that gives not so will have no relief. For it is not giving that is doing alms, but the doing it with readiness; the rejoicing, the feeling grateful to him that receives. For, “not grudgingly,” saith he, “or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver.” (2 Cor. ix. 7)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 9 (KJV):7** Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

Giving is a good work. But our sins are not relieved by our giving, but only by His blood as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

He is our advocate and the propitiation for our sins as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

And we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):12** But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

There was only a need for Him to do this once as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):12** Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

By this one sacrifice He has put away sin as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):26** For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Chrysostom continues, “Except then one so give, let him not give: for that is loss, not alms. If then ye know that ye will gain, not they, know that your gain becomes greater. For as for them the body is fed, but your soul is approved; for them, not one of their sins is forgiven when they receive, but for you, the more part of your offenses is removed. Let us then share

with them in their great prizes. When men adopt kings they do not think they give more than they receive. Adopt thou Christ, and thou shalt have great security. Wilt thou also share with Paul? Why do I say Paul when it is Christ that receiveth?”

We will receive rewards for any good works we do, after we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior. This is what Jesus taught in **Matthew 6 (KJV):19** Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Our salvation is secure when we believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord. But our rewards will depend on our faithfulness to His word.

Chrysostom continues, “But that ye may know that all is for your sakes that I say and do, and not of care for the comfort of others, if there is any of the rulers of the church that lives in abundance and wants nothing, though he be a saint, give not, but prefer to him one that is in want, though he be not so admirable. And wherefore? Because Christ too so willeth, as when He saith, “If thou make a supper or a dinner, call not thy friends, neither thy kinsmen, but the maimed, the lame, the blind, that cannot recompense thee.” (Luke xiv. 12)”

He refers in context to **Luke 14 (KJV):12** Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. 13 But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

Though Chrysostom does not mention it, believers will be recompensed at the resurrection of the just, that is, at the judgment seat of Christ.

He continues, “For it is not indiscriminately that one should pay such attentions, but to the hungry, but to the thirsty, but to those who need clothing, but to strangers, but to those who from riches have been reduced to poverty. For He said not simply, “I was fed,” but “I was an hungered,” for, “Ye saw me an hungered,” He says, “and fed me.” (Matt. xxv. 35)”

He refers again to **Matthew 25 (KJV):35** For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

He continues, “Twofold is the claim, both that he is a saint and that he is hungry. For if he that is simply hungry ought to be fed, much more when he is a saint too that is hungry. If then he is a saint, but not in need, give not; for this were no gain. For neither did Christ enjoin it; or rather, neither is he a saint that is in abundance and receiveth. Seest thou that it is not for filthy lucre that these things have been said to you, but for your profit? Feed the hungry, that thou mayest not feed the fire of hell. He, eating of what is thine, sanctifies also what remains. (Luke xi. 41)”

He refers in context to **Luke 11 (KJV):37** And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. 38 And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner. 39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. 40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? 41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things

are clean unto you. 42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 43 Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. 44 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.

The Pharisees were dead in their trespasses and sins as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB)**: 1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

This is what Jesus was referring to when He said that the Pharisees make the outside of the cup and the platter clean, but inwardly they were “full ravening and wickedness”. That is, they had not been born again.

In Luke 11:41, the most literal translation may be found as follows:

πλὴν τὰ ἐνόητα δότε ἐλεημοσύνην καὶ ἰδοὺ πάντα καθαρὰ  
Nevertheless the things being within give alms and behold all things clean

ὕμῃν ἐστιν  
to you are

**The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, Marshall’s literal English translation with the Nestle Greek text, page 286, third edition 1974.**

He continues, “Think how the widow maintained Elias; and she did not more feed than she was fed: she did not more give than receive. This now also takes place in a much greater thing. For it is not a “barrel of meal,” nor “a cruse of oil” (1 Kings xvii. 14), but what? “An hundred fold, and eternal life” (Matt. xix. 21, 29), is the recompense for such—the mercy of God thou becomest; the spiritual food; a pure leaven.”

He refers to **1 Kings 17 (KJV)**: 14 For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.

And to **Matthew 19 (KJV)**: 21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

And to **Matthew 19 (KJV)**: 29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

He continues, “She was a widow, famine was pressing, and none of these things hindered her. Children too she had, and not even so was she withheld. (1 Kings xvii. 12)”

He refers to **1 Kings 17 (KJV)**: 12 And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

He continues, “This woman is become equal to her that cast in the two mites. She said not to herself, “What shall I receive from this man? He stands in need of me. If he had any

power he had not hungered, he had broken the drought, he had not been subject to like sufferings. Perchance he too offends God.” None of these things did she think of. Seest thou how great a good it is to do well with simplicity, and not to be over curious about the person benefited? If she had chosen to be curious she would have doubted; she would not have believed. So, too, Abraham, if he had chosen to be curious, would not have received angels. For it cannot, indeed it cannot be, that one who is exceeding nice in these matters, should ever meet with them. No, such an one usually lights on impostors; and how that is, I will tell you. The pious man is not desirous to appear pious, and does not clothe himself in show, and is likely to be rejected. But the impostor, as he makes a business of it, puts on a deal of piety that is hard to see through. So that while he who does good, even to those who seem not pious, will fall in with those who are so, he who seeks out those who are thought to be pious, will often fall in with those who are not so. Wherefore, I beseech you, let us do all things in simplicity. For let us even suppose that he is an impostor that comes; you are not bidden to be curious about this. For, “Give,” saith he, “to every one that asketh thee” (Luke vi. 30); and, “Forbear not to redeem him that is to be slain.” (Prov. xxiv. 11)”

He refers to **Luke 6 (KJV):30** Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.

And in context to **Proverbs 24 (Septuagint):11** Deliver them that are led away to death, and redeem them that are appointed to be slain; spare not . 12 But if thou shouldest say, I know not this man; know that the Lord knows the hearts of all; and he that formed breath for all, he knows all things, who renders to every man according to his works.

And in context to **Proverbs 24 (KJV):11** If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; 12 If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?

He continues, “Yet most of those that are slain suffer this for some evil they are convicted of; still he saith, “Forbear not.” For in this shall we be like God, thus shall we be admired, and shall obtain those immortal blessings, which may we all be thought worthy of, through the grace and lovingkindness of Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom, to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, power, honor, now and forever, and world without end. Amen.”

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY VI, page 497-500**

For as a sparrow, though it be not wholly enclosed, but only caught by the foot, is still under the power of him who set the snare; so though we be not wholly subverted, both in faith and life, but in life only, we are under the power of the devil. For “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven”; and again, “I know you not; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matt. vii. 21–23) You see there is no advantage from our faith, when our Lord knows us not: and to the virgins he says the same, “I know you not.” (Matt. xxv. 12) What then is the benefit of virginity, or of many labors, when the Lord knows us not? And in many places we find men not blamed for their faith, but punished for their evil life

only; as elsewhere, not reprov'd for evil lives, but perishing for their pravity of doctrine. For these things hold together. You see that when we do not the will of God, we are under the snare of the devil. And often not only from a bad life, but from one defect, we enter into Hell, where there are not good qualities to counterbalance it, since the virgins were not accused of fornication or adultery, nor of envy or ill-will, nor of drunkenness, nor of unsound faith, but of a failure of oil, that is, they failed in almsgiving, for that is the oil meant. (**Schaff Note:** So he takes it on Matt. xxv. Hom. lxxviii. al. lxxix. See also on Philip. i. 30, Hom. iv. 15, and notes, and on Rom. xi. 6, and on Rom. xiv. 13. St. Jerome and St. Aug. take the oil more generally of good works, with allusion to Matt. v. 16) And those who were pronounced accursed in the words, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," were not accused of any such crimes, but because they had not fed Christ.

Moral. Seest thou that a failure in alms-giving is enough to cast a man into hell fire? For where will he avail who does not give alms? Dost thou fast every day? So also did those virgins, but it availed them nothing. Dost thou pray? What of that? prayer without almsgiving is unfruitful, without that all things are unclean and unprofitable. The better part of virtue is destroyed. "He that loveth not his brother," it is said, "knoweth not God." (1 John iv. 8) And how dost thou love him, when thou dost not even impart to him of these poor worthless things? Tell me, therefore, dost thou observe chastity? On what account? From fear of punishment? By no means. It is of a natural endowment that thou observest it, since if thou wast chaste from fear of punishment, and didst violence to nature in submitting to so severe a rule, much more oughtest thou to do alms. For to govern the desire of wealth, and of bodily pleasures, is not the same thing. The latter is much more difficult to restrain. And wherefore? Because the pleasure is natural, and the desire of it is innate and of natural growth in the body. It is not so with riches. Herein we are able to resemble God, in showing mercy and pity. When therefore we have not this quality, we are devoid of all good. He has not said, "ye shall be like unto your Father, if ye fast," nor "if ye be virgins," nor "if ye pray," hath He said, "ye shall be like unto your Father," for none of these things can be applied to God, nor are they His acts. But what? "Be ye merciful, as your Father in Heaven is merciful." (Luke vi. 36) This is the work of God. If therefore thou hast not this, what hast thou? He says: "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." (Hosea vi. 6) God made Heaven, and earth, and sea. Great works these, and worthy of His wisdom! But by none of these has He so powerfully attracted human nature to Himself, as by mercy and the love of mankind. For that indeed is the work of power and wisdom and goodness. But it is far more so that He became a servant. Do we not for this more especially admire Him? are we not for this still more amazed at Him? Nothing attracts God to us so much as mercy. And the prophets from beginning to end discourse upon this subject. But I speak not of mercy that is accompanied with covetousness. That is not mercy. For it is not the root of the thorn but of the olive that produces the oil; so it is not the root of covetousness, of iniquity, or of rapine, that produces mercy. Do not put a slander on almsgiving. Do not cause it to be evil spoken of by all. If thou committest robbery for this, that thou mayest give alms, nothing is more wicked than thy almsgiving. For when it is produced by rapine, it is not almsgiving, it is inhumanity, it is cruelty, it is an insult to God. If Cain so offended, by offering inferior gifts of his own, shall he not offend, who offers the goods of another? An offering is nothing else but a sacrifice, a purification, not a pollution. And thou who darest not to pray with unclean hands, dost thou offer the dirt and filth of robbery, and think thou doest nothing wrong? Thou sufferest

not thy hands to be full of dirt and filth, but having first cleansed these, thou offerest. Yet that filth is no charge against thee, while the other deserves reproach and blame. Let it not therefore be our consideration, how we may offer prayers and oblations with clean hands, but how the things offered may be pure. If one, after having washed a vessel clean, should fill it with unclean gifts, would it not be ridiculous mockery? Let the hands be clean; and they will be so, if we wash them not with water only, but first with righteousness. This is the purifier of the hands. But if they be full of unrighteousness, though they be washed a thousand times, it avails nothing. “Wash you, make you clean” (Isa. i. 16), He says, but does He add, “Go to the baths, the lakes, the rivers”? No; but what? “Put away the evil of your doings from your souls.” This is to be clean. This it is to be cleansed from defilement. This is real purity. The other is of little use; but this bestows upon us confidence towards God. The one may be obtained by adulterers, thieves, murderers, by worthless, and dissolute, and effeminate persons, and especially the latter. For they are ever careful of the cleanliness of their bodies, and scented with perfumes, cleansing their sepulcher. For their body is but a sepulcher, since the soul is dead within it. This cleanness therefore may be theirs, but not that which is inward.

To wash the body is no great matter. That is a Jewish purification, senseless and unprofitable, where purity within is wanting. Suppose one to labor under a putrefying sore, or consuming ulcer; let him wash his body ever so much, it is of no advantage. And if the putrefaction of the body receives no benefit from cleansing and disguising the outward appearance; when the soul is infected with rottenness, what is gained by the purity of the body? Nothing! Our prayers ought to be pure, and pure they cannot be, if they are sent forth from a corrupt soul, and nothing so corrupts the soul as avarice and rapine. But there are some who after committing numberless sins during the day, wash themselves in the evening and enter the churches, holding up their hands with much confidence, as if by the washing of the bath they had put off all their guilt. And if this were the case, it would be a vast advantage to use the bath daily! I would not myself cease to frequent the baths, (**Schaff Note:** This was thought too luxurious for persons of devout life. See Euseb. ii. 23, and St. Clem. Al. Pædag. iii. 9), who recommends providing for cleanliness by other means, if it made us pure, and cleansed us from our sins! But these things are trifling and ridiculous, the toys of children. It is not the filth of the body, but the impurity of the soul, to which God is averse. For He says, “Blessed are the pure”—does He say in body? No—“in heart: for they shall see God.” (Matt. v. 8) And what says the Prophet: “Create in me a clean heart, O God.” (Ps. li. 10) And again, “Wash my heart from wickedness.” (Jer. iv. 14)

It is of great use to be in the habit of doing good actions. See how trifling and unprofitable these washings are. But when the soul is prepossessed by a habit, it does not depart from it, nor does it venture to draw nigh in prayer, till it has fulfilled these ceremonies. For instance, we have brought ourselves to a habit of washing and praying, and without washing we do not think it right to pray. And we do not willingly pray with unwashed hands, as if we should offend God, and violate our conscience. Now if this trifling custom has so great power over us, and is observed every day; if we had brought ourselves to a habit of almsgiving, and had determined so constantly to observe it, as never to enter a house of prayer with empty hands, the point would be gained. For great is the power of habit both in good things and in evil, and when this carries us on, there will be little trouble. Many are in the habit of crossing themselves continually, and they need no one to remind them of it, but often when the mind is wandering



after other things, the hand is involuntarily drawn by custom, as by some living teacher, to make the sign. Some have brought themselves into a habit of not swearing at all, and therefore neither willingly nor unwillingly do they ever do it. Let us then bring ourselves into such a habit of almsgiving.

What labors were it worth to us to discover such a remedy. For say, were there not the relief of almsgiving, while we still by our numberless sins rendered ourselves liable to Divine vengeance, should we not have lamented sadly? Should we not have said, O that it were possible by our wealth to wash away our sins, and we would have parted with it all! O that by our riches we could put away the wrath of God, then we would not spare our substance? For if we do this in sickness, and at the point of death we say, “If it were possible to buy off death, such an one would give all his possessions”; much more in this matter. For see how great is the love of God for man. He has granted us power to buy off not temporal but eternal death. Do not purchase, He says, this short life, but that life that is everlasting. It is that I sell thee, not the other: I do not mock thee. Didst thou gain the present life, thou hadst gained nothing. I know the worth of that which I offer thee. The bargainers and traffickers in worldly goods do not act thus. They, when they can impose on whom they will, give a little to receive a great deal. It is not so with God. He gives the greater by far for the less.

Tell me, if you were to go to a merchant, and he were to set before you two stones, one of little worth, and the other very precious, and sure to fetch a large amount of wealth; if he allowed you for the price of the cheap one to carry off the more costly, should you complain of him? No! You would rather admire his liberality. So now, two lives are set before us, the one temporal, the other eternal. These God offers us for sale, but He would sell us the latter rather than the former. Why do we complain, like silly children, that we receive the more precious? Is it possible then to purchase life for money? Yes, when what we bestow is our own, and not the property of another; when we do not practice an imposture. But, you say, henceforth the goods are mine. They are not thine after rapine. They are still thy neighbor’s, though thou wert a thousand times the master of them. For if thou shouldst receive a deposit, it would not be thine own even for the short season that the depositor was traveling, though it might be laid up with thee. If therefore that is not ours, which we received with the consent and thanks of those who deposited it, even for the short period that we retain it, much less is that ours, which we plundered against the will of its owner. He is the master of it, however long thou mayest withhold it. But Virtue is really our own; as for money, even our own is not strictly ours, much less that of others. Today it is ours, tomorrow it belongs to another. What is of virtue is our own possession. This does not suffer loss, like other things, but is entirely possessed by all who have it. This therefore let us acquire, and let us despise riches, that we may be able to attain those real goods, of which God grant that we may be thought worthy to partake, through the grace and lovingkindness, &c.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “For as a sparrow, though it be not wholly enclosed, but only caught by the foot, is still under the power of him who set the snare; so though we be not wholly subverted, both in faith and life, but in life only, we are under the power of the devil. For “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven”; and again, “I know you not; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matt. vii. 21–23)”

He refers to **Matthew 7 (KJV):21** Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

He continues, “You see there is no advantage from our faith, when our Lord knows us not: and to the virgins he says the same, “I know you not.” (Matt. xxv. 12)”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):1** Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

And to **Matthew 25 (KJV):12** But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

He continues, “What then is the benefit of virginity, or of many labors, when the Lord knows us not? And in many places we find men not blamed for their faith, but punished for their evil life only; as elsewhere, not reprov'd for evil lives, but perishing for their pravity of doctrine. For these things hold together. You see that when we do not the will of God, we are under the snare of the devil. And often not only from a bad life, but from one defect, we enter into Hell, where there are not good qualities to counterbalance it, since the virgins were not accused of fornication or adultery, nor of envy or ill-will, nor of drunkenness, nor of unsound faith, but of a failure of oil, that is, they failed in almsgiving, for that is the oil meant. (**Schaff Note:** So he takes it on Matt. xxv. Hom. lxxviii. al. lxxix. See also on Philip. i. 30, Hom. iv. 15, and notes, and on Rom. xi. 6, and on Rom. xiv. 13. St. Jerome and St. Aug. take the oil more generally of good works, with allusion to Matt. v. 16) And those who were pronounced accursed in the words, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,” were not accused of any such crimes, but because they had not fed Christ.

Moral. Seest thou that a failure in alms-giving is enough to cast a man into hell fire? For where will he avail who does not give alms? Dost thou fast every day? So also did those virgins, but it availed them nothing. Dost thou pray? What of that? prayer without almsgiving is unfruitful, without that all things are unclean and unprofitable.”

Chrysostom based his whole doctrine of salvation on Matthew 25 (KJV):31-46, when Jesus spoke of His second coming, and the judgment of the nations. It is as if there were no other Scriptures that had any bearing on salvation to him. He did not understand that there could have been another explanation.

He continues, “The better part of virtue is destroyed. “He that loveth not his brother,” it is said, “knoweth not God.” (1 John iv. 8)”

He refers in context to **1 John 4 (KJV):7** Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

The apostle John is saying in these verses that love is an evidence in the life of one who has believed in Jesus Christ, and confessed Him as Lord, and that he or she is saved, and knows God.

Chrysostom continues, as he then argues, “And how dost thou love him, when thou dost not even impart to him of these poor worthless things? Tell me, therefore, dost thou observe chastity? On what account? From fear of punishment? By no means. It is of a natural endowment that thou observest it, since if thou wast chaste from fear of punishment, and didst

violence to nature in submitting to so severe a rule, much more oughtest thou to do alms. For to govern the desire of wealth, and of bodily pleasures, is not the same thing. The latter is much more difficult to restrain. And wherefore? Because the pleasure is natural, and the desire of it is innate and of natural growth in the body. It is not so with riches. Herein we are able to resemble God, in showing mercy and pity. When therefore we have not this quality, we are devoid of all good. He has not said, “ye shall be like unto your Father, if ye fast,” nor “if ye be virgins,” nor “if ye pray,” hath He said, “ye shall be like unto your Father,” for none of these things can be applied to God, nor are they His acts. But what? “Be ye merciful, as your Father in Heaven is merciful.” (Luke vi. 36)”

He refers to **Luke 6 (KJV):36** Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. He continues, “This is the work of God.”

But Jesus taught as in **John 6 (KJV):29** Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

He continues, “If therefore thou hast not this, what hast thou? He says: “I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.” (Hosea vi. 6)”

He refers to **Hosea 6 (KJV):6** For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

He continues, “God made Heaven, and earth, and sea. Great works these, and worthy of His wisdom! But by none of these has He so powerfully attracted human nature to Himself, as by mercy and the love of mankind. For that indeed is the work of power and wisdom and goodness. But it is far more so that He became a servant. Do we not for this more especially admire Him? are we not for this still more amazed at Him? Nothing attracts God to us so much as mercy. And the prophets from beginning to end discourse upon this subject. But I speak not of mercy that is accompanied with covetousness. That is not mercy. For it is not the root of the thorn but of the olive that produces the oil; so it is not the root of covetousness, of iniquity, or of rapine, that produces mercy. Do not put a slander on almsgiving. Do not cause it to be evil spoken of by all. If thou committest robbery for this, that thou mayest give alms, nothing is more wicked than thy almsgiving. For when it is produced by rapine, it is not almsgiving, it is inhumanity, it is cruelty, it is an insult to God. If Cain so offended, by offering inferior gifts of his own, shall he not offend, who offers the goods of another? An offering is nothing else but a sacrifice, a purification, not a pollution. And thou who darest not to pray with unclean hands, dost thou offer the dirt and filth of robbery, and think thou doest nothing wrong? Thou sufferest not thy hands to be full of dirt and filth, but having first cleansed these, thou offerest. Yet that filth is no charge against thee, while the other deserves reproach and blame. Let it not therefore be our consideration, how we may offer prayers and oblations with clean hands, but how the things offered may be pure.”

Chrysostom makes the giving of alms a necessity for salvation. But giving is a gift given to some by the grace of God, as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):6** Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

It is not a condition of salvation, but a fruit in those who have been saved.

Chrysostom continues, “If one, after having washed a vessel clean, should fill it with

unclean gifts, would it not be ridiculous mockery? Let the hands be clean; and they will be so, if we wash them not with water only, but first with righteousness. This is the purifier of the hands. But if they be full of unrighteousness, though they be washed a thousand times, it avails nothing. “Wash you, make you clean” (Isa. i. 16), He says, but does He add, “Go to the baths, the lakes, the rivers”? No; but what? “Put away the evil of your doings from your souls.””

He refers to **Isaiah 1 (KJV):16** Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

He continues, “This is to be clean. This it is to be cleansed from defilement. This is real purity. The other is of little use; but this bestows upon us confidence towards God. The one may be obtained by adulterers, thieves, murderers, by worthless, and dissolute, and effeminate persons, and especially the latter. For they are ever careful of the cleanliness of their bodies, and scented with perfumes, cleansing their sepulcher. For their body is but a sepulcher, since the soul is dead within it. This cleanness therefore may be theirs, but not that which is inward.

To wash the body is no great matter. That is a Jewish purification, senseless and unprofitable, where purity within is wanting. Suppose one to labor under a putrefying sore, or consuming ulcer; let him wash his body ever so much, it is of no advantage. And if the putrefaction of the body receives no benefit from cleansing and disguising the outward appearance; when the soul is infected with rottenness, what is gained by the purity of the body? Nothing! Our prayers ought to be pure, and pure they cannot be, if they are sent forth from a corrupt soul, and nothing so corrupts the soul as avarice and rapine. But there are some who after committing numberless sins during the day, wash themselves in the evening and enter the churches, holding up their hands with much confidence, as if by the washing of the bath they had put off all their guilt. And if this were the case, it would be a vast advantage to use the bath daily! I would not myself cease to frequent the baths, (**Schaff Note:** This was thought too luxurious for persons of devout life. See Euseb. ii. 23, and St. Clem. Al. Pædag. iii. 9), who recommends providing for cleanliness by other means, if it made us pure, and cleansed us from our sins! But these things are trifling and ridiculous, the toys of children. It is not the filth of the body, but the impurity of the soul, to which God is averse. For He says, “Blessed are the pure”—does He say in body? No—“in heart: for they shall see God.” (Matt. v. 8)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):8** Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

He continues, “And what says the Prophet: “Create in me a clean heart, O God.” (Ps. li. 10) And again, “Wash my heart from wickedness.” (Jer. iv. 14)

He refers to **Psalms 51 (KJV):10** Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

And to **Jeremiah 4 (KJV):14** O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?

He continues, “It is of great use to be in the habit of doing good actions. See how trifling and unprofitable these washings are. But when the soul is prepossessed by a habit, it does not depart from it, nor does it venture to draw nigh in prayer, till it has fulfilled these ceremonies. For instance, we have brought ourselves to a habit of washing and praying, and without washing we do not think it right to pray. And we do not willingly pray with unwashed hands, as if we should offend God, and violate our conscience. Now if this trifling custom has so great power over us, and is observed every day; if we had brought ourselves to a habit of almsgiving, and had determined so constantly to observe it, as never to enter a house of prayer with empty

hands, the point would be gained. For great is the power of habit both in good things and in evil, and when this carries us on, there will be little trouble. Many are in the habit of crossing themselves continually, and they need no one to remind them of it, but often when the mind is wandering after other things, the hand is involuntarily drawn by custom, as by some living teacher, to make the sign. Some have brought themselves into a habit of not swearing at all, and therefore neither willingly nor unwillingly do they ever do it. Let us then bring ourselves into such a habit of almsgiving.”

Making the sign of the cross became a ritual early on in the Church. Giving is a sacrifice that pleases God, as we read in **Hebrews 13 (NASB):15** Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. 16 And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Such sacrifices are not a condition of salvation, but a fruit in the life of one who is saved. Without faith it is impossible to please Him, as we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):6** But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Chrysostom continues, “What labors were it worth to us to discover such a remedy. For say, were there not the relief of almsgiving, while we still by our numberless sins rendered ourselves liable to Divine vengeance, should we not have lamented sadly? Should we not have said, O that it were possible by our wealth to wash away our sins, and we would have parted with it all! O that by our riches we could put away the wrath of God, then we would not spare our substance? For if we do this in sickness, and at the point of death we say, “If it were possible to buy off death, such an one would give all his possessions”; much more in this matter. For see how great is the love of God for man. He has granted us power to buy off not temporal but eternal death. Do not purchase, He says, this short life, but that life that is everlasting. It is that I sell thee, not the other: I do not mock thee. Didst thou gain the present life, thou hadst gained nothing. I know the worth of that which I offer thee. The bargainers and traffickers in worldly goods do not act thus. They, when they can impose on whom they will, give a little to receive a great deal. It is not so with God. He gives the greater by far for the less.”

We cannot buy our salvation with alms. We are saved by grace through faith, as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Chrysostom continues, “Tell me, if you were to go to a merchant, and he were to set before you two stones, one of little worth, and the other very precious, and sure to fetch a large amount of wealth; if he allowed you for the price of the cheap one to carry off the more costly, should you complain of him? No! You would rather admire his liberality. So now, two lives are set before us, the one temporal, the other eternal. These God offers us for sale, but He would sell us the latter rather than the former. Why do we complain, like silly children, that we receive the more precious? Is it possible then to purchase life for money? Yes, when what we bestow is our own, and not the property of another; when we do not practice an imposture. But, you say, henceforth the goods are mine. They are not thine after rapine. They are still thy neighbor’s, though thou wert a thousand times the master of them. For if thou shouldst receive a deposit, it

would not be thine own even for the short season that the depositor was traveling, though it might be laid up with thee. If therefore that is not ours, which we received with the consent and thanks of those who deposited it, even for the short period that we retain it, much less is that ours, which we plundered against the will of its owner. He is the master of it, however long thou mayest withhold it. But Virtue is really our own; as for money, even our own is not strictly ours, much less that of others. Today it is ours, tomorrow it belongs to another. What is of virtue is our own possession. This does not suffer loss, like other things, but is entirely possessed by all who have it. This therefore let us acquire, and let us despise riches, that we may be able to attain those real goods, of which God grant that we may be thought worthy to partake, through the grace and lovingkindness, &c.”

God’s salvation is free, as we read in **Isaiah 55 (KJV):1** Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. 3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

And in **Romans 3 (KJV):24** Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

And in **Romans 8 (KJV):32** He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

And in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

And in **Revelation 21 (KJV):6** And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

And in **Revelation 22 (KJV):17** And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TITUS, HOMILY VI, page 540-543**

“These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject. Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.”

Having spoken of the love of God to man, of His ineffable regard for us, of what we were and what He has done for us, he has added, “These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works”; that is, Discourse of these things, and from a consideration of them exhort to almsgiving. For what has been said will not only apply to humility, to the not being puffed up, and not reviling others, but to every other virtue. So also in arguing with the Corinthians, he says, “Ye know that our Lord being

rich became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich.” (2 Cor. viii. 9) Having considered the care and exceeding love of God for man, he thence exhorts them to almsgiving, and that not in a common and slight manner, but “that they may be careful,” he says, “to maintain good works,” that is, both to succor the injured, not only by money, but by patronage and protection, and to defend the widows and orphans, and to afford a refuge to all that are afflicted. For this is to maintain good works. For these things, he says, are good and profitable unto men. “But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain.” What do these “genealogies” mean? For in his Epistle to Timothy he mentions “fables and endless genealogies.” (1 Tim. i. 4) [Perhaps both here and there glancing at the Jews, who, priding themselves on having Abraham for their forefather, neglected their own part. On this account he calls them both “foolish and unprofitable”; for it is the part of folly to confide in things unprofitable.] “Contentions,” he means, with heretics, in which he would not have us labor to no purpose, where nothing is to be gained, for they end in nothing. For when a man is perverted and predetermined not to change his mind, whatever may happen, why shouldst thou labor in vain, sowing upon a rock, when thou shouldst spend thy honorable toil upon thy own people, in discoursing with them upon almsgiving and every other virtue? How then does he elsewhere say, “If God peradventure will give them repentance” (2 Tim. ii. 25); but here, “A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself”? In the former passage he speaks of the correction of those of whom he had hope, and who had simply made opposition. But when he is known and manifest to all, why dost thou contend in vain? why dost thou beat the air? What means, “being condemned of himself”? Because he cannot say that no one has told him, no one admonished him; since therefore after admonition he continues the same, he is self-condemned.

Ver. 12. “When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus; be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis.” What sayest thou? After having appointed him to preside over Crete, dost thou again summon him to thyself? It was not to withdraw him from that occupation, but to discipline him the more for it. For that he does not call him to attend upon him, as if he took him everywhere with him as his follower, appears from what he adds:

“For I have determined there to winter.”

Now Nicopolis is a city of Thrace.

Ver. 14. “Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.”

These were not of the number to whom Churches had been intrusted, but of the number of his companions. But Apollos was the more vehement, being “an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures.” (Acts xviii. 24) But if Zenas was a lawyer, you say, he ought not to have been supported by others. But by a lawyer here is meant one versed in the laws of the Jews. And he seems to say, supply their wants abundantly, that nothing may be lacking to them.

Ver. 14, 15. “And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith.”

That is, either those that love Paul himself, or those men that are faithful. “Grace be with you all. Amen.” How then dost thou command him to stop the mouths of gainsayers, if he must pass them by when they are doing everything to their own destruction? He means that he should not do it principally for their advantage, for being once perverted in their minds, they would not

profit by it. But if they injured others, it behooved him to withstand and contend with them; and manfully await them, but if thou art reduced to necessity, seeing them destroying others, be not silent, but stop their mouths, from regard to those whom they would destroy. It is not indeed possible for a zealous man of upright life to abstain from contention, but so do as I have said. For the evil arises from idleness and a vain philosophy, that one should be occupied about words only. For it is a great injury to be uttering a superfluity of words, when one ought to be teaching, or praying, or giving thanks. For it is not right to be sparing of our money but not sparing of our words; we ought rather to spare words than our money, and not to give ourselves up to all sorts of persons.

What means, “that they be careful to maintain good works”? That they wait not for those who are in want to come to them, but that they seek out those who need their assistance. Thus the considerate man shows his concern, and with great zeal will he perform this duty. For in doing good actions, it is not those who receive the kindness that are benefited, so much as those who do it that make gain and profit, for it gives them confidence towards God. But in the other case, there is no end of contention: therefore he calls the heretic incorrigible. For as to neglect those for whom there is a hope of conversion is the part of slothfulness, so to bestow pains upon those who are diseased past remedy is the extreme of folly and madness; for we render them more bold.

“And let ours,” he says, “learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.” You observe that he is more anxious for them than for those who are to receive their kindnesses. For they might probably have been brought on their way by many others, but I am concerned, he says, for our own friends. For what advantage would it be to them, if others should dig up treasures, and maintain their teachers? This would be no benefit to them, for they remained unfruitful. Could not Christ then, Who with five loaves fed five thousand men, and with seven loaves fed four thousand, could not He have supported Himself and His disciples?

Moral. For what reason then was He maintained by women? For women, it is said, followed Him, and ministered unto Him. (Mark xv. 41) It was to teach us from the first that He is concerned for those who do good. Could not Paul, who supported others by his own hands, have maintained himself without assistance from others? But you see him receiving and requesting aid. And hear the reason for it. “Not because I desire a gift,” he says, “but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.” (Philip. iv. 17) And at the beginning too, when men sold all their possessions and laid them at the Apostles’ feet, the Apostles, seest thou, were more concerned for them than for those who received their alms. For if their concern had only been that the poor might by any means be relieved, they would not have judged so severely of the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, when they kept back their money. Nor would Paul have charged men to give “not grudgingly nor of necessity.” (2 Cor. ix. 7) What sayest thou, Paul? dost thou discourage giving to the poor? No, he answers; but I consider not their advantage only, but the good of those who give. Dost thou see, that when the prophet gave that excellent counsel to Nebuchadnezzar, he did not merely consider the poor. For he does not content himself with saying, Give to the poor; but what? “Break off thy sins by almsdeeds, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.” (Dan. iv. 27) Part with thy wealth, not that others may be fed, but that thou mayest escape punishment. And Christ again says, “Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor...and come and follow Me.” (Matt. xix. 21) Dost thou see that the commandment was given that he might be induced to follow Him? For as riches are an



impediment, therefore he commands them to be given to the poor, instructing the soul to be pitiful and merciful, to despise wealth, and to flee from covetousness. For he who has learnt to give to him that needs, will in time learn not to receive from those who have to give. This makes men like God. Yet virginity, and fasting, and lying on the ground, are more difficult than this, but nothing is so strong and powerful to extinguish the fire of our sins as almsgiving. It is greater than all other virtues. It places the lovers of it by the side of the King Himself, and justly. For the effect of virginity, of fasting, of lying on the ground, is confined to those who practice them, and no other is saved thereby. But almsgiving extends to all, and embraces the members of Christ, and actions that extend their effects to many are far greater than those which are confined to one.

For almsgiving is the mother of love, of that love, which is the characteristic of Christianity, which is greater than all miracles, by which the disciples of Christ are manifested. It is the medicine of our sins, the cleansing of the filth of our souls, the ladder fixed to heaven; it binds together the body of Christ. Would you learn how excellent a thing it is? In the time of the Apostles, men selling their possessions brought them to them, and they were distributed. For it is said, "Distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." (Acts iv. 35) For tell me how, setting aside the future, and not now considering the kingdom that is to come, let us see who in the present life are the gainers, those who received, or those who gave. The former murmured and quarreled with each other. The latter had one soul. "They were of one heart, and of one soul," it is said, "and grace was upon them all." (Acts iv. 32) And they lived in great simplicity. Dost thou see that they were gainers even by thus giving? Tell me now, with whom would you wish to be numbered, with those who gave away their possessions, and had nothing, or with those who received even the goods of others?

See the fruit of almsgiving, the separations and hindrances were removed, and immediately their souls were knit together. "They were all of one heart and of one soul." So that even setting aside almsgiving, the parting with riches is attended with gain. And these things I have said, that those who have not succeeded to an inheritance from their forefathers may not be cast down, as if they had less than those who are wealthy. For if they please they have more. For they will more readily incline to almsgiving, like the widow, and they will have no occasion for enmity towards their neighbor, and they will enjoy freedom in every respect. Such an one cannot be threatened with the confiscation of his goods, and he is superior to all wrongs. As those who fly unincumbered with clothes are not easily caught, but they who are incumbered with many garments and a long train are soon overtaken, so it is with the rich man and the poor. The one, though he be taken, will easily make his escape, whilst the other, though he be not detained, is incumbered by cords of his own, by numberless cares, distresses, passions, provocations, all which overwhelm the soul, and not these alone, but many other things which riches draw after them. It is much more difficult for a rich man to be moderate and to live frugally, than for the poor, more difficult for him to be free from passion. Then he, you say, will have the greater reward.—By no means.—What, not if he overcomes greater difficulties?—But these difficulties were of his own seeking. For we are not commanded to become rich, but the reverse. But he prepares for himself so many stumbling-blocks and impediments.

Others not only divest themselves of riches, but macerate their bodies, as travelers in the narrow way. Instead of doing this, thou heatest more intensely the furnace of thy passions, and gettest more about thee. Go therefore into the broad way, for it is that which receives such as

thee. But the narrow way is for those who are afflicted and straitened, who bear along with them nothing but those burdens, which they can carry through it, as almsgiving, love for mankind, goodness, and meekness. These if thou bearest, thou wilt easily find entrance, but if thou takest with thee arrogance, a soul inflamed with passions, and that load of thorns, wealth, there is need of wide room for thee to pass, nor wilt thou well be able to enter into the crowd without striking others, and coming down upon them on thy way. In this case a wide distance from others is required. But he who carries gold and silver, I mean the achievements of virtue, does not cause his neighbors to flee from him, but brings men nearer to him, even to link themselves with him. But if riches in themselves are thorns, what must covetousness be? Why dost thou take that away with thee? Is it to make the flame greater by adding fuel to that fire? Is not the fire of hell sufficient? Consider how the Three Children overcame the furnace. Imagine that to be hell. With tribulation were they plunged into it, bound and fettered; but within they found large room; not so they that stood around without.

Something of this kind even now will be experienced, if we will manfully resist the trials that encompass us. If we have hope in God, we shall be in security, and have ample room, and those who bring us into these straits shall perish. For it is written, "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein." (Proverbs xxvi. 27) Though they bind our hands and our feet, the affliction will have power to set us loose. For observe this miracle. Those whom men had bound, the fire set free. As if certain persons were delivered up to the servants of their friends, and the servants, from regard to the friendship of their master, instead of injuring them, should treat them with much respect; so the fire, when as it knew that the Three Children were the friends of its Lord, burst their fetters, set them free, and let them go, and became to them as a pavement, and was trodden under their feet. And justly, since they had been cast into it for the glory of God. Let us, as many of us as are afflicted, hold fast these examples.

But behold, they were delivered from their affliction, you say, and we are not. True, they were delivered, and justly; since they did not enter into that furnace expecting deliverance, but as if to die outright. For hear what they say: "There is a God in Heaven, Who will deliver us. But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." (Dan. iii. 17, 18) But we, as if bargaining on the chastisements of the Lord, even fix a time, saying, "If He does not show mercy till this time." Therefore it is that we are not delivered. Surely Abraham did not leave his home expecting again to receive his son, but as prepared to sacrifice him; and it was contrary to his expectation that he received him again safe. And thou, when thou fallest into tribulation, be not in haste to be delivered, prepare thy mind for all endurance, and speedily thou shalt be delivered from thy affliction. For God brings it upon thee for this end, that He may chasten thee. When therefore from the first we learn to bear it patiently, and do not sink into despair, He presently relieves us, as having effected the whole matter.

I should like to tell you an instructive story, which has much of profit in it. What then is it? Once, when a persecution arose, and a severe war was raging against the Church, two men were apprehended. The one was ready to suffer anything whatever; the other was prepared to submit with firmness to be beheaded, but with fear and trembling shrunk from other tortures. Observe then the dispensation towards these men. When the judge was seated, he ordered the one who was ready to endure anything, to be beheaded. The other he caused to be hung up and tortured, and that not once or twice, but from city to city. Now why was this permitted? That he

might recover through torments that quality of mind which he had neglected, that he might shake off all cowardice, and be no longer afraid to endure anything. Joseph too, when he was urgent to escape from prison, was left to remain there. For hear him saying, “Indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews; but do thou make mention of me to the king.” (Gen. xl. 14, 15) And for this he was suffered to remain, that he might learn not to place hope or confidence in men, but to cast all upon God. Knowing these things therefore let us give thanks to God, and let us do all things that are expedient for us, that we may obtain the good things to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom to the Father be glory, with the Holy Ghost, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, ““These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject. Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.”

He refers to **Titus 3 (KJV):**11 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. 9 But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. 10 A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; 11 Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

He continues, “Having spoken of the love of God to man, of His ineffable regard for us, of what we were and what He has done for us, he has added, “These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works”; that is, Discourse of these things, and from a consideration of them exhort to almsgiving. For what has been said will not only apply to humility, to the not being puffed up, and not reviling others, but to every other virtue. So also in arguing with the Corinthians, he says, “Ye know that our Lord being rich became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich.” (2 Cor. viii. 9)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 8 (KJV):**9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

He continues, “Having considered the care and exceeding love of God for man, he thence exhorts them to almsgiving, and that not in a common and slight manner, but “that they may be careful,” he says, “to maintain good works,” that is, both to succor the injured, not only by money, but by patronage and protection, and to defend the widows and orphans, and to afford a refuge to all that are afflicted. For this is to maintain good works. For these things, he says, are good and profitable unto men. “But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain.” What do these “genealogies” mean? For in his Epistle to Timothy he mentions “fables and endless genealogies.” (1 Tim. i. 4)”

He refers in context to **1 Timothy 1 (KJV):**3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.

He continues, “[Perhaps both here and there glancing at the Jews, who, priding themselves on having Abraham for their forefather, neglected their own part. On this account he calls them both “foolish and unprofitable”; for it is the part of folly to confide in things unprofitable.] “Contentions,” he means, with heretics, in which he would not have us labor to no purpose, where nothing is to be gained, for they end in nothing. For when a man is perverted and predetermined not to change his mind, whatever may happen, why shouldst thou labor in vain, sowing upon a rock, when thou shouldst spend thy honorable toil upon thy own people, in discoursing with them upon almsgiving and every other virtue? How then does he elsewhere say, “If God peradventure will give them repentance” (2 Tim. ii. 25);”

He refers in context to **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):24** And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, **25** In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; **26** And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

He continues, “but here, “A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself”? In the former passage he speaks of the correction of those of whom he had hope, and who had simply made opposition. But when he is known and manifest to all, why dost thou contend in vain? why dost thou beat the air? What means, “being condemned of himself”? Because he cannot say that no one has told him, no one admonished him; since therefore after admonition he continues the same, he is self-condemned.

He continues, “Ver. 12. “When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus; be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis.”

He refers to **Titus 3 (KJV):12** When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter.

He continues, “What sayest thou? After having appointed him to preside over Crete, dost thou again summon him to thyself? It was not to withdraw him from that occupation, but to discipline him the more for it. For that he does not call him to attend upon him, as if he took him everywhere with him as his follower, appears from what he adds:

“For I have determined there to winter.”

Now Nicopolis is a city of Thrace. “The region known as Thrace is an area in southeast Europe that sits between modern-day Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey. It has three natural boundaries: the majestic Balkan Mountains in the north, the Aegean Sea to the south, and the Black Sea to the east.” (Google)

Ver. 14. “Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.”

He refers to **Titus 3 (KJV):13** Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

He continues, “These were not of the number to whom Churches had been intrusted, but of the number of his companions. But Apollos was the more vehement, being “an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures.” (Acts xviii. 24)”

He refers to **Acts 18 (KJV):24** And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

He continues, “But if Zenas was a lawyer, you say, he ought not to have been supported by others. But by a lawyer here is meant one versed in the laws of the Jews. And he seems to say, supply their wants abundantly, that nothing may be lacking to them.

Ver. 14, 15. “And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith.””

He refers to **Titus 3 (KJV):14** And let our's also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. 15 All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

He continues, “That is, either those that love Paul himself, or those men that are faithful. “Grace be with you all. Amen.” How then dost thou command him to stop the mouths of gainsayers, if he must pass them by when they are doing everything to their own destruction? He means that he should not do it principally for their advantage, for being once perverted in their minds, they would not profit by it. But if they injured others, it behooved him to withstand and contend with them; and manfully await them, but if thou art reduced to necessity, seeing them destroying others, be not silent, but stop their mouths, from regard to those whom they would destroy. It is not indeed possible for a zealous man of upright life to abstain from contention, but so do as I have said. For the evil arises from idleness and a vain philosophy, that one should be occupied about words only. For it is a great injury to be uttering a superfluity of words, when one ought to be teaching, or praying, or giving thanks. For it is not right to be sparing of our money but not sparing of our words; we ought rather to spare words than our money, and not to give ourselves up to all sorts of persons.

What means, “that they be careful to maintain good works”? That they wait not for those who are in want to come to them, but that they seek out those who need their assistance. Thus the considerate man shows his concern, and with great zeal will he perform this duty. For in doing good actions, it is not those who receive the kindness that are benefited, so much as those who do it that make gain and profit, for it gives them confidence towards God. But in the other case, there is no end of contention: therefore he calls the heretic incorrigible. For as to neglect those for whom there is a hope of conversion is the part of slothfulness, so to bestow pains upon those who are diseased past remedy is the extreme of folly and madness; for we render them more bold.”

Chrysostom did not understand the rest of salvation, which we read of in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

When we come to Him, and receive Him as our savior, He takes the burden of our sin off of us, and we find rest for our souls. As we then grow in grace and knowledge, we begin to serve Him, and others through Him. That is, we take His yoke upon ourselves that is easy and light. We do the works that God has ordained for us to do, as we walk with Him. This is what Paul was teaching in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

These works do not save us, or atone for sin. But we will be rewarded for good works at the judgment seat of Christ.

Chrysostom continues, ““And let ours,” he says, “learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.” You observe that he is more anxious for them than for those who are to receive their kindnesses. For they might probably have been brought on their way by many others, but I am concerned, he says, for our own friends. For what advantage would it be to them, if others should dig up treasures, and maintain their teachers? This would be no benefit to them, for they remained unfruitful. Could not Christ then, Who with five loaves fed five thousand men, and with seven loaves fed four thousand, could not He have supported Himself and His disciples?

Moral. For what reason then was He maintained by women? For women, it is said, followed Him, and ministered unto Him. (Mark xv. 41)”

He refers in context to **Mark 15 (KJV):40** There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; 41 (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

He continues, “It was to teach us from the first that He is concerned for those who do good. Could not Paul, who supported others by his own hands, have maintained himself without assistance from others? But you see him receiving and requesting aid. And hear the reason for it. “Not because I desire a gift,” he says, “but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.” (Philip. iv. 17)”

He refers in context to **Philippians 4 (KJV):16** For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. 17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

He continues, “And at the beginning too, when men sold all their possessions and laid them at the Apostles’ feet, the Apostles, seest thou, were more concerned for them than for those who received their alms. For if their concern had only been that the poor might by any means be relieved, they would not have judged so severely of the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, when they kept back their money.”

But the sin of Ananias and Sapphira was lying to the Holy Ghost, who is God, as we read in **Acts 5 (KJV):1** But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. 6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. 7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. 9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. 10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

Chrysostom continues, “Nor would Paul have charged men to give “not grudgingly nor of

necessity.” (2 Cor. ix. 7)”

He refers in context to **2 Corinthians 9 (KJV):6** But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

He continues, “What sayest thou, Paul? dost thou discourage giving to the poor? No, he answers; but I consider not their advantage only, but the good of those who give. Dost thou see, that when the prophet gave that excellent counsel to Nebuchadnezzar, he did not merely consider the poor. For he does not content himself with saying, Give to the poor; but what? “Break off thy sins by almsdeeds, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.” (Dan. iv. 27)”

He refers to **Daniel 4 (Septuagint):24** Therefore, O king, let my counsel please thee, and atone for thy sins by alms, and *thine* iniquities by compassion on the poor: it may be God will be longsuffering to thy trespasses.

And to **Daniel 4 (KJV):27** Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

In the Septuagint the words “atone for thy sins” is used, which could explain why Chrysostom thought that meant “remit thee thy sins”. In the Hebrew, the words “break off” are a translation of פָּרַק (pronounced per-ak'), (Aramaic) corresponding to H6561; to discontinue:—break off. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H6562**

The word translated “alms” in the Septuagint is, in the Hebrew, צְדָקָה (pronounced tsid·kā'), tsid-kaw'; (Aramaic) corresponding to H6666; beneficence:—righteousness.

**Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H6665**

So the sense is to stop doing what you have been doing, and do what is right.

Chrysostom continues, “Part with thy wealth, not that others may be fed, but that thou mayest escape punishment.”

He misinterprets the Scripture. Showing mercy by giving to the poor is a sacrifice that pleases God, but it does not merit salvation. We are saved by grace alone, through faith, which is the gift of God, as we have read before in Ephesians 2:8-10.

He continues, “And Christ again says, “Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor...and come and follow Me.” (Matt. xix. 21)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 19 (KJV):18** He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, 19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? 21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. 22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. 23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. 24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 25 When his disciples heard



it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? 26 But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

He continues, “Dost thou see that the commandment was given that he might be induced to follow Him? For as riches are an impediment, therefore he commands them to be given to the poor, instructing the soul to be pitiful and merciful, to despise wealth, and to flee from covetousness. For he who has learnt to give to him that needs, will in time learn not to receive from those who have to give. This makes men like God. Yet virginity, and fasting, and lying on the ground, are more difficult than this, but nothing is so strong and powerful to extinguish the fire of our sins as almsgiving. It is greater than all other virtues. It places the lovers of it by the side of the King Himself, and justly. For the effect of virginity, of fasting, of lying on the ground, is confined to those who practice them, and no other is saved thereby. But almsgiving extends to all, and embraces the members of Christ, and actions that extend their effects to many are far greater than those which are confined to one.

For almsgiving is the mother of love, of that love, which is the characteristic of Christianity, which is greater than all miracles, by which the disciples of Christ are manifested. It is the medicine of our sins, the cleansing of the filth of our souls, the ladder fixed to heaven; it binds together the body of Christ.”

Almsgiving in the sense that Chrysostom speaks of is showing mercy. It is not the mother of love. Love is a fruit of the Spirit as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Showing mercy is a gift according to the grace that is given to some, as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):6** Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

It is not the means by which we merit salvation, nor does it merit forgiveness of our sins. But it may be the means by which others are led to the Lord.

He continues, “Would you learn how excellent a thing it is? In the time of the Apostles, men selling their possessions brought them to them, and they were distributed. For it is said, “Distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.” (Acts iv. 35)”

He refers in context to **Acts 4 (KJV):33** And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

This was a time of great grace. Chrysostom continues, “For tell me how, setting aside the future, and not now considering the kingdom that is to come, let us see who in the present life are the gainers, those who received, or those who gave. The former murmured and quarreled with each other. The latter had one soul. “They were of one heart, and of one soul,” it is said, “and grace was upon them all.” (Acts iv. 32)”

He refers to **Acts 4 (KJV):32** And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his



own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

He continues, “And they lived in great simplicity. Dost thou see that they were gainers even by thus giving? Tell me now, with whom would you wish to be numbered, with those who gave away their possessions, and had nothing, or with those who received even the goods of others?”

See the fruit of almsgiving, the separations and hindrances were removed, and immediately their souls were knit together. “They were all of one heart and of one soul.” So that even setting aside almsgiving, the parting with riches is attended with gain. And these things I have said, that those who have not succeeded to an inheritance from their forefathers may not be cast down, as if they had less than those who are wealthy. For if they please they have more. For they will more readily incline to almsgiving, like the widow, and they will have no occasion for enmity towards their neighbor, and they will enjoy freedom in every respect. Such an one cannot be threatened with the confiscation of his goods, and he is superior to all wrongs. As those who fly unincumbered with clothes are not easily caught, but they who are incumbered with many garments and a long train are soon overtaken, so it is with the rich man and the poor. The one, though he be taken, will easily make his escape, whilst the other, though he be not detained, is incumbered by cords of his own, by numberless cares, distresses, passions, provocations, all which overwhelm the soul, and not these alone, but many other things which riches draw after them. It is much more difficult for a rich man to be moderate and to live frugally, than for the poor, more difficult for him to be free from passion. Then he, you say, will have the greater reward.—By no means.—What, not if he overcomes greater difficulties?—But these difficulties were of his own seeking. For we are not commanded to become rich, but the reverse. But he prepares for himself so many stumbling-blocks and impediments.”

It is difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven, but with God, all things are possible as we read before in **Matthew 19 (KJV):** 22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. 23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. 24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 25 When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? 26 But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

Chrysostom continues, “Others not only divest themselves of riches, but macerate their bodies, as travelers in the narrow way. Instead of doing this, thou heatest more intensely the furnace of thy passions, and gettest more about thee. Go therefore into the broad way, for it is that which receives such as thee. But the narrow way is for those who are afflicted and straitened, who bear along with them nothing but those burdens, which they can carry through it, as almsgiving, love for mankind, goodness, and meekness. These if thou bearest, thou wilt easily find entrance, but if thou takest with thee arrogance, a soul inflamed with passions, and that load of thorns, wealth, there is need of wide room for thee to pass, nor wilt thou well be able to enter into the crowd without striking others, and coming down upon them on thy way. In this case a wide distance from others is required. But he who carries gold and silver, I mean the achievements of virtue, does not cause his neighbors to flee from him, but brings men nearer to him, even to link themselves with him. But if riches in themselves are thorns, what must

covetousness be? Why dost thou take that away with thee? Is it to make the flame greater by adding fuel to that fire? Is not the fire of hell sufficient? Consider how the Three Children overcame the furnace. Imagine that to be hell. With tribulation were they plunged into it, bound and fettered; but within they found large room; not so they that stood around without.

Something of this kind even now will be experienced, if we will manfully resist the trials that encompass us. If we have hope in God, we shall be in security, and have ample room, and those who bring us into these straits shall perish. For it is written, “Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein.” (Proverbs xxvi. 27)”

He refers to **Proverbs 26 (KJV):27** Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.

He continues, “Though they bind our hands and our feet, the affliction will have power to set us loose. For observe this miracle. Those whom men had bound, the fire set free. As if certain persons were delivered up to the servants of their friends, and the servants, from regard to the friendship of their master, instead of injuring them, should treat them with much respect; so the fire, when as it knew that the Three Children were the friends of its Lord, burst their fetters, set them free, and let them go, and became to them as a pavement, and was trodden under their feet. And justly, since they had been cast into it for the glory of God. Let us, as many of us as are afflicted, hold fast these examples.

But behold, they were delivered from their affliction, you say, and we are not. True, they were delivered, and justly; since they did not enter into that furnace expecting deliverance, but as if to die outright. For hear what they say: “There is a God in Heaven, Who will deliver us. But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” (Dan. iii. 17, 18)”

He refers to **Daniel 3 (KJV):17** If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Chrysostom continues, “But we, as if bargaining on the chastisements of the Lord, even fix a time, saying, “If He does not show mercy till this time.” Therefore it is that we are not delivered. Surely Abraham did not leave his home expecting again to receive his son, but as prepared to sacrifice him; and it was contrary to his expectation that he received him again safe.”

Actually, we read that Abraham was a man of great faith, as in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):17** By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

He continues, “And thou, when thou fallest into tribulation, be not in haste to be delivered, prepare thy mind for all endurance, and speedily thou shalt be delivered from thy affliction. For God brings it upon thee for this end, that He may chasten thee. When therefore from the first we learn to bear it patiently, and do not sink into despair, He presently relieves us, as having effected the whole matter.”

It is because God loves us that He chastens us as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):6** For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

He continues, “I should like to tell you an instructive story, which has much of profit in it. What then is it? Once, when a persecution arose, and a severe war was raging against the Church, two men were apprehended. The one was ready to suffer anything whatever; the other was prepared to submit with firmness to be beheaded, but with fear and trembling shrunk from other tortures. Observe then the dispensation towards these men. When the judge was seated, he ordered the one who was ready to endure anything, to be beheaded. The other he caused to be hung up and tortured, and that not once or twice, but from city to city. Now why was this permitted? That he might recover through torments that quality of mind which he had neglected, that he might shake off all cowardice, and be no longer afraid to endure anything. Joseph too, when he was urgent to escape from prison, was left to remain there. For hear him saying, “Indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews; but do thou make mention of me to the king.” (Gen. xl. 14, 15)”

He refers to **Genesis 40 (KJV):** 14 But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: 15 For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon.

He continues, “And for this he was suffered to remain, that he might learn not to place hope or confidence in men, but to cast all upon God. Knowing these things therefore let us give thanks to God, and let us do all things that are expedient for us, that we may obtain the good things to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom to the Father be glory, with the Holy Ghost, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.”

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY VII, page 29**

Now to this end God hath opened to us many ways. For, “Tell thou first,” saith He, “thy sins, that thou mayest be justified” (Isa. xliii. 26); and again, “I said, I have declared mine iniquity unto Thee, and Thou hast takeaway the unrighteousness of my heart” (Ps. xxxii. 5, LXX); since a continual accusation and remembrance of sins contributes not a little to lessen their magnitude. But there is another more prevailing way than this; to bear malice against none of those who have offended against us, to forgive their trespasses to all those who have trespassed against us. Will you learn a third? Hear Daniel, saying, “Redeem thy sins by almsdeeds, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.” (Dan. iv. 27, LXX) And there is another besides this; constancy in prayer, and persevering attendance on the intercessions made with God. In like manner fasting brings to us some, and that not small comfort and release from sins committed, provided it be attended with kindness to others, and quenches the vehemence of the wrath of God. (1 Tim. ii. 1) For “water will quench a blazing fire, and by almsdeeds sins are purged away.” (Ecclus. iii. 30, LXX)

Let us then travel along all these ways; for if we give ourselves wholly to these employments, if on them we spend our time, not only shall we wash off our bygone transgressions, but shall gain very great profit for the future. For we shall not allow the devil to assault us with leisure either for slothful living, or for pernicious curiosity, since by these among other means, and in consequence of these, he leads us to foolish questions and hurtful disputations, from seeing us at leisure, and idle, and taking no forethought for excellency of

living. But let us block up this approach against him, let us watch, let us be sober, that having in this short time toiled a little, we may obtain eternal goods in endless ages, by the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom and with whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “Now to this end God hath opened to us many ways. For, “Tell thou first,” saith He, “thy sins, that thou mayest be justified” (Isa. xliiii. 26);”

He refers in context to **Isaiah 43 (KJV):25** I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. 26 Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.

He continues, “and again, “I said, I have declared mine iniquity unto Thee, and Thou hast take away the unrighteousness of my heart” (Ps. xxxii. 5, LXX);”

He refers to **Psalms 32 (Septuagint):5** I acknowledged my sin, and hid not mine iniquity: I said, I will confess mine iniquity to the Lord against myself; and thou forgavest the ungodliness of my heart. Pause.

And to **Psalms 32 (KJV):5** I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

Chrysostom continues, “since a continual accusation and remembrance of sins contributes not a little to lessen their magnitude. But there is another more prevailing way than this; to bear malice against none of those who have offended against us, to forgive their trespasses to all those who have trespassed against us. Will you learn a third? Hear Daniel, saying, “Redeem thy sins by almsdeeds, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.” (Dan. iv. 27, LXX)”

He refers to **Daniel 4 (Septuagint):24** Therefore, O king, let my counsel please thee, and atone for thy sins by alms, and *thine* iniquities by compassion on the poor: it may be God will be longsuffering to thy trespasses.

And to **Daniel 4 (KJV):27** Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

The words “break off” are a translation of the Hebrew word פָּרַק (pronounced per-ak’); (Aramaic) corresponding to H6561; to discontinue:—break off.

He continues, “And there is another besides this; constancy in prayer, and persevering attendance on the intercessions made with God. In like manner fasting brings to us some, and that not small comfort and release from sins committed, provided it be attended with kindness to others, and quenches the vehemence of the wrath of God. (1 Tim. ii. 1)”

He refers in context to **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):1** I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

He continues, “For “water will quench a blazing fire, and by almsdeeds sins are purged away.” (Ecclus. iii. 30, LXX)

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 3 (KJV):30** Water will quench a flaming fire; and alms maketh an atonement for sins.

But Ecclesiasticus is not a canonical book of the Old Testament, though it was accepted by the Church in the time of Chrysostom.

He concludes, “Let us then travel along all these ways; for if we give ourselves wholly to these employments, if on them we spend our time, not only shall we wash off our bygone transgressions, but shall gain very great profit for the future. For we shall not allow the devil to assault us with leisure either for slothful living, or for pernicious curiosity, since by these among other means, and in consequence of these, he leads us to foolish questions and hurtful disputations, from seeing us at leisure, and idle, and taking no forethought for excellency of living. But let us block up this approach against him, let us watch, let us be sober, that having in this short time toiled a little, we may obtain eternal goods in endless ages, by the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom and with whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

It is interesting that he did not note **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LIX, page 216**

...How many of those who now stand here would desire to have been born at that time, when Christ went about the earth in the flesh, to have conversed and sat at meat with Him? Lo, this may be done now, we may invite Him more than then to a meal, and feast with Him, and that to greater profit. For of those who then feasted with Him many even perished, as Judas and others like him; but every one of those who invite Him to their houses now, and share with Him table and roof, shall enjoy a great blessing. “Come,” it saith, “ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me.” (Matt. xxv. 34–36) That then we may hear these words, let us clothe the naked, let us bring in the stranger, feed the hungry, give the thirsty drink, let us visit the sick, and look upon him that is in prison, that we may have boldness and obtain remission of our sins, and share those good things which transcend both speech and thought. Which may we all obtain, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory and the might forever. Amen.

**Commentary:** Chrysostom writes, “...How many of those who now stand here would desire to have been born at that time, when Christ went about the earth in the flesh, to have conversed and sat at meat with Him? Lo, this may be done now, we may invite Him more than then to a meal, and feast with Him, and that to greater profit. For of those who then feasted with Him many even perished, as Judas and others like him; but every one of those who invite Him to their houses now, and share with Him table and roof, shall enjoy a great blessing. “Come,” it saith, “ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I

was a stranger, and ye took Me in; sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me.” (Matt. xxv. 34–36)”

He refers again to **Matthew 25 (KJV):**34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

He continues, “That then we may hear these words, let us clothe the naked, let us bring in the stranger, feed the hungry, give the thirsty drink, let us visit the sick, and look upon him that is in prison, that we may have boldness and obtain remission of our sins, and share those good things which transcend both speech and thought. Which may we all obtain, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory and the might forever. Amen.”

The remission of sins is mentioned in **Matthew 26 (KJV):**27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

And in **Acts 10 (KJV):**43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

And in **Romans 3 (KJV):**25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

And in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

And in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):**18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

Nowhere in the canonical Scriptures is it said that we receive remission of our sins by showing mercy, or giving alms. This was an assumption based on a misinterpretation of Matthew 25:31-46, and Daniel 4:27, and Ecclesiasticus 3:30.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXIX, page 255-256**

[3.] Let us then ever flee this monster: various and manifold it is, and everywhere sheds its peculiar venom, in wealth, in luxury, in beauty of person. Through this we everywhere go beyond needful use; through this arises extravagance in garments, and a great swarm of domestics; through this the needful use is every where despised, in our houses, our garments, our table; and extravagance prevails. Wilt thou enjoy glory? Do alms-deeds, then shall Angels praise thee, then shall God receive thee. Now the admiration goes no farther than the goldsmiths and weavers, and thou departest without a crown, often seeing that thou receivest curses. But if thou put not these things about thy body, but expend them in feeding the poor, great will be the applause from all sides, great the praise. Then shalt thou have them, when thou givest them to others; when thou keepest them to thyself, then thou hast them not. For a house is a faithless treasury, but a sure treasury are the hands of the poor. Why adornest thou thy body, while thy soul is neglected, possessed by uncleanness? Why bestowest thou not so much thought on thy

soul, as thy body? Thou oughtest to bestow greater; but anyhow, beloved, we ought to bestow equal care upon it. For tell me, if any one asked thee which thou wouldest choose, that thy body should be fresh and of good habit and surpassing in beauty, and wear mean raiment, or having the body deformed and full of diseases, to wear gold and finery; wouldest thou not much prefer to have beauty depending on the nature of thy person, than on the raiment with which thou art clothed? And wilt thou choose this in the case of thy body, but the contrary in the case of thy soul; and, when thou hast that ugly and unsightly and black, dost thou think to gain anything from golden ornaments? What madness is this! Shift this adorning within, put these necklaces about thy soul. The things that are put about thy body help neither to its health nor to its beauty, for it will not make black white, nor what is ugly either beautiful or good looking. But if thou put them about thy soul, thou shalt soon make it white instead of black, instead of ugly and unsightly, thou shalt make it beautiful and well-favored. The words are not mine, but those of the Lord Himself, who saith, “Though thy sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow” (Isa. i. 18 , LXX); and, “Give alms—and all things shall be clean unto you” (Luke xi. 41); and by such a disposition thou shalt beautify not thyself only, but thy husband. For they if they see you putting off these outward ornaments, will have no great need of expense, and not having it, they will abstain from all covetousness, and will be more inclined to give alms, and ye too will be able boldly to give them fitting counsel. At present ye are deprived of all such authority. For with what mouth will ye speak of these things? with what eyes will ye look your husbands in the face, asking money for alms, when ye spend most upon the covering of your bodies? Then wilt thou be able boldly to speak with thy husband concerning alms-giving, when thou layest aside thine ornaments of gold. Even if thou accomplish nothing, thou hast fulfilled all thy part; but I should rather say, that it is impossible that the wife should not gain the husband, when she speaks by the very actions. “For what knowest thou, O woman, whether thou shalt save thy husband?” (1 Cor. vii. 16) As then now thou shalt give account both for thyself and for him, so if thou put off all this vanity thou shalt have a double crown, wearing thy crown and triumphing with thy husband through those unalloyed ages, and enjoying the everlasting good things, which may we all obtain, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “[3.] Let us then ever flee this monster: various and manifold it is, and everywhere sheds its peculiar venom, in wealth, in luxury, in beauty of person. Through this we everywhere go beyond needful use; through this arises extravagance in garments, and a great swarm of domestics; through this the needful use is every where despised, in our houses, our garments, our table; and extravagance prevails. Wilt thou enjoy glory? Do alms-deeds, then shall Angels praise thee, then shall God receive thee. Now the admiration goes no farther than the goldsmiths and weavers, and thou departest without a crown, often seeing that thou receivest curses. But if thou put not these things about thy body, but expend them in feeding the poor, great will be the applause from all sides, great the praise. Then shalt thou have them, when thou givest them to others; when thou keepest them to thyself, then thou hast them not. For a house is a faithless treasury, but a sure treasury are the hands of the poor. Why adornest thou thy body, while thy soul is neglected, possessed by uncleanness? Why bestowest thou not so much thought on thy soul, as thy body? Thou oughtest to bestow greater; but anyhow, beloved, we ought to bestow equal care upon it. For tell me, if any one asked thee

which thou wouldest choose, that thy body should be fresh and of good habit and surpassing in beauty, and wear mean raiment, or having the body deformed and full of diseases, to wear gold and finery; wouldest thou not much prefer to have beauty depending on the nature of thy person, than on the raiment with which thou art clothed? And wilt thou choose this in the case of thy body, but the contrary in the case of thy soul; and, when thou hast that ugly and unsightly and black, dost thou think to gain anything from golden ornaments? What madness is this! Shift this adorning within, put these necklaces about thy soul. The things that are put about thy body help neither to its health nor to its beauty, for it will not make black white, nor what is ugly either beautiful or good looking. But if thou put them about thy soul, thou shalt soon make it white instead of black, instead of ugly and unsightly, thou shalt make it beautiful and wellfavored. The words are not mine, but those of the Lord Himself, who saith, “Though thy sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow” (Isa. i. 18 , LXX);”

He refers to **Isaiah 1 (Septuagint):18** And come, let us reason together, saith the Lord: and though your sins be as purple, I will make them white as snow; and though they be as scarlet, I will make them white as wool.

And to **Isaiah 1 (KJV):18** Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

He continues, “and, “Give alms—and all things shall be clean unto you” (Luke xi. 41);”

He refers in context to **Luke 11 (KJV):39** And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. 40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? 41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

But a more literal translation reads as in **Luke 11 (NASB):39** But the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but inside of you, you are full of robbery and wickedness. 40 You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also? 41 But give that which is within as charity, and then all things are clean for you.

Jesus was speaking of cleansing the inside of the cup. This cleansing comes about by faith in Him.

He continues, “and by such a disposition thou shalt beautify not thyself only, but thy husband. For they if they see you putting off these outward ornaments, will have no great need of expense, and not having it, they will abstain from all covetousness, and will be more inclined to give alms, and ye too will be able boldly to give them fitting counsel. At present ye are deprived of all such authority. For with what mouth will ye speak of these things? with what eyes will ye look your husbands in the face, asking money for alms, when ye spend most upon the covering of your bodies? Then wilt thou be able boldly to speak with thy husband concerning almsgiving, when thou layest aside thine ornaments of gold. Even if thou accomplish nothing, thou hast fulfilled all thy part; but I should rather say, that it is impossible that the wife should not gain the husband, when she speaks by the very actions. “For what knowest thou, O woman, whether thou shalt save thy husband?” (1 Cor. vii. 16)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):16** For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?



He concludes, “As then now thou shalt give account both for thyself and for him, so if thou put off all this vanity thou shalt have a double crown, wearing thy crown and triumphing with thy husband through those unalloyed ages, and enjoying the everlasting good things, which may we all obtain, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXXXI, page 302**

...Wherefore I pray and beseech you not to bring loss on yourselves, nor, keeping hold of mire, rob yourselves of the treasures which are above, bringing your vessel to port laden with straw and chaff. Let each say what he will concerning us, let him be angry at our continual admonitions, let him call us silly, tedious, tiresome, still we will not desist from exhorting you on these matters continually, and from continually repeating to you that of the Prophet, “‘Break off thy sins by almsgiving, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor’ (Dan. iv. 27), and bind them upon thy neck.” Do not act in this way today, and desist to-morrow. For even this body has need of daily food; and so too hath the soul, or rather that much more; and if it give not, it becomes weaker and more vile. Let us then not neglect it when it is perishing, choking. Many wounds it receives each day, by being lustful, angry, slothful, reviling, revengeful, envious. It is therefore necessary to prepare also remedies for it, and no small remedy is that of almsgiving, which can be placed on every wound. For, “Give alms,” it saith, “of such things as ye have, and behold all things are clean unto you.” (Luke xi. 41) “Alms,” not covetousness, for that which proceeds from covetousness endures not, though thou give to those who need. For almsgiving is that which is free from all injustice, “this” makes all things clean. This is a thing better even than fasting, or lying on the ground; they may be more painful and laborious, but this more profitable. It enlightens the soul, makes it sleek, beautiful, and vigorous. Not so doth the fruit of the olive hold up the athletes, as this oil recovers the combatants of piety. Let us then anoint our hands, that we may lift them up well against our adversary. He that practiceth showing mercy to him that needeth, will soon cease from covetousness, he who continues in giving to the poor, will soon cease from anger, and will never even be highminded. For as the physician continually tending wounded persons is easily sobered, beholding human nature in the calamities of others; so we, if we enter upon the work of aiding the poor, shall easily become truly wise, and shall not admire riches, nor deem present things any great matter, but despise them all, and soaring aloft to heaven, shall easily obtain the eternal blessings, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**Commentary:** Chrysostom writes, “...Wherefore I pray and beseech you not to bring loss on yourselves, nor, keeping hold of mire, rob yourselves of the treasures which are above, bringing your vessel to port laden with straw and chaff. Let each say what he will concerning us, let him be angry at our continual admonitions, let him call us silly, tedious, tiresome, still we will not desist from exhorting you on these matters continually, and from continually repeating to you that of the Prophet, “‘Break off thy sins by almsgiving, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor’ (Dan. iv. 27), and bind them upon thy neck.””

He refers to **Daniel 4 (Septuagint):24** Therefore, O king, let my counsel please thee, and atone for thy sins by alms, and *thine* iniquities by compassion on the poor: it may be God will be longsuffering to thy trespasses.

And to **Daniel 4 (KJV):27** Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

He continues, “Do not act in this way today, and desist tomorrow. For even this body has need of daily food; and so too hath the soul, or rather that much more; and if it give not, it becomes weaker and more vile. Let us then not neglect it when it is perishing, choking. Many wounds it receives each day, by being lustful, angry, slothful, reviling, revengeful, envious. It is therefore necessary to prepare also remedies for it, and no small remedy is that of almsgiving, which can be placed on every wound. For, “Give alms,” it saith, “of such things as ye have, and behold all things are clean unto you.” (Luke xi. 41)”

He refers in context to **Luke 11 (KJV):39** And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. 40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? 41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

But a more literal translation reads as in Luke 11 (**NASB**):39 But the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but inside of you, you are full of robbery and wickedness. 40 You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also? 41 But give that which is within as charity, and then all things are clean for you.

He continues, ““Alms,” not covetousness, for that which proceeds from covetousness endures not, though thou give to those who need. For almsgiving is that which is free from all injustice, “this” makes all things clean. This is a thing better even than fasting, or lying on the ground; they may be more painful and laborious, but this more profitable. It enlightens the soul, makes it sleek, beautiful, and vigorous. Not so doth the fruit of the olive hold up the athletes, as this oil recovers the combatants of piety. Let us then anoint our hands, that we may lift them up well against our adversary. He that practiceth showing mercy to him that needeth, will soon cease from covetousness, he who continues in giving to the poor, will soon cease from anger, and will never even be highminded. For as the physician continually tending wounded persons is easily sobered, beholding human nature in the calamities of others; so we, if we enter upon the work of aiding the poor, shall easily become truly wise, and shall not admire riches, nor deem present things any great matter, but despise them all, and soaring aloft to heaven, shall easily obtain the eternal blessings, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

#### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXXXV, page 322**

Let us perform the obsequies of the departed, as is good both for us and them, to the glory of God: let us do much alms for their sake, let us send with them the best provision for the way. For if the memory of admirable men, though dead, hath protected the living, (for, “I will

defend,” it saith, “this city for Mine Own. sake, and for My servant David’s sake”— 2 Kings xix. 34,) much more will alms-doing effect this; for this hath raised even the dead, as when the widows stood round showing what things Dorcas had made, while she was with them. (Acts ix. 39) When therefore one is about to die, let the friend of that dying person prepare the obsequies (**Schaff Note:** or, “burial dress,” τὰ ἐντάφια) and persuade the departing one to leave somewhat to the needy. With these garments let him send him to the grave, leaving Christ his heir. For if they who write kings among their heirs, leave a safe portion to their relations, when one leaves Christ heir with his children, consider how great good he will draw down upon himself and all his. These are the right sort of funerals, these profit both those who remain and those who depart. If we be so buried, we shall be glorious at the Resurrection time. But if caring for the body we neglect the soul, we then shall suffer many terrible things, and incur much ridicule. For neither is it a common unseemliness to depart without being clothed with virtue, nor is the body, though cast out without a tomb, so disgraced, as a soul appearing bare of virtue in that day. This let us put on, this let us wrap around us; it is best to do so during all our lifetime; but if we have in this life been negligent, let us at least in our end be sober, and charge our relations to help us when we depart by alms-doing; that being thus assisted by each other, we may attain to much confidence, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory, dominion, and honor, now and ever and world without end. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “Let us perform the obsequies of the departed, as is good both for us and them, to the glory of God: let us do much alms for their sake, let us send with them the best provision for the way. For if the memory of admirable men, though dead, hath protected the living, (for, “I will defend,” it saith, “this city for Mine Own. sake, and for My servant David’s sake”— 2 Kings xix. 34,) much more will alms-doing effect this; for this hath raised even the dead, as when the widows stood round showing what things Dorcas had made, while she was with them. (Acts ix. 39)”

He refers to **2 Kings 19 (KJV):34** For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

And in context to **Acts 9 (KJV):36** Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. 37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. 39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. 40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. 41 And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

The faith of Peter is what God used to work a miracle, and bring her back to life. It was not her alms, but God’s mercy. He continues, “When therefore one is about to die, let the friend of that dying person prepare the obsequies (**Schaff Note:** or, “burial dress,” τὰ ἐντάφια) and persuade the departing one to leave somewhat to the needy. With these garments let him send him to the grave, leaving Christ his heir. For if they who write kings among their heirs, leave a

safe portion to their relations, when one leaves Christ heir with his children, consider how great good he will draw down upon himself and all his. These are the right sort of funerals, these profit both those who remain and those who depart. If we be so buried, we shall be glorious at the Resurrection time. But if caring for the body we neglect the soul, we then shall suffer many terrible things, and incur much ridicule. For neither is it a common unseemliness to depart without being clothed with virtue, nor is the body, though cast out without a tomb, so disgraced, as a soul appearing bare of virtue in that day. This let us put on, this let us wrap around us; it is best to do so during all our lifetime; but if we have in this life been negligent, let us at least in our end be sober, and charge our relations to help us when we depart by alms-doing; that being thus assisted by each other, we may attain to much confidence, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory, dominion, and honor, now and ever and world without end. Amen.”

## Commentary Summary

Concerning **Alms**, we see that Chrysostom laid great emphasis on almsgiving. He believed that without it one could not be saved. He believed that if we give alms, God will remit our sins, basing this on **Daniel 4 (Septuagint):24** Therefore, O king, let my counsel please thee, and atone for thy sins by alms, and *thine* iniquities by compassion on the poor: it may be God will be longsuffering to thy trespasses:

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY XLVII, page 295**, he says, speaking of Matthew, “Let us imitate then this virtue, and most of all his humility and almsgiving, without which one cannot be saved.”

His thinking about almsgiving was mainly based on Matthew 25:31-46. The root meaning of the Greek word translated “alms” in the New Testament is compassion, and showing mercy. At the judgment of the nations, the sheep nations are those who had compassion, or showed mercy to Christ’s brethren during the tribulation period. The goat nations are those who did not have compassion, or show mercy, to Christ’s brethren during the tribulation. But Chrysostom interpreted this reference in Scripture to mean that one could not be saved if they had not had compassion, or shown mercy to anyone.

And he says, “And this is shown by the five virgins, and together with them by the Pharisee. For without virginity indeed it is possible to see the kingdom, but without almsgiving it cannot be. For this is among the things that are essential, and hold all together. Not unnaturally then have we called it the heart of virtue.”

So to Chrysostom, almsgiving is “essential”, that is, to salvation.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXIV, page 395-396**, he says, “And why do I speak of the whole code.”

By “code” he is speaking of the “entire code of laws” of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

And he says, “For even a part of it overlooked brings upon one great evils; as, for instance, almsgiving overlooked casts into hell them that have come short in it; and yet this is not the whole of virtue, but a part thereof.”

And he says, “But I have also something more than these things to say again. I mean, that not only one of them overlooked shuts Heaven against us, but though it be done, yet not in due perfection and abundance, it produces the selfsame effect again. “For except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.” (Matthew 5:20)”

And referring to the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, he says, “So that though thou give alms, but not more than they, thou shalt not enter in.”

But the Pharisees trusted in themselves that they were righteous. We need God’s righteousness which we can only obtain by faith.

The scribes and the Pharisees were unbelievers who had not been born again. Chrysostom did not understand that we do not enter in because of our own righteousness, but because of His righteousness, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; **24** Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: **25** Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; **26** To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. **27** Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. **28** Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. **29** Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: **30** Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. **31** Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

Paul didn’t want his own righteousness, as we read in **Philippians 3 (KJV):9** And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

When he doesn’t really say how much in alms one must give, Chrysostom was laying a terrible burden on believers by making almsgiving a requirement to be saved. We are saved when we surrender to the Lord in faith, believing that Jesus rose from the dead, and we confess Him as Lord.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XXX**, he says, “Since nothing is more fearful and full of anguish than that voice which they who departed without abundant almsgiving shall then hear the Bridegroom, “I know you not.” (S. Matt. xxv. 12)”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILIPPIANS, HOMILY I, page 187-188**, he says, “So that what I want is this, that you may have a relief from your own sins. But he that gives not so will have no relief.”

To Chrysostom, feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, covering the naked, giving shelter to the stranger, freed us from our sins, and was a requirement to be saved.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY VI, page 497-500**, he says, “Seest thou that a failure in alms-giving is enough to cast a man into hell fire?”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TITUS, HOMILY VI, 540-543**, he says, “For almsgiving is the mother of love, of that love, which is the characteristic of Christianity, which is greater than all miracles, by which the disciples of Christ

are manifested. It is the medicine of our sins, the cleansing of the filth of our souls, the ladder fixed to heaven; it binds together the body of Christ.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY VII, page 216**, he says, “since a continual accusation and remembrance of sins contributes not a little to lessen their magnitude. But there is another more prevailing way than this; to bear malice against none of those who have offended against us, to forgive their trespasses to all those who have trespassed against us. Will you learn a third? Hear Daniel, saying, “Redeem thy sins by almsdeeds, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.” (Dan. iv. 27, LXX)”

He refers to **Daniel 4 (Septuagint):24** Therefore, O king, let my counsel please thee, and atone for thy sins by alms, and *thine* iniquities by compassion on the poor: it may be God will be longsuffering to thy trespasses.

And to **Daniel 4 (KJV):27** Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

The words “break off” are a translation of the Hebrew word פָּרַק (pronounced per-ak’); (Aramaic) corresponding to H6561; to discontinue:—break off. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H6562**

And he says, “And there is another besides this; constancy in prayer, and persevering attendance on the intercessions made with God. In like manner fasting brings to us some, and that not small comfort and release from sins committed, provided it be attended with kindness to others, and quenches the vehemence of the wrath of God. (1 Tim. ii. 1)”

And he says, “For “water will quench a blazing fire, and by almsdeeds sins are purged away.” (Ecclus. iii. 30, LXX)”

But Ecclesiasticus is not a canonical book of the Old Testament, though it was accepted by the Church in the time of Chrysostom.

He did not realize that a simple confession of sin is enough because the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LIX, page 216**, he says, ““Come,” it saith, “ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me.” (Matt. xxv. 34–36) That then we may hear these words, let us clothe the naked, let us bring in the stranger, feed the hungry, give the thirsty drink, let us visit the sick, and look upon him that is in prison, that we may have boldness and obtain remission of our sins, and share those good things which transcend both speech and thought.”

But nowhere in the canonical Scriptures is it said that we receive remission of our sins by showing mercy, or giving alms. This was an assumption based on a misinterpretation of Matthew 25:31-46, and Daniel 4:27, and Ecclesiasticus 3:30. In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXIX, page 255-256**, he says, “and, “Give alms—and all things shall be clean unto you” (Luke xi. 41);”

But Jesus was speaking of cleansing the inside of the cup. This cleansing comes about by faith in Him.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXXXI, page 302**, he says, “For almsgiving is that which is free from all injustice, “this” makes all things clean. This is a thing better even than fasting, or lying on the ground; they may be more painful and laborious, but this more profitable. It enlightens the soul, makes it sleek, beautiful, and vigorous.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXXXV, page 322**, he says, “For if the memory of admirable men, though dead, hath protected the living, (for, “I will defend,” it saith, “this city for Mine Own. sake, and for My servant David’s sake”— 2 Kings xix. 34,) much more will alms-doing effect this; for this hath raised even the dead, as when the widows stood round showing what things Dorcas had made, while she was with them. (Acts ix. 39)”

But the faith of Peter is what God used to work a miracle, and bring her back to life. It was not her alms, but God’s mercy.

The Scriptures are clear, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

It is not by good works, as we read in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

We are saved by our faith in Jesus Christ as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

When we believe, we pass from death to life as Jesus taught in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

## **Penance**

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, LETTERS TO OLYMPIAS, page 295-296**

Therefore even if you remain at home, and are set fast in bed, do not consider your life an idle one; for you undergo more severe pains than those who are dragged, and maltreated, and tortured by executioners, inasmuch as in this excessive infirmity of yours you have a perpetual executioner residing with you.

4. Do not then now desire death, nor neglect the means of cure; for indeed this would not be safe. On this account Paul also exhorts Timothy to take the greatest care of himself. As regards infirmity then enough has now been said. But if it is separation from me which causes your despondency expect release from this. And I have not said this now merely to encourage you, but I am sure that it really will be the case. For if it were not destined to happen, I should



long ago, so at least I think, have departed from this world, considering the trials which have been inflicted on me. For to pass over all that occurred in Constantinople, after my departure thence, you may understand what sufferings I endured on that long and cruel journey, most of which were sufficient to produce death; what I endured after my arrival here, after my removal from Cucusus, and after my sojourn in Arabissus. Yet I have survived all these things, and now I am in sound health, and great security, so that all Armenians are astonished that with such a feeble and flimsy frame as mine I can support such an intolerable amount of cold, or that I can breathe at all, when those who are habituated to the winter are suffering from it in no common degree. Nevertheless I have remained uninjured up to the present day, having escaped the hands of robbers who have repeatedly attacked us, and yet in daily want of the necessaries of life, and deprived of the use of a bath; and although since my sojourn here I have been constantly without this luxury I am now so established in the habit that I do not even long for the comfort to be derived from it, but am in sounder health than before. And neither the inclemency of the climate, nor the desolation of the region, nor the scarcity of provisions, nor the lack of attendants, nor the unskillfulness of physicians, nor the deprivation of the bath, nor perpetual confinement in one chamber as in a prison, and the impossibility of moving about which I always used continually to need, nor perpetual contact with fire and smoke, nor fear of robbers, nor a constant state of siege, nor anything else of this kind has got the better of me; on the contrary I am in a sounder condition of health than I was elsewhere, although I then received great care and attention. Taking all these things then into consideration pray shake off the despondency which now oppresses you, and do not exact inordinate and cruel penances from yourself. I sent you the treatise which I have lately written, that “no one can harm the man who does not injure himself,” and the letter which I now send your honour contends for the same position. I beg you therefore to go over it constantly, and if your health permits you, recite it aloud. For if you will, it may prove an effectual remedy for you.

**Commentary:** In summary, Chrysostom wanted moderation in doing penances, as he says above, “Taking all these things then into consideration pray shake off the despondency which now oppresses you, and do not exact inordinate and cruel penances from yourself.”

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, Homily X, Matt. III. 1, 2, page 64-65**

4. “And the same John had his raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins.” (Matthew 3:4)

Observe, how the prophets foretold some things, others they left to the evangelists. Wherefore also Matthew both sets down the prophecies, and adds his own part, not accounting even this superfluous, to speak of the dress of the righteous man.

For indeed it was a marvellous and strange thing to behold so great austerity in a human frame: which thing also particularly attracted the Jews, seeing in him the great Elijah, and guided by what they then beheld, to the memory of that blessed man; or rather, even to a greater astonishment. For the one indeed was brought up in cities and in houses, the other dwelt entirely in the wilderness from his very swaddling clothes. For it became the forerunner of Him who



was to put away all the ancient ills, the labor, for example, the curse, the sorrow, the sweat; himself also to have certain tokens of such a gift, and to come at once to be above that condemnation. Thus he neither ploughed land, nor opened furrow, he ate not his bread by the sweat of his face, but his table was hastily supplied, and his clothing more easily furnished than his table, and his lodging yet less troublesome than his clothing. For he needed neither roof, nor bed, nor table, nor any other of these things, but a kind of angel's life in this our flesh did he exhibit. For this cause his very garment was of hair, that by his dress he might instruct men to separate themselves from all things human, and to have nothing in common with the earth, but to hasten back to their earlier nobleness, wherein Adam was before he wanted garments or robe. Thus that garb bore tokens of nothing less than a kingdom, and of repentance.

And do not say to me, "Whence had he a garment of hair and a girdle, dwelling as he did in the wilderness?" For if thou art to make a difficulty of this, thou wilt also inquire into more things besides; how in the winters, and how in the heats of summer, he continued in the wilderness, and this with a delicate body, and at an immature age? how the nature of his infant flesh endured such great inconstancy of weather, and a diet so uncommon, and all the other hardships arising from the wilderness?

Where now are the philosophers of the Greeks, who at random and for nought emulated the shamelessness of the Cynics (for what is the profit of being shut up in a tub, and afterwards running into such wantonness)? they who encompassed themselves with rings and cups, and men servants and maid servants, and with much pomp besides, falling into either extreme. But this man was not so; but he dwelt in the wilderness as in Heaven, showing forth all strictness of self-restraint. And from thence, like some angel from Heaven, he went down unto the cities, being a champion of godliness, and a crowned victor over the world, and a philosopher of that philosophy which is worthy of the heavens. And these things were, when sin was not yet put away, when the law had not yet ceased, when death was not yet bound, when the brazen gates were not yet broken up, but while the ancient polity still was in force.

Such is the nature of a noble and thoroughly vigilant soul, for it is everywhere springing forward, and passing beyond the limits set to it; as Paul (**Schaff Note:** As in refusing to be supported (in several cases) by those to whom he preached the gospel. See his account of his views in so doing, 1 Cor. ix., especially towards the end of the chapter.) also did with respect to the new polity.

But why, it may be asked, did he use a girdle with his raiment? This was customary with them of old time, before men passed into this soft and loose kind of dress. Thus, for instance, both Peter (John 21:7) appears to have been "girded," and Paul; for it saith, "the man that owneth this girdle." (Acts 21:11) And Elijah (2 Kings 1:8) too was thus arrayed, and every one of the saints, because they were at work continually, laboring, and busying themselves either in journeyings, or about some other necessary matter; and not for this cause only, but also with a view of trampling under foot all ornaments, and practising all austerity. This very kind of thing accordingly Christ declares to be the greatest praise of virtue, thus saying, "What went ye out for to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in king's houses." (Matthew 11:8)

But if he, who was so pure, and more glorious than the heaven, and above all prophets, than whom none greater was born, and who had such great boldness of speech, thus exercised himself in austerity, scorning so exceedingly all dissolute delicacy, and training himself to this

hard life; what excuse shall we have, who after so great a benefit, and the unnumbered burdens of our sins, do not show forth so much as the least part of his penance, (ἐξομολογεω) but are drinking and surfeiting, and smelling of perfumes, and in no better trim than the harlot women on the stage, and are by all means softening ourselves, and making ourselves an easy prey to the devil? (**Schaff Note:** [τ διαβλ. The Oxford edition has “the devils,” but this is misleading, since it suggests a reference to “demons.” Probably the plural is a misprint.—R.]])

5. “Then went out to him all Judea, and Jerusalem, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him, confessing their sins.” (Matthew 3:5-6)

Seest thou how great power was in the coming of the prophet? how he stirred up all the people; how he led them to a consideration of their own sins? For it was indeed worthy of wonder to behold him in human form showing forth such things and using so great freedom of speech, and rising up in condemnation of all as children, and having his great grace beaming out from his countenance. And, moreover, the appearance of a prophet after the great interval of time contributed to their amazement, because the gift had failed them, and returned to them after a long time. And the nature of his preaching too was strange and unusual. For they heard of none of those things to which they were accustomed; such as wars and battles and victories below, and famine and pestilence, and Babylonians and Persians, and the taking of the city, and the other things with which they were familiar, but of Heaven and of the kingdom there, and of the punishment in hell. And it was for this cause, let me add, that although they that committed revolt in the wilderness, those in the company of Judas, and of Theudas, (Acts 5:36-37) had been all of them slain no great while before, yet they were not the more backward to go out thither. For neither was it for the same objects that he summoned them, as for dominion, or revolt, or revolution; but in order to lead them by the hand to the kingdom on high. Wherefore neither did he keep them in the wilderness to take them about with him, but baptizing them, and teaching them the rules concerning self denial, he dismissed them; by all means instructing them to scorn whatever things are on earth, and to raise themselves up to the things to come, and press on every day.

6. This man then let us also emulate, and forsaking luxury and drunkenness let us go over unto the life of restraint. For this surely is the time of confession both for the uninitiated and for the baptized; for the one, that upon their repentance they may partake of the sacred mysteries; for the others, that having washed away their stain after baptism, they may approach the table with a clean conscience. Let us then forsake this soft and effeminate way of living. For it is not, it is not possible at once both to do penance (ἐξομολογεσθαι) and to live in luxury. And this let John teach you by his raiment, by his food, by his abode. What then? dost thou require us, you may say, to practice such self-restraint as this? I do not require it, but I advise and recommend it. But if this be not possible to you, let us at least, though in cities, show forth repentance, for the judgment is surely at our doors. But even if it were further off, we ought not even so to be emboldened, for the term of each man’s life is the end of the world virtually to him that is summoned. But that it is even at the doors, hear Paul saying, “The night is far spent, the day is at hand” (Romans 13:12) and again, “He that cometh will come, and will not tarry.” (Hebrews 10:37)

For the signs too are now complete, which announce that day. For “this Gospel of the Kingdoms,” saith He, “shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then

shall the end come.” (**Schaff Note:** Matt. xxiv. 14 [“All the nations,” so R.V., and comp. what follows here.—R.]) Attend with care to what is said. He said not, “when it hath been believed by all men,” but “when it hath been preached to (**Schaff Note:** [παρ πντων νθρωπων...παρ πασ, is the explanation of Chrysostom, paraphrasing the New Testament passage.—R.]) all.” For this cause he also said, “for a witness to the nations,” to show, that He doth not wait for all men to believe, and then for Him to come. Since the phrase, “for a witness,” hath this meaning, “for accusation,” “for reproof,” “for condemnation of them that have not believed.”

But we, while hearing these things and seeing them, slumber, and see dreams, sunk in a lethargy, as in some very deepest night. ([ἐν βαθυττ νυκτ]) For the things present are nothing better than dreams, whether they be prosperous, or whether they be painful. Wherefore I entreat you now at length to be awakened, and to look another way, unto the Sun of Righteousness. For no man while sleeping can see the sun, nor delight his eyes with the beauty of its beams; but whatever he may see, he beholds all as in a dream. For this cause we need much penance, and many tears; both as being in a state of insensibility while we err, and because our sins are great, and beyond excuse. And that I lie not, the more part of them that hear me are witnesses. Nevertheless, although they be beyond excuse, let us repent, and we shall receive crowns.

7. But by repentance I mean, not only to forsake our former evil deeds, but also to show forth good deeds greater than those. For, “bring forth,” saith he, “fruits meet for repentance.” (**Schaff Note:** Matt. iii. 8 [R.V., more literally, “worthy of repentance,” with margin, “Or, your repentance,” the Greek being τῆς μετανοίας; so in the text of Chrysostom.—R.]) But how shall we bring them forth? If we do the opposite things: as for instance, hast thou seized by violence the goods of others? henceforth give away even thine own. Hast thou been guilty of fornication for a long time? abstain even from thy wife for certain appointed days; exercise continence. Hast thou insulted and stricken such as were passing by? Henceforth bless them that insult thee, and do good to them that smite thee. For it sufficeth not for our health to have plucked out the dart only, but we must also apply remedies to the wound. Hast thou lived in self-indulgence, and been drunken in time past? Fast, and take care to drink water, in order to destroy the mischief that hath so grown up within thee. Hast thou beheld with unchaste eyes beauty that belonged to another? Henceforth do not so much as look upon a woman at all, that thou mayest stand in more safety. For it is said, “Depart from evil, and do good;” (Ps. xxxiv. 14) and again, “Make thy tongue to cease from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile.” (Ps. xxxiv. 13 [LXX]) “But tell me the good too.” “Seek peace, and pursue it.” I mean not peace with man only, but also peace with God. And he hath well said, “pursue” her: for she is driven away, and cast out; she hath left the earth, and is gone to sojourn in Heaven. Yet shall we be able to bring her back again, if we will put away pride and boasting, and whatsoever things stand in her way, and will follow this temperate and frugal life. (**Schaff Note:** [“If we desire (θλωμεν), by putting away, etc....to pursue this temperate and frugal life.”—R.]) For nothing is more grievous than wrath and fierce anger. This renders men both puffed up and servile, by the former making them ridiculous, by the other hateful; and bringing in opposite vices, pride and flattery, at the same time. But if we will cut off the greediness of this passion, we shall be both lowly with exactness, and exalted with safety. For in our bodies too all distempers arise from excess; and when the elements thereof leave their proper limits, and go on beyond moderation, then all these countless diseases are generated, and grievous kinds of death. Somewhat of the same kind one may see take place with respect to the soul likewise.

8. Let us therefore cut away excess, and drinking the salutary medicine of moderation, let us abide in our proper temperament, and give careful heed to our prayers. Though we receive not, let us persevere that we may receive; and if we do receive, then because we have received. For it is not at all His wish to defer giving, but by such delay He is contriving for us to persevere. With this intent He doth also lengthen out (**Schaff Note:** ὑπερθεταί, used as in the word ὑπερθεσιχριν εδτε πρ πντων τ εδτι.) what is good for us better than we do, and loves us more ardently than those who gave us birth. And let both these considerations be a charm for us to chant to ourselves in every terror that occurs, that so we may quell our despondency, and in all things glorify Him, who on our behalf doeth and ordereth all, even God.

For so we shall both easily repulse all hostile devices, and attain unto the incorruptible crowns: by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom be unto the Father glory, might, and honor, together with the Holy Ghost, now, and always, even for ever and ever. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “4. “And the same John had his raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins.” (Matthew 3:4)”

He refers to **Matthew 3 (KJV):4** And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

He continues, “Observe, how the prophets foretold some things, others they left to the evangelists. Wherefore also Matthew both sets down the prophecies, and adds his own part, not accounting even this superfluous, to speak of the dress of the righteous man.

For indeed it was a marvellous and strange thing to behold so great austerity in a human frame: which thing also particularly attracted the Jews, seeing in him the great Elijah, and guided by what they then beheld, to the memory of that blessed man; or rather, even to a greater astonishment. For the one indeed was brought up in cities and in houses, the other dwelt entirely in the wilderness from his very swaddling clothes. For it became the forerunner of Him who was to put away all the ancient ills, the labor, for example, the curse, the sorrow, the sweat;”

Chrysostom understood that John the Baptist was the “forerunner of Him”, as it was prophesied in **Isaiah 40 (KJV):3** The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

And in **Malachi 3 (KJV):1** Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

He continues, “himself also to have certain tokens of such a gift, and to come at once to be above that condemnation. Thus he neither ploughed land, nor opened furrow, he ate not his bread by the sweat of his face, but his table was hastily supplied, and his clothing more easily furnished than his table, and his lodging yet less troublesome than his clothing. For he needed neither roof, nor bed, nor table, nor any other of these things, but a kind of angel’s life in this our flesh did he exhibit. For this cause his very garment was of hair, that by his dress he might instruct men to separate themselves from all things human, and to have nothing in common with the earth, but to hasten back to their earlier nobleness, wherein Adam was before he wanted garments or robe. Thus that garb bore tokens of nothing less than a kingdom, and of repentance.

And do not say to me, “Whence had he a garment of hair and a girdle, dwelling as he did in the wilderness?” For if thou art to make a difficulty of this, thou wilt also inquire into more

things besides; how in the winters, and how in the heats of summer, he continued in the wilderness, and this with a delicate body, and at an immature age? how the nature of his infant flesh endured such great inconstancy of weather, and a diet so uncommon, and all the other hardships arising from the wilderness?

Where now are the philosophers of the Greeks, who at random and for nought emulated the shamelessness of the Cynics (for what is the profit of being shut up in a tub, and afterwards running into such wantonness)? they who encompassed themselves with rings and cups, and men servants and maid servants, and with much pomp besides, falling into either extreme. But this man was not so; but he dwelt in the wilderness as in Heaven, showing forth all strictness of self-restraint. And from thence, like some angel from Heaven, he went down unto the cities, being a champion of godliness, and a crowned victor over the world, and a philosopher of that philosophy which is worthy of the heavens. And these things were, when sin was not yet put away, when the law had not yet ceased, when death was not yet bound, when the brazen gates were not yet broken up, but while the ancient polity still was in force.”

He is speaking of course of John the Baptist.

He continues, “Such is the nature of a noble and thoroughly vigilant soul, for it is everywhere springing forward, and passing beyond the limits set to it; as Paul (**Schaff Note:** As in refusing to be supported (in several cases) by those to whom he preached the gospel. See his account of his views in so doing, 1 Cor. ix., especially towards the end of the chapter.) also did with respect to the new polity.

And we read as in **1 Corinthians 9 (KJV):** 13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? 14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. 15 But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. 16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! 17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

He continues, “But why, it may be asked, did he use a girdle with his raiment? This was customary with them of old time, before men passed into this soft and loose kind of dress. Thus, for instance, both Peter (John 21:7) appears to have been “girded,” and Paul; for it saith, “the man that owneth this girdle.” (Acts 21:11) And Elijah (2 Kings 1:8) too was thus arrayed, and every one of the saints, because they were at work continually, laboring, and busying themselves either in journeyings, or about some other necessary matter; and not for this cause only, but also with a view of trampling under foot all ornaments, and practising all austerity.”

He refers to **John 21 (KJV):**7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

And to **Acts 21 (KJV):**11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

And to **2 Kings 1 (KJV):**8 And they answered him, He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite.

He continues, “This very kind of thing accordingly Christ declares to be the greatest praise of virtue, thus saying, “What went ye out for to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in king’s houses.” (Matthew 11:8)”

He refers to **Matthew 11 (KJV):8** But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

He continues, “But if he, who was so pure, and more glorious than the heaven, and above all prophets, than whom none greater was born, and who had such great boldness of speech, thus exercised himself in austerity, scorning so exceedingly all dissolute delicacy, and training himself to this hard life; what excuse shall we have, who after so great a benefit, and the unnumbered burdens of our sins, do not show forth so much as the least part of his penance, (ἐξομολογεῖω) but are drinking and surfeiting, and smelling of perfumes, and in no better trim than the harlot women on the stage, and are by all means softening ourselves, and making ourselves an easy prey to the devil? (**Schaff Note:** [τ διαβλ. The Oxford edition has “the devils,” but this is misleading, since it suggests a reference to “demons.” Probably the plural is a misprint.—R.])”

When he says above, “whom none greater was born”, he refers to **Luke 7 (KJV):28** For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

Chrysostom mentions “penance” here. We read again of John the Baptist’s discipline in **Matthew 3 (KJV):4** And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

Chrysostom seems to contrast this “hard life” of “penance” with “drinking and surfeiting, and smelling of perfumes”, and “making ourselves an easy prey to the devil”.

He continues, “5. “Then went out to him all Judea, and Jerusalem, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him, confessing their sins.” (Matthew 3:5-6)”

He refers to **Matthew 3 (KJV):5** Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, 6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

He continues, “Seest thou how great power was in the coming of the prophet? how he stirred up all the people; how he led them to a consideration of their own sins? For it was indeed worthy of wonder to behold him in human form showing forth such things and using so great freedom of speech, and rising up in condemnation of all as children, and having his great grace beaming out from his countenance. And, moreover, the appearance of a prophet after the great interval of time contributed to their amazement, because the gift had failed them, and returned to them after a long time. And the nature of his preaching too was strange and unusual. For they heard of none of those things to which they were accustomed; such as wars and battles and victories below, and famine and pestilence, and Babylonians and Persians, and the taking of the city, and the other things with which they were familiar, but of Heaven and of the kingdom there, and of the punishment in hell. And it was for this cause, let me add, that although they that committed revolt in the wilderness, those in the company of Judas, and of Theudas, (Acts 5:36-37) had been all of them slain no great while before, yet they were not the more backward to go out thither.”

He refers to **Acts 5 (KJV):36** For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. 37 After this man

rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

He continues, “For neither was it for the same objects that he summoned them, as for dominion, or revolt, or revolution; but in order to lead them by the hand to the kingdom on high. Wherefore neither did he keep them in the wilderness to take them about with him, but baptizing them, and teaching them the rules concerning self denial, he dismissed them; by all means instructing them to scorn whatever things are on earth, and to raise themselves up to the things to come, and press on every day.”

So it is possible that what Chrysostom means by “penance” is “rules concerning self denial”.

He continues, “6. This man then let us also emulate, and forsaking luxury and drunkenness let us go over unto the life of restraint. For this surely is the time of confession both for the uninitiated and for the baptized; for the one, that upon their repentance they may partake of the sacred mysteries; for the others, that having washed away their stain after baptism, they may approach the table with a clean conscience. Let us then forsake this soft and effeminate way of living. For it is not, it is not possible at once both to do penance (ἐξομολογεσθαι) and to live in luxury. And this let John teach you by his raiment, by his food, by his abode. What then? dost thou require us, you may say, to practice such self-restraint as this? I do not require it, but I advise and recommend it.”

So “penance” in Chrysostom’s thinking relates to John’s raiment, his food, and his abode. But the word “penance” is not found in Scripture.

He continues, “But if this be not possible to you, let us at least, though in cities, show forth repentance, for the judgment is surely at our doors.”

The word “repentance” is found in Scripture as we shall see shortly.

He continues, “But even if it were further off, we ought not even so to be emboldened, for the term of each man’s life is the end of the world virtually to him that is summoned. But that it is even at the doors, hear Paul saying, “The night is far spent, the day is at hand” (Romans 13:12) and again, “He that cometh will come, and will not tarry.” (Hebrews 10:37)”

He refers to **Romans 13 (KJV):12** The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

And the **Hebrews 10 (KJV):37** For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

He continues, “For the signs too are now complete, which announce that day. For “this Gospel of the Kingdom,” saith He, “shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” (**Schaff Note:** Matt. xxiv. 14 [“All the nations,” so R.V., and comp. what follows here.—R.]”

He refers to **Matthew 24 (KJV):14** And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

He continues, “Attend with care to what is said. He said not, “when it hath been believed by all men,” but “when it hath been preached to (**Schaff Note:** [παρ πντων νθρωπων...παρ πασ, is the explanation of Chrysostom, paraphrasing the New Testament passage.—R.] all.” For this cause he also said, “for a witness to the nations,” to show, that He doth not wait for all men to believe, and then for Him to come. Since the phrase, “for a witness,” hath this meaning, “for



accusation,” “for reproof,” “for condemnation of them that have not believed.”

But we, while hearing these things and seeing them, slumber, and see dreams, sunk in a lethargy, as in some very deepest night. ([ἐν βαθυττ νυκτ]) For the things present are nothing better than dreams, whether they be prosperous, or whether they be painful. Wherefore I entreat you now at length to be awakened, and to look another way, unto the Sun of Righteousness. For no man while sleeping can see the sun, nor delight his eyes with the beauty of its beams; but whatever he may see, he beholds all as in a dream. For this cause we need much penance, and many tears; both as being in a state of insensibility while we err, and because our sins are great, and beyond excuse.”

Chrysostom says that “we need much penance, and many tears”, “because our sins are great, and beyond excuse.”

He continues, “And that I lie not, the more part of them that hear me are witnesses. Nevertheless, although they be beyond excuse, let us repent, and we shall receive crowns.

7. But by repentance I mean, not only to forsake our former evil deeds, but also to show forth good deeds greater than those. For, “bring forth,” saith he, “fruits meet for repentance.” (**Schaff Note:** Matt. iii. 8 [R.V., more literally, “worthy of repentance,” with margin, “Or, your repentance,” the Greek being τῆς μετανοίας; so in the text of Chrysostom.—R.]”

He refers to **Matthew 3 (KJV):8** Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

The word “repentance” in the Greek is **μετάνοια** (pronounced me-tä'-noiä), from G3340; (subjectively) compunction (for guilt, including reformation); by implication, reversal (of (another's) decision):—repentance. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3341**

It is derived from the Greek word **μετανοέω** (pronounced me-tä-no-e'-o), from G3326 and G3539; to think differently or afterwards, i.e. reconsider (morally, feel compunction):—repent.

The idea is that when we repent, we have a change of mind about our sin, and about who Jesus is. We may also feel sorrow for our sins. We then turn away from our sin and follow Jesus.

Chrysostom continues, “But how shall we bring them forth? If we do the opposite things: as for instance, hast thou seized by violence the goods of others? henceforth give away even thine own. Hast thou been guilty of fornication for a long time? abstain even from thy wife for certain appointed days; exercise continence. Hast thou insulted and stricken such as were passing by? Henceforth bless them that insult thee, and do good to them that smite thee. For it sufficeth not for our health to have plucked out the dart only, but we must also apply remedies to the wound. Hast thou lived in self-indulgence, and been drunken in time past? Fast, and take care to drink water, in order to destroy the mischief that hath so grown up within thee. Hast thou beheld with unchaste eyes beauty that belonged to another? Henceforth do not so much as look upon a woman at all, that thou mayest stand in more safety.”

And this agrees with **Matthew 5 (KJV):44** But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

And with **Matthew 5 (KJV):28** But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

He continues, “For it is said, “Depart from evil, and do good;” (Ps. xxxiv. 14) and again, “Make thy tongue to cease from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile.” (Ps. xxxiv. 13



[LXX]) “But tell me the good too.” “Seek peace, and pursue it.” I mean not peace with man only, but also peace with God.”

He refers to **Psalm 33 (Septuagint):** 13 What man is there that desires life, loving to see good days? 14 Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. 15 Turn away from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

And to **Psalm 34 (KJV):** 12 What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? 13 Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. 14 Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

Chrysostom continues, “And he hath well said, “pursue” her: for she is driven away, and cast out; she hath left the earth, and is gone to sojourn in Heaven. Yet shall we be able to bring her back again, if we will put away pride and boasting, and whatsoever things stand in her way, and will follow this temperate and frugal life. (**Schaff Note:** [“If we desire (θλωμεν), by putting away, etc....to pursue this temperate and frugal life.”—R.]) For nothing is more grievous than wrath and fierce anger. This renders men both puffed up and servile, by the former making them ridiculous, by the other hateful; and bringing in opposite vices, pride and flattery, at the same time. But if we will cut off the greediness of this passion, we shall be both lowly with exactness, and exalted with safety. For in our bodies too all distempers arise from excess; and when the elements thereof leave their proper limits, and go on beyond moderation, then all these countless diseases are generated, and grievous kinds of death. Somewhat of the same kind one may see take place with respect to the soul likewise.

8. Let us therefore cut away excess, and drinking the salutary medicine of moderation, let us abide in our proper temperament, and give careful heed to our prayers. Though we receive not, let us persevere that we may receive; and if we do receive, then because we have received. For it is not at all His wish to defer giving, but by such delay He is contriving for us to persevere. With this intent He doth also lengthen out (**Schaff Note:** ὑπερτεταται, used as in the word ὑπρθεσιχριν εδτε πρ πντων τ εδτι.) what is good for us better than we do, and loves us more ardently than those who gave us birth. And let both these considerations be a charm for us to chant to ourselves in every terror that occurs, that so we may quell our despondency, and in all things glorify Him, who on our behalf doeth and ordereth all, even God.

For so we shall both easily repulse all hostile devices, and attain unto the incorruptible crowns: by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom be unto the Father glory, might, and honor, together with the Holy Ghost, now, and always, even for ever and ever. Amen.”

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, Homily LXXI, Matt. XXII. 34-36, page 434-435**

How then shall we escape the danger? If we learn how to give alms, if we see after whose good report we are to seek. For tell me, who has the skill of almsgiving? Plainly, it is God, who hath made known the thing, who best of all knows it, and practices it without limit. What then? If thou art learning to be a wrestler, to whom dost thou look? or to whom dost thou display thy doings in the wrestling school, to the seller of herbs, and of fish, or to the trainer? And yet they are many, and he is one. What then, if while he admires thee, others deride thee, wilt thou not

with him deride them?

What, if thou art learning to box, wilt thou not look in like manner to him who knows how to teach this? And if thou art practising oratory, wilt thou not accept the praise of the teacher of rhetoric, and despise the rest.

How then is it other than absurd, in other arts to look to the teacher only, but here to do the contrary? although the loss be not equal. For there, if you wrestle according to the opinion of the multitude, and not that of the teacher, the loss is in the wrestling; but here it is in eternal life. Thou art become like to God in giving alms; be thou then like Him in not making a display. For even He said, when healing, that they should tell no man.

But dost thou desire to be called merciful amongst men? And what is the gain? The gain is nothing; but the loss infinite. For these very persons, whom thou callest to be witnesses, become robbers of thy treasures that are in the heavens; or rather not these, but ourselves, who spoil our own possessions, and scatter what we have laid up above.

O new calamity! this strange passion. Where moth corrupteth not, nor thief breaketh through, vainglory scattereth. This is the moth of those treasures there; this the thief of our wealth in heaven; this steals away the riches that cannot be spoiled; this mars and corrupts all. For because the devil saw that that place is impregnable to thieves and to the worm, and the other plots against them, he by vainglory steals away the wealth.

But dost thou desire glory? Doth not then that suffice thee which is given by the receiver himself, that from our gracious God, but dost thou set thine heart on that from men also? Take heed, lest thou undergo the contrary, lest some condemn thee as not showing mercy, but making a display, and seeking honor, as making a show of the calamities of others.

For indeed the showing of mercy is a mystery. Shut therefore the doors, that none may see what it is not pious to display. For our mysteries too are above all things, a showing of God's mercy and lovingkindness. According to His great mercy, He had mercy on us being disobedient.

And the first prayer too is full of mercy, when we entreat for the energumens; and the second again, for others under penance seeking for much mercy; and the third also for ourselves, and this puts forward the innocent children of the people entreating God for mercy. For since we condemn ourselves for sins, for them that have sinned much and deserve to be blamed we ourselves cry; but for ourselves the children; for the imitators of whose simplicity the kingdom of heaven is reserved. For this image shows this, that they who are like those children, lowly and simple, these above all men are able to deliver the guilty by their prayers.

But the mystery itself, of how much mercy, of how much love to man it is full, the initiated know.

Do thou then, when according to thy power thou art showing mercy to a man, shut the doors, let the object of thy mercy see it only; but if it be possible, not even he. But if thou set them open, thou art profanely exposing thy mystery.

Consider that the very person, whose praise thou seekest, even himself will condemn thee; and if he be a friend, will accuse thee to himself; but if an enemy, he will deride thee unto others also. And thou wilt undergo the opposite of what thou desirest. For thou indeed desirest that he should call thee the merciful man; but he will not call thee this, but the vainglorious, the man-pleaser, and other names far more grievous than these.

But if thou shouldst hide it, he will call thee all that is opposite to this; the merciful, the

kind. For God suffers it not to be hidden; but if thou conceal it, the other will make it known, and greater will be the admiration, and more abundant the gain. So that even for this very object of being glorified, to make a display is against us; for with respect to the thing unto which we most hasten and press, as to this most especially is this thing against us. For so far from obtaining the credit of being merciful, we obtain even the contrary, and besides this, great is the loss we undergo.

For every motive then let us abstain from this, and set our love on God's praise alone. For thus shall we both attain to honor here, and enjoy the eternal blessings, by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and might world without end. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, "How then shall we escape the danger? If we learn how to give alms, if we see after whose good report we are to seek. For tell me, who has the skill of almsgiving? Plainly, it is God, who hath made known the thing, who best of all knows it, and practices it without limit. What then? If thou art learning to be a wrestler, to whom dost thou look? or to whom dost thou display thy doings in the wrestling school, to the seller of herbs, and of fish, or to the trainer? And yet they are many, and he is one. What then, if while he admires thee, others deride thee, wilt thou not with him deride them?"

What, if thou art learning to box, wilt thou not look in like manner to him who knows how to teach this? And if thou art practicing oratory, wilt thou not accept the praise of the teacher of rhetoric, and despise the rest.

How then is it other than absurd, in other arts to look to the teacher only, but here to do the contrary? although the loss be not equal. For there, if you wrestle according to the opinion of the multitude, and not that of the teacher, the loss is in the wrestling; but here it is in eternal life. Thou art become like to God in giving alms; be thou then like Him in not making a display. For even He said, when healing, that they should tell no man."

And we read in **Matthew 8 (KJV):** 1 When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. 2 And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. 3 And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. 4 And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

He continues, "But dost thou desire to be called merciful amongst men? And what is the gain? The gain is nothing; but the loss infinite. For these very persons, whom thou callest to be witnesses, become robbers of thy treasures that are in the heavens; or rather not these, but ourselves, who spoil our own possessions, and scatter what we have laid up above.

O new calamity! this strange passion. Where moth corrupteth not, nor thief breaketh through, vainglory scattereth. This is the moth of those treasures there; this the thief of our wealth in heaven; this steals away the riches that cannot be spoiled; this mars and corrupts all. For because the devil saw that that place is impregnable to thieves and to the worm, and the other plots against them, he by vainglory steals away the wealth.

But dost thou desire glory? Doth not then that suffice thee which is given by the receiver himself, that from our gracious God, but dost thou set thine heart on that from men also? Take heed, lest thou undergo the contrary, lest some condemn thee as not showing mercy, but making a display, and seeking honor, as making a show of the calamities of others.

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And the first prayer too is full of mercy, when we entreat for the energumens; and the second again, for others under penance seeking for much mercy; and the third also for ourselves, and this puts forward the innocent children of the people entreating God for mercy."

An "energumen" is "a person possessed by or as if by an evil spirit : DEMONIAC". (**Merriam Webster**) He also mentions "others under penance seeking for much mercy".

He continues, "For since we condemn ourselves for sins, for them that have sinned much and deserve to be blamed we ourselves cry;"

So we could assume that those "under penance" are those "that have sinned much and deserve to be blamed", and for which "we ourselves cry" in prayer.

He continues, "but for ourselves the children; for the imitators of whose simplicity the kingdom of heaven is reserved. For this image shows this, that they who are like those children, lowly and simple, these above all men are able to deliver the guilty by their prayers.

But the mystery itself, of how much mercy, of how much love to man it is full, the initiated know.

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But if thou shouldest hide it, he will call thee all that is opposite to this; the merciful, the kind. For God suffers it not to be hidden; but if thou conceal it, the other will make it known, and greater will be the admiration, and more abundant the gain. So that even for this very object of being glorified, to make a display is against us; for with respect to the thing unto which we most hasten and press, as to this most especially is this thing against us. For so far from obtaining the credit of being merciful, we obtain even the contrary, and besides this, great is the loss we undergo.

For every motive then let us abstain from this, and set our love on God's praise alone. For thus shall we both attain to honor here, and enjoy the eternal blessings, by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and might world without end. Amen."

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIV, page 447-449**

Ver. 27. "But He that searcheth the hearts."

You see that it is not about the Comforter that he is speaking, but about the spiritual heart. Since if this were not so, he ought to have said, "He that searcheth" the Spirit. But that thou mayest learn that the language is meant of a spiritual man, who has the gift of prayer, he

proceeds, "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit," that is, of the spiritual man.

"Because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

Not (he means) that he informs God as if ignorant, but this is done that we may learn to pray for proper things, and to ask of God what is pleasing to Him. For this is what the "according to God" is. And so this was with a view to solace those that came to Him, and to yield them excellent instruction. For He that furnished the gifts, and gave besides blessings without number, was the Comforter. Hence it says, "all these things worketh one and the self-same Spirit." (1 Cor. xii. 11) And it is for our instruction that this takes place, and to show the love of the Spirit, it condescendeth even to this. And it is from this that the person praying getteth heard, because the prayer is made "according to the will of God."

You see from how many points he instructs them in the love that was shown them and the honor that was done them. And what is there that God hath not done for us? The world He hath made corruptible for us, and again for us incorruptible. He suffered His Prophets to be ill-treated for our sake, sent them into captivity for us, let them fall into the furnace, and undergo ills without number. Nay, He made them prophets for us, and the Apostles also He made for us. He gave up for us His Only-Begotten, He punisheth the devil for us, He hath seated us on the Right Hand, He was reproached for us. "For the reproaches of them that reproached thee," it says, "fell upon me." (Ps. lxxix. 9) Yet still, when we are drawing back after so great favor, He leaveth us not, but again entreats, and on our account inciteth others to entreat for us, that He may show us favor. And so it was with Moses. For to him He says, "Let Me alone, that I may blot them out" (Ex. xxxii. 10), that He might drive him upon supplicating on their behalf. And now He doth the same thing. Hence He gave the gift of prayer. But this He doth, not as Himself standing in need of entreaty, but that we might not, from being saved without effort (*ἀπλῶς*), grow indifferent. For this cause it is on account of David, and of this person and that, He often says, that He is reconciled with them, to establish again this very thing, that the reconciliation may be with all due formality. Still He would have looked more loving toward man, if it had not been through this and the other prophet, but of Himself, that He told them that He ceased to be wroth. But the reason of His not holding to that point was, that this ground of reconciliation might not become an occasion for listlessness. Wherefore to Jeremiah also He said, "Pray not for this people, for I will not hear thee" (Jer. xi. 14), not as wishing to stop his praying (for He earnestly longeth for our salvation), but to terrify them: and this the prophet also seeing did not cease praying. And that you may see that it was not through a wish to turn him from it, but to shame them that He said this, hear what it says. "Seest thou not what these are doing?" (Ez. viii. 6, not verbally from LXX) And when He says to the city "Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap (Gr. herb), yet thou art stained before Me" (Jer. ii. 22), it is not that He may cast them into despair that He so speaks, but that He may rouse them to repentance. For as in the case of the Ninevites, by giving the sentence without limitation, and holding out no good hope, He scared them the more, and led them to repentance, so He doth here also, both to rouse them, and to render the prophet more venerated, that in this way at least they may hear him. Then, since they kept on in a state of incurable madness, and were not to be sobered even by the rest being carried away, he first exhorts them to remain there. But when they kept not up to this, but deserted to Egypt, this indeed He allowed them, but requires of them not to desert to irreligion as well as to Egypt. (Jer. xliv. 8) But when they did not comply in this either, He

sendeth the prophet along with them, so that they might not after all suffer total wreck. (Ver. 28) For since they did not follow Him when He called, He next followeth them to discipline them, and hinder their being hurried further into vice, and as a father full of affection does a child who takes all treatment in the same peevish way, conducting him about everywhere with himself, and following him about. This was the reason why He sent not Jeremiah only into Egypt, but also Ezekiel into Babylon, and they did not refuse to go. For when they found their Master love the people exceedingly, they continued themselves to do so likewise. Much as if a right minded servant were to take compassion upon an intractable son when he saw his father grieving and lamenting about him. And what was there that they did not suffer for them? They were sawn asunder, they were driven out, they were reproached, they were stoned, they underwent numberless grievances. And after all this they would run back to them. Samuel, for instance, ceased not to mourn for Saul, miserably insulted as he was by him, and injured irreparably. (1 Sam. xv. 35) Still he held none of these things in remembrance. And for the people of the Jews, Jeremiah has composed Lamentations in writing. And when the general of the Persians had given him liberty to dwell securely, and with perfect freedom, wherever he pleased, he preferred above dwelling at home the affliction of the people, and their hard durance in a strange land. (Jer. xi. 5) So Moses left the palace and the sort of living herein, and hasted to be among their calamities. And Daniel abode for twenty days following without food, pinching himself with the most severe fast, that he might reconcile God to them. (Dan. x. 2) And the three Children too, when in the furnace, and so fierce a fire, put up a supplication for them. For it was not on their account that they were grieved, as they were saved; but since they considered that then was the time for the greatest boldness of speech, they consequently prayed in their behalf; hence too they said, "In a contrite heart and an humble spirit let us be accepted." (Prayer of Azariah 1:16) For them Joshua also rent his garments. (Josh. vii. 6) For them Ezekiel too wailed and lamented when he saw them cut down. (Ez. ix. 8) And Jeremy said, "Let me alone, I will weep bitterly." (Is. xxii. 4) And before this, when he did not venture openly to pray for a remittance of their sad estate, he sought for some limited period, when he says, "How long, O, Lord?" (ib. vi. 11) For full of affectionateness is the whole race of the saints. Wherefore also St. Paul saith, "Put on therefore, as the elect saints of God, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind." (Col. iii. 12) You see the strict propriety of the word, and how he would have us continually merciful. For he does not say, "show mercy" only, but put it on, that like as our garment is always with us, so may mercy be. And he does not say merely mercy, but "bowels of mercy," that we may imitate the natural affection of relations. But we do just the contrary, and if any one comes to ask a single penny of us, we insult them, abuse them, call them impostors. Dost thou not shudder, man, and blush to call him an impostor for bread? Why even supposing such an one is practising imposture, he deserves to be pitied for it, because he is so pressed with famine as to put on such a character. This then is a reproach to our cruelty. For since we had not the heart to bestow with readiness, they are compelled to practice a great many arts, so as to put a cheat off upon our inhumanity, and to soften down our harshness. Now if it was gold and silver that he asked of thee, then there would be some reason in thy suspicions. But if it is necessary food that he comes to thee for, why be showing thyself wise so unseasonably, and take so over exact an account of him, accusing him of idleness and sloth? For if we must talk in this way, it is not others but ourselves that we ought to address. When therefore thou art going to God to ask forgiveness for thy sins, then call these words to mind, and thou wilt know thou

deservest to have these things said to thee by God, much more than the poor man by thee. And yet God hath never said such words to thee as “Stand off, since thou art an impostor, always coming to church and hearing My laws, but when abroad, setting gold, and pleasure (ἐπιθυμίαν), and friendship, and in fact anything above My commandments. And now thou makest thyself humble, but when thy prayers are over thou art bold, and cruel, and inhuman. Get thee hence, therefore, and never come to Me any more.” Yet this, and more than this, we deserve to have said to us; but still He never did reproach us in any such way, but is longsuffering and fulfills everything on His own part, and gives us more than we ask for. Calling this to mind then, let us relieve the poverty of those that beg of us, and if they do impose upon us, let us not be over exact about it. For such a salvation is it that we ourselves require, one with pardon, with kindness (φιλανθρωπίας), with much mercy along with it. For it is not possible, it certainly is not, if our estate were searched into strictly, that we should ever be saved, but we must needs be punished and brought to ruin altogether. Let us not then be bitter judges of others lest we also get a strict account demanded of us. For we have sins that are too great to plead any excuse. And therefore let us show more mercy towards those who have committed inexcusable sins, that we also may lay up for ourselves the like mercy beforehand. And yet be as large-hearted as we may, we shall never be able to contribute such love toward man as we stand in need of at the hand of a God that loveth man. How then is it other than monstrous, when we are in need of so many things ourselves, to be over exact with our fellow servants, and do all we can against ourselves? For thou dost not in this way so much prove him unworthy of thy liberality, as thyself of God’s love toward man. For he that deals over exactly with his fellow servant, will be the more sure to find the like treatment at God’s hand. Let us not speak against ourselves, but even if they come out of idleness or willfulness, let us bestow. For we also do many sins through willfulness, or rather we do them all through willfulness, and yet God doth not presently call us to punishment, but gives us a set time for penance, nurturing us day by day, disciplining us, teaching us, supplying us with all other things, that we too may emulate this mercy of His.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “Ver. 27. “But He that searcheth the hearts.””

He is referring in context to **Romans 8 (KJV):26** Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

He continues, “You see that it is not about the Comforter that he is speaking, but about the spiritual heart. Since if this were not so, he ought to have said, “He that searcheth” the Spirit. But that thou mayest learn that the language is meant of a spiritual man, who has the gift of prayer, he proceeds, “And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit,” that is, of the spiritual man.

“Because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.””

However, what the Scripture is saying is that the Holy Spirit knows how to pray, because He knows the mind of God, who is a spirit. So the Holy Spirit, the comforter helps us when we don’t know how to pray, and He then makes “intercession for the saints according to the will of God”.

Chrysostom continues, “Not (he means) that he informs God as if ignorant, but this is done that we may learn to pray for proper things, and to ask of God what is pleasing to Him. For this is what the “according to God” is. And so this was with a view to solace those that came to Him, and to yield them excellent instruction. For He that furnished the gifts, and gave besides blessings without number, was the Comforter. Hence it says, “all these things worketh one and the selfsame Spirit.” (1 Cor. xii. 11)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):11** But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

He continues, “And it is for our instruction that this takes place, and to show the love of the Spirit, it condescendeth even to this. And it is from this that the person praying getteth heard, because the prayer is made “according to the will of God.”

Chrysostom did not understand that it is the Spirit of God who is praying for us, not we ourselves, and that He is making intercession for us according to the will of God. This is how He helps us.

Chrysostom continues, “You see from how many points he instructs them in the love that was shown them and the honor that was done them. And what is there that God hath not done for us? The world He hath made corruptible for us, and again for us incorruptible. He suffered His Prophets to be ill treated for our sake, sent them into captivity for us, let them fall into the furnace, and undergo ills without number. Nay, He made them prophets for us, and the Apostles also He made for us. He gave up for us His Only-Begotten, He punisheth the devil for us, He hath seated us on the Right Hand, He was reproached for us. “For the reproaches of them that reproached thee,” it says, “fell upon me.” (Ps. lxi. 9)”

He refers to **Psalms 69 (KJV):9** For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

He continues, “Yet still, when we are drawing back after so great favor, He leaveth us not, but again entreats, and on our account inciteth others to entreat for us, that He may show us favor. And so it was with Moses. For to him He says, “Let Me alone, that I may blot them out” (Ex. xxxii. 10), that He might drive him upon supplicating on their behalf.”

He refers in context to **Exodus 32 (KJV):9** And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: 10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.

He continues, “And now He doth the same thing. Hence He gave the gift of prayer. But this He doth, not as Himself standing in need of entreaty, but that we might not, from being saved without effort (*ἀπλῶς*), grow indifferent. For this cause it is on account of David, and of this person and that, He often says, that He is reconciled with them, to establish again this very thing, that the reconciliation may be with all due formality. Still He would have looked more loving toward man, if it had not been through this and the other prophet, but of Himself, that He told them that He ceased to be wroth. But the reason of His not holding to that point was, that this ground of reconciliation might not become an occasion for listlessness. Wherefore to Jeremiah also He said, “Pray not for this people, for I will not hear thee” (Jer. xi. 14), not as wishing to stop his praying (for He earnestly longeth for our salvation), but to terrify them.”



He refers to **Jeremiah 11 (KJV):14** Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble.

He continues, “and this the prophet also seeing did not cease praying. And that you may see that it was not through a wish to turn him from it, but to shame them that He said this, hear what it says. “Seest thou not what these are doing?” (**Schaff Note:** Ez. viii. 6, not verbally from LXX)”

He refers to **Ezekiel 8 (KJV):6** He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations.

He continues, “And when He says to the city “Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap (Gr. herb), yet thou art stained before Me” (Jer. ii. 22), it is not that He may cast them into despair that He so speaks, but that He may rouse them to repentance.”

He refers to **Jeremiah 2 (KJV):22** For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God.

He continues, “For as in the case of the Ninevites, by giving the sentence without limitation, and holding out no good hope, He scared them the more, and led them to repentance, so He doth here also, both to rouse them, and to render the prophet more venerated, that in this way at least they may hear him. Then, since they kept on in a state of incurable madness, and were not to be sobered even by the rest being carried away, he first exhorts them to remain there. But when they kept not up to this, but deserted to Egypt, this indeed He allowed them, but requires of them not to desert to irreligion as well as to Egypt. (Jer. xliv. 8)”

He refers to **Jeremiah 44 (KJV):8** In that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other gods in the land of Egypt, whither ye be gone to dwell, that ye might cut yourselves off, and that ye might be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth?

He continues, “But when they did not comply in this either, He sendeth the prophet along with them, so that they might not after all suffer total wreck. (Ver. 28)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

He continues, “For since they did not follow Him when He called, He next followeth them to discipline them, and hinder their being hurried further into vice, and as a father full of affection does a child who takes all treatment in the same peevish way, conducting him about everywhere with himself, and following him about. This was the reason why He sent not Jeremiah only into Egypt, but also Ezekiel into Babylon, and they did not refuse to go. For when they found their Master love the people exceedingly, they continued themselves to do so likewise. Much as if a right minded servant were to take compassion upon an intractable son when he saw his father grieving and lamenting about him. And what was there that they did not suffer for them? They were sawn asunder, they were driven out, they were reproached, they were stoned, they underwent numberless grievances. And after all this they would run back to them. Samuel, for instance, ceased not to mourn for Saul, miserably insulted as he was by him, and injured irreparably. (1 Sam. xv. 35)”

He refers to **Hebrews 11 (KJV):37** They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

And to **1 Samuel 15 (KJV):35** And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

He continues, “Still he held none of these things in remembrance. And for the people of the Jews, Jeremiah has composed Lamentations in writing. And when the general of the Persians had given him liberty to dwell securely, and with perfect freedom, wherever he pleased, he preferred above dwelling at home the affliction of the people, and their hard durance in a strange land. (Jer. xi. 5)”

He refers to **Jeremiah 11 (KJV):5** That I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as it is this day. Then answered I, and said, So be it, O Lord.

He continues, “So Moses left the palace and the sort of living herein, and hasted to be among their calamities.”

And we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):24** By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; **25** Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; **26** Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. **27** By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

He continues, “And Daniel abode for twenty days following without food, pinching himself with the most severe fast, that he might reconcile God to them. (Dan. x. 2)”

He refers in context to **Daniel 10 (KJV):1** In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision. **2** In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. **3** I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

He continues, “And the three Children too, when in the furnace, and so fierce a fire, put up a supplication for them. For it was not on their account that they were grieved, as they were saved; but since they considered that then was the time for the greatest boldness of speech, they consequently prayed in their behalf; hence too they said, “In a contrite heart and an humble spirit let us be accepted.” (Prayer of Azariah 1:16)”

He refers to **Prayer of Azariah 1 (KJV):16** Nevertheless in a contrite heart and an humble spirit let us be accepted.

He continues, “For them Joshua also rent his garments. (Josh. vii. 6)”

He refers in context to **Joshua 7 (KJV):3** And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few. **4** So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai. **5** And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and

became as water. 6 And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. 7 And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!

He continues, “For them Ezekiel too wailed and lamented when he saw them cut down. (Ez. ix. 8)”

He refers in context to **Ezekiel 9 (KJV)**:4 And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. 5 And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: 6 Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house. 7 And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city. 8 And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord God! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem? 9 Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not. 10 And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head.

And Jeremy said, “Let me alone, I will weep bitterly.” (Is. xxii. 4)”

He refers in context to **Isaiah 22 (KJV)**:1 The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops? 2 Thou that art full of stirs, a tumultuous city, joyous city: thy slain men are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle. 3 All thy rulers are fled together, they are bound by the archers: all that are found in thee are bound together, which have fled from far. 4 Therefore said I, Look away from me; I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people.

He continues, “And before this, when he did not venture openly to pray for a remittance of their sad estate, he sought for some limited period, when he says, “How long, O, Lord?” (ib. vi. 11)”

He refers in context to **Isaiah 6 (KJV)**:11 Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, 12 And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. 13 But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.

He continues, “For full of affectionateness is the whole race of the saints. Wherefore also St. Paul saith, “Put on therefore, as the elect saints of God, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind.” (Col. iii. 12)”

He refers in context to **Colossians 3 (KJV)**:12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any:

even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. 14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

He continues, “You see the strict propriety of the word, and how he would have us continually merciful. For he does not say, “show mercy” only, but put it on, that like as our garment is always with us, so may mercy be. And he does not say merely mercy, but “bowels of mercy,” that we may imitate the natural affection of relations. But we do just the contrary, and if any one comes to ask a single penny of us, we insult them, abuse them, call them impostors. Dost thou not shudder, man, and blush to call him an impostor for bread? Why even supposing such an one is practising imposture, he deserves to be pitied for it, because he is so pressed with famine as to put on such a character. This then is a reproach to our cruelty. For since we had not the heart to bestow with readiness, they are compelled to practice a great many arts, so as to put a cheat off upon our inhumanity, and to soften down our harshness. Now if it was gold and silver that he asked of thee, then there would be some reason in thy suspicions. But if it is necessary food that he comes to thee for, why be showing thyself wise so unseasonably, and take so over exact an account of him, accusing him of idleness and sloth? For if we must talk in this way, it is not others but ourselves that we ought to address. When therefore thou art going to God to ask forgiveness for thy sins, then call these words to mind, and thou wilt know thou deservest to have these things said to thee by God, much more than the poor man by thee. And yet God hath never said such words to thee as “Stand off, since thou art an impostor, always coming to church and hearing My laws, but when abroad, setting gold, and pleasure (ἐπιθυμίαν), and friendship, and in fact anything above My commandments. And now thou makest thyself humble, but when thy prayers are over thou art bold, and cruel, and inhuman. Get thee hence, therefore, and never come to Me any more.” Yet this, and more than this, we deserve to have said to us; but still He never did reproach us in any such way, but is longsuffering and fulfills everything on His own part, and gives us more than we ask for. Calling this to mind then, let us relieve the poverty of those that beg of us, and if they do impose upon us, let us not be over exact about it. For such a salvation is it that we ourselves require, one with pardon, with kindness (φιλανθρωπίας), with much mercy along with it. For it is not possible, it certainly is not, if our estate were searched into strictly, that we should ever be saved, but we must needs be punished and brought to ruin altogether. Let us not then be bitter judges of others lest we also get a strict account demanded of us. For we have sins that are too great to plead any excuse. And therefore let us show more mercy towards those who have committed inexcusable sins, that we also may lay up for ourselves the like mercy beforehand. And yet be as large-hearted as we may, we shall never be able to contribute such love toward man as we stand in need of at the hand of a God that loveth man. How then is it other than monstrous, when we are in need of so many things ourselves, to be over exact with our fellow servants, and do all we can against ourselves? For thou dost not in this way so much prove him unworthy of thy liberality, as thyself of God’s love toward man. For he that deals over exactly with his fellow servant, will be the more sure to find the like treatment at God’s hand. Let us not speak against ourselves, but even if they come out of idleness or willfulness, let us bestow. For we also do many sins through willfulness, or rather we do them all through willfulness, and yet God doth not presently call us to punishment, but gives us a set time for penance, nurturing us day by day, disciplining us, teaching us, supplying us with all other things, that we too may emulate this mercy of His.”

We could define “penance” as “an act of self-abasement, mortification (see MORTIFICATION SENSE 3), or devotion performed to show sorrow or repentance for sin”. (Merriam Webster)

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON SECOND CORINTHIANS, HOMILY IV, page 296-297**

Ver. 6. “Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the many.”

And he saith not “to him that hath committed fornication,” but here again “to such a one,” as also in the former Epistle. Not however for the same reason; but there out of shame, here out of mercy. Wherefore he no where subsequently so much as mentions the crime; for it was time now to excuse.

Ver. 7. “So that contrariwise ye should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow.”

He bids them not only take off the censure; but, besides, restores him to his former estate; for if one let go him that hath been scourged and heal him not, he hath done nothing. And see how him too he keeps down lest he should be rendered worse by the forgiveness. For though he had both confessed and repented, he makes it manifest that he obtaineth remission not so much by his penitence as by this free gift. Wherefore he saith, “to forgive (*χαρισασθαι*) him and to comfort him,” and what follows again makes the same thing plain. ‘For’ saith he, ‘it is not because he is worthy, not because he has shown sufficient penitence; but because he is weak, it is for this I request (Or think it fitting) it.’ Whence also he added, “lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.” And this is both as testifying to his deep repentance and as not allowing him to fall into despair (*ἀπονοίαν*, which is however seldom used in this sense by St. Chrysostom).

But what means this, “swallowed up?” Either doing as Judas did, or even in living becoming worse. For, saith he, if he should rush away from longer enduring the anguish of this lengthened censure, perchance also despairing he will either come to hang himself, or fall into greater crimes afterwards. One ought then to take steps beforehand (*προκαταλαβεῖν*), lest the sore become too hard to deal with; and lest what we have well done we lose by want of moderation.

Now this he said, (as I have already observed,) both to keep him low, and to teach him not to be over-listless after this restoration. For, not as one who has washed all quite away; but as fearing lest he should work aught of deeper mischief, I have received him, he saith. Whence we learn that we must determine the penance, not only by the nature of the sins, but by the disposition and habit of them that sin. As the Apostle did in that instance. For he feared his weakness, and therefore said, “lest he be swallowed up,” as though by a wild beast, by a storm, by a billow.

Ver. 8. “Wherefore I beseech you.”

He no longer commands but beseeches, not as a teacher but as an equal; and having seated them on the judgment seat he placed himself in the rank of an advocate; for having succeeded in his object, for joy he adopts without restraint the tone of supplication. And what can it be that thou beseechest? Tell me.

“To confirm your love toward him.”

That is, ‘make it strong,’ not simply have intercourse with him, nor any how. Herein, again, he bears testimony to their virtue as very great; since they who were so friendly and so applauded him as even to be puffed up, were so estranged that Paul takes such pains to make them confirm their love towards him. Herein is excellence of disciples, herein excellence of teachers; that they should so obey the rein, he so manage their motions (ῥυθμιζειν). If this were so even now, they who sin would not have transgressed senselessly. For one ought neither to love carelessly, nor to be estranged without some reason.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 6. “Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the many.””

He refers to **2 Corinthians 2 (KJV):6** Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many.

He continues, “And he saith not “to him that hath committed fornication,” but here again “to such a one,” as also in the former Epistle. Not however for the same reason; but there out of shame, here out of mercy. Wherefore he no where subsequently so much as mentions the crime; for it was time now to excuse.

The crime was reported in the first epistle, as we read in **1 Corinthians 5 (KJV):1** It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

He continues, “Ver. 7. “So that contrariwise ye should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow.””

He refers to **2 Corinthians 2 (KJV):7** So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

He continues, “He bids them not only take off the censure; but, besides, restores him to his former estate; for if one let go him that hath been scourged and heal him not, he hath done nothing. And see how him too he keeps down lest he should be rendered worse by the forgiveness. For though he had both confessed and repented, he makes it manifest that he obtaineth remission not so much by his penitence as by this free gift.”

The word “penitence” means “the quality or state of being penitent : sorrow for sins or faults”. (**Merriam Webster**)

He continues, “Wherefore he saith, “to forgive (χαρισασθαι) him and to comfort him,” and what follows again makes the same thing plain. ‘For’ saith he, ‘it is not because he is worthy, not because he has shown sufficient penitence; but because he is weak, it is for this I request (Or think it fitting) it.’ Whence also he added, “lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.” And this is both as testifying to his deep repentance and as not allowing him to fall into despair (**Schaff Note:** ἀπονοίαν, which is however seldom used in this sense by St. Chrysostom).

But what means this, “swallowed up?” Either doing as Judas did, or even in living

becoming worse. For, saith he, if he should rush away from longer enduring the anguish of this lengthened censure, perchance also despairing he will either come to hang himself, or fall into greater crimes afterwards. One ought then to take steps beforehand (προκαταλαβεῖν), lest the sore become too hard to deal with; and lest what we have well done we lose by want of moderation.

Now this he said, (as I have already observed,) both to keep him low, and to teach him not to be over-listless after this restoration. For, not as one who has washed all quite away; but as fearing lest he should work aught of deeper mischief, I have received him, he saith. Whence we learn that we must determine the penance, not only by the nature of the sins, but by the disposition and habit of them that sin. As the Apostle did in that instance. For he feared his weakness, and therefore said, “lest he be swallowed up,” as though by a wild beast, by a storm, by a billow.”

Chrysostom equates the discipline of the apostle Paul with penance.

He continues, “Ver. 8. “Wherefore I beseech you.””

He refers to **2 Corinthians 2 (KJV):8** Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.

He continues, “He no longer commands but beseeches, not as a teacher but as an equal; and having seated them on the judgment seat he placed himself in the rank of an advocate; for having succeeded in his object, for joy he adopts without restraint the tone of supplication. And what can it be that thou beseechest? Tell me.

“To confirm your love toward him.”

That is, ‘make it strong,’ not simply have intercourse with him, nor any how. Herein, again, he bears testimony to their virtue as very great; since they who were so friendly and so applauded him as even to be puffed up, were so estranged that Paul takes such pains to make them confirm their love towards him. Herein is excellence of disciples, herein excellence of teachers; that they should so obey the rein, he so manage their motions (ῥυθμιζειν). If this were so even now, they who sin would not have transgressed senselessly. For one ought neither to love carelessly, nor to be estranged without some reason.”

But Paul’s judgment was not for the man to do penance, but to be put away from the believers, as we read in **1 Corinthians 5 (KJV):6** Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? **7** Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: **8** Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. **9** I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: **10** Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. **11** But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. **12** For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? **13** But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

The Corinthians did as Paul commanded, and they put the man out of the church. And this punishment was effective, and the man repented as a result. And when the man repented, the Corinthians forgave him, as did Paul. No penance, that is, voluntary self-punishment, was

required, but repentance, that is, turning from the sin and turning to God was required.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON SECOND CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XVIII, page 365-367**

[3.] Certain it is at least that the prayer of the churches loosed Peter from his chains, opened the mouth of Paul; their voice in no slight degree equips those that arrive unto spiritual rule. Therefore indeed it is that both he who is going to ordain calleth at that time for their prayers also, and that they add their votes and assent by acclamations which the initiated know: for it is not lawful before the uninitiated to unbare all things. But there are occasions in which there is no difference at all between the priest and those under him; for instance, when we are to partake (Literally, ‘enjoy’) of the awful mysteries; for we are all alike counted worthy of the same things: not as under the Old Testament [when] the priest ate some things and those under him others, and it was not lawful for the people to partake of those things whereof the priest partook. But not so now, but before all one body is set and one cup. And in the prayers also, one may observe the people contributing much. For in behalf of the possessed, in behalf of those under penance, the prayers are made in common both by the priest and by them; and all say one prayer, the prayer replete with pity. Again when we exclude from the holy precincts those who are unable to partake of the holy table, it behoveth that another prayer be offered, and we all alike fall upon the ground, and all alike rise up. Again, in the most awful mysteries themselves, the priest prays for the people and the people also pray for the priest; for the words, “with thy spirit,” are nothing else than this.

**Commentary:** In summary, Chrysostom mentions those under penance, as he says, “For in behalf of the possessed, in behalf of those under penance, the prayers are made in common both by the priest and by them; and all say one prayer, the prayer replete with pity.”

That is, “those under penance” were those under “voluntary self-punishment inflicted as an outward expression of repentance for having done wrong”.

### **Commentary Summary**

Concerning **Penance**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, LETTERS TO OLYMPIAS, page 295-296**, Chrysostom wanted moderation in doing penances, as he says, “Taking all these things then into consideration pray shake off the despondency which now oppresses you, and do not exact inordinate and cruel penances from yourself.”

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, Homily X, Matt. III. 1, 2, page 64-65**, he says, speaking of John the Baptist, “But if he, who was so pure, and more glorious than the heaven, and above all prophets, than whom none greater was born, and who had such great boldness of speech, thus exercised himself in austerity, scorning so exceedingly all dissolute delicacy, and training himself to this hard life; what excuse shall we have, who after so great a benefit, and the unnumbered burdens of our sins, do not show forth so much as the least part of his penance, (ἐξομολογεῶ) but are drinking and surfeiting, and smelling of perfumes, and in no better trim than the harlot women



on the stage, and are by all means softening ourselves, and making ourselves an easy prey to the devil?"

So he calls John the Baptist's discipline "penance". He is referring to **Matthew 3 (KJV):** 1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, 6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

The word "confessing" in the Greek is **ἐξομολογέω** (pronounced ex-om-ol-og-eh'-o); from G1537 and G3670; to acknowledge or (by implication, of assent) agree fully:—confess, profess, promise. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1843**

This word is derived from two Greek words, the first is **ἐκ** (pronounced ek); a primary preposition denoting origin (the point whence action or motion proceeds), from, out (of place, time, or cause; literal or figurative; direct or remote):—after, among, × are, at, betwixt(-yond), by (the means of), exceedingly, (+ abundantly above), for(-th), from (among, forth, up), + grudgingly, + heartily, X heavenly, × hereby, + very highly, in, ...ly, (because, by reason) of, off (from), on, out among (from, of), over, since, × thenceforth, through, × unto, × vehemently, with(-out). **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1537**

The second is **ὁμολογέω** (pronounced hom-ol-og-eh'-o; from a compound of the base of G3674 and G3056; to assent, i.e. covenant, acknowledge:—con- (pro-)fess, confession is made, give thanks, promise. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3670**

And this Greek word is derived from two Greek words, the first is **ὁμοῦ homoû**, hom-oo'; genitive case of **ὁμός** (pronounced homós) (the same; akin to G260) as adverb; at the same place or time:—together. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3674**

And the second is **λόγος lógos**, log'-os; from G3004; something said (including the thought); by implication, a topic (subject of discourse), also reasoning (the mental faculty) or motive; by extension, a computation; specially, (with the article in John) the Divine Expression (i.e. Christ):—account, cause, communication, × concerning, doctrine, fame, × have to do, intent, matter, mouth, preaching, question, reason, + reckon, remove, say(-ing), shew, × speaker, speech, talk, thing, + none of these things move me, tidings, treatise, utterance, word, work. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3056**

So **ἐξομολογέω** (pronounced ex-om-ol-og-eh'-o) means to speak out the same things, that is, to confess before others in agreement with the Lord.

The same Greek word is translated as "confessing" in **Acts 19 (KJV):** 18 And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds.

It does not mean "do penance" as Chrysostom implies.

He also says, "Wherefore neither did he keep them in the wilderness to take them about with him, but baptizing them, and teaching them the rules concerning self denial, he dismissed them; by all means instructing them to scorn whatever things are on earth, and to raise themselves up to the things to come, and press on every day."

So by "penance" Chrysostom means "rules concerning self denial".

And he says, “For it is not, it is not possible at once both to do penance (ἐξομολογεσθαι) and to live in luxury. And this let John teach you by his raiment, by his food, by his abode. What then? dost thou require us, you may say, to practice such self-restraint as this? I do not require it, but I advise and recommend it. But if this be not possible to you, let us at least, though in cities, show forth repentance, for the judgment is surely at our doors.”

So “penance” in Chrysostom’s thinking relates to John’s raiment, his food, and his abode. But the word “penance” is not found in Scripture.

And he says, “For no man while sleeping can see the sun, nor delight his eyes with the beauty of its beams; but whatever he may see, he beholds all as in a dream. For this cause we need much penance, and many tears; both as being in a state of insensibility while we err, and because our sins are great, and beyond excuse.”

And he says, “But by repentance I mean, not only to forsake our former evil deeds, but also to show forth good deeds greater than those. For, “bring forth,” saith he, “fruits meet for repentance.”

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, Homily LXXI, Matt. XXII. 34-36, page 434-435**, he says, “And the first prayer too is full of mercy, when we entreat for the energumens; and the second again, for others under penance seeking for much mercy; and the third also for ourselves, and this puts forward the innocent children of the people entreating God for mercy.”

An “energumen” is “a person possessed by or as if by an evil spirit : DEMONIAC”. He also mentions “others under penance seeking for much mercy”. (**Merriam Webster**)

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIV, page 447-449**, he says, “For we also do many sins through willfulness, or rather we do them all through willfulness, and yet God doth not presently call us to punishment, but gives us a set time for penance, nurturing us day by day, disciplining us, teaching us, supplying us with all other things, that we too may emulate this mercy of His.”

We could also define “penance” as “voluntary self-punishment inflicted as an outward expression of repentance for having done wrong”. (**Merriam Webster**)

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON SECOND CORINTHIANS, HOMILY IV, page 296-297**, he says that, when Paul is speaking of the one who committed fornication with his father’s wife, that, ““He bids them not only take off the censure; but, besides, restores him to his former estate; for if one let go him that hath been scourged and heal him not, he hath done nothing. And see how him too he keeps down lest he should be rendered worse by the forgiveness. For though he had both confessed and repented, he makes it manifest that he obtaineth remission not so much by his penitence as by this free gift.”

The word “penitence” means “the quality or state of being penitent : sorrow for sins or faults”. (**Merriam Webster**)

And he says, “Now this he said, (as I have already observed,) both to keep him low, and to teach him not to be over-listless after this restoration. For, not as one who has washed all quite away; but as fearing lest he should work aught of deeper mischief, I have received him, he saith. Whence we learn that we must determine the penance, not only by the nature of the sins, but by the disposition and habit of them that sin. As the Apostle did in that instance. For he

feared his weakness, and therefore said, “lest he be swallowed up,” as though by a wild beast, by a storm, by a billow.”

Chrysostom equates the discipline of the apostle Paul, on the one who committed fornication with his father’s wife, with penance.

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON SECOND CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XVIII, page 365-367**, he says, “For in behalf of the possessed, in behalf of those under penance, the prayers are made in common both by the priest and by them; and all say one prayer, the prayer replete with pity.”

We don’t have a clear picture of how penance was administered in the time of Chrysostom, but from his writing, we get some idea of what it entailed. That is, one under penance would have voluntary self-punishment or self-abasement, or mortification, or devotion performed or inflicted as an outward expression of repentance for having done wrong.

When I was a Catholic I understood it to mean an atonement for the sins I had committed. It was prescribed by the priest in confession. But the word “penance” is not found in the Bible. Instead, the word “repentance” is found. In the context of how this word “repentance” is used in the Bible, it means to have a change of mind about our sin, and to turn, or return, to God.

The idea of penance began to develop in the early Church as a result of a misunderstanding of the Biblical truth about justification. When we understand that God imputes His righteousness down to our account when we believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord, and we are born again, then dealing with our sin is simply a confession to God of our sin of which He is faithful and just to forgive, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. **8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

## **Good Works**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXV, page 400-401**

How then saith He, “To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give,” as though there are some that should sit there? Not as though there are; far from it; but He makes answer to the thoughts of them who ask the favor, condescending to their understanding. For neither did they know that lofty throne, and His sitting at the right hand of the Father; how should they, when even the things that were much lower than these, and were daily instilled into them, they understood not? but they sought one thing only, to enjoy the first honors, and to stand before the rest, and that no one should stand before them with Him; even as I have already said before, that, since they heard of twelve thrones, in ignorance what the saying could mean, they asked for the first place.

What therefore Christ saith is this: “Ye shall die indeed for me, and shall be slain for the sake of the gospel, and shall be partakers with me, as far as regards the passion: but this is not sufficient to secure you the enjoyment of the first seat, and to cause that ye should occupy the first place. For if any one else should come, together with the martyrdom, possessed of all the

other parts of virtue far more fully than you, not because I love you now, and prefer you to the rest, therefore shall I set aside him that is distinguished by his good works, and give the first honors to you.”

But thus indeed He did not say it, so as not to pain them, but darkly He intimates the self-same thing, saying, “Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and ye shall be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on my right hand and on my left, this is not mine to give, but it shall be given to those for whom it is prepared.”

But for whom is it prepared? For them who could become distinguished by their works. Therefore He said not, It is not mine to give, but my Father’s, lest any should say that He was too weak, or wanting in vigor for their recompense; but how? It is not mine, but of those for whom it is prepared.

And in order that what I say may be more plain, let us work it on an illustration, and let us suppose there was some master of the games, then that many excellent combatants went down to the contest, and that some two of the combatants that were most nearly connected with the master of the games were to come to him and say, “Cause us to be crowned and proclaimed,” confiding in their goodwill and friendship with him; and that he were to say to them, “This is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared, by their labors, and their toils;” should we indeed condemn him as powerless? By no means, but we should approve him for his justice, and for having no respect of persons. Like then as we should not say that he did not give the crown from want of vigor, but as not wishing to corrupt the law of the games, nor to disturb the order of justice; in like manner now should I say Christ said this, from every motive to compel them, after the grace of God, to set their hopes of salvation and approval on the proof of their own good works.

Therefore He saith, “For whom it is prepared.” For what, saith He, if others should appear better than you? What, if they should do greater things? For shall ye, because ye have become my disciples, therefore enjoy the first honors, if ye yourselves should not appear worthy of the choice?

For that He Himself hath power over the whole, is manifest from His having the entire judgment. For to Peter too He speaks thus, “I will give thee the keys of the Heavens.” (**Schaff Note:** Matthew 16:19 [This peculiar reading and rendering is commented on in the note on Homily LIV. 3.—R.]

And Paul also makes this clear where he saith, “Henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me in that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also which have loved His appearing.” (2 Timothy 4:8) But the appearing was of Christ. But that no one will stand before Paul, is surely clear to every one.

And if He hath expressed these things somewhat obscurely, marvel not. For to lead them on by hidden instruction, (οκονομικ) not to be rudely pressing Him without object or cause for the first honors (for from a human passion they felt this), and not wishing to give them pain, by the obscurity He effects both these objects.

“Then were the ten moved with indignation with respect to the two.” Then. When.? When He had reproved them. So long as the judgment was Christ’s, they were not moved with indignation; but seeing them preferred, they were contented, and held their peace, out of reverence and honor to their Master.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “How then saith He, “To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give,” as though there are some that should sit there?”

He refers in context to **Matthew 20 (KJV):20** Then came to him the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. 21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. 22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. 23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.

He continues, “Not as though there are; far from it; but He makes answer to the thoughts of them who ask the favor, condescending to their understanding. For neither did they know that lofty throne, and His sitting at the right hand of the Father; how should they, when even the things that were much lower than these, and were daily instilled into them, they understood not? but they sought one thing only, to enjoy the first honors, and to stand before the rest, and that no one should stand before them with Him; even as I have already said before, that, since they heard of twelve thrones, in ignorance what the saying could mean, they asked for the first place.

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But thus indeed He did not say it, so as not to pain them, but darkly He intimates the self-same thing, saying, “Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and ye shall be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on my right hand and on my left, this is not mine to give, but it shall be given to those for whom it is prepared.”

But for whom is it prepared? For them who could become distinguished by their works. Therefore He said not, It is not mine to give, but my Father’s, lest any should say that He was too weak, or wanting in vigor for their recompense; but how? It is not mine, but of those for whom it is prepared.

And in order that what I say may be more plain, let us work it on an illustration, and let us suppose there was some master of the games, then that many excellent combatants went down to the contest, and that some two of the combatants that were most nearly connected with the master of the games were to come to him and say, “Cause us to be crowned and proclaimed,” confiding in their goodwill and friendship with him; and that he were to say to them, “This is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared, by their labors, and their toils;” should we indeed condemn him as powerless? By no means, but we should approve him for his justice, and for having no respect of persons. Like then as we should not say that he did not give the crown from want of vigor, but as not wishing to corrupt the law of the games, nor to disturb the order of justice; in like manner now should I say Christ said this, from every motive to compel them, after the grace of God, to set their hopes of salvation

and approval on the proof of their own good works.”

But we are not saved by works, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

He continues, “Therefore He saith, “For whom it is prepared.” For what, saith He, if others should appear better than you? What, if they should do greater things? For shall ye, because ye have become my disciples, therefore enjoy the first honors, if ye yourselves should not appear worthy of the choice?

For that He Himself hath power over the whole, is manifest from His having the entire judgment. For to Peter too He speaks thus, “I will give thee the keys of the Heavens.” (Matthew 16:19 [This peculiar reading and rendering is commented on in the note on Homily LIV. 3.—R.]”

He refers to **Matthew 16 (KJV):19** And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

He continues, “And Paul also makes this clear where he saith, “Henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me in that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also which have loved His appearing.” (2 Timothy 4:8)”

He refers to **2 Timothy 4 (KJV):8** Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

He continues, “But the appearing was of Christ. But that no one will stand before Paul, is surely clear to every one.”

Paul is speaking of the second coming of Christ in this verse, because “at that day” refers to the judgment seat of Christ.

He continues, “And if He hath expressed these things somewhat obscurely, marvel not. For to lead them on by hidden instruction, (οκονομικ) not to be rudely pressing Him without object or cause for the first honors (for from a human passion they felt this), and not wishing to give them pain, by the obscurity He effects both these objects.

“Then were the ten moved with indignation with respect to the two.” Then. When? When He had reproved them. So long as the judgment was Christ’s, they were not moved with indignation; but seeing them preferred, they were contented, and held their peace, out of reverence and honor to their Master.”

He refers to **Matthew 20 (KJV):24** And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. 25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. 26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; 27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: 28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Ver. 8. "For by grace," saith he "have ye been saved."

In order then that the greatness of the benefits bestowed may not raise thee too high, observe how he brings thee down: "by grace ye have been saved," saith he,

"Through faith;"

Then, that, on the other hand, our freewill be not impaired, he adds also our part in the work, and yet again cancels it, and adds,

"And that not of ourselves."

Neither is faith, he means, "of ourselves." Because had He not come, had He not called us, how had we been able to believe? for "how," saith he, "shall they believe, unless they hear?" (Rom. x. 14) So that the work of faith itself is not our own.

"It is the gift," said he, "of God," it is "not of works."

Was faith then, you will say, enough to save us? No; but God, saith he, hath required this, lest He should save us, barren and without work at all. His expression is, that faith saveth, but it is because God so willeth, that faith saveth. Since, how, tell me, doth faith save, without works? This itself is the gift of God.

Ver. 9. "That no man should glory."

That he may excite in us proper feeling touching this gift of grace. "What then?" saith a man, "Hath He Himself hindered our being justified by works?" By no means. But no one, he saith, is justified by works, in order that the grace and lovingkindness of God may be shown. He did not reject us as having works, but as abandoned of works He hath saved us by grace; so that no man henceforth may have whereof to boast. And then, lest when thou hearest that the whole work is accomplished not of works but by faith, thou shouldest become idle, observe how he continues,

Ver. 10. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them."

Observe the words he uses. He here alludes to the regeneration, which is in reality a second creation. We have been brought from nonexistence into being. As to what we were before, that is, the old man, we are dead. What we are now become, before, we were not. Truly then is this work a creation, yea, and more noble than the first; for from that one, we have our being; but from this last, we have, over and above, our well being.

"For good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them."

Not merely that we should begin, but that we should walk in them, for we need a virtue which shall last throughout, and be extended on to our dying day. If we had to travel a road leading to a royal city, and then when we had passed over the greater part of it, were to flag and sit down near the very close, it were of no use to us. This is the hope of our calling; for "for good works" he says. Otherwise it would profit us nothing.

Moral. Thus here he rejoices not that we should work one work, but all; for, as we have five senses, and ought to make use of all in their proper season, so ought we also the several virtues. Now were a man to be temperate and yet unmerciful, or were he to be merciful and yet grasping, or were he to abstain indeed from other people's goods, and yet not bestow his own, it would be all in vain. For a single virtue alone is not enough to present us with boldness before the judgment seat of Christ; no, we require it to be great, and various, and universal, and entire. Hear what Christ saith to the disciples, "Go, ye and make disciples of all the nations,—teaching

them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you.” (Matt. xxviii. 19) And again, “Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, shall be called least in the kingdom of Heaven,” (Matt. v. 19) that is, in the resurrection; nay, he shall not enter into the kingdom; for He is wont to call the time also of the resurrection, the kingdom. “If he break one,” saith He, “he shall be called least,” so that we have need of all. And observe how it is not possible to enter without works of mercy; but if even this alone be wanting, we shall depart into the fire. For, saith He, “Depart, ye cursed, into the eternal fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his angels.” Why and wherefore? “For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink.” (Matt. xxv. 42) Beholdest thou, how without any other charge laid against them, for this one alone they perished. And for this reason alone too were the virgins also excluded from the bride chamber, though sobriety surely they did possess. As the Apostle saith “and the sanctification, without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Heb. xii. 14) Consider then, that without sobriety, it is impossible to see the Lord; yet it does not necessarily follow that with sobriety it is possible to see Him, because often-times something else stands in the way. Again, if we do all things ever so rightly, and yet do our neighbor no service, neither in that case shall we enter into the kingdom. Whence is this evident? From the parable of the servants entrusted with the talents. For, in that instance, the man’s virtue was in every point unimpaired, and there had been nothing lacking, but forasmuch as he was slothful in his business, he was rightly cast out. Nay, it is possible, even by railing only, to fall into Hell. “For whosoever” saith Christ, “shall say to his brother, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire.” (Matt. v. 22) And if a man be ever so right in all things, and yet be injurious, he shall not enter.

And let no one impute cruelty to God, in that he excludes those who fail in this matter, from the kingdom of Heaven. For even with men, if any one do any thing whatsoever contrary to the law, he is banished from the king’s presence. And if he transgresses so much as one of the established laws, if he lays a false accusation against another, he forfeits his office. And if he commits adultery, and is detected, he is disgraced, and even though he have done ten thousand right acts, he is undone; and if he commits murder, and is convicted, this again is enough to destroy him. Now if the laws of men are so carefully guarded, how much more should those of God be. “But He is good,” a man says. How long are we to be uttering this foolish talk? foolish, I say, not because He is not good, but in that we keep thinking that His goodness will be available to us for these purposes, though I have again and again used ten thousand arguments on this subject. Listen to the Scripture, which saith, “Say not, His mercy is great, He will be pacified for the multitude of my sins.” (Ecclus. v. 6) He does not forbid us to say, “His mercy is great.” This is not what He enjoins; rather he would have us constantly say it, and with this object Paul raises all sorts of arguments, but his object is what follows. Do not, he means, admire the lovingkindness of God with this view, with a view to sinning, and saying, “His mercy will be pacified for the multitude of my sins.” For it is with this object that I too discourse so much concerning His goodness, not that we may presume upon it, and do any thing we choose, because in that way this goodness will be to the prejudice of our salvation; but that we may not despair in our sins, but may repent. For “the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance,” (Rom. ii. 4) not to greater wickedness. And if thou become depraved, because of His goodness, thou art rather belying Him before men. I see many persons thus impugning the longsuffering of God; so that if thou use it not aright, thou shalt pay the penalty. Is God a God



of lovingkindness? Yes, but He is also a righteous Judge. Is He one who maketh allowance for sins? True, yet rendereth He to every man according to his works. Doth He pass by iniquity and blot out transgressions? True, yet maketh He inquisition also. How then is it, that these things are not contradictions? Contradictions they are not, if we distinguish them by their times. He doeth away iniquity here, both by the laver of Baptism, and by penitence. There He maketh inquisition of what we have done by fire and torment. "If then," some man may say, "I am cast out, and forfeit the kingdom, whether I have wrought ten thousand evil deeds or only one, wherefore may I not do all sorts of evil deeds?" This is the argument of an ungrateful servant; still nevertheless, we will proceed to solve even this. Never do that which is evil in order to do thyself good; for we shall, all alike fall short of the kingdom, yet in Hell we shall not all undergo the same punishment, but one a severer, another a milder one. For now, if thou and another have "despised God's goodness," (Rom. ii. 4) the one in many instances, and the other in a few, ye will alike forfeit the kingdom. But if ye have not alike despised Him, but the one in a greater, the other in a less degree, in Hell ye shall feel the difference.

Now then, why, it may be said, doth He threaten them who have not done works of mercy, that they shall depart into the fire, and not simply into the fire, but into that which is "prepared for the devil and his angels?" (Matt. xxv. 41) Why and wherefore is this? Because nothing so provokes God to wrath. He puts this before all terrible things; for if it is our duty to love our enemies, of what punishment shall not he be worthy, who turns away even from them that love him, and is in this respect worse than the heathen? So that in this case the greatness of the sin will make such an one go away with the devil. Woe to him, it is said, who doeth not alms; and if this was the case under the Old Covenant, much more is it under the New. If, where the getting of wealth was allowed, and the enjoyment of it, and the care of it, there was such provision made for the succoring the poor, how much more in that Dispensation, where we are commanded to surrender all we have? For what did not they of old do? They gave tithes, and tithes again upon tithes for orphans, widows, and strangers; whereas some one was saying to me in astonishment at another, "Why, such an one gives tithes." What a load of disgrace does this expression imply, since what was not a matter of wonder with the Jews has come to be so in the case of the Christians? If there was danger then in omitting tithes, think how great it must be now.

Again, drunkenness shall not inherit the kingdom. Yet what is the language of most people? "Well, if both I and he are in the same case, that is no little comfort." What then? First of all, that thou and he shall not reap the same punishment; but were it otherwise, neither is that any comfort. Fellowship in sufferings has comfort in it, when the miseries have any proportion in them; but when they exceed all proportion, and carry us beyond ourselves, no longer do they allow of our receiving any comfort at all. For tell the man that is being tortured, and has entered into the flames, that such an one is undergoing the same, still he will not feel the comfort. Did not all the Israelites perish together? What manner of comfort did that afford them? Rather, did not this very thing distress them? And this was why they kept saying, We are lost, we are perished, we are wasted away. What manner of comfort then is there here? In vain do we comfort ourselves with such hopes as these. There is but one only comfort, to avoid falling into that unquenchable fire; but it is not possible for one who has fallen into it to find comfort, where there is the gnashing of teeth, where there is the weeping, where is the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched. For shalt thou conceive any comfort at all, tell me, when

thou art in so great tribulation and distress? Wilt thou then be any longer thyself? Let us not, I pray and entreat you, let us not vainly deceive ourselves and comfort ourselves with arguments like these; no, let us practice those virtues, which shall avail to save us. The object before us is to sit together with Christ, and art thou trifling about such matters as these? Why, were there no other sin at all, how great punishment ought we not to suffer for these very speeches themselves, because we are so insensate, so wretched, and so indolent, as, even with so vast a privilege before us, to talk thus? Oh! how much shalt thou have to lament, when thou shalt then consider them that have done good! When thou shalt behold slaves and base-born who have labored but a little here, there made partakers of the royal throne, will not these things be worse to thee than torment? For if even now, when thou seest any in high reputation, though thou art suffering no evil, thou regardest this as worse than any punishment, and by this alone art consumed, and bemoanest thyself, and weepest, and judgest it to be as bad as ten thousand deaths; what shalt thou suffer then? Why, even were there no hell at all, the very thought of the kingdom, were it not enough to destroy and consume thee? And that such will be the case, we have enough in our own experience of things to teach us. Let us not then vainly flatter our own souls with speeches like these; no, let us take heed, let us have a regard for our own salvation, let us make virtue our care, let us rouse ourselves to the practice of good works, that we may be counted worthy to attain to this exceeding glory, in Jesus Christ our Lord with whom to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit be glory, might, honor, now and ever, and for ages of ages. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 8. “For by grace,” saith he “have ye been saved.”

He refers to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

He continues, “In order then that the greatness of the benefits bestowed may not raise thee too high, observe how he brings thee down: “by grace ye have been saved,” saith he, “Through faith;”

Then, that, on the other hand, our freewill be not impaired, he adds also our part in the work, and yet again cancels it, and adds,

“And that not of ourselves.””

Chrysostom leads one to believe that Paul “adds also our part in the work” so that “our freewill be not impaired”. But then Chrysostom says “yet again cancels it, and adds, “And that not of ourselves.”” He is duplicitous in his speech here.

He continues, “Neither is faith, he means, “of ourselves.” Because had He not come, had He not called us, how had we been able to believe? for “how,” saith he, “shall they believe, unless they hear?” (Rom. x. 14) So that the work of faith itself is not our own.”

He refers to **Romans 10 (KJV):14** How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

He continues, ““It is the gift,” said he, “of God,” it is “not of works.”

Was faith then, you will say, enough to save us? No; but God, saith he, hath required this, lest He should save us, barren and without work at all. His expression is, that faith saveth, but it is because God so willeth, that faith saveth. Since, how, tell me, doth faith save, without works?

This itself is the gift of God.”

So to summarize, he is saying that faith and works are necessary to be saved.

He continues, “Ver. 9. “That no man should glory.””

He refers to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):9** Not of works, lest any man should boast.

He continues, “That he may excite in us proper feeling touching this gift of grace. “What then?” saith a man, “Hath He Himself hindered our being justified by works?” By no means. But no one, he saith, is justified by works, in order that the grace and lovingkindness of God may be shown. He did not reject us as having works, but as abandoned of works He hath saved us by grace; so that no man henceforth may have whereof to boast. And then, lest when thou hearest that the whole work is accomplished not of works but by faith, thou shouldest become idle, observe how he continues,

Ver. 10. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.””

He refers to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

He continues, “Observe the words he uses. He here alludes to the regeneration, which is in reality a second creation. We have been brought from nonexistence into being. As to what we were before, that is, the old man, we are dead. What we are now become, before, we were not. Truly then is this work a creation, yea, and more noble than the first; for from that one, we have our being; but from this last, we have, over and above, our well being.

“For good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.”

Not merely that we should begin, but that we should walk in them, for we need a virtue which shall last throughout, and be extended on to our dying day.”

We will have more understanding about what he means by virtue shortly. He continues, “If we had to travel a road leading to a royal city, and then when we had passed over the greater part of it, were to flag and sit down near the very close, it were of no use to us. This is the hope of our calling; for “for good works” he says. Otherwise it would profit us nothing.”

Chrysostom is not clear here about the regeneration that happens when one is born again. When we are born of the Spirit, we are born again, or literally, born from above. Jesus taught Nicodemus in **John 3 (KJV):3** Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

The words “born again” in the Greek are **γεννηθῆ ἄνωθεν** (pronounced gen-nethay ano-then), and literally mean “born from above”. Jesus then explains how this happens as we continue in **John 3 (KJV):4** Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? **5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. **6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. **7** Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. **8** The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Man is composed of body, soul, and spirit, as we read in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That we have a spirit is also mentioned in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

That there is a difference between soul and spirit is stated in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Our spirit is where we connect with God. The reason we need to be born again is because in our spirit we were dead in trespasses and sins, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Then, speaking of the new birth, Paul continues in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

This is also spoken of in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

The word “regeneration” in the Greek is **παλιγγενεσί** (pronounced pä-len-ge-ne-se'-ä), from G3825 and G1078; (spiritual) rebirth (the state or the act), i.e. (figuratively) spiritual renovation; specially, Messianic restoration:—regeneration. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3824**

This Greek word is composed of two Greek words. The first is **πάλιν** (pronounced pä'-len) (G3825), probably from the same as G3823 (through the idea of oscillatory repetition); (adverbially) anew, i.e. (of place) back, (of time) once more, or (conjunctionally) furthermore or on the other hand:—again. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3825**

The second is **γένεσις** (pronounced ge'-ne-ses) (G1078), from the same as G1074; nativity; figuratively, nature:—generation, nature(-ral). **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1078**

The washing that happens at regeneration is the cleansing of all our sins. Regeneration refers to the birth in our spirit by the Holy Spirit when we believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord. We then receive a new divine nature in our spirit as a result of being born of the Holy Spirit, as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Our spirit now has eternal life as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

We have passed from death to life as Jesus taught in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Chrysostom is making good works a requirement to be saved. So if we don't continue in good works, we will lose our salvation. But good works are ordained for those who are saved by grace, through faith, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Being "created in Christ Jesus unto good works" relates to our being born again. God has ordained good works for us "that we should walk in them". But if we only build wood, hay, and stubble, we will still be saved, yet as by the fire of our bad choices, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):14** If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

He continues, "Moral. Thus here he rejoices not that we should work one work, but all; for, as we have five senses, and ought to make use of all in their proper season, so ought we also the several virtues. Now were a man to be temperate and yet unmerciful, or were he to be merciful and yet grasping, or were he to abstain indeed from other people's goods, and yet not bestow his own, it would be all in vain. For a single virtue alone is not enough to present us with boldness before the judgment seat of Christ; no, we require it to be great, and various, and universal, and entire. Hear what Christ saith to the disciples, "Go, ye and make disciples of all the nations,—teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." (Matt. xxviii. 19)"

He refers in context to **Matthew 28 (KJV):18** And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

He continues, "And again, "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, shall be called least in the kingdom of Heaven," (Matt. v. 19) that is, in the resurrection; nay, he shall not enter into the kingdom; for He is wont to call the time also of the resurrection, the kingdom."

He refers in context to **Matthew 5 (KJV):17** Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

He continues, ""If he break one," saith He, "he shall be called least," so that we have need of all. And observe how it is not possible to enter without works of mercy; but if even this alone be wanting, we shall depart into the fire. For, saith He, "Depart, ye cursed, into the eternal

fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his angels.” Why and wherefore? “For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink.” (Matt. xxv. 42)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 25 (KJV)**:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

He continues, “Beholdest thou, how without any other charge laid against them, for this one alone they perished. And for this reason alone too were the virgins also excluded from the bride chamber, though sobriety surely they did possess.”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV)**:1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

There is only one thing that will keep us from the kingdom of heaven, as Jesus explained in **John 3 (KJV)**:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Chrysostom thought that it was faith plus works. He continues, “As the Apostle saith “and the sanctification, without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Heb. xii. 14)”

He refers to **Hebrews 12 (KJV)**:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

But we were sanctified when we believed in Jesus Christ, as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB)**:11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

And in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV)**:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

He continues, “Consider then, that without sobriety, it is impossible to see the Lord; yet it does not necessarily follow that with sobriety it is possible to see Him, because oftentimes something else stands in the way. Again, if we do all things ever so rightly, and yet do our neighbor no service, neither in that case shall we enter into the kingdom. Whence is this evident? From the parable of the servants entrusted with the talents. For, in that instance, the man's virtue was in every point unimpaired, and there had been nothing lacking, but forasmuch as he was slothful in his business, he was rightly cast out.”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):**24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. 26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: 27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. 28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. 29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. 30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Parables are not to be used to formulate doctrine. We must be careful not to make a parable walk on all fours, as it were. There is a message in the parable. That is what we must look for. In this parable of the talents, the one who received one talent never did anything with what he had received. This is why he was ultimately cast out into “outer darkness” where “there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”. The word did not profit this one, not being mixed with faith as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):**2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

He continues, “Nay, it is possible, even by railing only, to fall into Hell. “For whosoever” saith Christ, “shall say to his brother, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire.” (Matt. v. 22) And if a man be ever so right in all things, and yet be injurious, he shall not enter.”

Let us read in context in **Matthew 5 (KJV):**20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. 21 Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Jesus was pointing out that without righteousness, we will not enter into the kingdom of heaven. The scribes and the Pharisees had no righteousness because they had no faith. This righteousness Abraham had as we read in **Romans 4 (KJV):**13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

That is, the righteousness of God which is by faith as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):**22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

In Matthew 5:22, Jesus was pointing out that sin is sin, be it great or small. Jesus taught that it was His blood which was shed for the remission of sins, as we read in **Matthew 26 (KJV):**28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

And in **Acts 10 (KJV):**43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

And in **Romans 3 (KJV):25** Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

And in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):18** Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

He continues, “And let no one impute cruelty to God, in that he excludes those who fail in this matter, from the kingdom of Heaven. For even with men, if any one do any thing whatsoever contrary to the law, he is banished from the king’s presence. And if he transgresses so much as one of the established laws, if he lays a false accusation against another, he forfeits his office. And if he commits adultery, and is detected, he is disgraced, and even though he have done ten thousand right acts, he is undone; and if he commits murder, and is convicted, this again is enough to destroy him. Now if the laws of men are so carefully guarded, how much more should those of God be. “But He is good,” a man says. How long are we to be uttering this foolish talk? foolish, I say, not because He is not good, but in that we keep thinking that His goodness will be available to us for these purposes, though I have again and again used ten thousand arguments on this subject. Listen to the Scripture, which saith, “Say not, His mercy is great, He will be pacified for the multitude of my sins.” (Ecclus. v. 6)”

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 5 (KJV):6** And say not His mercy is great; he will be pacified for the multitude of my sins: for mercy and wrath come from him, and his indignation resteth upon sinners.

He continues, “He does not forbid us to say, “His mercy is great.” This is not what He enjoins; rather he would have us constantly say it, and with this object Paul raises all sorts of arguments, but his object is what follows. Do not, he means, admire the lovingkindness of God with this view, with a view to sinning, and saying, “His mercy will be pacified for the multitude of my sins.” For it is with this object that I too discourse so much concerning His goodness, not that we may presume upon it, and do any thing we choose, because in that way this goodness will be to the prejudice of our salvation; but that we may not despair in our sins, but may repent. For “the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance,” (Rom. ii. 4) not to greater wickedness.”

He refers to **Romans 2 (KJV):4** Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

And we read in **Romans 6 (KJV):1** What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

He continues, “And if thou become depraved, because of His goodness, thou art rather belying Him before men. I see many persons thus impugning the longsuffering of God; so that if thou use it not aright, thou shalt pay the penalty. Is God a God of lovingkindness? Yes, but He is also a righteous Judge. Is He one who maketh allowance for sins? True, yet rendereth He to every man according to his works. Doth He pass by iniquity and blot out transgressions? True, yet maketh He inquisition also.”

He refers to **Psalms 36 (KJV):7** How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.



And to **2 Timothy 4 (KJV):8** Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

And to **Proverbs 24 (KJV):12** If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?

And to **Matthew 16 (KJV):27** For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

And to **Psalms 51 (KJV):1** Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

And to **Isaiah 44 (KJV):22** I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

And to **Numbers 14 (KJV):18** The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.

He continues, "How then is it, that these things are not contradictions? Contradictions they are not, if we distinguish them by their times."

Actually, they are not contradictions if we consider them in their context. Chrysostom takes many verses out of context.

He continues, "He doeth away iniquity here, both by the laver of Baptism, and by penitence."

He relies on ritual, and punishment of ourselves for forgiveness of sin. But without faith, it is impossible to please Him as we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):6** But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

And we are to walk by faith, as in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):7** (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

And we read in **Romans 4 (KJV):1** What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? **2** For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. **3** For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. **4** Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. **5** But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

He continues, "There He maketh inquisition of what we have done by fire and torment. "If then," some man may say, "I am cast out, and forfeit the kingdom, whether I have wrought ten thousand evil deeds or only one, wherefore may I not do all sorts of evil deeds?" This is the argument of an ungrateful servant; still nevertheless, we will proceed to solve even this. Never do that which is evil in order to do thyself good; for we shall, all alike fall short of the kingdom, yet in Hell we shall not all undergo the same punishment, but one a severer, another a milder one. For now, if thou and another have "despised God's goodness," (Rom. ii. 4) the one in many instances, and the other in a few, ye will alike forfeit the kingdom. But if ye have not alike despised Him, but the one in a greater, the other in a less degree, in Hell ye shall feel the difference."

He refers again to **Romans 2 (KJV):4** Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

It is true that there will be greater and lesser punishments in Hell. But a believer will not go to Hell. Chrysostom did not understand the standing of the believer. When we believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord, we are born again, and God justifies us. That is, He declares us as righteous, and imputes, or puts down to our account, His very righteousness as Paul explains in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

And, referring to Abraham, in **Romans 4 (KJV):22** And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

It is when we believe “on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead” that God justifies us. This is why our justification is spoken of as a past event in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

And in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

He continues, “Now then, why, it may be said, doth He threaten them who have not done works of mercy, that they shall depart into the fire, and not simply into the fire, but into that which is “prepared for the devil and his angels?” (Matt. xxv. 41)”

He refers again in context to **Matthew 25 (KJV):41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

He continues, “Why and wherefore is this? Because nothing so provokes God to wrath. He puts this before all terrible things; for if it is our duty to love our enemies, of what punishment shall not he be worthy, who turns away even from them that love him, and is in this respect worse than the heathen? So that in this case the greatness of the sin will make such an

one go away with the devil. Woe to him, it is said, who doeth not alms; and if this was the case under the Old Covenant, much more is it under the New. If, where the getting of wealth was allowed, and the enjoyment of it, and the care of it, there was such provision made for the succoring the poor, how much more in that Dispensation, where we are commanded to surrender all we have? For what did not they of old do? They gave tithes, and tithes again upon tithes for orphans, widows, and strangers; whereas some one was saying to me in astonishment at another, "Why, such an one gives tithes." What a load of disgrace does this expression imply, since what was not a matter of wonder with the Jews has come to be so in the case of the Christians? If there was danger then in omitting tithes, think how great it must be now."

Chrisostom is making us keep the law to be saved. But the law is our school master to bring us to Christ, as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV):**23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

After we have been justified by our faith in Christ Jesus, we are no longer under the law. The law cannot condemn us, who have now been justified. We have been sovereignly baptized into Christ, and have put on Christ. God has placed us in His body where it has pleased Him, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

This is not referring to water baptism, but the baptism by the Spirit of God into the one body of Christ. We continue to read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**14 For the body is not one member, but many.15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

In verse 18, we read that God has "set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him". And being set by God in a specific place, we have a specific function to perform in that place, as an eye, hand, head, or feet.

Chrysostom continues, "Again, drunkenness shall not inherit the kingdom. Yet what is the language of most people? "Well, if both I and he are in the same case, that is no little comfort." What then? First of all, that thou and he shall not reap the same punishment; but were it otherwise, neither is that any comfort. Fellowship in sufferings has comfort in it, when the miseries have any proportion in them; but when they exceed all proportion, and carry us beyond ourselves, no longer do they allow of our receiving any comfort at all. For tell the man that is

being tortured, and has entered into the flames, that such an one is undergoing the same, still he will not feel the comfort. Did not all the Israelites perish together? What manner of comfort did that afford them? Rather, did not this very thing distress them? And this was why they kept saying, We are lost, we are perished, we are wasted away. What manner of comfort then is there here? In vain do we comfort ourselves with such hopes as these. There is but one only comfort, to avoid falling into that unquenchable fire; but it is not possible for one who has fallen into it to find comfort, where there is the gnashing of teeth, where there is the weeping, where is the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched. For shalt thou conceive any comfort at all, tell me, when thou art in so great tribulation and distress? Wilt thou then be any longer thyself? Let us not, I pray and entreat you, let us not vainly deceive ourselves and comfort ourselves with arguments like these; no, let us practice those virtues, which shall avail to save us.”

Why not simply submit to God, and His righteousness, as Paul in **Philippians 3 (KJV):8** Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

He continues, “The object before us is to sit together with Christ, and art thou trifling about such matters as these? Why, were there no other sin at all, how great punishment ought we not to suffer for these very speeches themselves, because we are so insensate, so wretched, and so indolent, as, even with so vast a privilege before us, to talk thus? Oh! how much shalt thou have to lament, when thou shalt then consider them that have done good! When thou shalt behold slaves and base-born who have labored but a little here, there made partakers of the royal throne, will not these things be worse to thee than torment? For if even now, when thou seest any in high reputation, though thou art suffering no evil, thou regardest this as worse than any punishment, and by this alone art consumed, and bemoanest thyself, and weepst, and judgest it to be as bad as ten thousand deaths; what shalt thou suffer then? Why, even were there no hell at all, the very thought of the kingdom, were it not enough to destroy and consume thee? And that such will be the case, we have enough in our own experience of things to teach us. Let us not then vainly flatter our own souls with speeches like these; no, let us take heed, let us have a regard for our own salvation, let us make virtue our care, let us rouse ourselves to the practice of good works, that we may be counted worthy to attain to this exceeding glory, in Jesus Christ our Lord with whom to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit be glory, might, honor, now and ever, and for ages of ages. Amen.”

Let us instead not rely on our own righteousness, or good works, but on what He has done for us, as we read in **Titus 3 (KJV):4** But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXXVI, page 278-281**

John xiv. 31; xv. 1 *“Arise, let us go hence. I am the true Vine, (ye are the branches,) and My Father is the Husbandman.”*

[1.] ‘Ignorance’ makes the soul timid and unmanly, just as instruction in heavenly doctrines makes it great and sublime. For when it has enjoyed no care, it is in a manner timid, not by nature but by will. For when I see the man who once was brave, now become a coward, I say that this latter feeling no longer belongs to nature, for what is natural is immutable. Again, when I see those who but now were cowards all at once become daring, I pass the same judgment, and refer all to will. Since even the disciples were very fearful, before they had learned what they ought, and had been deemed worthy of the gift of the Spirit; yet afterwards they became bolder than lions. So Peter, who could not bear the threat of a damsel, was hung with his head downwards, and was scourged, and though he endured ten thousand dangers, would not be silent, but enduring what he endured as though it were a dream, in such a situation spake boldly; but not so before the Crucifixion. Wherefore Christ said, “Arise, let us go hence.” “But why, tell me? Did he not know the hour at which Judas would come upon Him? Or perhaps He feared lest he should come and seize them, and lest the plotters should be upon him before he had furnished his most excellent teaching.” Away with the thought! these things are far from His dignity. “If then He did not fear, why did He remove them, and then after finishing His discourse lead them into a garden known to Judas? And even had Judas come, could He not have blinded their eyes, as He also did when the traitor was not present? Why did He remove them?” He alloweth the disciples a little breathing time. For it was likely that they, as being in a conspicuous place, would tremble and fear, both on the account of the time and the place, (for it was the depth of night,) and would not give heed to His words, but would be continually turning about, and imagining that they heard those who were to set upon them; and that more especially when their Master’s speech made them expect evil. For, “yet a little while,” He saith, “and I am not with you,” and, “the ruler of this world cometh.” Since now when they heard these and the like words they were troubled, as though they should certainly be taken immediately, He leadeth them to another place, in order that thinking themselves in safety, they might listen to Him without fear. For they were about to hear lofty doctrines. Therefore He saith, “Arise, let us go hence.” Then He addeth, and saith, “I am the Vine, ye are the branches.” What willeth He to imply by the comparison? That the man who gives no heed to His words can have no life, and that the miracles about to take place, would be wrought by the power of Christ. “My Father is the Husbandman.” “How then? Doth the Son need a power working within?” Away with the thought! this example does not signify this. Observe with what exactness He goeth through the comparison. He saith not that the “root” enjoys the care of the Husbandman, but, “the branches.” And the foot is brought in in this place for no other purpose, but that they may learn that they can work nothing without His power, and that they ought to be united with Him by faith as the branch with the vine.

Ver. 2. “Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit the Father taketh away.”

Here He alludeth to the manner of life, showing that without works it is not possible to be in Him.

“And every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it.”

That is, “causeth it to enjoy great care.” Yet the root requires care rather than the branches, in being dug about, and cleared, yet about this He saith nothing here, but all about the branches. Showing that He is sufficient to Himself, and that the disciples need much help from

the Husbandman, although they be very excellent. Wherefore He saith, “that which beareth fruit, He purgeth it.” The one branch, because it is fruitless, cannot even remain in the Vine, but for the other, because it beareth fruit, He rendereth it more fruitful. This, some one might assert, was said with relation also to the persecutions then coming upon them. For the “purgeth it,” is “pruneth,” which makes the branch bear better. Whence it is shown, that persecutions rather make men stronger. Then, lest they should ask concerning whom He said these things, and lest He should throw them back into anxiety, He saith,

Ver. 3. “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.”

Seest thou how He introduceth Himself as tending the branches? “I have cleansed you,” He saith; yet above He declareth that the Father doth this. But there is no separation between the Father and the Son. “And now your part also must be performed.” Then to show that He did not this as needing their ministry, but for their advancement, He addeth,

Ver. 4. “As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, so neither can he who abideth not in Me.”

For that they might not be separated from Him by timidity, He fasteneth and glueth to Himself their souls slackened through fear, and holdeth out to them good hopes for the future. For the root remains, but to be taken away, or to be left, belongs to the branches. Then having urged them on in both ways, by things pleasant and things painful, He requireth first what is to be done on our side.

Ver. 5. “He that abideth in Me, and I in him.”

Seest thou that the Son contributeth not less than the Father towards the care of the disciples? The Father purgeth, but He keepeth them in Himself. The abiding in the root is that which maketh the branches to be fruit-bearing. For that which is not purged, if it remain on the root, bears fruit, though perhaps not so much as it ought; but that which remains not, bears none at all. But still the “purging” also hath been shown to belong to the Son, and the “abiding in the root,” to the Father, who also begat the Root. Seest thou how all is common, both the “purging,” and the enjoying the virtue which is from the root?

[2.] Now it were a great penalty, the being able to do nothing, but He stayeth not the punishment at this point, but carrieth on His discourse farther.

Ver. 6. “He is cast forth,” He saith.

No longer enjoying the benefit of the husbandman’s hand. “And is withered.” That is, if he had aught of the root, he loses it; if any grace, he is stripped of this, and is bereft of the help and life which proceed from it. And what the end? “He is cast into the fire.” Not such he who abideth with Him. Then He showeth what it is to “abide,” and saith,

Ver. 7. “If My words abide in you.”

Seest thou that with reason I said above, that He seeketh the proof by works? For when He had said, “Whatsoever ye shall ask I will do it” ( c. xiv. 14, 15 ), He added, “If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments.” And here, “If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you.”

“Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”

This He said to show that they who plotted against Him should be burnt up, but that “they” should bear fruit. Then transferring the fear from them to the others, and showing that they should be invincible, He saith,

Ver. 8. “Herein is My Father glorified, that ye be My disciples, and bear much fruit.”

Hence He maketh His discourse credible, for if the bearing fruit pertains to the glory of

the Father, He will not neglect His own glory. “And ye shall be My disciples.” Seest thou how he that beareth fruit, he is the disciple? But what is, “In this is the Father glorified”? “He rejoiceth when ye abide in Me, when ye bear fruit.”

Ver. 9. “As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you.”

Here at length He speaketh in a more human manner, for this, as spoken to men, has its peculiar force. Since what a measure of love did He manifest, who chose to die, who counted worthy of such honor those who were His slaves, His haters, His open enemies, and led them up to the heavens! “If then I love you, be bold; if it be the glory of My Father that ye bear fruit, imagine nothing ill.” Then that He may not make them supine, observe how He braceth them again,

“Continue ye in My love.” “For this ye have the power to do.” And how shall this be?

Ver. 10. “If ye keep My commandments, even as I have kept my Father’s commandments.”

Again, His discourse proceedeth in a human way; for certainly the Lawgiver would not be subject to commandments. Seest thou that here also, as I am always saying, this is declared because of the infirmity of the hearers? For He chiefly speaketh to their suspicions, and by every means showeth them that they are in safety, and that their enemies are being lost, and that all, whatever they have, they have from the Son, and that, if they show forth a pure life, none shall ever have the mastery over them. And observe that He discourseth with them in a very authoritative manner, for He said not, “abide in the love of My Father,” but, “in Mine”; then, lest they should say, “when Thou hast set us at war with all men, Thou leavest us, and departest,” He showeth that He doth not leave them, but is so joined to them if they will, as the branch in the vine. Then, lest from confidence they should become supine, He saith not that the blessing cannot be removed if they are slack-minded. And in order not to refer the action to Himself, and so make them more apt to fall, He saith, “Herein is My Father glorified.” For everywhere He manifesteth His own and His Father’s love towards them. Not the things of the Jews, then, were “glory,” but those which they were about to receive. And that they might not say, “we have been driven from the possessions of our fathers, we have been deserted, we have become naked, and destitute of all things,” “Look,” He saith, “on Me. I am loved by the Father, yet still I suffer these things appointed. And so I am not now leaving you because I love you not. For if I am slain, and take not this for a proof of not being loved by the Father, neither ought ye to be troubled. For, if ye continue in My love, these dangers shall not be able to do you any mischief on the score of love.”

[3.] Since then love is a thing mighty and irresistible, not a bare word, let us manifest it by our actions. He reconciled us when we were His enemies, let us, now that we have become His friends, remain so. He led the way, let us at least follow; He loveth us not for His own advantage, (for He needeth nothing,) let us at least love Him for our profit; He loved us being His enemies, let us at least love Him being our friend. At present we do the contrary; for every day God is blasphemed through us, through our plunderings, through our covetousness. And perhaps one of you will say, “Every day thy discourse is about covetousness.” Would that I could speak about it every night too; would that I could do so, following you about in the marketplace, and at your table; would that both wives, and friends, and children, and domestics, and tillers of the soil, and neighbors, and the very pavement and walls, could ever shout forth this word, that so we might perchance have relaxed a little. For this malady hath seized upon all

the world, and occupies the souls of all, and great is the tyranny of Mammon. We have been ransomed by Christ, and are the slaves of gold. We proclaim the sovereignty of the one, and obey the other. Whatever “he” commands we readily obey, and we have refused to know family, or friendship, or nature, or laws, or anything, for him. No one looks up to Heaven, no one thinks about things to come. But there will be a time, when there will be no profit even in these words. “In the grave,” it saith, “who shall confess to Thee?” Gold is a desirable thing, and procures us much luxury, and makes us to be honored, but not in like manner as doth Heaven. For from the wealthy man many even turn aside, and hate him, but him who lives virtuously they respect and honor. “But” saith some one “the poor man is derided, even though he be virtuous.” Not among men, but brutes. Wherefore he ought not so much as to notice them. For if asses were to bray and daws chatter at us, while all wise men commended us, we should not, losing sight of this latter audience, have regard to clamors of the brutes; for like to daws, and worse than asses, are they who admire present things. Moreover, if an earthly king approve thee, thou makest no account of the many, though they all deride thee; but if the Lord of the universe praise thee, seekest thou the good words of beetles and gnats? For this is what these men are, compared with God, or rather not even this, but something viler, if there be aught such. How long do we wallow in the mire? How long do we set sluggards and belly-gods for our judges? They can prove dicers well, drunkards, those who live for the belly, but as for virtue and vice, they cannot imagine so much as a dream. If any one taunt thee because thou hast not skill to draw the channels of the watercourses, thou wilt not think it any terrible thing, but wilt even laugh at him who objects to thee ignorance of this kind; and dost thou, when thou desirest to practice virtue, appoint as judges those who know nothing of it? On this account we never reach that art. We commit our case not to the practiced, but to the unlearned, and they judge not according to the rules of art, but according to their own ignorance. Wherefore, I exhort you, let us despise the many; or rather let us desire neither praises, nor possessions, nor wealth, nor deem poverty any evil. For poverty is to us a teacher of prudence, and endurance, and all true wisdom. Thus Lazarus lived in poverty, and received a crown; Jacob desired to get bread only; and Joseph was in the extreme of poverty, being not merely a slave, but also a prisoner; and on this account we admire him the more, and we do not so much praise him when he distributed the corn, as when he dwelt in the dungeon: not when he wore the diadem, but when the chain; not when he sat upon the throne, but when he was plotted against and sold. Considering then all these things, and the crowns twined for us after the conflicts, let us admire not wealth, and honor, and luxury, and power, but poverty, and the chain, and bonds, and endurance in the cause of virtue. For the end of those things is full of troubles and confusion, and their lot is bound up with this present life; but the fruit of these, heaven, and the good things in the heavens, which neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard; which may we all obtain, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “John xiv. 31; xv. 1 *“Arise, let us go hence. I am the true Vine, (ye are the branches,) and My Father is the Husbandman.”*”

He refers to **John 14 (KJV):31** But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

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heavenly doctrines makes it great and sublime. For when it has enjoyed no care, it is in a manner timid, not by nature but by will. For when I see the man who once was brave, now become a coward, I say that this latter feeling no longer belongs to nature, for what is natural is immutable. Again, when I see those who but now were cowards all at once become daring, I pass the same judgment, and refer all to will. Since even the disciples were very fearful, before they had learned what they ought, and had been deemed worthy of the gift of the Spirit; yet afterwards they became bolder than lions.”

Yet we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV)**:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

This “nature” in verse 3 is the law of sin in our flesh as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV)**:21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

This is the reason that unbelievers, that is, the unsaved, are totally dominated by their flesh, and they cannot please God. And this law of sin, or sin nature, remains in the flesh of those who are saved, and are born again. But believers have victory over the flesh because of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV)**:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

The “law of the Spirit of life” relates to the new divine nature in our spirit after we have been born again of the Spirit of God.

Chrysostom did not understand that man has a sin nature inherited from Adam in our flesh. This is why our flesh is doomed to die.

He continues, “So Peter, who could not bear the threat of a damsel, was hung with his head downwards, and was scourged, and though he endured ten thousand dangers, would not be silent, but enduring what he endured as though it were a dream, in such a situation spake boldly; but not so before the Crucifixion. Wherefore Christ said, “Arise, let us go hence.” “But why, tell me? Did he not know the hour at which Judas would come upon Him? Or perhaps He feared lest he should come and seize them, and lest the plotters should be upon him before he had furnished his most excellent teaching.” Away with the thought! these things are far from His dignity. “If then He did not fear, why did He remove them, and then after finishing His discourse lead them into a garden known to Judas? And even had Judas come, could He not have blinded their eyes, as He also did when the traitor was not present? Why did He remove them?” He alloweth the disciples a little breathing time. For it was likely that they, as being in a conspicuous place, would tremble and fear, both on the account of the time and the place, (for it was the depth of night,) and would not give heed to His words, but would be continually turning

about, and imagining that they heard those who were to set upon them; and that more especially when their Master's speech made them expect evil. For, "yet a little while," He saith, "and I am not with you," and, "the ruler of this world cometh."

He refers to **John 14 (KJV):19** Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

And to **John 14 (KJV):30** Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

He continues, "Since now when they heard these and the like words they were troubled, as though they should certainly be taken immediately, He leadeth them to another place, in order that thinking themselves in safety, they might listen to Him without fear. For they were about to hear lofty doctrines. Therefore He saith, "Arise, let us go hence." Then He addeth, and saith, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches."

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And to **John 15 (KJV):5** I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

He continues, "What willeth He to imply by the comparison? That the man who gives no heed to His words can have no life, and that the miracles about to take place, would be wrought by the power of Christ. "My Father is the Husbandman."

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):1** I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

He continues, "'How then? Doth the Son need a power working within?" Away with the thought! this example does not signify this. Observe with what exactness He goeth through the comparison. He saith not that the "root" enjoys the care of the Husbandman, but, "the branches." And the foot is brought in in this place for no other purpose, but that they may learn that they can work nothing without His power, and that they ought to be united with Him by faith as the branch with the vine.

Ver. 2. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit the Father taketh away."

Here He alludeth to the manner of life, showing that without works it is not possible to be in Him.

"And every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it."

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):2** Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Again, we see that he believed that "without works it is not possible to be in Him". But the Scripture is clear, as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

And Paul says in **Philippians 3 (KJV):8** Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

Chrysostom continues, "That is, "causeth it to enjoy great care." Yet the root requires care rather than the branches, in being dug about, and cleared, yet about this He saith nothing

here, but all about the branches. Showing that He is sufficient to Himself, and that the disciples need much help from the Husbandman, although they be very excellent. Wherefore He saith, “that which beareth fruit, He purgeth it.” The one branch, because it is fruitless, cannot even remain in the Vine, but for the other, because it beareth fruit, He rendereth it more fruitful. This, some one might assert, was said with relation also to the persecutions then coming upon them. For the “purgeth it,” is “pruneth,” which makes the branch bear better. Whence it is shown, that persecutions rather make men stronger. Then, lest they should ask concerning whom He said these things, and lest He should throw them back into anxiety, He saith,

Ver. 3. “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.””

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):3** Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

And we read in **Psalm 119 (KJV):9** Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

He continues, “Seest thou how He introduceth Himself as tending the branches? “I have cleansed you,” He saith; yet above He declareth that the Father doth this. But there is no separation between the Father and the Son. “And now your part also must be performed.” Then to show that He did not this as needing their ministry, but for their advancement, He addeth,

Ver. 4. “As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, so neither can he who abideth not in Me.””

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):4** Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

He continues, “For that they might not be separated from Him by timidity, He fasteneth and glueth to Himself their souls slackened through fear, and holdeth out to them good hopes for the future. For the root remains, but to be taken away, or to be left, belongs to the branches. Then having urged them on in both ways, by things pleasant and things painful, He requireth first what is to be done on our side.

Ver. 5. “He that abideth in Me, and I in him.””

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):5** I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

He continues, “Seest thou that the Son contributeth not less than the Father towards the care of the disciples? The Father purgeth, but He keepeth them in Himself. The abiding in the root is that which maketh the branches to be fruit-bearing. For that which is not purged, if it remain on the root, bears fruit, though perhaps not so much as it ought; but that which remains not, bears none at all. But still the “purging” also hath been shown to belong to the Son, and the “abiding in the root,” to the Father, who also begat the Root. Seest thou how all is common, both the “purging,” and the enjoying the virtue which is from the root?

[2.] Now it were a great penalty, the being able to do nothing, but He stayeth not the punishment at this point, but carrieth on His discourse farther.

Ver. 6. “He is cast forth,” He saith.”

He is referring to **John 15 (KJV):6** If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

He continues, “No longer enjoying the benefit of the husbandman’s hand. “And is withered.” That is, if he had aught of the root, he loses it; if any grace, he is stripped of this, and is bereft of the help and life which proceed from it. And what the end? “He is cast into the fire.”

Not such he who abideth with Him. Then He showeth what it is to “abide,” and saith,

Ver. 7. “If My words abide in you.”

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):7** If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

He continues, “Seest thou that with reason I said above, that He seeketh the proof by works? For when He had said, “Whatsoever ye shall ask I will do it” ( c. xiv. 14, 15 ), He added, “If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments.””

He refers to **John 14 (KJV):14** If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. 15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

He continues, “And here, “If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you.”

“Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”

This He said to show that they who plotted against Him should be burnt up, but that “they” should bear fruit. Then transferring the fear from them to the others, and showing that they should be invincible, He saith,

Ver. 8. “Herein is My Father glorified, that ye be My disciples, and bear much fruit.””

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):8** Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

Hence He maketh His discourse credible, for if the bearing fruit pertains to the glory of the Father, He will not neglect His own glory. “And ye shall be My disciples.” Seest thou how he that beareth fruit, he is the disciple? But what is, “In this is the Father glorified”? “He rejoiceth when ye abide in Me, when ye bear fruit.”

Ver. 9. “As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you.””

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):9** As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

He continues, “Here at length He speaketh in a more human manner, for this, as spoken to men, has its peculiar force. Since what a measure of love did He manifest, who chose to die, who counted worthy of such honor those who were His slaves, His haters, His open enemies, and led them up to the heavens! “If then I love you, be bold; if it be the glory of My Father that ye bear fruit, imagine nothing ill.” Then that He may not make them supine, observe how He braceth them again,

“Continue ye in My love.” “For this ye have the power to do.” And how shall this be?

Ver. 10. “If ye keep My commandments, even as I have kept my Father’s commandments.””

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):10** If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

He continues, “Again, His discourse proceedeth in a human way; for certainly the Lawgiver would not be subject to commandments. Seest thou that here also, as I am always saying, this is declared because of the infirmity of the hearers? For He chiefly speaketh to their suspicions, and by every means showeth them that they are in safety, and that their enemies are being lost, and that all, whatever they have, they have from the Son, and that, if they show forth a pure life, none shall ever have the mastery over them. And observe that He discourseth with them in a very authoritative manner, for He said not, “abide in the love of My Father,” but, “in Mine”; then, lest they should say, “when Thou hast set us at war with all men, Thou leavest us, and departest,” He showeth that He doth not leave them, but is so joined to them if they will, as

the branch in the vine. Then, lest from confidence they should become supine, He saith not that the blessing cannot be removed if they are slack-minded. And in order not to refer the action to Himself, and so make them more apt to fall, He saith, "Herein is My Father glorified." For everywhere He manifesteth His own and His Father's love towards them. Not the things of the Jews, then, were "glory," but those which they were about to receive. And that they might not say, "we have been driven from the possessions of our fathers, we have been deserted, we have become naked, and destitute of all things," "Look," He saith, "on Me. I am loved by the Father, yet still I suffer these things appointed. And so I am not now leaving you because I love you not. For if I am slain, and take not this for a proof of not being loved by the Father, neither ought ye to be troubled. For, if ye continue in My love, these dangers shall not be able to do you any mischief on the score of love.'"

But we are not saved by our fruit, but by the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ saves us. The fruit we produce will be rewarded as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):14** If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

If, as a believer, we are fruitless, we will still be saved, yet we will suffer in this life for our bad choices.

Chrysostom continues, "[3.] Since then love is a thing mighty and irresistible, not a bare word, let us manifest it by our actions. He reconciled us when we were His enemies, let us, now that we have become His friends, remain so. He led the way, let us at least follow; He loveth us not for His own advantage, (for He needeth nothing,) let us at least love Him for our profit; He loved us being His enemies, let us at least love Him being our friend. At present we do the contrary; for every day God is blasphemed through us, through our plunderings, through our covetousness. And perhaps one of you will say, "Every day thy discourse is about covetousness." Would that I could speak about it every night too; would that I could do so, following you about in the marketplace, and at your table; would that both wives, and friends, and children, and domestics, and tillers of the soil, and neighbors, and the very pavement and walls, could ever shout forth this word, that so we might perchance have relaxed a little. For this malady hath seized upon all the world, and occupies the souls of all, and great is the tyranny of Mammon. We have been ransomed by Christ, and are the slaves of gold. We proclaim the sovereignty of the one, and obey the other. Whatever "he" commands we readily obey, and we have refused to know family, or friendship, or nature, or laws, or anything, for him. No one looks up to Heaven, no one thinks about things to come. But there will be a time, when there will be no profit even in these words. "In the grave," it saith, "who shall confess to Thee?" Gold is a desirable thing, and procures us much luxury, and makes us to be honored, but not in like manner as doth Heaven. For from the wealthy man many even turn aside, and hate him, but him who lives virtuously they respect and honor. "But" saith some one "the poor man is derided, even though he be virtuous." Not among men, but brutes. Wherefore he ought not so much as to notice them. For if asses were to bray and daws chatter at us, while all wise men commended us, we should not, losing sight of this latter audience, have regard to clamors of the brutes; for like to daws, and worse than asses, are they who admire present things. Moreover, if an earthly king approve thee, thou makest no account of the many, though they all deride thee; but if the Lord of the universe praise thee, seekest thou the good words of beetles and gnats? For this is what these men are, compared with God, or rather not even this, but something viler, if there be

aught such. How long do we wallow in the mire? How long do we set sluggards and belly-gods for our judges? They can prove dicers well, drunkards, those who live for the belly, but as for virtue and vice, they cannot imagine so much as a dream. If any one taunt thee because thou hast not skill to draw the channels of the watercourses, thou wilt not think it any terrible thing, but wilt even laugh at him who objects to thee ignorance of this kind; and dost thou, when thou desirest to practice virtue, appoint as judges those who know nothing of it? On this account we never reach that art. We commit our case not to the practiced, but to the unlearned, and they judge not according to the rules of art, but according to their own ignorance. Wherefore, I exhort you, let us despise the many; or rather let us desire neither praises, nor possessions, nor wealth, nor deem poverty any evil. For poverty is to us a teacher of prudence, and endurance, and all true wisdom. Thus Lazarus lived in poverty, and received a crown; Jacob desired to get bread only; and Joseph was in the extreme of poverty, being not merely a slave, but also a prisoner; and on this account we admire him the more, and we do not so much praise him when he distributed the corn, as when he dwelt in the dungeon: not when he wore the diadem, but when the chain; not when he sat upon the throne, but when he was plotted against and sold. Considering then all these things, and the crowns twined for us after the conflicts, let us admire not wealth, and honor, and luxury, and power, but poverty, and the chain, and bonds, and endurance in the cause of virtue. For the end of those things is full of troubles and confusion, and their lot is bound up with this present life; but the fruit of these, heaven, and the good things in the heavens, which neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard; which may we all obtain, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”

And Chrysostom has given us a good exhortation to live for Him who paid it all for us.

## Commentary Summary

Concerning **Good Works**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXV, page 400-401**, he says, “Like then as we should not say that he did not give the crown from want of vigor, but as not wishing to corrupt the law of the games, nor to disturb the order of justice; in like manner now should I say Christ said this, from every motive to compel them, after the grace of God, to set their hopes of salvation and approval on the proof of their own good works.”

But we are not saved by works, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY IV, page 67-70**, Chrysostom says, speaking of entering the kingdom of heaven, “And observe how it is not possible to enter without works of mercy; but if even this alone be wanting, we shall depart into the fire.”

He makes works of mercy a requirement for entering the kingdom of heaven.

He also says, “He doeth away iniquity here, both by the laver of Baptism, and by penitence.”

By penitence, he means “voluntary self-punishment inflicted as an outward expression of repentance for having done wrong”.

And he adds, “Let us not then vainly flatter our own souls with speeches like these; no, let us take heed, let us have a regard for our own salvation, let us make virtue our care, let us rouse ourselves to the practice of good works, that we may be counted worthy to attain to this exceeding glory, in Jesus Christ our Lord with whom to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit be glory, might, honor, now and ever, and for ages of ages. Amen.”

Our character is transformed by the renewing of our minds, as we present ourselves a living sacrifice, as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We are not saved by the “practice of good works”, but we will be rewarded for good works at the judgment seat of Christ. When we believe in Jesus Christ, we are “counted worthy to attain to this exceeding glory”, the glory of salvation. The Lord justifies us and places His righteousness down to our account. We will then be rewarded for the works He has ordained for us to do as we walk in them, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXXVI, page 278-281**, referring to John 15:2, “Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit the Father taketh away”, he says, “Here He alludeth to the manner of life, showing that without works it is not possible to be in Him.”

That is, he is saying that without works it is not possible to be saved.

And referring to John 15:6, he says, “Ver. 6. “He is cast forth,” He saith.” No longer enjoying the benefit of the husbandman’s hand. “And is withered.” That is, if he had aught of the root, he loses it; if any grace, he is stripped of this, and is bereft of the help and life which proceed from it. And what the end? “He is cast into the fire.” Not such he who abideth with Him.”

But Jesus is talking about bearing fruit, as we read in **John 15 (KJV):4** Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

If we don’t bear fruit, we will bear the fire of our bad choices, but we will not lose our salvation, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):15** If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

But the Scriptures are clear. It is not by works of righteousness which we have done, as we read again in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

And “works of righteousness” are good works. So we are not saved by good works.

And we read in **Philippians 3 (KJV):8** Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not

having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

And by “mine own righteousness”, Paul refers to the good works he has performed according to the law.

Chrysostom misinterpreted **Ephesians 2 (KJV):**8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

He thought that because verse 10 mentions good works, it is a proof that faith plus good works are what saves us. He did not understand that being born again of the Spirit of God, and having a new divine nature as a result in our spirit, and having the Holy Spirit as the life of our spirit, we were now capable of good works, and we will be rewarded accordingly. If we build gold, silver precious stones we will be rewarded as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):**12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

If all we produce is wood, hay, or stubble, we will not receive any rewards, but we will still be saved as we continue in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):**15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Good works don't save us. We are saved by grace, through faith, the gift of God. And Paul makes it simple, as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):**8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

## Worthy of the Kingdom

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY XXI, page 156-157**

And now would ye have me exhibit examples of secular men? At present, indeed, we have none; still there are perhaps even secular men who are excellent, though not arrived at the highest philosophy. I shall therefore quote you examples from the saints of the ancient times. How many, who had wives to keep and children to bring up, were inferior in no respect, no, in no respect to those who have been mentioned? Now, however, it is no longer so, “by reason of the present distress” (1 Cor. vii. 26), as this blessed Apostle saith. Now then whom would ye have me mention? Noah, or Abraham? The son of the one or of the other? Or again, Joseph? Or would ye have me go to the Prophets? Moses I mean, or Isaiah? However, if you will, let us carry our discourse to Abraham, whom all are continually bringing forward to us above all others. Had he not a wife? Had he not children? Yes, for I too use the same language to you, as you do to me. He had a wife, but it was not because he had a wife that he was so remarkable. He



had riches, but it was not because he had riches that he pleased God. He begat children, but it was not because he begat children that he was pronounced blessed. He had three hundred and eighteen servants born in his house, but it was not on this account that he was accounted wonderful. But would you know why it was? It was for his hospitality, for his contempt of riches, for his chastened conduct. For what, tell me, is the duty of a philosopher? Is it not to despise both riches and glory? Is it not to be above both envy and every other passion? Come now then, let us bring him forward and strip him, and show you what a philosopher he was. First of all, he esteemed his fatherland as nothing. God said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred" (Gen. xii. 1), and immediately he went forth. He was not bound to his house, (or surely he would never have gone forth,) nor to his love of familiar friends, nor to anything else whatever. But what? glory and money he despised above all others. For when he had put an end to war by turning the enemy to flight, and was requested to take the spoil, he rejected it. (Gen. xiv. 21–23)

Again, the son of this great man was revered, not because of his riches, but for his hospitality: not because of his children, but for his obedience: not because of his wife, but for the barrenness inflicted on his wife. (Gen. xxv. 21)

They looked upon the present life as nothing, they followed not after gain, they despised all things. Tell me, which sort of plants are the best? Are not those which have their strength from themselves and are injured neither by rains, nor by hailstorms, nor by gusts of wind, nor by any other vicissitude of the sort, but stand naked in defiance of them all, and needing neither wall nor fence to protect them? Such is the true philosopher, such is that wealth of which we spoke. He has nothing, and has all things: he has all things, and has nothing. For a fence is not within, but only without; a wall is not a thing of nature, but only built round from without. And what again, I ask, what sort of body is a strong one? Is it not that which is in health, and which is overcome neither by hunger nor repletion, nor by cold, nor by heat; or is it that which in view of all these things, needs both caterers, and weavers, and hunters, and physicians, to give it health? He is the rich man, the true philosopher, who needeth none of these things. For this cause it was that this blessed Apostle said, "Bring them up in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." Surround them not with outward defenses. For such is wealth, such is glory; for when these fall, and they do fall, the plant stands naked and defenseless, not only having derived no profit from them during the time past, but even injury. For those very shelters that prevented its being injured to the attacks of the winds, will now have prepared it for perishing all at once. And so wealth is injurious rather, because it renders us undisciplined for the vicissitudes of life. Let us therefore train up our children to be such, that they shall be able to bear up against every trial, and not be surprised at what may come upon them; "let us bring them up in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." And great will be the reward which will be thus laid up in store for us. For if men for making statues and painting portraits of kings enjoy so great honor, shall not we who adorn the image of the King of kings, (for man is the image of God,) receive ten thousand blessings, if we effect a true likeness? For the likeness is in this, in the virtue of the soul, when we train our children to be good, to be meek, to be forgiving, (because all these are attributes of God,) to be beneficent, to be humane; when we train them to regard the present world as nothing. Let this then be our task, to mold and to direct both ourselves and them according to what is right. Otherwise with what sort of boldness shall we stand before the judgment seat of Christ? If a man who has unruly children is unworthy to

be a Bishop (Tit. i. 6), much more is he unworthy of the kingdom of Heaven. What sayest thou? If we have an unruly wife, or unruly children, shall we have to render account? Yes, we shall, if we do not with exactness bring in that which is due from ourselves; for our own individual virtue is not enough in order to salvation. If the man who laid aside the one talent gained nothing, but was punished even in such a manner, it is plain that one's own individual virtue is not enough in order to salvation, but there is need of that of another also. Let us therefore entertain great solicitude for our wives, and take great care of our children, and of our servants, and of ourselves. And in our government both of ourselves and of them, let us beseech God that He aid us in the work. If He shall see us interested in this work, and solicitous about it, He will aid us; but if He shall see us paying no regard to it, He will not give us His hand. For He does not vouchsafe us His assistance when we sleep, but when we labor also ourselves. For a helper, (as the name implies,) is not a helper of one that is inactive, but of one who works also himself. But the good God is able of Himself to bring the work to perfection, that we may be all counted worthy to attain to the blessings promised us, through the grace and compassions of His only begotten Son, with Whom together with the Holy Ghost be unto the Father, glory, might, and honor, now and ever, and throughout all ages. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, "And now would ye have me exhibit examples of secular men? At present, indeed, we have none; still there are perhaps even secular men who are excellent, though not arrived at the highest philosophy. I shall therefore quote you examples from the saints of the ancient times. How many, who had wives to keep and children to bring up, were inferior in no respect, no, in no respect to those who have been mentioned? Now, however, it is no longer so, "by reason of the present distress" (1 Cor. vii. 26), as this blessed Apostle saith."

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):**25 Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. 26 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.

He continues, "Now then whom would ye have me mention? Noah, or Abraham? The son of the one or of the other? Or again, Joseph? Or would ye have me go to the Prophets? Moses I mean, or Isaiah? However, if you will, let us carry our discourse to Abraham, whom all are continually bringing forward to us above all others. Had he not a wife? Had he not children? Yes, for I too use the same language to you, as you do to me. He had a wife, but it was not because he had a wife that he was so remarkable. He had riches, but it was not because he had riches that he pleased God. He begat children, but it was not because he begat children that he was pronounced blessed. He had three hundred and eighteen servants born in his house, but it was not on this account that he was accounted wonderful. But would you know why it was? It was for his hospitality, for his contempt of riches, for his chastened conduct. For what, tell me, is the duty of a philosopher? Is it not to despise both riches and glory? Is it not to be above both envy and every other passion? Come now then, let us bring him forward and strip him, and show you what a philosopher he was. First of all, he esteemed his fatherland as nothing. God said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred" (Gen. xii. 1), and immediately he went forth."

He refers to **Genesis 12 (KJV):1** Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

He continues, “He was not bound to his house, (or surely he would never have gone forth,) nor to his love of familiar friends, nor to anything else whatever. But what? glory and money he despised above all others. For when he had put an end to war by turning the enemy to flight, and was requested to take the spoil, he rejected it. (Gen. xiv. 21–23)”

He refers in context to **Genesis 14 (KJV):21** And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. 22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, 23 That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: 24 Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

He continues, “Again, the son of this great man was revered, not because of his riches, but for his hospitality: not because of his children, but for his obedience: not because of his wife, but for the barrenness inflicted on his wife. (Gen. xxv. 21)”

He refers to **Genesis 25 (KJV):21** And Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren: and the Lord was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

He continues, “They looked upon the present life as nothing, they followed not after gain, they despised all things. Tell me, which sort of plants are the best? Are not those which have their strength from themselves and are injured neither by rains, nor by hailstorms, nor by gusts of wind, nor by any other vicissitude of the sort, but stand naked in defiance of them all, and needing neither wall nor fence to protect them? Such is the true philosopher, such is that wealth of which we spoke. He has nothing, and has all things: he has all things, and has nothing. For a fence is not within, but only without; a wall is not a thing of nature, but only built round from without. And what again, I ask, what sort of body is a strong one? Is it not that which is in health, and which is overcome neither by hunger nor repletion, nor by cold, nor by heat; or is it that which in view of all these things, needs both caterers, and weavers, and hunters, and physicians, to give it health? He is the rich man, the true philosopher, who needeth none of these things. For this cause it was that this blessed Apostle said, “Bring them up in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.””

He refers to **Ephesians 6 (KJV):4** And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

He continues, “Surround them not with outward defenses. For such is wealth, such is glory; for when these fall, and they do fall, the plant stands naked and defenseless, not only having derived no profit from them during the time past, but even injury. For those very shelters that prevented its being injured to the attacks of the winds, will now have prepared it for perishing all at once. And so wealth is injurious rather, because it renders us undisciplined for the vicissitudes of life. Let us therefore train up our children to be such, that they shall be able to bear up against every trial, and not be surprised at what may come upon them; “let us bring them up in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.” And great will be the reward which will be thus laid up in store for us. For if men for making statues and painting portraits of kings enjoy so great honor, shall not we who adorn the image of the King of kings, (for man is the image of God,) receive ten thousand blessings, if we effect a true likeness? For the likeness is in

this, in the virtue of the soul, when we train our children to be good, to be meek, to be forgiving, (because all these are attributes of God,) to be beneficent, to be humane; when we train them to regard the present world as nothing. Let this then be our task, to mold and to direct both ourselves and them according to what is right. Otherwise with what sort of boldness shall we stand before the judgment seat of Christ? If a man who has unruly children is unworthy to be a Bishop (Tit. i. 6), much more is he unworthy of the kingdom of Heaven.”

He refers to **Titus 1 (KJV):6** If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

Chrysostom would make unruly children a means of being disqualified from the kingdom of Heaven.

Chrysostom continues, “What sayest thou? If we have an unruly wife, or unruly children, shall we have to render account? Yes, we shall, if we do not with exactness bring in that which is due from ourselves; for our own individual virtue is not enough in order to salvation.”

It is true that “our own individual virtue is not enough in order to salvation”. This is why we need the grace of God. But we are not responsible for anyone else’s salvation in order for ourselves to be saved.

Chrysostom continues, “If the man who laid aside the one talent gained nothing, but was punished even in such a manner, it is plain that one’s own individual virtue is not enough in order to salvation, but there is need of that of another also.”

But this one individual had no faith. He did not commit, or do anything with what he had received. This is why he was condemned to outer darkness.

He continues, “Let us therefore entertain great solicitude for our wives, and take great care of our children, and of our servants, and of ourselves. And in our government both of ourselves and of them, let us beseech God that He aid us in the work. If He shall see us interested in this work, and solicitous about it, He will aid us; but if He shall see us paying no regard to it, He will not give us His hand. For He does not vouchsafe us His assistance when we sleep, but when we labor also ourselves. For a helper, (as the name implies,) is not a helper of one that is inactive, but of one who works also himself. But the good God is able of Himself to bring the work to perfection, that we may be all counted worthy to attain to the blessings promised us, through the grace and compassions of His only begotten Son, with Whom together with the Holy Ghost be unto the Father, glory, might, and honor, now and ever, and throughout all ages. Amen.”

Chrysostom did not understand the grace of God. We are not counted worthy by what we have done, but what Christ has done for us. It is by faith in Jesus Christ that we are justified as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Our justification gives us a standing before God as righteous ones. God has imputed to us His very own righteousness by justifying us. He has also given us new life in our spirits, and made us new creations in Christ Jesus. He has made us worthy. We are not our own, as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? **20** For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

## **Commentary Summary**

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY XXI, page 156-157**, he says, “If a man who has unruly children is unworthy to be a Bishop (Tit. i. 6), much more is he unworthy of the kingdom of Heaven.”

He refers to **Titus 1 (KJV):6** If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

Chrysostom would make unruly children a means of being disqualified from the kingdom of Heaven.

He then says, “What sayest thou? If we have an unruly wife, or unruly children, shall we have to render account? Yes, we shall, if we do not with exactness bring in that which is due from ourselves; for our own individual virtue is not enough in order to salvation.”

It is true that “our own individual virtue is not enough in order to salvation”. This is why we need the grace of God. And even so, we are also not saved by “our own individual virtue”, but by the grace of God through faith, which is the gift of God. And we are not responsible for anyone else’s salvation in order for ourselves to be saved.

Again he says, “If the man who laid aside the one talent gained nothing, but was punished even in such a manner, it is plain that one’s own individual virtue is not enough in order to salvation, but there is need of that of another also.”

But this one individual had no faith. He did not commit, or do anything with the talent that he had received. This is why he was condemned to outer darkness.

Chrysostom did not understand the grace of God. We are not counted worthy by what we have done, but by our faith in what Christ has done for us. It is by faith in Jesus Christ that we are justified, and it is by grace that we are saved.

## **The Power of Fear**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY II, page 382-384**

Ver. 8. “In flaming fire rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus.”

If they that have not obeyed the Gospel suffer vengeance, what will not they suffer who besides their disobedience also afflict you? And see his intelligence; he says not here those who

afflict you, but those “who obey not.” So that although not on your account, yet on His own it is necessary to punish them. This then is said in order to full assurance, that it is altogether necessary for them to be punished: but what was said before, was said that they also might be honored, because they suffer these things on your account. The one causes them to believe concerning the punishment; the other to be pleased, because for the sake of what has been done to them they suffer these things.

All this was said to them, but it applies also to us. When therefore we are in affliction, let us consider these things. Let us not rejoice at the punishment of others as being avenged, but as ourselves escaping from such punishment and vengeance. For what advantage is it to us when others are punished? Let us not, I beseech you, have such souls. Let us be invited to virtue by the prospect of the kingdom. For he indeed who is exceedingly virtuous is induced neither by fear nor by the prospect of the kingdom, but for Christ’s sake alone, as was the case with Paul. Let us, however, even thus consider the blessings of the kingdom, the miseries of hell, and thus regulate and school ourselves; let us in this way bring ourselves to the things that are to be practiced. When you see anything good and great in the present life, think of the kingdom, and you will consider it as nothing. When you see anything terrible, think of hell, and you will deride it. When you are possessed by carnal desire, think of the fire, think also of the pleasure of sin itself, that it is nothing worth, that it has not even pleasure in it. For if the fear of the laws that are enacted here has so great power as to withdraw us from wicked actions, how much more should the remembrance of things future, the vengeance that is immortal, the punishment that is everlasting? If the fear of an earthly king withdraws us from so many evils, how much more the fear of the King Eternal?

Whence then can we constantly have this fear? If we continually hearken to the Scriptures. For if the sight only of a dead body so depresses the mind, how much more must hell and the fire unquenchable, how much more the worm that never dieth. If we always think of hell, we shall not soon fall into it. For this reason God has threatened punishment; if it was not attended with great advantage to think of it, God would not have threatened it. But because the remembrance of it is able to work great good, for this reason He has put into our souls the terror of it, as a wholesome medicine. Let us not then overlook the great advantage arising from it, but let us continually advert to it, at our dinners, at our suppers. For conversation about pleasant things profits the soul nothing, but renders it more languid, while that about things painful and melancholy cuts off all that is relaxed and dissolute in it, and converts it, and braces it when unnerved. He who converses of theaters and actors does not benefit the soul, but inflames it more, and renders it more careless. He who concerns himself and is busy in other men’s matters, often even involves it in dangers by this curiosity. But he who converses about hell incurs no dangers, and renders it more sober.

But dost thou fear the offensiveness of such words? Hast thou then, if thou art silent, extinguished hell? or if thou speakest of it, hast thou kindled it? Whether thou speakest of it or not, the fire boils forth. Let it be continually spoken of, that thou mayest never fall into it. It is not possible that a soul anxious about hell should readily sin. For hear the most excellent advice, “Remember,” it says, “thy latter end” (Ecclus. xxviii. 6), and thou wilt not sin for ever. A soul that is fearful of giving account cannot but be slow to transgression. For fear being vigorous in the soul does not permit anything worldly to exist in it. For if discourse raised concerning hell so humbles and brings it low, does not the reflection constantly dwelling upon

the soul purify it more than any fire?

Let us not remember the kingdom so much as hell. For fear has more power than the promise. And I know that many would despise ten thousand blessings, if they were rid of the punishment, inasmuch as it is even now sufficient for me to escape vengeance, and not to be punished. No one of those who have hell before their eyes will fall into hell. No one of those who despise hell will escape hell. For as among us those who fear the judgment seats will not be apprehended by them, but those who despise them are chiefly those who fall under them, so it is also in this case. If the Ninevites had not feared destruction, they would have been overthrown, but because they feared, they were not overthrown. If in the time of Noah they had feared the deluge, they would not have been drowned. And if the Sodomites had feared they would not have been consumed by fire. It is a great evil to despise a threat. He who despises threatening will soon experience its reality in the execution of it. Nothing is so profitable as to converse concerning hell. It renders our souls purer than any silver. For hear the prophet saying, "Thy judgments are always before me." (From Ps. xviii. 22, Sept) For although it pains the hearer, it benefits him very much.

For such indeed are all things that profit. For medicines too, and food, at first annoy the sick, and then do him good. And if we cannot bear the severity of words, it is manifest that we shall not be able to bear affliction in very deed. If no one endures a discourse concerning hell, it is evident, that if persecution came on, no one would ever stand firm against fire, against sword. Let us exercise our ears not to be over soft and tender: for from this we shall come to endure even the things themselves. If we be habituated to hear of dreadful things, we shall be habituated also to endure dreadful things. But if we be so relaxed as not to endure even words, when shall we stand against things? Do you see how the blessed Paul despises all things here, and dangers one after another, as not even temptations? Wherefore? Because he had been in the practice of despising hell, for the sake of what was God's will. He thought even the experience of hell to be nothing for the sake of the love of Christ; while we do not even endure a discourse concerning it for our own advantage. Now therefore having heard a little, go your ways; but I beseech you if there is any love in you, constantly to revert to discourses concerning these things. They can do you no harm, even if they should not benefit, but assuredly they will benefit you too. For according to our discourses, the soul is qualified. For evil communications, he says, "corrupt good manners." Therefore also good communications improve it; therefore also fearful discourses make it sober. For the soul is a sort of wax. For if you apply cold discourses, you harden and make it callous; but if fiery ones, you melt it; and having melted it, you form it to what you will, and engrave the royal image upon it. Let us therefore stop up our ears to discourses that are vain. It is no little evil; for from it arise all evils.

If our mind had been practiced to apply to divine discourses, it would not apply to others; and not applying to others, neither would it betake itself to evil actions. For words are the road to works. First we think, then we speak, then we act. Many men, even when before sober, have often from disgraceful words gone on to disgraceful actions. For our soul is neither good nor evil by nature, but becomes both the one and the other from choice. As therefore the sail carries the ship wherever the wind may blow, or rather as the rudder moves the ship, if the wind be favorable, so also thought will sail without danger, if good words from a favorable quarter waft it. But if the contrary, often they will even overwhelm the reason. For what winds are to ships, that discourses are to souls. Wherever you will, you may move and turn it. For this reason one

exhorting says, "Let thy whole discourse be in the law of the Most High." (Ecc. xii. 13) Wherefore, I exhort you, when we receive children from the nurse, let us not accustom them to old wives' stories, but let them learn from their first youth that there is a Judgment, that there is a punishment; let it be infixed in their minds. This fear being rooted in them produces great good effects. For a soul that has learnt from its first youth to be subdued by this expectation, will not soon shake off this fear. But like a horse obedient to the bridle, having the thought of hell seated upon it, walking orderly, it will both speak and utter things profitable; and neither youth nor riches, nor an orphan state, nor any other thing, will be able to injure it, having its reason so firm and able to hold out against everything.

By these discourses let us regulate as well ourselves as our wives too, our servants, our children, our friends, and, if possible, our enemies. For with these discourses we are able to cut off the greater part of our sins, and it is better to dwell upon things grievous than upon things agreeable, and it is manifest from hence. For, tell me, if you should go into a house where a marriage is celebrated, for a season you are delighted at the spectacle, but afterwards having gone away, you pine with grief that you have not so much. But if you enter the house of mourners, even though they are very rich, when you go away you will be rather refreshed. For there you have not conceived envy, but comfort and consolation in your poverty. You have seen by facts, that riches are no good, poverty no evil, but they are things indifferent. So also now, if you talk about luxury, you the more vex your soul, that is not able perhaps to be luxurious. But if you are speaking against luxury, and introduce discourse concerning hell, the thing will cheer you, and beget much pleasure. For when you consider that luxury will not be able to defend us at all against that fire, you will not seek after it; but if you reflect that it is wont to kindle it even more, you will not only not seek, but will turn from it and reject it.

Let us not avoid discourses concerning hell, that we may avoid hell. Let us not banish the remembrance of punishment, that we may escape punishment. If the rich man had reflected upon that fire, he would not have sinned; but because he never was mindful of it, therefore he fell into it. Tell me, O man, being about to stand before the Judgment seat of Christ, dost thou speak of all things rather than of that? And when you have a matter before a judge, often only relating to words, neither day nor night, at no time or season dost thou talk of anything else, but always of that business, and when thou art about to give an account of thy whole life, and to submit to a trial, canst thou not bear even with others reminding thee of that Judgment? For this reason therefore all things are ruined and undone, because when we are about to stand before a human tribunal concerning matters of this life, we move everything, we solicit all men, we are constantly anxious about it, we do everything for the sake of it: but when we are about, after no long time, to come before the Judgment seat of Christ, we do nothing either by ourselves, or by others; we do not entreat the Judge. And yet He grants to us a long season of forbearance, and does not snatch us away in the midst of our sins, but permits us to put them off, and that Goodness and Lovingkindness leaves nothing undone of all that belongs to Himself. But all is of no avail; on this account the punishment will be the heavier. But God forbid it should be so! Wherefore, I beseech you, let us even if but now become watchful. Let us keep hell before our eyes. Let us consider that inexorable Account, that, thinking of those things, we may both avoid vice, and choose virtue, and may be able to obtain the blessings promised to those who love Him, by the grace and lovingkindness, &c.



**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 8. “In flaming fire rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus.”

He refers to **2 Thessalonians 1 (KJV):8** In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

He continues, “If they that have not obeyed the Gospel suffer vengeance, what will not they suffer who besides their disobedience also afflict you? And see his intelligence; he says not here those who afflict you, but those “who obey not.” So that although not on your account, yet on His own it is necessary to punish them. This then is said in order to full assurance, that it is altogether necessary for them to be punished: but what was said before, was said that they also might be honored, because they suffer these things on your account. The one causes them to believe concerning the punishment; the other to be pleased, because for the sake of what has been done to them they suffer these things.

All this was said to them, but it applies also to us. When therefore we are in affliction, let us consider these things. Let us not rejoice at the punishment of others as being avenged, but as ourselves escaping from such punishment and vengeance. For what advantage is it to us when others are punished? Let us not, I beseech you, have such souls. Let us be invited to virtue by the prospect of the kingdom. For he indeed who is exceedingly virtuous is induced neither by fear nor by the prospect of the kingdom, but for Christ’s sake alone, as was the case with Paul. Let us, however, even thus consider the blessings of the kingdom, the miseries of hell, and thus regulate and school ourselves; let us in this way bring ourselves to the things that are to be practiced. When you see anything good and great in the present life, think of the kingdom, and you will consider it as nothing. When you see anything terrible, think of hell, and you will deride it. When you are possessed by carnal desire, think of the fire, think also of the pleasure of sin itself, that it is nothing worth, that it has not even pleasure in it. For if the fear of the laws that are enacted here has so great power as to withdraw us from wicked actions, how much more should the remembrance of things future, the vengeance that is immortal, the punishment that is everlasting? If the fear of an earthly king withdraws us from so many evils, how much more the fear of the King Eternal?”

And we should have a healthy fear of hell, as Jesus taught in **Matthew 18 (KJV):8** Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. 9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

Chrysostom continues, “Whence then can we constantly have this fear? If we continually hearken to the Scriptures.”

He speaks of the “fear of the King Eternal”.

He continues, “For if the sight only of a dead body so depresses the mind, how much more must hell and the fire unquenchable, how much more the worm that never dieth.”

He refers in context to **Mark 9 (KJV):43** And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 46 Where their worm dieth not, and

the fire is not quenched. 47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: 48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Chrysostom continues, “If we always think of hell, we shall not soon fall into it. For this reason God has threatened punishment; if it was not attended with great advantage to think of it, God would not have threatened it. But because the remembrance of it is able to work great good, for this reason He has put into our souls the terror of it, as a wholesome medicine.”

And we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):30** For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

And in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):28** Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29 For our God is a consuming fire.

Chrysostom writes as if the righteous could fall into hell. But if we have believed in Jesus Christ, God has justified us, as we read in **Romans 5 (NKJV):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

We stand in grace. In justifying us, God has put His righteousness down to our account. We then read in **Romans 8 (KJV):33** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

And as a result, we are not to “always think of hell”, but to keep looking to Jesus as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):1** Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Chrysostom continues, “Let us not then overlook the great advantage arising from it, but let us continually advert to it, at our dinners, at our suppers. For conversation about pleasant things profits the soul nothing, but renders it more languid, while that about things painful and melancholy cuts off all that is relaxed and dissolute in it, and converts it, and braces it when unnerved. He who converses of theaters and actors does not benefit the soul, but inflames it more, and renders it more careless. He who concerns himself and is busy in other men’s matters, often even involves it in dangers by this curiosity. But he who converses about hell incurs no dangers, and renders it more sober.”

But the Lord would have us to rejoice always, as we read in **Philippians 4 (KJV):4** Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. 5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

And the Lord would have us to seek the things above, as we read in **Colossians 3 (KJV):1** If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth

on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

He continues, “But dost thou fear the offensiveness of such words? Hast thou then, if thou art silent, extinguished hell? or if thou speakest of it, hast thou kindled it? Whether thou speakest of it or not, the fire boils forth. Let it be continually spoken of, that thou mayest never fall into it. It is not possible that a soul anxious about hell should readily sin. For hear the most excellent advice, “Remember,” it says, “thy latter end” (Ecclus. xxviii. 6), and thou wilt not sin for ever.”

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 28 (KJV):6** Remember thy end, and let enmity cease; *remember* corruption and death, and abide in the commandments.

He continues, “A soul that is fearful of giving account cannot but be slow to transgression. For fear being vigorous in the soul does not permit anything worldly to exist in it. For if discourse raised concerning hell so humbles and brings it low, does not the reflection constantly dwelling upon the soul purify it more than any fire?”

Let us not remember the kingdom so much as hell. For fear has more power than the promise.”

However, we read in **1 John 4 (KJV):18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. 19 We love him, because he first loved us.

He continues, “And I know that many would despise ten thousand blessings, if they were rid of the punishment, inasmuch as it is even now sufficient for me to escape vengeance, and not to be punished. No one of those who have hell before their eyes will fall into hell. No one of those who despise hell will escape hell. For as among us those who fear the judgment seats will not be apprehended by them, but those who despise them are chiefly those who fall under them, so it is also in this case. If the Ninevites had not feared destruction, they would have been overthrown, but because they feared, they were not overthrown. If in the time of Noah they had feared the deluge, they would not have been drowned. And if the Sodomites had feared they would not have been consumed by fire. It is a great evil to despise a threat. He who despises threatening will soon experience its reality in the execution of it. Nothing is so profitable as to converse concerning hell. It renders our souls purer than any silver. For hear the prophet saying, “Thy judgments are always before me.” (From Ps. xviii. 22, Sept.) For although it pains the hearer, it benefits him very much.”

He refers to **Psalms 18 (Septuagint):22** For all his judgments were before me, and his ordinances departed not from me.

And to **Psalms 18 (KJV):22** For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me.

He continues, “For such indeed are all things that profit. For medicines too, and food, at first annoy the sick, and then do him good. And if we cannot bear the severity of words, it is manifest that we shall not be able to bear affliction in very deed. If no one endures a discourse concerning hell, it is evident, that if persecution came on, no one would ever stand firm against fire, against sword. Let us exercise our ears not to be over soft and tender: for from this we shall come to endure even the things themselves. If we be habituated to hear of dreadful things, we shall be habituated also to endure dreadful things. But if we be so relaxed as not to endure even words, when shall we stand against things? Do you see how the blessed Paul despises all things

here, and dangers one after another, as not even temptations? Wherefore? Because he had been in the practice of despising hell, for the sake of what was God's will. He thought even the experience of hell to be nothing for the sake of the love of Christ; while we do not even endure a discourse concerning it for our own advantage. Now therefore having heard a little, go your ways; but I beseech you if there is any love in you, constantly to revert to discourses concerning these things. They can do you no harm, even if they should not benefit, but assuredly they will benefit you too. For according to our discourses, the soul is qualified. For evil communications, he says, "corrupt good manners."

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):33** Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

He continues, "Therefore also good communications improve it; therefore also fearful discourses make it sober. For the soul is a sort of wax. For if you apply cold discourses, you harden and make it callous; but if fiery ones, you melt it; and having melted it, you form it to what you will, and engrave the royal image upon it. Let us therefore stop up our ears to discourses that are vain. It is no little evil; for from it arise all evils.

If our mind had been practiced to apply to divine discourses, it would not apply to others; and not applying to others, neither would it betake itself to evil actions. For words are the road to works. First we think, then we speak, then we act. Many men, even when before sober, have often from disgraceful words gone on to disgraceful actions. For our soul is neither good nor evil by nature, but becomes both the one and the other from choice. As therefore the sail carries the ship wherever the wind may blow, or rather as the rudder moves the ship, if the wind be favorable, so also thought will sail without danger, if good words from a favorable quarter waft it. But if the contrary, often they will even overwhelm the reason. For what winds are to ships, that discourses are to souls. Wherever you will, you may move and turn it. For this reason one exhorting says, "Let thy whole discourse be in the law of the Most High." (Ecc. xii. 13)"

He refers to **Ecclesiastes 12 (KJV):13** Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

And we read in **Joshua 1 (KJV):8** This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

He continues, "Wherefore, I exhort you, when we receive children from the nurse, let us not accustom them to old wives' stories, but let them learn from their first youth that there is a Judgment, that there is a punishment; let it be infixed in their minds. This fear being rooted in them produces great good effects. For a soul that has learnt from its first youth to be subdued by this expectation, will not soon shake off this fear. But like a horse obedient to the bridle, having the thought of hell seated upon it, walking orderly, it will both speak and utter things profitable; and neither youth nor riches, nor an orphan state, nor any other thing, will be able to injure it, having its reason so firm and able to hold out against everything."

And we read that there is no fear of God in the eyes of the unsaved in **Romans 3 (KJV):10** As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is

an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

So it is good to teach our children the truth, and warn them of the consequences of sin.

He continues, "By these discourses let us regulate as well ourselves as our wives too, our servants, our children, our friends, and, if possible, our enemies. For with these discourses we are able to cut off the greater part of our sins, and it is better to dwell upon things grievous than upon things agreeable, and it is manifest from hence. For, tell me, if you should go into a house where a marriage is celebrated, for a season you are delighted at the spectacle, but afterwards having gone away, you pine with grief that you have not so much. But if you enter the house of mourners, even though they are very rich, when you go away you will be rather refreshed. For there you have not conceived envy, but comfort and consolation in your poverty. You have seen by facts, that riches are no good, poverty no evil, but they are things indifferent. So also now, if you talk about luxury, you the more vex your soul, that is not able perhaps to be luxurious. But if you are speaking against luxury, and introduce discourse concerning hell, the thing will cheer you, and beget much pleasure. For when you consider that luxury will not be able to defend us at all against that fire, you will not seek after it; but if you reflect that it is wont to kindle it even more, you will not only not seek, but will turn from it and reject it.

Let us not avoid discourses concerning hell, that we may avoid hell. Let us not banish the remembrance of punishment, that we may escape punishment. If the rich man had reflected upon that fire, he would not have sinned; but because he never was mindful of it, therefore he fell into it."

And Jesus told this parable in **Luke 16 (KJV)**: 19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Jesus was warning everyone about hell here. But once we have believed, we have passed from death to life, as Jesus taught in **John 5 (KJV)**: 24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that

heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

After we have been born again, we can look forward to the promise of heaven, and if we don't then walk with the Lord, we can look forward to the discipline of the Lord mentioned in **Hebrews 12 (KJV)**:3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Chrysostom continues, "Tell me, O man, being about to stand before the Judgment seat of Christ, dost thou speak of all things rather than of that? And when you have a matter before a judge, often only relating to words, neither day nor night, at no time or season dost thou talk of anything else, but always of that business, and when thou art about to give an account of thy whole life, and to submit to a trial, canst thou not bear even with others reminding thee of that Judgment? For this reason therefore all things are ruined and undone, because when we are about to stand before a human tribunal concerning matters of this life, we move everything, we solicit all men, we are constantly anxious about it, we do everything for the sake of it: but when we are about, after no long time, to come before the Judgment seat of Christ, we do nothing either by ourselves, or by others; we do not entreat the Judge. And yet He grants to us a long season of forbearance, and does not snatch us away in the midst of our sins, but permits us to put them off, and that Goodness and Lovingkindness leaves nothing undone of all that belongs to Himself. But all is of no avail; on this account the punishment will be the heavier. But God forbid it should be so! Wherefore, I beseech you, let us even if but now become watchful. Let us keep hell before our eyes. Let us consider that inexorable Account, that, thinking of those things, we may both avoid vice, and choose virtue, and may be able to obtain the blessings promised to those who love Him, by the grace and lovingkindness, &c."

However, we read as in **Psalms 27 (KJV)**:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? 2 When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. 3 Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

And in **Philippians 1 (KJV)**:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

And in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV)**:4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. 5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also

hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. 6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. 9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. 11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

At the judgment seat of Christ we will receive rewards for good deeds. If we have no good deeds, but only wood, hay, and stubble, we will receive no rewards, but we will still be saved. There is the hard way, and the harder way. It is hard to follow the Lord, but it is harder to live in sin.

If we seek first the kingdom, and its righteousness, we can be confident that the Lord is for us, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):**31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Fear has no power over us when we walk in the light as He is in the light, as in **1 John 1 (KJV):**5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY II, page 382-384**, he writes, ““If we always think of hell, we shall not soon fall into it. For this reason God has threatened punishment; if it was not attended with great advantage to think of it, God would not have threatened it. But because the remembrance of it is able to work great good, for this reason He has put into our souls the terror of it, as a wholesome medicine.”

Our God is a consuming fire, but if we have believed in Jesus Christ, God has

justified us, and we stand in grace with the righteousness of God put down to our account.

He also writes, “Let us not then overlook the great advantage arising from it, but let us continually advert to it, at our dinners, at our suppers.”

But the Lord would have us to rejoice always, and to seek the things above, as we read in **Colossians 3 (KJV):**1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Again he says, “Whether thou speakest of it or not, the fire boils forth. Let it be continually spoken of, that thou mayest never fall into it. It is not possible that a soul anxious about hell should readily sin.”

But it is not possible for the righteous to fall into hell. In Chrysostom’s thinking, it is possible for one to lose their salvation. This we will cover under the heading, **Losing Salvation.**

And he says, “Let us not remember the kingdom so much as hell. For fear has more power than the promise.”

However, we read in **1 John 4 (KJV):**18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. 19 We love him, because he first loved us.

He also says, “Let us not avoid discourses concerning hell, that we may avoid hell. Let us not banish the remembrance of punishment, that we may escape punishment.”

But let us teach the truth about the consequences of sin, and the security of the believer. For when one has believed in Jesus, they have passed from death to life, as in **John 5 (KJV):**24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

And we read in **Colossians 2 (KJV):**6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

We received Him by faith. Let us continue to walk in Him by faith.

## **Righteous Deeds Done After the Grace of God**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XXI, page 74-76**

[3.] It was then from this motive that He said in this place, “Woman, what have I to do with thee?” and also for another reason not less pressing. What was that? It was, that His miracles might not be suspected. The request ought to have come from those who needed, not from His mother. And why so? Because what is done at the request of one’s friends, great though it be, often causes offense to the spectators; but when they make the request who have the need, the miracle is free from suspicion, the praise unmixed, the benefit great. So if some excellent physician should enter a house where there were many sick, and be spoken to by none of the patients or their relations, but be directed only by his own mother, he would be suspected and disliked by the sufferers, nor would any of the patients or their attendants deem him able to exhibit anything great or remarkable. And so this was a reason why He rebuked her on that



occasion, saying, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" instructing her for the future not to do the like; because, though He was careful to honor His mother, yet He cared much more for the salvation of her soul, and for the doing good to the many, for which He took upon Him the flesh.

These then were the words, not of one speaking rudely to his mother, but belonging to a wise dispensation, which brought her into a right frame of mind, and provided that the miracles should be attended with that honor which was meet. And setting other things aside, this very appearance which these words have of having been spoken chidingly, is amply enough to show that He held her in high honor, for by His displeasure He showed that He revered her greatly; in what manner, we will say in the next discourse. Think of this then, and when you hear a certain woman saying, "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked," and Him answering, "rather blessed are they that do the will of my Father" (Luke xi. 27), suppose that those other words also were said with the same intention. For the answer was not that of one rejecting his mother, but of One who would show that her having borne Him would have nothing availed her, had she not been very good and faithful. Now if, setting aside the excellence of her soul, it profited Mary nothing that the Christ was born of her, much less will it be able to avail us to have a father or a brother, or a child of virtuous and noble disposition, if we ourselves be far removed from his virtue. "A brother," saith David, "doth not redeem, shall man redeem?" (Ps. xlix. 7, LXX) We must place our hopes of salvation in nothing else, but only in our own righteous deeds (done) after the grace of God. For if this by itself could have availed, it would have availed the Jews, (for Christ was their kinsman according to the flesh,) it would have availed the town in which He was born, it would have availed His brethren. But as long as His brethren cared not for themselves, the honor of their kindred availed them nothing, but they were condemned with the rest of the world, and then only were approved, when they shone by their own virtue; and the city fell, and was burnt, having gained nothing from this; and His kinsmen according to the flesh were slaughtered and perished very miserably, having gained nothing towards being saved from their relationship to Him, because they had not the defense of virtue. The Apostles, on the contrary, appeared greater than any, because they followed the true and excellent way of gaining relationship with Him, that by obedience. And from this we learn that we have always need of faith, and a life shining and bright, since this alone will have power to save us. For though His relations were for a long time everywhere held in honor, being called the Lord's kinsmen, yet now we do not even know their names, while the lives and names of the Apostles are everywhere celebrated.

Let us then not be proud of nobleness of birth according to the flesh, but though we have ten thousand famous ancestors, let us use diligence ourselves to go beyond their excellences, knowing that we shall gain nothing from the diligence of others to help us in the judgment that is to come; nay, this will be the more grievous condemnation, that though born of righteous parents and having an example at home, we do not, even thus, imitate our teachers. And this I say now, because I see many heathens, (**Schaff Note:** lit. "Greeks.") when we lead them to the faith and exhort them to become Christians, flying to their kinsmen and ancestors and house, and saying, "All my relations and friends and companions are faithful Christians." What is that to thee, thou wretched and miserable? This very thing will be especially thy ruin, that thou didst not respect the number of those around thee, and run to the truth. Others again who are believers but live a careless life, when exhorted to virtue make the very same defense, and say, "my

father and my grandfather and my greatgrandfather were very pious and good men.” But this will assuredly most condemn thee, that being descended from such men, thou hast acted unworthily of the root from whence thou art sprung. For hear what the Prophet says to the Jews, “Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept (sheep)” (Hos. xii. 12); and again Christ, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad.” (c. viii. 56) And everywhere they bring forward to them the righteous acts of their fathers, not only to praise them, but also to make the charge against their descendants more heavy. Knowing then this, let us use every means that we may be saved by our own works, lest having deceived ourselves by vain trusting on others, we learn that we have been deceived when the knowledge of it will profit us nothing. “In the grave,” saith David, “who shall give thee thanks?” (Ps. vi. 5) Let us then repent here, that we may obtain the everlasting goods, which may God grant we all do, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “[3.] It was then from this motive that He said in this place, “Woman, what have I to do with thee?” and also for another reason not less pressing. What was that? It was, that His miracles might not be suspected. The request ought to have come from those who needed, not from His mother. And why so? Because what is done at the request of one’s friends, great though it be, often causes offense to the spectators; but when they make the request who have the need, the miracle is free from suspicion, the praise unmixed, the benefit great.”

He refers to **John 2 (KJV):4** Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

The verse actually reads in Greek as follows:

#### **John 2:4**

λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί γύναι οὐπω ἦκει ἡ ὥρα μου  
says to her Jesus what to me and to thee woman? Not yet is come the hour of me

**The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, Marshall’s literal English translation with the Nestle Greek text, page 361, third edition 1974**

So, the verse reads in common English, “Jesus says to her, What is that to you and me, woman? My hour is not yet come.”

He continues, “So if some excellent physician should enter a house where there were many sick, and be spoken to by none of the patients or their relations, but be directed only by his own mother, he would be suspected and disliked by the sufferers, nor would any of the patients or their attendants deem him able to exhibit anything great or remarkable. And so this was a reason why He rebuked her on that occasion, saying, “Woman, what have I to do with thee?” instructing her for the future not to do the like; because, though He was careful to honor His mother, yet He cared much more for the salvation of her soul, and for the doing good to the many, for which He took upon Him the flesh.”

But Jesus honored His mother, and her faith in Him, as we continue reading in **John 2 (KJV):5** His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. 6 And there

were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. 7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. 9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, 10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. 11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

He continues, “These then were the words, not of one speaking rudely to his mother, but belonging to a wise dispensation, which brought her into a right frame of mind, and provided that the miracles should be attended with that honor which was meet. And setting other things aside, this very appearance which these words have of having been spoken chidingly, is amply enough to show that He held her in high honor, for by His displeasure He showed that He revered her greatly; in what manner, we will say in the next discourse. Think of this then, and when you hear a certain woman saying, “Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked,” and Him answering, “rather blessed are they that do the will of my Father” ( Luke xi. 27 ), suppose that those other words also were said with the same intention.”

He refers to **Luke 11 (KJV):27** And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. 28 But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

He continues, “For the answer was not that of one rejecting his mother, but of One who would show that her having borne Him would have nothing availed her, had she not been very good and faithful. Now if, setting aside the excellence of her soul, it profited Mary nothing that the Christ was born of her, much less will it be able to avail us to have a father or a brother, or a child of virtuous and noble disposition, if we ourselves be far removed from his virtue. “A brother,” saith David, “doth not redeem, shall man redeem?” (Ps. xlix. 7, LXX)”

He refers in context to **Psalms 49 (Septuagint):7** A brother does not redeem, shall a man redeem? he shall not give to God a ransom for himself, 8 or the price of the redemption of his soul, though he labour for ever, 9 and live to the end, so that he should not see corruption.

And to **Psalms 49 (KJV):7** None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: 8 (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:) 9 That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.

He continues, “We must place our hopes of salvation in nothing else, but only in our own righteous deeds (done) after the grace of God.”

Now we see clearly what John Chrysostom believed about salvation. According to him, God gives us grace to hear the Gospel, but God does not infringe upon our free will to believe. After we believe, we have the grace of God to help us, but our salvation will then depend on “our own righteous deeds (done) after the grace of God”.

He continues, “For if this by itself could have availed, it would have availed the Jews, (for Christ was their kinsman according to the flesh,) it would have availed the town in which He was born, it would have availed His brethren. But as long as His brethren cared not for themselves, the honor of their kindred availed them nothing, but they were condemned with the

rest of the world, and then only were approved, when they shone by their own virtue; and the city fell, and was burnt, having gained nothing from this; and His kinsmen according to the flesh were slaughtered and perished very miserably, having gained nothing towards being saved from their relationship to Him, because they had not the defense of virtue.”

He speaks of the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. by the Roman general Titus. He continues, “The Apostles, on the contrary, appeared greater than any, because they followed the true and excellent way of gaining relationship with Him, that by obedience. And from this we learn that we have always need of faith, and a life shining and bright, since this alone will have power to save us.”

So ultimately, according to Chrysostom, we are saved by our own good works and faith.

He continues, “For though His relations were for a long time everywhere held in honor, being called the Lord’s kinsmen, yet now we do not even know their names, while the lives and names of the Apostles are everywhere celebrated.”

But James, the Lord’s brother, is mentioned in Galatians 1:19. This James wrote the epistle of James. Chrysostom is not saying that Mary had other children, as he explains in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER I, page 13**, where he says, “But as he considered that he had a share in the august titles of the Apostles, he exalts himself by honoring James; and this he does by calling him “the Lord’s brother,” although he was not by birth His brother, but only so reputed.”

Chrysostom continues, “Let us then not be proud of nobleness of birth according to the flesh, but though we have ten thousand famous ancestors, let us use diligence ourselves to go beyond their excellences, knowing that we shall gain nothing from the diligence of others to help us in the judgment that is to come; nay, this will be the more grievous condemnation, that though born of righteous parents and having an example at home, we do not, even thus, imitate our teachers. And this I say now, because I see many heathens, (**Schaff Note:** lit. “Greeks.”) when we lead them to the faith and exhort them to become Christians, flying to their kinsmen and ancestors and house, and saying, “All my relations and friends and companions are faithful Christians.” What is that to thee, thou wretched and miserable? This very thing will be especially thy ruin, that thou didst not respect the number of those around thee, and run to the truth. Others again who are believers but live a careless life, when exhorted to virtue make the very same defense, and say, “my father and my grandfather and my greatgrandfather were very pious and good men.” But this will assuredly most condemn thee, that being descended from such men, thou hast acted unworthily of the root from whence thou art sprung. For hear what the Prophet says to the Jews, “Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept (sheep)” (Hos. xii. 12); and again Christ, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad.” (c. viii. 56)”

He refers to **Hosea 12 (KJV):12** And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep.

And to **John 8 (KJV):56** Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

He continues, “And everywhere they bring forward to them the righteous acts of their fathers, not only to praise them, but also to make the charge against their descendants more heavy. Knowing then this, let us use every means that we may be saved by our own works, lest having deceived ourselves by vain trusting on others, we learn that we have been deceived

when the knowledge of it will profit us nothing.”

But the Scriptures are clear that we are not saved by works, but by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

He continues, ““In the grave,” saith David, “who shall give thee thanks?” (Ps. vi. 5)”

He refers to **Psalm 6 (KJV):5** For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?

He concludes, “Let us then repent here, that we may obtain the everlasting goods, which may God grant we all do, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory, for ever and ever. Amen.”

### Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XXI, page 74-76**, he says, “We must place our hopes of salvation in nothing else, but only in our own righteous deeds (done) after the grace of God.”

Now we see clearly what John Chrysostom believed about salvation. According to him, God gives us grace to hear the Gospel, but God does not infringe upon our free will to believe. After we believe, we have the grace of God to help us, but our salvation will then depend on “our own righteous deeds after the grace of God”.

He also says, “The Apostles, on the contrary, appeared greater than any, because they followed the true and excellent way of gaining relationship with Him, that by obedience. And from this we learn that we have always need of faith, and a life shining and bright, since this alone will have power to save us.”

So ultimately, according to Chrysostom, we are saved by our own good works and faith.

And he says, “Knowing then this, let us use every means that we may be saved by our own works, lest having deceived ourselves by vain trusting on others, we learn that we have been deceived when the knowledge of it will profit us nothing.”

But the Scriptures are clear that we are not saved by works, but by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Righteous deeds done after the grace of God refers to our own good works which “God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”.

And in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

## Faith Alone Is Not Enough

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XXXI, page 106-107

John iii. 35, 36

“The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

[1.] Great is shown to be in all things the gain of humility. (**Schaff Note:** lit. “condescension.”) Thus it is that we have brought arts to perfection, not by learning them all at once from our teachers; it is thus that we have built cities, putting them together slowly, little by little; it is thus that we maintain our life. And marvel not if the thing has so much power in matters pertaining to this life, when in spiritual things one may find that great is the power of this wisdom. For so the Jews were enabled to be delivered from their idolatry, being led on gently and little by little, and hearing from the first nothing sublime concerning either doctrine or life. So after the coming of Christ, when it was the time for higher doctrines, the Apostles brought over all men without at first uttering anything sublime. And so Christ appears to have spoken to most at the beginning, and so John did now, speaking of Him as of some wonderful man, and darkly introducing high matter.

For instance, when commencing he spake thus: “A man cannot receive anything of himself” (c. iii. 27): then after adding a high expression, and saying, “He that cometh from heaven is above all,” he again brings down his discourse to what is lowly, and besides many other things saith this, that “God giveth not the Spirit by measure.” Then he proceeds to say, “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand.” And after that, knowing that great is the force of punishment, (**Schaff Note:** al. “of the mention of punishment.”) and that the many are not so much led by the promise of good things as by the threat of the terrible, he concludes his discourse with these words; “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” Here again he refers the account of punishment to the Father, for he saith not “the wrath of the Son,” (yet He is the Judge,) but sets over them the Father, desiring so the more to terrify them.

“Is it then enough,” saith one, “to believe on the Son, that one may have eternal life?” By no means. And hear Christ Himself declaring this, and saying, “Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. vii. 21); and the blasphemy against the Spirit is enough of itself to cast a man into hell. But why speak I of a portion of doctrine? Though a man believe rightly on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, yet if he lead not a right life, his faith will avail nothing towards his salvation. Therefore when He saith, “This is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God” (c. xvii. 3), let us not suppose that the (knowledge) spoken of is sufficient for our salvation; we need besides this a most exact life and conversation. Since though he has said here, “He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life,” and in the same place something even stronger, (for he weaves his discourse not of blessings only, but of their contraries also, speaking thus: “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him”;) yet not even from this do we assert that

faith alone is sufficient to salvation. And the directions for living given in many places of the Gospels show this. Therefore he did not say, "This by itself is eternal life," nor, "He that doth but believe on the Son hath eternal life," but by both expressions he declared this, that the thing (**Schaff Note:** i.e. believing.) doth contain life, yet that if a right conversation follow not, there will follow a heavy punishment. And he did not say, "awaiteth him," but, "abideth on him," that is, "shall never remove from him." For that thou mayest not think that the "shall not see life," is a temporary death, but mayest believe that the punishment is continual, he hath put this expression to show that it rests (**Schaff Note:** lit. "sits upon.") upon him continually. And this he has done, by these very words forcing them on (**Schaff Note:** i.e. believing) to Christ. Therefore he gave not the admonition to them in particular, but made it universal, the manner which best might bring them over. For he did not say, "if ye believe," and, "if ye believe not," but made his speech general, so that his words might be free from suspicion. And this he has done yet more strongly than Christ. For Christ saith, "He that believeth not is condemned already," but John saith, "shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." With good cause; for it was a different thing for a man to speak of himself and for another to speak of him. They would have thought that Christ spake often of these things from self-love, and that he was a boaster; but John was clear from all suspicion. And if at a later time, Christ also used stronger expressions, it was when they had begun to conceive an exalted opinion of Him.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, "John iii. 35, 36

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):35** The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. 36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

He continues, "[1.] Great is shown to be in all things the gain of humility. (**Schaff Note:** lit. "condescension.") Thus it is that we have brought arts to perfection, not by learning them all at once from our teachers; it is thus that we have built cities, putting them together slowly, little by little; it is thus that we maintain our life. And marvel not if the thing has so much power in matters pertaining to this life, when in spiritual things one may find that great is the power of this wisdom. For so the Jews were enabled to be delivered from their idolatry, being led on gently and little by little, and hearing from the first nothing sublime concerning either doctrine or life. So after the coming of Christ, when it was the time for higher doctrines, the Apostles brought over all men without at first uttering anything sublime. And so Christ appears to have spoken to most at the beginning, and so John did now, speaking of Him as of some wonderful man, and darkly introducing high matter.

For instance, when commencing he spake thus: "A man cannot receive anything of himself" (c. iii. 27): then after adding a high expression, and saying, "He that cometh from heaven is above all," he again brings down his discourse to what is lowly, and besides many other things saith this, that "God giveth not the Spirit by measure.""

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):27** John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

And to **John 3 (KJV):31** He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

And to **John 3 (KJV):34** For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

He continues, “Then he proceeds to say, “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand.””

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):35** The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

He continues, “And after that, knowing that great is the force of punishment, (**Schaff Note:** al. “of the mention of punishment.”) and that the many are not so much led by the promise of good things as by the threat of the terrible, he concludes his discourse with these words; “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.””

He refers again to **John 3 (KJV):36** He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

He continues, “Here again he refers the account of punishment to the Father, for he saith not “the wrath of the Son,” (yet He is the Judge,) but sets over them the Father, desiring so the more to terrify them.

“Is it then enough,” saith one, “to believe on the Son, that one may have eternal life?” By no means. And hear Christ Himself declaring this, and saying, “Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. vii. 21);”

He refers to **Matthew 7 (KJV):21** Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

But the Scripture says belief in the Son is enough, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

And the Scripture he just quoted in John 3:36, agrees.

Chrysostom continues, “and the blasphemy against the Spirit is enough of itself to cast a man into hell.”

He refers to **Matthew 12 (KJV):31** Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. 32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

He continues, “But why speak I of a portion of doctrine? Though a man believe rightly on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, yet if he lead not a right life, his faith will avail nothing towards his salvation. Therefore when He saith, “This is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God” (c. xvii. 3), let us not suppose that the (knowledge) spoken of is sufficient for our salvation;”

He refers to **John 17 (KJV):3** And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

He continues, “we need besides this a most exact life and conversation. Since though he has said here, “He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life,” and in the same place something even stronger, (for he weaves his discourse not of blessings only, but of their contraries also,



speaking thus: “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him”;) yet not even from this do we assert that faith alone is sufficient to salvation. And the directions for living given in many places of the Gospels show this.”

But after the Gospels, we read as in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Faith alone is what saves us according to Scripture.

He continues, “Therefore he did not say, “This by itself is eternal life,” nor, “He that doth but believe on the Son hath eternal life,” but by both expressions he declared this, that the thing (**Schaff Note:** i.e. believing.) doth contain life, yet that if a right conversation follow not, there will follow a heavy punishment.”

But he misinterprets the Scripture here, for we read again in **John 3 (KJV):36** He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

There is no qualification of “a right conversation” following “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life”. The verse only adds the warning that “he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” The one “that believeth not the Son” is the one who has not been born again.

Chrysostom continues, “And he did not say, “awaiteth him,” but, “abideth on him,” that is, “shall never remove from him.” For that thou mayest not think that the “shall not see life,” is a temporary death, but mayest believe that the punishment is continual, he hath put this expression to show that it rests (**Schaff Note:** lit. “sits upon.”) upon him continually.”

And this is true. The one who does not believe in Jesus Christ will not see life but only the wrath of God, because they have not been born again.

He continues, “And this he has done, by these very words forcing them on (**Schaff Note:** i.e. believing) to Christ. Therefore he gave not the admonition to them in particular, but made it universal, the manner which best might bring them over. For he did not say, “if ye believe,” and, “if ye believe not,” but made his speech general, so that his words might be free from suspicion. And this he has done yet more strongly than Christ. For Christ saith, “He that believeth not is condemned already,” but John saith, “shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.””

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

This speech in John 3:18 is very clear. The one who believes on him is not condemned. The one who does not believe is already condemned. This is because all the world stands guilty before God, and must be born again to be justified.

We note that John the Baptist begins speaking in **John 3 (KJV):27** John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

And these are John's words in **John 3 (KJV):36** He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Chrysostom continues, "With good cause; for it was a different thing for a man to speak of himself and for another to speak of him. They would have thought that Christ spake often of these things from self-love, and that he was a boaster; but John was clear from all suspicion. And if at a later time, Christ also used stronger expressions, it was when they had begun to conceive an exalted opinion of Him."

But Jesus said that He who has believed in Him has passed from death to life, as we read in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

And we were washed, sanctified, and justified when we were born again, as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NKJV):11** And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

This language is very clear. If anyone sins after believing in Jesus, and being born again, we have an advocate with the Father, as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

If we believe not, He is still faithful, as we read in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):13** If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

What does He mean, "he cannot deny himself"? We must test ourselves. If we have truly believed, Christ is in us, as we read in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

If we have truly believed, Jesus Christ is in us because we have been born of the Spirit of God. We are not our own. We have been bought with a price, as in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY VII, page 398**

Hebrews iv. 11–13

"Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is quick [i.e. living] and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

[1.] Faith is indeed great and bringeth salvation, and without it, it is not possible ever to be saved. It suffices not however of itself to accomplish this, but there is need of a right

conversation also. So that on this account Paul also exhorts those who had already been counted worthy of the mysteries; saying, “Let us labor to enter into that rest.” “Let us labor” (he says), Faith not sufficing, the life also ought to be added thereto, and our earnestness to be great; for truly there is need of much earnestness too, in order to go up into Heaven. For if they who suffered so great distress in the Wilderness, were not counted worthy of [the promised] land, and were not able to attain [that] land, because they murmured and because they committed fornication: how shall we be counted worthy of Heaven, if we live carelessly and indolently? We then have need of much earnestness.

And observe, the punishment does not extend to this only, the not entering in (for he said not, “Let us labor to enter into the rest,” lest we fail of so great blessings), but he added what most of all arouses men. What then is this? “Lest any man fall, after the same example of unbelief.” What means this? It means that we should have our mind, our hope, our expectation, yonder, lest we should fail. For that [otherwise] we shall fail, the example shows, “lest [&c.] after the same,” he says.

[2.] In the next place, lest hearing [the words] “after the same [example],” thou shouldest think that the punishment is the same, hear what he adds; “For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and pierceth even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” In these words he shows that He, the Word of God, wrought the former things also, and lives, and has not been quenched.

Do not then when hearing the Word, think of it lightly. For “He is sharper,” he says, “than a sword.” Observe His condescension; and hence consider why the prophets also needed to speak of saber and bow and sword. “If ye turn not,” it is said, “He will whet His sword, He hath bent His bow and made it ready.” (Ps. vii. 12) For if now, after so long a time, and after their being perfected, He cannot smite down by the name of the Word alone, but needs these expressions in order to show the superiority [arising] from the comparison [of the Gospel with the law]: much more then [of old].

“Piercing,” he says, “even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit.” What is this? He hinted at something more fearful. Either that He divides the spirit from the soul, or that He pierces even through them disembodied, not as a sword through bodies only. Here he shows, that the soul also is punished, and that it thoroughly searches out the most inward things, piercing wholly through the whole man.

“And is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight.” In these words most of all he terrified them. For do not (he says) be confident if ye still stand fast in the Faith, but without full assurance. He judges the inner heart, for there He passes through, both punishing and searching out.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Hebrews iv. 11–13

“Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is quick [i.e. living] and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”

He refers to **Hebrews 4 (KJV):11** Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. 12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

He continues, “[1.] Faith is indeed great and bringeth salvation, and without it, it is not possible ever to be saved. It suffices not however of itself to accomplish this, but there is need of a right conversation also.”

So to Chrysostom, faith plus works are needed to be saved.

He continues, “So that on this account Paul also exhorts those who had already been counted worthy of the mysteries; saying, “Let us labor to enter into that rest.” “Let us labor” (he says), Faith not sufficing, the life also ought to be added thereto, and our earnestness to be great; for truly there is need of much earnestness too, in order to go up into Heaven. For if they who suffered so great distress in the Wilderness, were not counted worthy of [the promised] land, and were not able to attain [that] land, because they murmured and because they committed fornication: how shall we be counted worthy of Heaven, if we live carelessly and indolently? We then have need of much earnestness.”

Let us provide some context in the Scriptures, as we now read in **Hebrews 4 (NASB):1** Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. 3 For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, “As I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest,” although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”; 5 and again in this passage, “They shall not enter My rest.” 6 Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience, 7 He again fixes a certain day, “Today,” saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, “Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts.” 8 For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. 9 So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

So in verse 2, some of the Israelites did not enter His rest, because “it was not united by faith in those who heard” the word preached to them. Then in verse 3, he says, “we who have believed enter that rest”, that is, God’s rest. This is the rest of salvation which Jesus taught in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

What are we resting from? We rest from our works, as “God did from His”, and in verse 10 above.

Chrysostom continues, “And observe, the punishment does not extend to this only, the not entering in (for he said not, “Let us labor to enter into the rest,” lest we fail of so great blessings), but he added what most of all arouses men. What then is this? “Lest any man fall, after the same example of unbelief.” What means this? It means that we should have our mind,

our hope, our expectation, yonder, lest we should fail. For that [otherwise] we shall fail, the example shows, “lest [&c.] after the same,” he says.

There are actually four rests for a believer in the word of God. The first is the rest of salvation which Jesus taught in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

This rest comes to us when we believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord, and we are born again.

The second is the rest of serving, as Jesus also taught in **Matthew 11 (KJV):29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

His yoke is the yoke of serving in His body, the Church. He has placed each believer into His body in a specific place for a specific function to perform, as we read in **Romans 12 (NASB):4** For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

As we grow in grace and knowledge of His word, we will become more of who He made us to be, and we will find our place in His body, and the rest that accompanies that place.

The third rest is the rest of inheritance. This is the rest that Israel was to enter when they entered into the promised land. This is the rest spoken of in **Hebrews 4 (KJV): 8** For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. 9 So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. 11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Some of the Israelites did not enter into the promised land, that is, their inheritance, because of unbelief.

As we rest from our own works, and do the works ordained for us to do by God, we will enter into all that God has for us. We will then know what is the abundant life he has promised us in **John 10 (KJV):10** The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

This is the rest of the inheritance. Then there is one final rest, which is the rest of glorification, for when we see Him, we will be like Him, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

And we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):30** Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Our mortal bodies will be made immortal, as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):51** Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Chrysostom continues, “[2.] In the next place, lest hearing [the words] “after the same [example],” thou shouldest think that the punishment is the same, hear what he adds; “For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and pierceth even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” In these words he shows that He, the Word of God, wrought the former things also, and lives, and has not been quenched.

Do not then when hearing the Word, think of it lightly. For “He is sharper,” he says, “than a sword.” Observe His condescension; and hence consider why the prophets also needed to speak of saber and bow and sword. “If ye turn not,” it is said, “He will whet His sword, He hath bent His bow and made it ready.” (Ps. vii. 12)”

He refers in context to **Psalm 7 (KJV):**11 God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. 12 If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.

He continues, “For if now, after so long a time, and after their being perfected, He cannot smite down by the name of the Word alone, but needs these expressions in order to show the superiority [arising] from the comparison [of the Gospel with the law]: much more then [of old].

“Piercing,” he says, “even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit.” What is this? He hinted at something more fearful. Either that He divides the spirit from the soul, or that He pierces even through them disembodied, not as a sword through bodies only. Here he shows, that the soul also is punished, and that it thoroughly searches out the most inward things, piercing wholly through the whole man.”

He refers again to **Hebrews 4 (KJV):**12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

The Scripture is merely saying that there is a difference between the soul and spirit, just as there is a difference between joints and marrow. The spirit is where we connect with God. Before we accepted Christ, we were dead in trespasses and sins, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):**1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

But God gave us new life by giving us birth by His Spirit, as we continue in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):**4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Our spirit is where we are born of the Spirit of God, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):**6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

This is where we connect with God. Then our soul, which is our mind, will, conscience,

emotions, and heart, the center of our emotions, is where we connect with our fellow man. Our flesh is where we connect with the physical world through the five senses of touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing.

The word of God is “piercing” in that it gives us discernment of “the thoughts and intents of the heart”. This helps us judge ourselves rightly.

Chrysostom did not understand that we are composed of body, soul, and spirit. He thought we were composed of just soul and body. To him, the soul was another name for spirit.

He continues, ““And is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight.””

He refers again to **Hebrews 4 (KJV):13** Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

He continues, “In these words most of all he terrified them. For do not (he says) be confident if ye still stand fast in the Faith, but without full assurance. He judges the inner heart, for there He passes through, both punishing and searching out.”

The thoughts of our heart are open “unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do”, as are all things. And he scourges every son as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):5** And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

But Paul prays for us all to have the “full assurance” of understanding in **Colossians 2 (KJV):1** For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; 2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; 3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

This assurance comes from rightly dividing the word, and not taking one Scripture out of context with the rest of the word of God.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XXXI, page 106-107**, he says, “Is it then enough,” saith one, “to believe on the Son, that one may have eternal life?” By no means. And hear Christ Himself declaring this, and saying, “Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. vii. 21);”

He refers to **Matthew 7 (KJV):21** Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

And Jesus also said in **John 6 (KJV):40** And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

If we have truly believed in Jesus, we have everlasting life, and we are saved.

He continues, “But why speak I of a portion of doctrine? Though a man believe rightly on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, yet if he lead not a right life, his faith will avail

nothing towards his salvation. Therefore when He saith, “This is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God” (c. xvii. 3), let us not suppose that the (knowledge) spoken of is sufficient for our salvation; “we need besides this a most exact life and conversation.”

He refers to **John 17 (KJV):3** And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

And he says, “Since though he has said here, “He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life, . . . yet not even from this do we assert that faith alone is sufficient to salvation. And the directions for living given in many places of the Gospels show this.”

However, he who has believed in Him has passed from death to life, as we read in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

And we were washed, sanctified, and justified when we were born again, as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NKJV):11** And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

We are not our own, for we have been bought with a price. If we don’t walk rightly after having truly believed in Jesus Christ, the Lord will discipline us, but He will not take away what He has given.

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY VII, page 398**, he says, “Faith is indeed great and bringeth salvation, and without it, it is not possible ever to be saved. It suffices not however of itself to accomplish this, but there is need of a right conversation also.”

And so to Chrysostom, faith plus works are needed to be saved.

And he says, “So that on this account Paul also exhorts those who had already been counted worthy of the mysteries; saying, “Let us labor to enter into that rest.” “Let us labor” (he says), Faith not sufficing, the life also ought to be added thereto, and our earnestness to be great; for truly there is need of much earnestness too, in order to go up into Heaven.”

But Jesus said in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

We enter His rest when we come to Him in faith. We must continue to walk by faith, as we read in **Colossians 2 (KJV):6** As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

As we continue to walk by faith, and serve Him, we will enter more of His rest.

And he asks, “how shall we be counted worthy of Heaven, if we live carelessly and indolently?”

But once we have truly believed, our salvation is secure. The one who has truly believed has been born again, and has everlasting life, as we read again in **John 3 (KJV):36** He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Once we have faith, God justifies us, as we read in **Romans 5 (NKJV):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus



Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

God puts His righteousness down to the account of the one who has faith, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):**21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

We are more than conquerors, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):**31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## When Are We Clean?

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXX, page 258-259**

Ver. 4. "And having risen from supper, and laid aside His garments."

[2.] Observe how not by the washing only, but in another way also He exhibiteth humility. For it was not before reclining, but after they had all sat down, then He arose. In the next place, He doth not merely wash them, but doth so, putting off His garments. And He did not even stop here, but girded Himself with a towel. Nor was He satisfied with this, but Himself filled (the basin), and did not bid another fill it; He did all these things Himself, showing by all that we must do such things, when we are engaged in well doing, not merely for form's sake, but with all zeal. Now He seemeth to me to have washed the feet of the traitor first from its saying,

Ver. 5. "He began to wash the disciples' feet," and adding,

Ver. 6. "Then cometh He to Simon Peter and Peter saith unto Him, Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?"

"With those hands," he saith, "with which Thou hast opened eyes, and cleansed lepers, and raised the dead?" For this (question) is very emphatic; wherefore He needed not to have said any more than the, "Thou"; for even of itself this would have sufficed to convey the whole. Some one might reasonably enquire, how none of the others forbade Him, but Peter only, which was a mark of no slight love and reverence. What then is the cause? He seemeth to me to have washed the traitor first, then to have come to Peter, and that the others were afterwards instructed from his case. That He washed some one other before him is clear from its saying,

“But when He came to Peter.” Yet the Evangelist is not a vehement accuser, for the “began,” is the expression of one implying this. And even if Peter were the first, yet it is probable that the traitor, being a forward person, had reclined even before the chief. For by another circumstance also his forwardness is shown, when He dippeth with his Master in the dish, and being convicted, feels no compunction; while Peter being rebuked but once on a former occasion, and for words which he spake from loving affection, was so abashed, that being even distressed and trembling, he begged another to ask a question. But Judas, though continually convicted, felt not. ( Ver. 24) When therefore He came to Peter, he saith unto Him, “Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?”

Ver. 7. “He saith unto him, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know here after.”

That is “thou shalt know how great is the gain from this, the profit of the lesson, and how it is able to guide us into all humblemindedness.” What then doth Peter? He still hinders Him, and saith,

Ver. 8. “Thou shalt never wash my feet.” “What doest thou, Peter? Rememberest thou not those former words? Saidst thou not, ‘Be merciful to Thyself,’ and heardest thou not in return, ‘Get thee behind Me, Satan’? (Matt. xvi. 22) Art thou not even so sobered, but art thou yet vehement?” “Yea,” he saith, “for what is being done is a great matter, and full of amazement.” Since then he did this from exceeding love, Christ in turn subdueth him by the same; and as there He effected this by sharply rebuking him, and saying, “Thou art an offense unto Me,” so here also by saying,

“If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.” What then saith that hot and burning one?

Ver. 9. “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.”

Vehement in deprecation, he becometh yet more vehement in acquiescence; but both from love. For why said He not wherefore He did this, instead of adding a threat? Because Peter would not have been persuaded. For had He said, “Suffer it, for by this I persuade you to be humbleminded,” Peter would have promised it ten thousand times, in order that his Master might not do this thing. But now what saith He? He speaketh of that which Peter most feared and dreaded, the being separated from Him; for it is he who continually asks, “Whither goest Thou?” (Ver. 36) Wherefore also he said, “I will give even my life for Thee.” (Ver. 37) And if, after hearing, “What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter,” he still persisted, much more would he have done so had he learnt (the meaning of the action). Therefore said He, “but thou shalt know hereafter,” as being aware, that should he learn it immediately he would still resist. And Peter said not, “Tell me, that I may suffer Thee,” but (which was much more vehement) he did not even endure to learn, but withstands Him, saying, “Thou shalt never wash my feet.” But as soon as He threatened, he straightway relaxed his tone. But what meaneth, “Thou shalt know after this”? “After this?” When? “When in My Name thou shalt have cast out devils; when thou shalt have seen Me taken up into Heaven, when thou shalt have learnt from the Spirit that I sit on His right hand, then shalt thou understand what is being done now.” What then saith Christ? When Peter said, “not my feet only, but also my hands and my head,” He replieth,

Ver. 10, 11. “He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean, but not all. For He knew who should betray Him.”

“And if they are clean, why washeth He their feet?” That we may learn to be modest. On

which account He came not to any other part of the body, but to that which is considered more dishonorable than the rest. But what is, “He that is washed”? It is instead of, “he that is clean.” Were they then clean, who had not yet been delivered from their sins, nor deemed worthy of the Spirit, since sin still had the mastery, the handwriting of the curse still remaining, the victim not having yet been offered? How then calleth He them “clean”? That thou mayest not deem them clean, as delivered from their sins, He addeth, Behold, “ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you.” That is, “In this way ye are so far clean; ye have received the light, ye have been freed from Jewish error. For the Prophet also saith, ‘Wash you, make you clean, put away the wickedness from your souls’ (Isa. i. 16, LXX); so that such a one is washed and is clean.” Since then these men had cast away all wickedness from their souls, and had companied with Him with a pure mind, therefore He saith according to the word of the Prophet, “he that is washed is clean already.” For in that place also It meaneth not the “washing” of water, practiced by the Jews; but the cleansing of the conscience.

[3.] Be we then also clean; learn we to do well. But what is “well”? “Judge for the fatherless, plead for the widow; and come, let us reason together, saith the Lord.” (Isa. i. 7) There is frequent mention in the Scriptures of widows and orphans, but we make no account of this. Yet consider how great is the reward. “Though,” it saith, “your sins be as scarlet, I will whiten them as snow; though they be red like crimson, I will whiten them as wool.” For a widow is an unprotected being, therefore He taketh much care for her. For they, when it is even in their power to contract a second marriage, endure the hardships of widowhood through fear of God. Let us then all, both men and women, stretch forth our hands to them, that we may never undergo the sorrows of widow-hood; or if we should have to undergo them, let us lay up a great store of kindness for ourselves. Not small is the power of the widow’s tears, it is able to open heaven itself. Let us not then trample on them, nor make their calamity worse, but assist them by every means. If so we do, we shall put around ourselves much safety, both in the present life, and in that which is to come. For not here alone, but there also will they be our defenders, cutting away most of our sins by reason of our beneficence towards them, and causing us to stand boldly before the judgment seat of Christ. Which (**Schaff Norte:** ὅ, al. ἡ ἄ, “which boldness.”) may it come to pass that we all obtain, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 4. “And having risen from supper, and laid aside His garments.”

He refers to **John 13 (KJV):4** He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

He continues, “[2.] Observe how not by the washing only, but in another way also He exhibiteth humility. For it was not before reclining, but after they had all sat down, then He arose. In the next place, He doth not merely wash them, but doth so, putting off His garments. And He did not even stop here, but girded Himself with a towel. Nor was He satisfied with this, but Himself filled (the basin), and did not bid another fill it; He did all these things Himself, showing by all that we must do such things, when we are engaged in well doing, not merely for form’s sake, but with all zeal. Now He seemeth to me to have washed the feet of the traitor first from its saying,

Ver. 5. “He began to wash the disciples’ feet,” and adding,

Ver. 6. "Then cometh He to Simon Peter and Peter saith unto Him, Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?"

He refers to **John 13 (KJV):5** After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. 6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

He continues, "'With those hands,'" he saith, "with which Thou hast opened eyes, and cleansed lepers, and raised the dead?" For this (question) is very emphatic; wherefore He needed not to have said any more than the, "Thou"; for even of itself this would have sufficed to convey the whole. Some one might reasonably enquire, how none of the others forbade Him, but Peter only, which was a mark of no slight love and reverence. What then is the cause? He seemeth to me to have washed the traitor first, then to have come to Peter, and that the others were afterwards instructed from his case."

There is no evidence in the Scripture that he washed the feet of Judas first.

He continues, "That He washed some one other before him is clear from its saying, "But when He came to Peter." Yet the Evangelist is not a vehement accuser, for the "began," is the expression of one implying this. And even if Peter were the first, yet it is probable that the traitor, being a forward person, had reclined even before the chief. For by another circumstance also his forwardness is shown, when He dippeth with his Master in the dish, and being convicted, feels no compunction; while Peter being rebuked but once on a former occasion, and for words which he spake from loving affection, was so abashed, that being even distressed and trembling, he begged another to ask a question. But Judas, though continually convicted, felt not. ( Ver. 24)"

He refers to **John 13 (KJV):24** Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

He continues, "When therefore He came to Peter, he saith unto Him, "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?"

Ver. 7. "He saith unto him, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know here after."

He refers to **John 13 (KJV):7** Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

He continues, "That is "thou shalt know how great is the gain from this, the profit of the lesson, and how it is able to guide us into all humblemindedness." What then doth Peter? He still hinders Him, and saith,

He continues, "Ver. 8. "Thou shalt never wash my feet.'"

He refers to **John 13 (KJV):8** Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

He continues, "'What doest thou, Peter? Rememberest thou not those former words? Saidst thou not, 'Be merciful to Thyself,' and heardest thou not in return, 'Get thee behind Me, Satan'? (Matt. xvi. 22)"

He refers in context to **Matthew 16 (KJV):22** Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. 23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

He continues, "'Art thou not even so sobered, but art thou yet vehement?" "Yea," he

saith, “for what is being done is a great matter, and full of amazement.” Since then he did this from exceeding love, Christ in turn subdueth him by the same; and as there He effected this by sharply rebuking him, and saying, “Thou art an offense unto Me,” so here also by saying,

“If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.” What then saith that hot and burning one? Ver. 9. “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.””

He refers to **John 13 (KJV):9** Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

He continues, “Vehement in deprecation, he becometh yet more vehement in acquiescence; but both from love. For why said He not wherefore He did this, instead of adding a threat? Because Peter would not have been persuaded. For had He said, “Suffer it, for by this I persuade you to be humbleminded,” Peter would have promised it ten thousand times, in order that his Master might not do this thing. But now what saith He? He speaketh of that which Peter most feared and dreaded, the being separated from Him; for it is he who continually asks, “Whither goest Thou?” (Ver. 36) Wherefore also he said, “I will give even my life for Thee.” (Ver. 37)”

He refers in context to **John 13 (KJV):33** Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. 34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. 36 Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. 37 37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. 38 Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

Chrysostom continues, “And if, after hearing, “What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter,” he still persisted, much more would he have done so had he learnt (the meaning of the action). Therefore said He, “but thou shalt know hereafter,” as being aware, that should he learn it immediately he would still resist. And Peter said not, “Tell me, that I may suffer Thee,” but (which was much more vehement) he did not even endure to learn, but withstands Him, saying, “Thou shalt never wash my feet.” But as soon as He threatened, he straightway relaxed his tone. But what meaneth, “Thou shalt know after this”? “After this”? When? “When in My Name thou shalt have cast out devils; when thou shalt have seen Me taken up into Heaven, when thou shalt have learnt from the Spirit that I sit on His right hand, then shalt thou understand what is being done now.” What then saith Christ? When Peter said, “not my feet only, but also my hands and my head,” He replieth,

Ver. 10, 11. “He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean, but not all. For He knew who should betray Him.””

He refers to **John 13 (KJV):10** Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

He continues, ““And if they are clean, why washeth He their feet?” That we may learn to be modest. On which account He came not to any other part of the body, but to that which is considered more dishonorable than the rest. But what is, “He that is washed”? It is instead of, “he that is clean.” Were they then clean, who had not yet been delivered from their sins, nor

deemed worthy of the Spirit, since sin still had the mastery, the handwriting of the curse still remaining, the victim not having yet been offered? How then calleth He them “clean”? That thou mayest not deem them clean, as delivered from their sins, He addeth, Behold, “ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you.””

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):3** Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

He continues, “That is, “In this way ye are so far clean; ye have received the light, ye have been freed from Jewish error. For the Prophet also saith, ‘Wash you, make you clean, put away the wickedness from your souls’ (Isa. i. 16 , LXX);”

He refers to **Isaiah 1 (Septuagint):16** Wash you, be clean; remove your iniquities from your souls before mine eyes; cease from your iniquities;

And to **Isaiah 1 (KJV):16** Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

He continues, “so that such a one is washed and is clean.” Since then these men had cast away all wickedness from their souls, and had companied with Him with a pure mind, therefore He saith according to the word of the Prophet, “he that is washed is clean already.” For in that place also It meaneth not the “washing” of water, practiced by the Jews; but the cleansing of the conscience.”

However, when Jesus said in verse 10, “He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all”, He referred to the washing of regeneration, that is, of being born again, as we read in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

The “washing of regeneration” refers to the cleansing of our sins when we believe in Jesus Christ, and we are born again, as we read of in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

This all happened when we were born again. The disciples had been washed by their faith in Jesus, as Peter showed in his confession in **Matthew 16 (KJV):13** When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? 14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Now we read again in **John 13 (KJV):10** Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

Judas was not clean. He had not believed in Jesus Christ. And Jesus also says that “He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit”. That is, once we have believed and are born again, we do not go through that washing again. We have a standing as righteous ones because of our justification by faith in Jesus Christ. But to maintain our fellowship with Him, we have need only to confess our sins, that is, to wash our feet.

Chrysostom continues, “[3.] Be we then also clean; learn we to do well. But what is

“well”? “Judge for the fatherless, plead for the widow; and come, let us reason together, saith the Lord.” (Isa. i. 17)”

He refers in context to **Isaiah 1 (KJV):**17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. 18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

He continues, “There is frequent mention in the Scriptures of widows and orphans, but we make no account of this. Yet consider how great is the reward. “Though,” it saith, “your sins be as scarlet, I will whiten them as snow; though they be red like crimson, I will whiten them as wool.” For a widow is an unprotected being, therefore He taketh much care for her. For they, when it is even in their power to contract a second marriage, endure the hardships of widowhood through fear of God. Let us then all, both men and women, stretch forth our hands to them, that we may never undergo the sorrows of widowhood; or if we should have to undergo them, let us lay up a great store of kindness for ourselves. Not small is the power of the widow’s tears, it is able to open heaven itself. Let us not then trample on them, nor make their calamity worse, but assist them by every means. If so we do, we shall put around ourselves much safety, both in the present life, and in that which is to come. For not here alone, but there also will they be our defenders, cutting away most of our sins by reason of our beneficence towards them, and causing us to stand boldly before the judgment seat of Christ. Which (**Schaff Norte:** ὅ, al. ἡ ἄλ, “which boldness.”) may it come to pass that we all obtain, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Chrysostom did not understand our justification by God when we believe. So he did not understand our standing before the Lord, as those who have been cleansed, and who are sons and daughters, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):**1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXXIII, page 270**

[3.] Let us then use every means to wipe off the filthiness. But first the font cleanseth, afterwards other ways also, many and of all kinds. For God, being merciful, hath even after this given to us various ways of reconciliation, of all which the first is that by alms-doing. “By alms-deeds,” it saith, “and deeds of faith sins are cleansed away.” (Ecclus. iii. 30) By alms-doing I do not mean that which is maintained by injustice, for this is not alms-doing, but savageness and inhumanity. What profits it to strip one man and clothe another? For we ought to begin the action with mercy, but this is inhumanity. If we give away everything that we have got from other people, it is no gain to us. And this Zacchæus shows, who on that occasion said, that he propitiated God by giving four times as much as he had taken. (Luke xix. 8) But we, when we plunder unboundedly, and give but little, think that we make God propitious, whereas we do rather exasperate Him. For tell me, if thou shouldest drag a dead and rotten ass from the waysides and lanes, and bring it to the altar, would not all stone thee as accursed and polluted?

Well then, if I prove that a sacrifice procured by plunder is more polluted than this, what defense shall we obtain? Let us suppose that some article has been obtained by plunder, is it not of fouler scent than a dead ass? Wouldest thou learn how great is the rottenness of sin? Hear the Prophet saying, “My wounds stank, and were corrupt.” (Ps. xxxviii. 5, LXX) And dost thou in words entreat God to forget thy misdeeds, and dost thou by what thou thyself doest, robbing and grasping, and placing thy sin upon the altar, cause Him to remember them continually? But now, this is not the only sin, but there is one more grievous than this, that thou defilest the souls of the saints. For the altar is but a stone, and is consecrated, but they ever bear with them Christ Himself; and darest thou to send thither any of such impurity? “No,” saith one, “not the same money, but other.” Mockery this, and trifling. Knowest thou not, that if one drop of injustice fall on a great quantity of wealth, the whole is defiled? And just as a man by casting dung into a pure fountain makes it all unclean, so also in the case of riches, anything illgotten entering in makes them to be tainted with the ill savor from itself. Then we wash our hands when we enter into church, but our hearts not so. Why, do our hands send forth a voice? It is the soul that utters the words: to that God looketh; cleanness of the body is of no use, while that is defiled. What profits it, if thou wipe clean thine outward hands, while thou hast those within impure? For the terrible thing and that which subverts all good is this, that while we are fearful about trifles, we care not for important matters. To pray with unwashed hands is a matter indifferent; but to do it with an unwashed mind, this is the extreme of all evils. Hear what was said to the Jews who busied themselves about such outward impurities. “Wash thine heart from wickedness, how long shall there be in thee thoughts of thy labors?” (Jer. iv. 14) Let us also wash ourselves, not with mire, but with fair water, with alms-doing, not with covetousness. First get free from rapine, and then show forth alms-deeds. Let us “decline from evil, and do good.” (Ps. xxxvii. 27) Stay thy hands from covetousness, and so bring them to alms-giving. But if with the same hands we strip one set of persons, though we may not clothe the others with what has been taken from them, yet we shall not thus escape punishment. For that which is the groundwork of the propitiation is made the groundwork of all wickedness. Better not show mercy, than show it thus; since for Cain also it had been better not to have brought his offering at all. Now if he who brought too little angered God, when one gives what is another’s, how shall not he anger Him? “I commanded thee,” He will say, “not to steal, and honorest thou Me from that thou hast stolen? What thinkest thou? That I am pleased with these things?” Then shall He say to thee, “Thou thoughtest wickedly that I am even such an one as thyself; I will rebuke thee, and set before thy face thy sins.” (Ps. l. 21, LXX) But may it not come to pass that any one of us hear this voice, but having wrought pure alms-deeds, and having our lamps burning, so may we enter into the bridechamber by the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “[3.] Let us then use every means to wipe off the filthiness. But first the font cleanseth, afterwards other ways also, many and of all kinds. For God, being merciful, hath even after this given to us various ways of reconciliation, of all which the first is that by alms-doing. “By alms-deeds,” it saith, “and deeds of faith sins are cleansed away.” (Ecclus. iii. 30)”

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 3 (KJV):30** Water will quench a flaming fire; and alms maketh an atonement for sins.



The book of Ecclesiasticus is not in the canon of Scripture. Now Chrysostom recognized the washing that happens at regeneration, only he thought that this washing happened at the font, or water baptism. But he did not understand that, after being regenerated, a simple confession of our sin is sufficient, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

It is His blood that cleanses us from all sin as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

And it is His word that is the light that we walk in as we read in **Psalms 119 (KJV):105** Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

This is the provision that the Lord has made for us. Let us abide in Him by walking in the light of His word, and confessing our sins as they are revealed to us by the light in His word.

Chrysostom continues, “By alms-doing I do not mean that which is maintained by injustice, for this is not alms-doing, but savageness and inhumanity. What profits it to strip one man and clothe another? For we ought to begin the action with mercy, but this is inhumanity. If we give away everything that we have got from other people, it is no gain to us. And this Zacchæus shows, who on that occasion said, that he propitiated God by giving four times as much as he had taken. (Luke xix. 8)”

He refers to **Luke 19 (KJV):8** And Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. 9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Giving, and showing mercy are fruits of salvation. But they do not atone for sins. The only atonement for sins is the shed blood of Jesus, as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):22** And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. 23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Under the law in the Old Testament, one had to offer a sacrifice for sin. This they did by bringing an animal of some sort to the priest. This is because “without the shedding of blood there is no remission”, as in verse 22 above. Jesus Christ has done what we could not do for ourselves. This He did once when He offered Himself at the cross for our sins.

Chrysostom continues, “But we, when we plunder unboundedly, and give but little, think

that we make God propitious, whereas we do rather exasperate Him.”

God is already propitious, as John explains in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

The blood of Jesus is the only propitiation for sin. It is finished.

Chrysostom continues, “For tell me, if thou shouldest drag a dead and rotten ass from the waysides and lanes, and bring it to the altar, would not all stone thee as accursed and polluted? Well then, if I prove that a sacrifice procured by plunder is more polluted than this, what defense shall we obtain? Let us suppose that some article has been obtained by plunder, is it not of fouler scent than a dead ass? Wouldest thou learn how great is the rottenness of sin? Hear the Prophet saying, “My wounds stank, and were corrupt.” (Ps. xxxviii. 5, LXX)”

He refers to **Psalms 38 (Septuagint):5** My bruises have become noisome and corrupt, because of my foolishness.

And to **Psalms 38 (KJV):5** My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness.

He continues, “And dost thou in words entreat God to forget thy misdeeds, and dost thou by what thou thyself doest, robbing and grasping, and placing thy sin upon the altar, cause Him to remember them continually? But now, this is not the only sin, but there is one more grievous than this, that thou defilest the souls of the saints. For the altar is but a stone, and is consecrated, but they ever bear with them Christ Himself; and darest thou to send thither any of such impurity? “No,” saith one, “not the same money, but other.” Mockery this, and trifling. Knowest thou not, that if one drop of injustice fall on a great quantity of wealth, the whole is defiled? And just as a man by casting dung into a pure fountain makes it all unclean, so also in the case of riches, anything illgotten entering in makes them to be tainted with the ill savor from itself. Then we wash our hands when we enter into church, but our hearts not so. Why, do our hands send forth a voice? It is the soul that utters the words: to that God looketh; cleanness of the body is of no use, while that is defiled. What profits it, if thou wipe clean thine outward hands, while thou hast those within impure? For the terrible thing and that which subverts all good is this, that while we are fearful about trifles, we care not for important matters. To pray with unwashed hands is a matter indifferent; but to do it with an unwashed mind, this is the extreme of all evils. Hear what was said to the Jews who busied themselves about such outward impurities. “Wash thine heart from wickedness, how long shall there be in thee thoughts of thy labors?” (Jer. iv. 14)”

He refers to **Jeremiah 4 (KJV):14** O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?

He continues, “Let us also wash ourselves, not with mire, but with fair water, with alms-doing, not with covetousness. First get free from rapine, and then show forth alms-deeds. Let us “decline from evil, and do good.” (Ps. xxxvii. 27)”

He refers to **Psalms 37 (KJV):27** Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.

He continues, “Stay thy hands from covetousness, and so bring them to alms-giving. But if with the same hands we strip one set of persons, though we may not clothe the others with what has been taken from them, yet we shall not thus escape punishment. For that which is the groundwork of the propitiation is made the groundwork of all wickedness.”

Alms-giving is not the “groundwork of the propitiation”. The “groundwork of the propitiation” is the blood of Christ. He is the propitiation for our sins as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):2** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

He continues, “Better not show mercy, than show it thus; since for Cain also it had been better not to have brought his offering at all. Now if he who brought too little angered God, when one gives what is another’s, how shall not he anger Him? “I commanded thee,” He will say, “not to steal, and honorest thou Me from that thou hast stolen? What thinkest thou? That I am pleased with these things?” Then shall He say to thee, “Thou thoughtest wickedly that I am even such an one as thyself; I will rebuke thee, and set before thy face thy sins.” (Ps. l. 21, LXX)”

He refers to **Psalm 50 (Septuagint):21** These things thou didst, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest wickedly that I should be like thee, *but* I will reprove thee, and set *thine offences* before thee.

And to **Psalm 50 (KJV):21** These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.

He concludes, “But may it not come to pass that any one of us hear this voice, but having wrought pure alms-deeds, and having our lamps burning, so may we enter into the bridechamber by the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXXXII, page 303**

Ver. 17. “Sanctify them through Thy truth.” “Make them holy by the gift of the Spirit, and of right doctrines.” As when He saith, “Ye are clean through the word which I spake unto you” (c. xv. 3), so now He saith the same thing, “Instruct them, teach them the truth.” “And yet He saith that the Spirit doth this. How then doth He now ask it from the Father?” That thou mayest again learn their equality of Honor. For right doctrines asserted concerning God sanctify the soul. And if He saith that they are sanctified by the word, marvel not. And to show that He speaketh of doctrines, He addeth,

“Thy word is truth.”

That is, “there is no falsehood in it, and all that is said in it must needs come to pass”; and again, it signifieth nothing typical or bodily. As also Paul saith concerning the Church, that He hath sanctified it by the Word. For the Word of God is wont also to cleanse. (Eph. v. 26) Moreover, the, “sanctify them,” seems to me to signify something else, such as this, “Set them apart for the Word and for preaching.” And this is made plain from what follows. For, He saith,

Ver. 17. “As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.”

**Commentary:** “Ver. 17. “Sanctify them through Thy truth.” “Make them holy by the gift of the Spirit, and of right doctrines.””

He refers to **John 17 (KJV):17** Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

He continues, “As when He saith, “Ye are clean through the word which I spake unto you” (c. xv. 3), so now He saith the same thing, “Instruct them, teach them the truth.””

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):3** Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

He continues, “And yet He saith that the Spirit doth this. How then doth He now ask it from the Father?” That thou mayest again learn their equality of Honor. For right doctrines asserted concerning God sanctify the soul. And if He saith that they are sanctified by the word, marvel not. And to show that He speaketh of doctrines, He addeth,

“Thy word is truth.”

That is, “there is no falsehood in it, and all that is said in it must needs come to pass”; and again, it signifieth nothing typical or bodily. As also Paul saith concerning the Church, that He hath sanctified it by the Word. For the Word of God is wont also to cleanse. (Eph. v. 26)”

He refers in context to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):25** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

And we read in **Psalms 119 (KJV):9** Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

He continues, “Moreover, the, “sanctify them,” seems to me to signify something else, such as this, “Set them apart for the Word and for preaching.” And this is made plain from what follows. For, He saith,

Ver. 17. “As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.””

Yes, the word “sanctify” has the sense of setting apart, as we read in **Exodus 13 (KJV):2** Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine.

And in **Exodus 28 (KJV):41** And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.

Aaron’s sons were sanctified, or set apart, to the priesthood.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXXXIII, page 312**

...If we are minded to be thus truly wise, we shall know well that human things are nothing. Let us learn then, and having reckoned up our faults, let us accomplish their correction in time, and let us determine to correct one this month, another next month, and a third in that which follows. And so mounting as it were by steps, let us get to heaven by a Jacob’s ladder. For the ladder seems to me to signify in a riddle by that vision the gradual ascent by means of virtue, by which it is possible for us to ascend from earth to heaven, not using material steps, but improvement and correction of manners. Let us then lay hold on this means of departure and ascent, that having obtained heaven, we may also enjoy all the blessings there, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**Commentary:** In summary, he refers to Jacob's ladder, which was a dream that Jacob had in Genesis. Chrysostom is formulating an analogy of our sanctification from this dream. Let us read of Jacob's dream in **Genesis 28 (KJV):**10 And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. 11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. 12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

The Lord then explains the dream as we continue in **Genesis 28 (KJV):**13 And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; 14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. 16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. 17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. 18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. 19 And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. 20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, 21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: 22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Bethel is 12 miles north of Jerusalem. See the map below on the following page. Nothing is mentioned of a step by step sanctification in this passage in Genesis, that is, "the gradual ascent by means of virtue, by which it is possible for us to ascend from earth to heaven, not using material steps, but improvement and correction of manners."

The dream was simply a confirmation to Jacob of God's purpose in his life, and in the generations succeeding him, that is, Israel.

Chrysostom is inventing an allegory of this dream of Jacob which has no foundation in the Scriptures. We are not gradually being saved, as if we were gradually becoming worthy of the kingdom of heaven, step by step, by "correction of our manners". We are saved by faith, and that not of ourselves. It is the gift of God.





## Commentary Summary

In *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXX*, page 258-259, he refers to **John 13 (KJV):10** Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

He then asks, ““And if they are clean, why washeth He their feet?” That we may learn to be modest. On which account He came not to any other part of the body, but to that which is

considered more dishonorable than the rest. But what is, “He that is washed”? It is instead of, “he that is clean.” Were they then clean, who had not yet been delivered from their sins, nor deemed worthy of the Spirit, since sin still had the mastery, the handwriting of the curse still remaining, the victim not having yet been offered? How then calleth He them “clean”? That thou mayest not deem them clean, as delivered from their sins, He addeth, Behold, “ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you.””

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):3** Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

And we are cleansed by the word, as we read in **Psalm 119 (KJV):9** Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

But Jesus was talking about a different cleansing here. In John 13:10, Jesus says, “He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit”. The one who “is washed” is one who has believed in Jesus Christ, and has been born again. This is the washing, or cleansing, of regeneration, as we read in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

When we believe in Jesus Christ, and we are born again, our sins are washed away. God justifies, and puts His righteousness down to our account. We then have a standing of righteous ones. Because of our standing as sons and daughters of God, we then only need to wash our feet and we are “clean every whit”.

All of the disciples except for Judas had believed in Jesus, and had been born again. This is why Jesus said, “and ye are clean, but not all”.

Chrysostom did believe that the disciples had “not yet been delivered from their sins”, because the “victim” had “yet been offered”. But just as Abraham believed in Him who was to come, and was justified, so the disciples believed in the one who was to come, and die for our sins. The disciples had faith in Jesus, and were born again. This is why Jesus said they were all clean, except for Judas. The early Church did not understand the teaching about regeneration in the Scriptures.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXXIII, page 270**, he says, “Let us then use every means to wipe off the filthiness. But first the font cleanseth, afterwards other ways also, many and of all kinds. For God, being merciful, hath even after this given to us various ways of reconciliation, of all which the first is that by alms-doing. “By alms-deeds,” it saith, “and deeds of faith sins are cleansed away.” (Ecclus. iii. 30)”

Though the book of Ecclesiasticus does say this, this book is not in the canon of Scripture.

And he says, ““Let us also wash ourselves, not with mire, but with fair water, with alms-doing, not with covetousness.”

And he says, “Stay thy hands from covetousness, and so bring them to alms-giving. But if with the same hands we strip one set of persons, though we may not clothe the others with what has been taken from them, yet we shall not thus escape punishment. For that which is the groundwork of the propitiation is made the groundwork of all wickedness.”

But alms-giving is not the “groundwork of the propitiation” as Chrysostom seems to think. The “groundwork of the propitiation” is the blood of Christ. And so we read in **Hebrews**



**9 (KJV):22** And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

The Old Testament sacrifices were only types of what would be required to atone for man's sin. That is, they were symbolic of what the Messiah, the Christ, would do for us.

And so we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):1** Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. 2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. 3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; 4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; 5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. 6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:

And in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):12** Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Therefore we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):27** Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

Christ has "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself", as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):24** For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

And we see the efficacy of the offering, as we continue to read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):1** For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

So we are "sanctified", or set apart to God, "through the offering of the body of Jesus



Christ once for all”. And so we read that there is “no more offering for sin”, as we continue in **Hebrews 10 (KJV)**:11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

And we are now able to enter into the “holiest by the blood of Jesus”, as we continue to read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV)**:19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

But we must remember that having “received a knowledge of the truth” is not enough to be saved. We must commit to Jesus as our Lord, as we continue to read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV)**:26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

We must believe to the “saving of the soul”, as we conclude in **Hebrews 10 (KJV)**:32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. 34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. 35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. 37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

**HOMILY LXXXII, page 303**, he says, “Ver. 17. “Sanctify them through Thy truth.” “Make them holy by the gift of the Spirit, and of right doctrines.””

He refers to **John 17 (KJV):17** Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

And he says, “And yet He saith that the Spirit doth this. How then doth He now ask it from the Father?” That thou mayest again learn their equality of Honor. For right doctrines asserted concerning God sanctify the soul. And if He saith that they are sanctified by the word, marvel not. And to show that He speaketh of doctrines, He addeth,

“Thy word is truth.””

And he says, “As also Paul saith concerning the Church, that He hath sanctified it by the Word. For the Word of God is wont also to cleanse. (Eph. v. 26)”

And he refers in context to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):25** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

And he says, “Moreover, the, “sanctify them,” seems to me to signify something else, such as this, “Set them apart for the Word and for preaching.” And this is made plain from what follows. For, He saith,

Ver. 17. “As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.””

And Aaron’s sons were sanctified in this sense, that is, they were set apart for the ministry of the priesthood among the Levites.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LXXXIII, page 312**, he refers to Jacob’s ladder, which was a dream that Jacob had in Genesis. Chrysostom is formulating an analogy of our sanctification from this dream.

And so he says, “And so mounting as it were by steps, let us get to heaven by a Jacob’s ladder. For the ladder seems to me to signify in a riddle by that vision the gradual ascent by means of virtue, by which it is possible for us to ascend from earth to heaven, not using material steps, but improvement and correction of manners.”

But the dream was simply a confirmation to Jacob of God’s purpose in his life, and in the generations succeeding him, that is, Israel.

Chrysostom is inventing an allegory of this dream of Jacob which has no foundation in the Scriptures. We are not gradually being saved, as if we were gradually becoming worthy of the kingdom of heaven, step by step, by correction of our manners. We are saved by faith, and that not of ourselves. It is the gift of God. When we believe and we are born again, God justifies us, and puts His righteousness down to our account. We then have a standing of righteousness. Our state is a different story. Our soul contains all of the baggage of our past. This is gradually cleansed in a progressive sanctification as we grow in grace and knowledge. Our standing doesn’t change, but our state changes moment by moment as we walk in the light.

## **The Three Rests**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY VI, page 393**

Hebrews iii. 7–11

*“Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart, and they have not known My ways. So I swear in My wrath they shall not enter into My rest.”*

[1.] Paul, having treated of hope, and having said that “We are His house, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end” (c. iii. ver. 6); next shows that we ought to look forward with firmness, and he proves this from the Scriptures. But be attentive, because he has expressed this in a manner somewhat difficult and not readily to be comprehended. And therefore we must first make our own statements, and after we have briefly explained the whole argument, then make clear the words of the Epistle. For you will no longer need us, if you have understood the scope of the Apostle.

His discourse was concerning Hope, and that it behooves us to hope for the things to come, and that for those who have toiled here there will assuredly be some reward and fruit and refreshment. This then he shows from the prophet; and what says he? “Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, they do alway err in their heart, and they have not known My ways. So I swear in My wrath, they shall not enter into My rest.”

He says that there are “three” rests: one, that of the Sabbath, in which God rested from His works; the second, that of Palestine, into which when the Jews had entered they would be at rest from their hardships and labors; the third, that which is Rest indeed, the kingdom of Heaven; which those who obtain, do indeed rest from their labors and troubles. Of these three then he makes mention here.

And why did he mention the three, when he is treating of the one only? That he might show that the prophet is speaking concerning this one. For he did not speak (he says) concerning the first. For how could he, when that had taken place long before? Nor yet again concerning the second, that in Palestine. For how could he? For he says, “They shall not enter into My rest.” It remains therefore that it is this third.

[2.] But it is necessary also to unfold the history, to make the argument more clear. For when they had come forth out of Egypt, and had accomplished a long journey, and had received innumerable proofs of the power of God, both in Egypt, and in the Red Sea (cf. Acts vii. 36), and in the wilderness, they determined to send spies to search out the nature of the land; and these went and returned, admiring indeed the country, and saying that it abounded in noble fruits, nevertheless it was a country of strong and invincible men: and the ungrateful and senseless Jews, when they ought to have called to mind the former blessings of God, and how when they were hemmed in the midst of the armies of so many Egyptians, He rescued them from their perils, and made them masters of their enemies’ spoils; and again, in the wilderness He clave the rock, and bestowed on them abundance of waters, and gave them the manna, and the other wonderful things which He wrought; [when they ought, I say, to have remembered this,] and to have trusted in God, they considered none of these things, but being struck with

terror, just as if nothing had been done, they said, we wish to go back again into Egypt, “for God hath brought us out thither” (it is said) “to slay us, with our children and wives.” (Cf. Num. xiv. 3) God therefore being angry that they had so quickly cast off the memory of what had been done, swore that generation, which had said these things, should not enter into the Rest; and they all perished in the wilderness. When David then, he says, speaking at a later period, and after these events, after that generation of men, said, “Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts,” that ye may not suffer the same things which your forefathers did, and be deprived of the Rest; he evidently [said this] as of some [future] rest. For if they had received their Rest (he says) why does He again say to them, “Today if ye will hear His voice harden not your hearts,” as your fathers did? What other rest then is there, except the kingdom of Heaven, of which the Sabbath was an image and type?

[3.] Next having set down the whole testimony (and this is, “Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart, and they have not known My ways. So I swear in My wrath, they shall not enter into My rest”), he then adds:

Ver. 12. “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.” For from hardness unbelief ariseth: and as in bodies, the parts that have become callous and hard do not yield to the hands of the physicians, so also souls that are hardened yield not to the word of God. For it is probable besides that some even disbelieved as though the things which had been done were not true.

Therefore he says, “Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.” For since the argument from the future is not so persuasive as from the past, he reminds them of the history, in which they had wanted faith. For if your fathers (he says) because they did not hope as they ought to have hoped, suffered these things, much more will you. Since to them also is this word addressed: for, “Today” (he says) is “ever,” so long as the world lasts.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Hebrews iii. 7–11

*“Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart, and they have not known My ways. So I swear in My wrath they shall not enter into My rest.”*

He refers in context to **Hebrews 3 (KJV):6** But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. 7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. 10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. 11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

He continues, “[1.] Paul, having treated of hope, and having said that “We are His house, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end” (c. iii. ver. 6); next shows that we ought to look forward with firmness, and he proves this from the Scriptures.

But be attentive, because he has expressed this in a manner somewhat difficult and not readily to be comprehended. And therefore we must first make our own statements, and after we have briefly explained the whole argument, then make clear the words of the Epistle. For you will no longer need us, if you have understood the scope of the Apostle.

His discourse was concerning Hope, and that it behooves us to hope for the things to come, and that for those who have toiled here there will assuredly be some reward and fruit and refreshment. This then he shows from the prophet; and what says he? “Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, they do alway err in their heart, and they have not known My ways. So I sware in My wrath, they shall not enter into My rest.”

He refers to Hebrews 3:7-11, which is a quotation of **Psalm 95 (KJV):7** For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today if ye will hear his voice, **8** Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: **9** When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. **10** Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: **11** Unto whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

He continues, “He says that there are “three” rests: one, that of the Sabbath, in which God rested from His works; the second, that of Palestine, into which when the Jews had entered they would be at rest from their hardships and labors; the third, that which is Rest indeed, the kingdom of Heaven; which those who obtain, do indeed rest from their labors and troubles. Of these three then he makes mention here.”

The rest of the Sabbath is mentioned in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):4** For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

A “Sabbath rest” is also spoken of in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):8** For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. **9** There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. **10** For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

The name “Jesus” in verse 8 is Greek for Joshua. The word “rest” in verse 9 in the Greek is **σαββατισμός** (pronounced sãb-bã-te-smo's), from a derivative of G4521; a "sabbatism", i.e. (figuratively) the repose of Christianity (as a type of heaven):—rest. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4520**

This Greek word is used once in the New Testament here in Hebrews 4:9. It is translated “Sabbath rest” in **Hebrews 4 (NASB):9** So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

Chrysostom continues, “And why did he mention the three, when he is treating of the one only? That he might show that the prophet is speaking concerning this one. For he did not speak (he says) concerning the first. For how could he, when that had taken place long before? Nor yet again concerning the second, that in Palestine. For how could he? For he says, “They shall not enter into My rest.” It remains therefore that it is this third.”

So, he is saying that there are three rests, the rest of the Sabbath, the rest of Palestine, or the inheritance, and the rest of the kingdom of heaven.

He continues, “[2.] But it is necessary also to unfold the history, to make the argument

more clear. For when they had come forth out of Egypt, and had accomplished a long journey, and had received innumerable proofs of the power of God, both in Egypt, and in the Red Sea (cf. Acts vii. 36), and in the wilderness, they determined to send spies to search out the nature of the land;”

He refers to **Acts 7 (KJV):36** He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

He continues, “and these went and returned, admiring indeed the country, and saying that it abounded in noble fruits, nevertheless it was a country of strong and invincible men: and the ungrateful and senseless Jews, when they ought to have called to mind the former blessings of God, and how when they were hemmed in the midst of the armies of so many Egyptians, He rescued them from their perils, and made them masters of their enemies’ spoils; and again, in the wilderness He clave the rock, and bestowed on them abundance of waters, and gave them the manna, and the other wonderful things which He wrought; [when they ought, I say, to have remembered this,] and to have trusted in God, they considered none of these things, but being struck with terror, just as if nothing had been done, they said, we wish to go back again into Egypt, “for God hath brought us out thither” (it is said) “to slay us, with our children and wives.” (Cf. Num. xiv. 3)”

He refers in context to **Numbers 14 (KJV):3** And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt? 4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

He continues, “God therefore being angry that they had so quickly cast off the memory of what had been done, sware that generation, which had said these things, should not enter into the Rest; and they all perished in the wilderness.”

And God’s judgment was after Moses’ prayer, as we read in **Numbers 14 (KJV):19** Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. 20 And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word: 21 But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. 22 Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; 23 Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: 24 But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.

Chrysostom continues, “When David then, he says, speaking at a later period, and after these events, after that generation of men, said, “Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts,” that ye may not suffer the same things which your forefathers did, and be deprived of the Rest; he evidently [said this] as of some [future] rest. For if they had received their Rest (he says) why does He again say to them, “Today if ye will hear His voice harden not your hearts,” as your fathers did? What other rest then is there, except the kingdom of Heaven, of which the Sabbath was an image and type?”

And so we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):1** Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. 2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being

mixed with faith in them that heard it. 3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. 5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. 6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: 7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, Today, after so long a time; as it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

He continues, “[3.] Next having set down the whole testimony (and this is, “Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart, and they have not known My ways. So I sware in My wrath, they shall not enter into My rest”), he then adds:

Ver. 12. “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.””

He refers again in context to **Hebrews 3 (KJV):7** Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. 10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. 11 So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) 12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

He continues, “For from hardness unbelief ariseth: and as in bodies, the parts that have become callous and hard do not yield to the hands of the physicians, so also souls that are hardened yield not to the word of God. For it is probable besides that some even disbelieved as though the things which had been done were not true.

Therefore he says, “Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.” For since the argument from the future is not so persuasive as from the past, he reminds them of the history, in which they had wanted faith. For if your fathers (he says) because they did not hope as they ought to have hoped, suffered these things, much more will you. Since to them also is this word addressed: for, “Today” (he says) is “ever,” so long as the world lasts.”

And we are encouraged to test ourselves as we read again in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

We will only fail the test if we have not sincerely believed in Jesus Christ, and confessed Him as Lord from our heart, as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

However, there are actually four rests for a believer in the word of God. The first is the rest of salvation which Jesus taught in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

When we come to Christ and accept Him as Lord, we enter into the rest of salvation. The second rest is the rest of serving, as Jesus also taught in **Matthew 11 (KJV):29** Take my yoke

upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

His yoke is the yoke of serving in His body, the Church. God has set each one in the body for a specific purpose, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):27** Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

The third rest is the rest of the inheritance. This is the rest that Israel was to enter when they entered into the promised land. This is the rest spoken of in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):11** Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

It is the Sabbath rest for the believer as we read in **Hebrews 4 (NASB):8** For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. 9 So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

The Sabbath rest is a continual rest in the promised land, the rest of the inheritance. Then there is one final rest, which is the rest of glorification, for when we see Him, we will be like Him, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

This is the rest that Chrysostom speaks of when he speaks of the rest of the kingdom of heaven.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY VI, page 393**, referring to Hebrews 3:7-11, “He says that there are “three” rests: one, that of the Sabbath, in which God rested from His works; the second, that of Palestine, into which when the Jews had entered they would be at rest from their hardships and labors; the third, that which is Rest indeed, the kingdom of Heaven; which those who obtain, do indeed rest from their labors and troubles. Of these three then he makes mention here.”

Chrysostom then explains, “And why did he mention the three, when he is treating of the one only? That he might show that the prophet is speaking concerning this one. For he did not speak (he says) concerning the first. For how could he, when that had taken place long before? Nor yet again concerning the second, that in Palestine. For how could he? For he says, “They shall not enter into My rest.” It remains therefore that it is this third.”

So, he is saying that there are three rests, the rest of the Sabbath, the rest of Palestine, or the inheritance, and the rest of the kingdom of heaven.

But in the Scriptures, there are actually four rests for the believer. The first is the rest of salvation, as we read in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.



The second is the rest of serving, as Jesus also taught in **Matthew 11 (KJV):29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

The third rest is the rest of the inheritance. This is the rest that Israel was to enter when they entered into the promised land. This is the Sabbath rest spoken of in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):** 8 For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. 9 So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. 11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Then there is one final rest, which is the rest of glorification, as we read in **Philippians 3 (KJV):20** For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

And in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

## Helping Our Salvation

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXXVIII, page 472-473

What then saith the Master? “Well done, thou good” (for this is goodness to look to one’s neighbor) “and faithful servant; thou wast faithful over few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,” (Matthew 25:23) meaning by this expression all blessedness.

But not so that other one, but how? “I knew that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou sowedst not, and gathering where thou strawedst not: and I was afraid, and hid thy talent: lo, there thou hast that is thine.” (Matthew 25:24, 25) What then the Master? “Thou oughtest to have put my money to the exchangers,” (Matthew 25:27 [R.V., “bankers.”]) that is, “that oughtest to have spoken, to have admonished, to have advised.” But are they disobedient? Yet this is nought to thee.

What could be more gentle than this? For men indeed do not so, but him that hath put out the money at usury, even him do they make also responsible to require it again. But He not so; but, Thou oughtest, He saith, to have put it out, and to have committed the requiring of it again to me. And I should have required it with increase; by increase upon the hearing, meaning the showing forth of the works. Thou oughtest to have done that which is easier, and to have left to me what is more difficult. Forasmuch then as he did not this, “Take,” saith He, “the talent from him, and give it to him that hath ten talents. ([R.V., “the ten talents.”]) For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.” (Matthew 25:28-29) What then is this? He that hath a gift of word and teaching to profit thereby, and useth it not, will lose the gift also; but he that giveth

diligence, will gain to himself the gift in more abundance; even as the other loseth what he had received. But not to this is the penalty limited for him that is slothful, but even intolerable is the punishment, and with the punishment the sentence, which is full of a heavy accusation. For “cast ye,” saith He, “the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 25:30 [R.V., “cast ye out,” etc.]) Seest thou how not only the spoiler, and the covetous, nor only the doer of evil things, but also he that doeth not good things, is punished with extreme punishment.

Let us hearken then to these words. As we have opportunity, let us help on our salvation, let us get oil for our lamps, let us labor to add to our talent. For if we be backward, and spend our time in sloth here, no one will pity us any more hereafter, though we should wail ten thousand times. He also that had on the filthy garments condemned himself, and profited nothing. He also that had the one talent restored that which was committed to his charge, and yet was condemned. The virgins again entreated, and came unto Him and knocked, and all in vain, and without effect.

Knowing then these things, let us contribute alike wealth, and diligence, and protection, (προστασαν) and all things for our neighbor’s advantage. For the talents here are each person’s ability, whether in the way of protection, or in money, or in teaching, or in what thing soever of the kind. Let no man say, I have but one talent, and can do nothing; for thou canst even by one approve thyself. For thou art not poorer than that widow; thou art not more uninstructed than Peter and John, who were both “unlearned and ignorant men;” (Acts 4:13) but nevertheless, since they showed forth a zeal, and did all things for the common good, they attained to Heaven. For nothing is so pleasing to God, as to live for the common advantage.

For this end God gave us speech, and hands, and feet, and strength of body, and mind, and understanding, that we might use all these things, both for our own salvation, and for our neighbor’s advantage. For not for hymns only and thanksgivings is our speech serviceable to us, but it is profitable also for instruction and admonition. And if indeed we used it to this end, we should be imitating our Master; but if for the opposite ends, the devil. Since Peter also, when he confessed the Christ, was blessed, as having spoken the words of the Father; but when he refused the cross, and dissuaded it, he was severely reprov’d, as savoring the things of the devil. But if where the saying was of ignorance, so heavy is the blame, when we of our own will commit many sins, what favor shall we have?

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “What then saith the Master? “Well done, thou good” (for this is goodness to look to one’s neighbor) “and faithful servant; thou wast faithful over few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,” (Matthew 25:23) meaning by this expression all blessedness.

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):23** His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

He continues, “But not so that other one, but how? “I knew that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou sowedst not, and gathering where thou strawedst not: and I was afraid, and hid thy talent: lo, there thou hast that is thine.” (Matthew 25:24-25) What then the Master? “Thou oughtest to have put my money to the exchangers,” (Matthew 25:27 [R.V., “bankers.”]) that is, “that oughtest to have spoken, to have admonished, to have advised.” But are they

disobedient? Yet this is nought to thee.”

He refers in context to **Matthew 25 (KJV):24** Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. 26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: 27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

He continues, “What could be more gentle than this? For men indeed do not so, but him that hath put out the money at usury, even him do they make also responsible to require it again. But He not so; but, Thou oughtest, He saith, to have put it out, and to have committed the requiring of it again to me. And I should have required it with increase; by increase upon the hearing, meaning the showing forth of the works. Thou oughtest to have done that which is easier, and to have left to me what is more difficult. Forasmuch then as he did not this, “Take,” saith He, “the talent from him, and give it to him that hath ten talents. ([R.V., “the ten talents.”]) For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.” (Matthew 25:28-29)”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):28** Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. 29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

He continues, “What then is this? He that hath a gift of word and teaching to profit thereby, and useth it not, will lose the gift also; but he that giveth diligence, will gain to himself the gift in more abundance; even as the other loseth what he had received. But not to this is the penalty limited for him that is slothful, but even intolerable is the punishment, and with the punishment the sentence, which is full of a heavy accusation. For “cast ye,” saith He, “the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 25:30 [R.V., “cast ye out,” etc.]”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):30** And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

He continues, “Seest thou how not only the spoiler, and the covetous, nor only the doer of evil things, but also he that doeth not good things, is punished with extreme punishment.

Let us hearken then to these words. As we have opportunity, let us help on our salvation, let us get oil for our lamps, let us labor to add to our talent. For if we be backward, and spend our time in sloth here, no one will pity us any more hereafter, though we should wail ten thousand times.”

The oil for the lamps refers to the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13.

He continues, “He also that had on the filthy garments condemned himself, and profited nothing.”

He refers to the parable of the the wedding for a son in Matthew 22:1-14.

He continues, “He also that had the one talent restored that which was committed to his charge, and yet was condemned.”

He refers to the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30.

He continues, “The virgins again entreated, and came unto Him and knocked, and all in vain, and without effect.”

He refers again to the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13.

He continues, “Knowing then these things, let us contribute alike wealth, and diligence, and protection, (προστασαν) and all things for our neighbor’s advantage. For the talents here are each person’s ability, whether in the way of protection, or in money, or in teaching, or in what thing soever of the kind. Let no man say, I have but one talent, and can do nothing; for thou canst even by one approve thyself. For thou art not poorer than that widow; thou art not more uninstructed than Peter and John, who were both “unlearned and ignorant men;” (Acts 4:13) but nevertheless, since they showed forth a zeal, and did all things for the common good, they attained to Heaven. For nothing is so pleasing to God, as to live for the common advantage.”

He refers to **Acts 4 (KJV):13** Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

He continues, “For this end God gave us speech, and hands, and feet, and strength of body, and mind, and understanding, that we might use all these things, both for our own salvation, and for our neighbor’s advantage.”

Helping “our own salvation” by using “all these things” which he has listed was the understanding of the Church in Chrysostom’s time. It was as if no one could be sure of their own salvation because they never knew if they had given enough.

He continues, “For not for hymns only and thanksgivings is our speech serviceable to us, but it is profitable also for instruction and admonition. And if indeed we used it to this end, we should be imitating our Master; but if for the opposite ends, the devil. Since Peter also, when he confessed the Christ, was blessed, as having spoken the words of the Father; but when he refused the cross, and dissuaded it, he was severely reprov’d, as savoring the things of the devil. But if where the saying was of ignorance, so heavy is the blame, when we of our own will commit many sins, what favor shall we have?”

Paul tells us to examine ourselves, as we read in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

And by our fruits we shall be known, as we read in **Matthew 7 (KJV):13** Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. 15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

We will gain much assurance of our salvation if we have fruit after we have believed in Jesus Christ. But we are not saved by our works, as we read in **Titus 3 (KJV):4** But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

## Commentary Summary:

Concerning **Helping Our Salvation**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXXVIII, page 472-473**, he says, ““Seest thou how not only the spoiler, and the covetous, nor only the doer of evil things, but also he that doeth not good things, is punished with extreme punishment.

Let us hearken then to these words. As we have opportunity, let us help on our salvation, let us get oil for our lamps, let us labor to add to our talent. For if we be backward, and spend our time in sloth here, no one will pity us any more hereafter, though we should wail ten thousand times.”

And he says, “For this end God gave us speech, and hands, and feet, and strength of body, and mind, and understanding, that we might use all these things, both for our own salvation, and for our neighbor’s advantage.”

Helping “our own salvation” by using “all these things” which he has listed was the understanding of the Church in Chrysostom’s time. It was as if no one could be sure of their own salvation because they never knew if they had given enough.

Jesus wanted us to remember what He had done for us, as we read in **Luke 22 (KJV):14** And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. 15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: 16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. 17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: 18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. 19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

It is His body and blood that was shed for us. It was not by the blood of goats and calves that He redeemed us, as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):12** Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

And in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):7** In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

And in **Colossians 1 (KJV):14** In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

And in **Colossians 1 (KJV):20** And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

And in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):12** Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

And in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

And in **Revelation 1 (KJV):4** John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the

seven Spirits which are before his throne; 5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The only thing that cleanses us from sin is the blood of Jesus. He alone is our propitiation and our advocate, as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

There is no other way to atone for sin. He alone is our mediator, as we read in **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

We are saved by grace, as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We are saved by our faith, as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

When we were born again, we were washed, sanctified, and justified, as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was the one sacrifice that could take away sin. And this was done once for all, as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):10** By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

When we sin after we have been born again, we don't have to atone for our sin. We only need to confess our sins, and He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and cleanse us of all unrighteousness.

We cannot help our salvation. But let us make sure we have believed from the heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and we have confessed Him as Lord. If so, we shall be saved.

## The Doctrine of Baptisms

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY VII, page 408-410

Hebrews vi. 1–3

*“Therefore leaving the principles of the Doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God; of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands; and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do, if God permit.”*

[1.] You have heard how much Paul found fault with the Hebrews for wishing to be always learning about the same things. And with good reason: “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the elements of the first principles of the oracles of God.” (c. v. 12)

I am afraid that this might fitly be said to you also, that “when for the time ye ought to be teachers,” ye do not maintain the rank of learners, but ever hearing the same things, and on the same subjects, you are in the same condition as if you heard no one. And if any man should question you, no one will be able to answer, except a very few who may soon be counted.

But this is no trifling loss. For oftentimes when the teacher wishes to go on further, and to touch on higher and more mysterious themes, the want of attention in those who are to be taught prevents.

For just as in the case of a grammar-master, if a boy though hearing continually the first elements does not master them, it will be necessary for him to be continually dinning the same things into the boy, and he will not leave off teaching, until the boy has been able to learn them accurately; for it is great folly to lead him on to other things, without having put the first well into him; so too in the Church, if while we constantly say the same things you learn nothing more, we shall never cease saying the same things.

For if our preaching were a matter of display and ambition, it would have been right to jump from one subject to another and change about continually, taking no thought for you, but only for your applauses. But since we have not devoted our zeal to this, but our labors are all for your profit, we shall not cease discoursing to you on the same subjects, till you succeed in learning them. For I might have said much about Gentile superstition, and about the Manichæans, and about the Marcionists, and by the grace of God have given them heavy blows, but this sort of discourse is out of season. For to those who do not yet know accurately their own affairs, to those who have not yet learned that to be covetous is evil, who would utter such discourses as those, and lead them on to other subjects before the time?

We then shall not cease to say the same things, whether ye be persuaded or not. We fear however, that by continually saying the same things, if ye hearken not, we may make the condemnation heavier for the disobedient.

I must not however say this in regard to you all; for I know many who are benefited by their coming here, who might with justice cry out against those others, as insidiously injuring them by their ignorance and inattention. But not even so will they be injured. For hearing the same things continually is useful even to those who know them, since by often hearing what we

know we are more deeply affected. We know, for instance, that Humility is an excellent thing, and that Christ often discoursed about it; but when we listen to the words themselves and the reflections made upon them, we are yet more affected, even if we hear them ten thousand times.

[2.] It is then a fitting time for us also to say now to you, “Wherefore leaving the beginning of the doctrine of Christ, let us go unto perfection.”

What is “the beginning of the doctrine”? He goes on to state it himself, saying, “not laying again” (these are his words) “the foundation of repentance from dead works, and faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands, of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”

But if this be “the Beginning,” what else is our doctrine save to repent “from dead works,” and through the Spirit to receive “the faith,” in “the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment”? But what is “the Beginning”? “The Beginning,” he says, is nothing else than this, when there is not a strict life. For as it is necessary to instruct one who is entering on the study of grammar, in the Elements (**Schaff Note:** or “the letters.”) first, so also must the Christian know these things accurately, and have no doubt concerning them. And should he again have need of teaching, he has not yet the foundation. For one who is firmly grounded ought to be fixed and to stand steady, and not be moved about. But if one who has been catechised and baptized is going ten years afterwards to hear again about the Faith, and that we ought to “believe” in “the resurrection of the dead,” he does not yet have the foundation, he is again seeking after the beginning of the Christian religion. For that the Faith is the foundation, and the rest the building, hear him [the Apostle] saying; “I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereupon.” (1 Cor. iii. 10) “If any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble.” (1 Cor. iii. 12)

“Not laying again” (he says) “the foundation of repentance from dead works.”

[3.] But what is, “let us go on unto perfection”? Let us henceforth proceed (he means) even to the very roof, that is, let us have the best life. For as in the case of the letters the Alpha involves the whole, and as the foundation, the whole building, so also does full assurance concerning the Faith involve purity of life. And without this it is not possible to be a Christian, as without foundations there can be no building; nor skill in literature without the letters. Still if one should be always going round about the letters, or if about the foundation, not about the building, he will never gain anything.

Do not however think that the Faith is depreciated by being called elementary: for it is indeed the whole power: for when he says, “For every one that useth milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe” (c. v. 13), it is not this which he calls “milk.” But to be still doubting about these things is [a sign] of a mind feeble, and needing many discourses. For these are the wholesome doctrines. For we call him “a perfect man” [i.e. “of full age”] who with the faith has a right life; but if any one have faith, yet does evil, and is in doubt concerning [the faith] itself, and brings disgrace on the doctrine, him we shall with reason call “a babe,” in that he has gone back again to the beginning. So that even if we have been ten thousand years in the faith, yet are not firm in it, we are babes; when we show a life not in conformity with it; when we are still laying a foundation.

[4.] But besides [their way of] life he brings another charge also against these [Hebrews], as being shaken to and fro, and needing “to lay a foundation of repentance from dead works.” For he who changes from one to another, giving up this, and choosing that, ought first to



condemn this, and to be separated from the system, and then to pass to the other. But if he intends again to lay hold on the first, how shall he touch the second?

What then of the Law (he says)? We have condemned it, and again we run back to it. This is not a shifting about, for here also [under the Gospel] we have a law. “Do we then” (he says) “make void the law through faith? God forbid, yea we establish the Law.” (Rom. iii. 31) I was speaking concerning evil deeds. For he that intends to pursue virtue ought to condemn wickedness first, and then go in pursuit of it. For repentance cannot prove them clean. For this cause they were straightway baptized, that what they were unable to accomplish by themselves, this might be effected by the grace of Christ. Neither then does repentance suffice for purification, but men must first receive baptism. At all events, it was necessary to come to baptism, having condemned the sins thereby and given sentence against them.

But what is “the doctrine of baptisms”? Not as if there were many baptisms, but one only. (**Schaff Note:** That is, the Apostle repudiates the teaching of more than one baptism.) Why then did he express it in the plural? Because he had said, “not laying again a foundation of repentance.” For if he again baptized them and catechised them afresh, and having been baptized at the beginning they were again taught what things ought to be done and what ought not, they would remain perpetually incorrigible.

“And of laying on of hands.” For thus did they receive the Spirit, “when Paul had laid his hands on them” (Acts xix. 6), it is said.

“And of the resurrection of the dead.” For this is both effected in baptism, and is affirmed in the confession.

“And of eternal judgment.” But why does he say this? Because it was likely that, having already believed, they would either be shaken [from their faith], or would lead evil and slothful lives, he says, “be wakeful.”

It is not open to them to say, If we live slothfully we will be baptized again, we will be catechised again, we will again receive the Spirit; even if now we fall from the faith, we shall be able again by being baptized, to wash away our sins, and to attain to the same state as before. Ye are deceived (he says) in supposing these things.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Hebrews vi. 1–3

*“Therefore leaving the principles of the Doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God; of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands; and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do, if God permit.”*

He refers to **Hebrews 6 (KJV):**1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this will we do, if God permit.

He continues, “[1.] You have heard how much Paul found fault with the Hebrews for wishing to be always learning about the same things. And with good reason: “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the elements of the first principles of the oracles of God.” (c. v. 12)”

He refers in context to **Hebrews 5 (KJV):**11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 12 For when for the time ye ought to be

teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

He continues, “I am afraid that this might fitly be said to you also, that “when for the time ye ought to be teachers,” ye do not maintain the rank of learners, but ever hearing the same things, and on the same subjects, you are in the same condition as if you heard no one. And if any man should question you, no one will be able to answer, except a very few who may soon be counted.

But this is no trifling loss. For oftentimes when the teacher wishes to go on further, and to touch on higher and more mysterious themes, the want of attention in those who are to be taught prevents.

For just as in the case of a grammar-master, if a boy though hearing continually the first elements does not master them, it will be necessary for him to be continually dinning the same things into the boy, and he will not leave off teaching, until the boy has been able to learn them accurately; for it is great folly to lead him on to other things, without having put the first well into him; so too in the Church, if while we constantly say the same things you learn nothing more, we shall never cease saying the same things.

For if our preaching were a matter of display and ambition, it would have been right to jump from one subject to another and change about continually, taking no thought for you, but only for your applauses. But since we have not devoted our zeal to this, but our labors are all for your profit, we shall not cease discoursing to you on the same subjects, till you succeed in learning them. For I might have said much about Gentile superstition, and about the Manichæans, and about the Marcionists, and by the grace of God have given them heavy blows, but this sort of discourse is out of season. For to those who do not yet know accurately their own affairs, to those who have not yet learned that to be covetous is evil, who would utter such discourses as those, and lead them on to other subjects before the time?

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Teaching is repetitive for the purpose of the edification of the hearers.

Chrysostom continues, “[2.] It is then a fitting time for us also to say now to you, “Wherefore leaving the beginning of the doctrine of Christ, let us go unto perfection.”

He refers in context to **Hebrews 6 (KJV):1** Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

The word “principles” in verse 1 in the Greek is ἀρχῆς (pronounced ār-kha's), from

G756; (properly abstract) a commencement, or (concretely) chief (in various applications of order, time, place, or rank):—beginning, corner, (at the, the) first (estate), magistrate, power, principality, principle, rule. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G746**

Chrysostom continues, “What is “the beginning of the doctrine”? He goes on to state it himself, saying, “not laying again” (these are his words) “the foundation of repentance from dead works, and faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands, of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.””

The word “foundation” in Hebrews 6:1 in the Greek is **θεμέλιος** (pronounced theh-meh'-le-os), from a derivative of G5087; something put down, i.e. a substruction (of a building, etc.), (literally or figuratively):—foundation. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2310**

Chrysostom continues, “But if this be “the Beginning,” what else is our doctrine save to repent “from dead works,” and through the Spirit to receive “the faith,” in “the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment”? But what is “the Beginning”? “The Beginning,” he says, is nothing else than this, when there is not a strict life. For as it is necessary to instruct one who is entering on the study of grammar, in the Elements (**Schaff Note:** or “the letters.”) first, so also must the Christian know these things accurately, and have no doubt concerning them. And should he again have need of teaching, he has not yet the foundation. For one who is firmly grounded ought to be fixed and to stand steady, and not be moved about. But if one who has been catechised and baptized is going ten years afterwards to hear again about the Faith, and that we ought to “believe” in “the resurrection of the dead,” he does not yet have the foundation, he is again seeking after the beginning of the Christian religion. For that the Faith is the foundation, and the rest the building, hear him [the Apostle] saying; “I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereupon.” (1 Cor. iii. 10) “If any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble.” (1 Cor. iii. 12)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):10** According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

He continues, ““Not laying again” (he says) “the foundation of repentance from dead works.”

[3.] But what is, “let us go on unto perfection”? Let us henceforth proceed (he means) even to the very roof, that is, let us have the best life. For as in the case of the letters the Alpha involves the whole, and as the foundation, the whole building, so also does full assurance concerning the Faith involve purity of life. And without this it is not possible to be a Christian, as without foundations there can be no building; nor skill in literature without the letters. Still if one should be always going round about the letters, or if about the foundation, not about the building, he will never gain anything.”

So Chrysostom is saying that the “full assurance concerning the Faith” involves “purity of life”, and that without “purity of life”, that “it is not possible to be a Christian, as without foundations there can be no building”. But we begin as newborns when we are born again of the Spirit of God. There may be much in our lives that is not pure when we accept Christ. This does not mean that we are not saved, or that we are not a Christian. We must grow in grace and

knowledge, as Peter says in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Chrysostom continues, “Do not however think that the Faith is depreciated by being called elementary: for it is indeed the whole power: for when he says, “For every one that useth milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe” (c. v. 13), it is not this which he calls “milk.””

He refers to **Hebrews 5 (KJV):13** For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

He continues, “But to be still doubting about these things is [a sign] of a mind feeble, and needing many discourses. For these are the wholesome doctrines. For we call him “a perfect man” [i.e. “of full age”] who with the faith has a right life; but if any one have faith, yet does evil, and is in doubt concerning [the faith] itself, and brings disgrace on the doctrine, him we shall with reason call “a babe,” in that he has gone back again to the beginning. So that even if we have been ten thousand years in the faith, yet are not firm in it, we are babes; when we show a life not in conformity with it; when we are still laying a foundation.”

Even so, babes in Christ are those who have been born again. This is how we begin as Christians. We are born again, and it is God’s will that we grow up into Him in all things, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):14** That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; **15** But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Chrysostom continues, “[4.] But besides [their way of] life he brings another charge also against these [Hebrews], as being shaken to and fro, and needing “to lay a foundation of repentance from dead works.” For he who changes from one to another, giving up this, and choosing that, ought first to condemn this, and to be separated from the system, and then to pass to the other. But if he intends again to lay hold on the first, how shall he touch the second?

What then of the Law (he says)? We have condemned it, and again we run back to it. This is not a shifting about, for here also [under the Gospel] we have a law. “Do we then” (he says) “make void the law through faith? God forbid, yea we establish the Law.” (Rom. iii. 31)”

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):31** Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

He continues, “I was speaking concerning evil deeds. For he that intends to pursue virtue ought to condemn wickedness first, and then go in pursuit of it. For repentance cannot prove them clean. For this cause they were straightway baptized, that what they were unable to accomplish by themselves, this might be effected by the grace of Christ. Neither then does repentance suffice for purification, but men must first receive baptism. At all events, it was necessary to come to baptism, having condemned the sins thereby and given sentence against them.”

Jesus taught about repentance in **Luke 13 (KJV):1** There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. **2** And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? **3** I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. **4** Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew

them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Repentance is the pathway to salvation. In the thinking of Chrysostom and the Church in his time, regeneration was by baptism. But the Scripture is clear. When one has believed in Jesus Christ, they pass from death to life, as we read in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

He continues, “But what is “the doctrine of baptisms”? Not as if there were many baptisms, but one only. (**Schaff Note:** That is, the Apostle repudiates the teaching of more than one baptism.) Why then did he express it in the plural? Because he had said, “not laying again a foundation of repentance.” For if he again baptized them and catechised them afresh, and having been baptized at the beginning they were again taught what things ought to be done and what ought not, they would remain perpetually incorrigible.”

He is referring in context to **Hebrews 6 (KJV):1** Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

And in context to **Ephesians 4 (KJV):4** There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

The word “baptisms” in Hebrews 6:2 is a translation of the Greek word, “**βαπτισμός** (pronounced bap-tis-mos’); from G907; ablution (ceremonial or Christian):—baptism, washing.

The actual word in the Greek is **βαπτισμῶν** (pronounced bap-tis-moan), and is in the Genitive Plural Masculine case. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G909**

So the “doctrine of baptisms” includes more than one baptism.

We must understand that the correct Biblical sense of the word “doctrine”, or teaching, is the formulation of a Biblical truth from the Scriptures alone, apart from tradition. With this understanding, there are actually seven different baptisms mentioned in the word of God, of which six relate to the believer. The first is the baptism of John the Baptist, as we read in **Matthew 3 (KJV):11** I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance, as we read in **Acts 19 (KJV):1** And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

So the first baptism relating to the believer is water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus. This was commanded by Jesus in **Matthew 28 (KJV):18** And Jesus came and spake unto

them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

The second baptism is the baptism with the Holy Spirit, which was first mentioned by John the Baptist, as we read in **Matthew 3 (KJV):**11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

Then Jesus taught, as in **Acts 1 (KJV):**5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. 6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

This was an enduing with power, as we read also in **Luke 24 (KJV):**49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

It is not that we do not have the Holy Spirit when we believe. The Holy Spirit gives life to our spirit when we believe in Jesus Christ. This is why Paul calls Him the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus in **Romans 8 (KJV):**2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

But the baptism with the Holy Spirit is a filling of the Holy Spirit as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):**1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

This baptism relates to receiving the “gift of the Holy Ghost”, and is “for all that are afar off, as many as the Lord will call”, as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):**38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

The third baptism mentioned in Scripture is the baptism of suffering, which Jesus spoke of in **Matthew 20 (KJV):**20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedees children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. 21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. 22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. 23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.

The fourth baptism in Scripture, relating to the believer, is the baptism by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ of the believer, as in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

This is a sovereign baptism by the Spirit of God when we believe. God sets us, or places us, as hands and feet, eyes and ears, in His body where it pleases Him, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):17** If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? **18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

The fifth and sixth baptisms in Scripture for the believer are mentioned in **Romans 6 (KJV):3** Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? **4** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

We are baptized into Jesus Christ, that is, into the sphere of Christ. We are in Christ, and heir to all that He is heir to. There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

And we are baptized into his death. We are dead to sin, as we read in **Romans 6 (KJV):2** God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

We have been raised to life by being born again in our spirits by the Spirit of God, and we are new creations, as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Three of these baptisms are sovereignly done by the Lord. The baptism into the body of Christ, the baptism into His death, and the baptism into Christ are all done by the Lord when we believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord. The baptism in water, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and the baptism of suffering are done when we take steps of faith to obey the Lord's call. Let us walk by faith, as we have received Him, and enter into all that the Lord has for us.

Chrysostom continues, ““And of laying on of hands.” For thus did they receive the Spirit, “when Paul had laid his hands on them” (Acts xix. 6), it is said.

He refers to **Acts 19 (KJV):6** And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

Hands are also laid on those we pray for, as Jesus did in **Matthew 19 (KJV):13** Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. **14** But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. **15** And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

And hands are laid on those who need healing, as Jesus did in **Luke 4 (KJV):40** Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

And in **Luke 13 (KJV):13** And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

And in **Acts 28 (KJV):28** And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of

a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

Chrysostom continues, ““And of the resurrection of the dead.” For this is both effected in baptism, and is affirmed in the confession.”

Chrysostom believed that regeneration, or being born again, occurred at baptism, but Jesus is clear that regeneration happens when we believe, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

And in **John 3 (KJV):36** He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

And in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Being born again is only dependent on our faith, and not the faith of anyone else. And this is a spiritual resurrection, the resurrection of our spirit, spoken of in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Then there will also be a resurrection of our body, as we read in **Luke 14 (KJV):14** And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

And in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):48** As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Chrysostom continues, ““And of eternal judgment.” But why does he say this? Because it was likely that, having already believed, they would either be shaken [from their faith], or would lead evil and slothful lives, he says, “be wakeful.”

It is not open to them to say, If we live slothfully we will be baptized again, we will be catechised again, we will again receive the Spirit; even if now we fall from the faith, we shall be able again by being baptized, to wash away our sins, and to attain to the same state as before. Ye are deceived (he says) in supposing these things.”

He is correct in that he says we do not need to be baptized again. Once we have believed in Jesus Christ, and have passed from death to life, we cannot die spiritually again. But God disciplines us as sons and daughters, as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):3** For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your



minds. 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. 14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

The Lord became the Father of our spirit, as in verse 9 above, when we were born again. The discipline of the Lord may take several forms as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):**28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

When we believe, we are not condemned, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):**18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

As believers who have been born again, and justified by God, we have peace with God, as we read in **Romans 5 (NKJV):**1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The word “peace” in the Greek is εἰρήνη (pronounced a-ra'-na), probably from a primary verb εἶρω eirō (to join); peace (literally or figuratively); by implication, prosperity:—one, peace, quietness, rest, +set at one again. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1515**

We have been set at one again with the Lord. Although we are not perfect yet, God treats us as sons and daughters.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY VII, page 408-410**, he says, “I was speaking concerning evil deeds. For he that intends to pursue virtue ought to condemn wickedness first, and then go in pursuit of it. For repentance cannot prove them clean. For this cause they were straightway baptized, that what they were unable to accomplish by themselves, this might be effected by the grace of Christ.

Neither then does repentance suffice for purification, but men must first receive baptism. At all events, it was necessary to come to baptism, having condemned the sins thereby and given sentence against them.”

He is commenting on **Hebrews 6 (KJV):1** Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this will we do, if God permit.

The word “baptisms” in Hebrews 6:2 in the Greek is in the plural case.

And he says, “But what is “the doctrine of baptisms”? Not as if there were many baptisms, but one only.”

He refers in context to **Ephesians 4 (KJV):4** There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

But there are seven baptisms mentioned in the word of God. The baptism of John the Baptist was a baptism of repentance telling them to believe on the one who would come after him. The baptism into the body of Christ, the baptism into His death, and the baptism into Christ are all done sovereignly by the Lord when we believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord, and we are born again. Again, these baptisms are sovereignly done by the Lord when we are born again. The baptism in water, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and the baptism of suffering are done when we take steps of faith to obey the Lord’s call. Let us walk by faith, as we have received Him, and enter into all the baptisms that the Lord has for us.

## The Doctrine of Repentance

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY IX, page 410-413**

[5.] Ver. 4, 5. “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting Him to an open shame.”

And see how putting them to shame, and forbiddingly he begins. “Impossible.” No longer (he says) expect that which is not possible; (For he said not, It is not seemly, or, It is not expedient, or, It is not lawful, but “impossible,” so as to cast [them] into despair), if ye have once been altogether enlightened.

Then he adds, “and have tasted of the heavenly gift. If ye have tasted” (he says) “of the heavenly gift,” that is, of forgiveness. “And been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good word of God” (he is speaking here of the doctrine) “and the powers of the world to come” (what powers is he speaking of? either the working of miracles, or “the earnest of the Spirit”— 2 Cor. i. 22) “and have fallen away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame.” “Renew them,” he says, “unto repentance,” that is, by repentance, for unto repentance is by repentance. What then, is repentance excluded? Not repentance, far from it! But the renewing again by the laver. For he did not say, “impossible” to be renewed “unto repentance,” and stop, but added how “impossible, [by] crucifying afresh.”

To “be renewed,” that is, to be made new, for to make men new is [the work] of the laver only: for (it is said) “thy youth shall be renewed as the eagle’s.” (Ps. ciii. 5) But it is [the work of] repentance, when those who have been made new, have afterwards become old through sins, to set them free from this old age, and to make them strong. To bring them to that former brightness however, is not possible; for there the whole was Grace.

[6.] “Crucifying to themselves,” he says, “the Son of God afresh, and putting Him to an open shame.” What he means is this. Baptism is a Cross, and “our old man was crucified with [Him]” (Rom. vi. 6), for we were “made conformable to the likeness of His death” (Rom. vi. 5; Philip. iii. 10), and again, “we were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death.” (Rom. vi. 4) Wherefore, as it is not possible that Christ should be crucified a second time, for that is to “put Him to an open shame.” For “if death shall no more have dominion over Him” (Rom. vi. 9), if He rose again, by His resurrection becoming superior to death; if by death He wrestled with and overcame death, and then is crucified again, all those things become a fable and a mockery. He then that baptizeth a second time, crucifies Him again.

But what is “crucifying afresh”? [It is] crucifying over again. For as Christ died on the cross, so do we in baptism, not as to the flesh, but as to sin. Behold two deaths. He died as to the flesh; in our case the old man was buried, and the new man arose, made conformable to the likeness of His death. If therefore it is necessary to be baptized [again], it is necessary that this

same [Christ] should die again. For baptism is nothing else than the putting to death of the baptized, and his rising again.

And he well said, “crucifying afresh unto themselves.” For he that does this, as having forgotten the former grace, and ordering his own life carelessly, acts in all respects as if there were another baptism. It behooves us therefore to take heed and to make ourselves safe.

[7.] What is, “having tasted of the heavenly gift”? it is, “of the remission of sins”: for this is of God alone to bestow, and the grace is a grace once for all. “What then? shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Far from it!” (Rom. vi. 1, 2) But if we should be always going to be saved by grace we shall never be good. For where there is but one grace, and we are yet so indolent, should we then cease sinning if we knew that it is possible again to have our sins washed away? For my part I think not.

He here shows that the gifts are many: and to explain it, Ye were counted worthy (he says) of so great forgiveness; for he that was sitting in darkness, he that was at enmity, he that was at open war, that was alienated, that was hated of God, that was lost, he having been suddenly enlightened, counted worthy of the Spirit, of the heavenly gift, of adoption as a son, of the kingdom of heaven, of those other good things, the unspeakable mysteries; and who does not even thus become better, but while indeed worthy of perdition, obtained salvation and honor, as if he had successfully accomplished great things; how could he be again baptized?

On two grounds then he said that the thing was impossible, and he put the stronger last: first, because he who has been deemed worthy of such [blessings], and who has betrayed all that was granted to him, is not worthy to be again renewed; neither is it possible that [Christ] should again be crucified afresh: for this is to “put Him to an open shame.”

There is not then any second laver: there is not [indeed]. And if there is, there is also a third, and a fourth; for the former one is continually disannulled by the later, and this continually by another, and so on without end.

“And tasted,” he says, “the good word of God”; and he does not unfold it; “and the powers of the world to come,” for to live as Angels and to have no need of earthly things, to know that this is the means of our introduction to the enjoyment of the worlds to come; this may we learn through the Spirit, and enter into those sacred recesses.

What are “the powers of the world to come”? Life eternal, angelic conversation. Of these we have already received the earnest through our Faith from the Spirit. Tell me then, if after having been introduced into a palace, and entrusted with all things therein, thou hadst then betrayed all, wouldest thou have been entrusted with them again?

[8.] What then (you say)? Is there no repentance? There is repentance, but there is no second baptism: but repentance there is, and it has great force, and is able to set free from the burden of his sins, if he will, even him that hath been baptized much in sins, and to establish in safety him who is in danger, even though he should have come unto the very depth of wickedness. And this is evident from many places. “For,” says one, “doth not he that falleth rise again? or he that turneth away, doth not he turn back to [God]?” (Jer. viii. 4) It is possible, if we will, that Christ should be formed in us again: for hear Paul saying, “My little children of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you.” (Gal. iv. 19) Only let us lay hold on repentance.

For behold the love of God to man! We ought on every ground to have been punished at the first; in that having received the natural law, and enjoyed innumerable blessings, we have

not acknowledged our Master, and have lived an unclean life. Yet He not only has not punished us, but has even made us partakers of countless blessings, just as if we had accomplished great things. Again we fell away, and not even so does He punish us, but has given medicine of repentance, which is sufficient to put away and blot out all our sins; only if we knew the nature of the medicine, and how we ought to apply it.

What then is the medicine of Repentance and how is it made up? First, of the condemnation of our own sins; “For” (it is said) “mine iniquity have I not hid” (Ps. xxxii. 5); and again, “I will confess against myself my lawlessness unto the Lord, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my heart.” And “Declare thou at the first thy sins, that thou mayest be justified.” (Isa. xliii. 26) And, “The righteous man is an accuser of himself at the first speaking.” (Prov. xviii. 17)

Secondly, of great humbleness of mind: For it is like a golden chain; if one have hold of the beginning, all will follow. Because if thou confess thy sin as one ought to confess, the soul is humbled. For conscience turning it on itself causeth it to be subdued.

Other things too must be added to humbleness of mind if it be such as the blessed David knew, when he said, “A broken and a contrite heart God will not despise.” (Ps. li. 17) For that which is broken does not rise up, does not strike, but is ready to be ill-treated and itself riseth not up. Such is contrition of heart: though it be insulted, though it be evil entreated, it is quiet, and is not eager for vengeance.

And after humbleness of mind, there is need of intense prayers, of many tears, tears by day, and tears by night: for, he says, “every night, will I wash my bed, I will water my couch with my tears. I am weary with my groaning.” (Ps. vi. 6) And again, “For I have eaten ashes as it were bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.” (Ps. cii. 9)

And after prayer thus intense, there is need of much almsgiving: for this it is which especially gives strength to the medicine of repentance. And as there is a medicine among the physicians’ helps which receives many herbs, but one is the essential, so also in case of repentance this is the essential herb, yea, it may be everything. For hear what the Divine

Scripture says, “Give alms, and all things shall be clean.” (Luke xi. 41) And again, “By alms-giving and acts of faithfulness (**Schaff Note:** καὶ πίστεσιν. [These same two words, ἐλεημοσύνη καὶ πίστεις, “almsgiving and acts of faithfulness,” are used by the Septuagint to translate “mercy and truth” in Prov. iii. 3 also, as if πίστεις were the distinct *acts of faithfulness* which go to make up *truth*, comp. *true of heart* throughout the Psalms.]) sins are purged away.” (Prov. xvi. 6) And, “Water will quench a flaming fire, and alms will do away with great sins.” (Ecclus. iii. 30)

Next not being angry with any one, not bearing malice; the forgiving all their trespasses. For, it is said, “Man retaineth wrath against man, and yet seeketh healing from the Lord.” (Ecclus. xxviii. 3) “Forgive that ye may be forgiven.” (Mark xi. 25)

Also, the converting our brethren from their wandering. For, it is said, (**Schaff Note:** This seems to be an expression of the doctrine of James v. 19, 20, partially in the language of our Lord, Luke xxii. 33. [Cf. Acts iii. 19]) “Go thou, and convert thy brethren, that thy sins may be forgiven thee.” And from one’s being in close relations with the priests, “and if,” it is said, “a man hath committed sins it shall be forgiven him.” (Jas. v. 15) To stand forward in defense of those who are wronged. Not to retain anger: to bear all things meekly.

[9.] Now then, before you learned that it is possible to have our sins washed away by

means of repentance, were ye not in an agony, because there is no second laver, and were ye not in despair of yourselves? But now that we have learned by what means repentance and remission is brought to a successful issue, and that we shall be able entirely to escape, if we be willing to use it aright, what forgiveness can we possibly obtain, if we do not even enter on the thought of our sins? since if this were done, all would be accomplished.

For as he who enters the door, is within; so he who reckons up his own evils will also certainly come to get them cured. But should he say, I am a sinner, without reckoning them up specifically, and saying, This and this sin have I committed, he will never leave off, confessing indeed continually, but never caring in earnest for amendment. For should he have laid down a beginning, all the rest will unquestionably follow too, if only in one point he have shown a beginning: for in every case the beginning and the preliminaries are difficult. This then let us lay as a foundation, and all will be smooth and easy.

Let us begin therefore, I entreat you, one with making his prayers intense: another with continual weeping: another with downcast countenance. For not even is this, which is so small, unprofitable: for "I saw" (it is said) "that he was grieved and went downcast, and I healed his ways." (Isa. lvii. 17, 18)

But let us all humble our own souls by alms-giving and forgiving our neighbors their trespasses, by not remembering injuries, nor avenging ourselves. If we continually reflect on our sins, no external circumstances can make us elated: neither riches, nor power, nor authority, nor honor; nay, even should we sit in the imperial chariot itself, we shall sigh bitterly: Since even the blessed David was a King, and yet he said, "Every night I will wash my bed," [&c.] (Ps. vi. 6): and he was not at all hurt by the purple robe and the diadem: he was not puffed up; for he knew himself to be a man, and inasmuch as his heart had been made contrite, he went mourning.

[10.] For what are all things human? Ashes and dust, and as it were spray before the wind; a smoke and a shadow, and a leaf driven here and there; and a flower; a dream, and a tale, and a fable, wind and air vainly puffed out and wasting away; a feather that hath no stay, a stream flowing by, or if there be aught of more nothingness than these.

For, tell me, what dost thou esteem great? What dignity thinkest thou to be great? is it that of the Consul? For the many think no greater dignity than that. He who is not Consul is not a whit inferior to him who is in so great splendor, who is so greatly admired. Both one and the other are of the same dignity; both of them alike, after a little while, are no more.

When was he made [Consul]? For how long a time? tell me: for two days? Nay, this takes place even in dreams. But that is [only] a dream, you say. And what is this? For (tell me) what is by day, is it [therefore] not a dream? Why do we not rather call these things a dream? For as dreams when the day comes on are proved to be nothing: so these things also, when the night comes on, are proved to be nothing. For night and day have received each an equal portion of time, and have equally divided all duration. Therefore as in the day a person rejoices not in what happened at night, so neither in the night is it possible for him to reap the fruit of what is done in the day. Thou hast been made Consul? So was I in the night; only I in the night, thou in the day. And what of this? Not even so hast thou any advantage over me, except haply its being said, Such an one is Consul, and the pleasure that springs from the words, gives him the advantage.

I mean something of this kind, for I will express it more plainly: if I say "Such an one is

Consul,” and bestow on him the name, is it not gone as soon as it is spoken? So also are the things themselves; no sooner doth the Consul appear, than he is no more. But let us suppose [that he is Consul] for a year, or two years, or three or four years. Where are they who were ten times Consul? Nowhere.

But Paul is not so. For he was, and also is living continually: he did not live one day, nor two, nor ten, and twenty, nor thirty; nor ten and twenty, nor yet thirty years—and die. Even the four hundredth year is now past, and still even yet is he illustrious, yea much more illustrious than when he was alive. And these things indeed [are] on earth; but the glory of the saints in heaven what word could set forth?

Wherefore I entreat you, let us seek this glory; let us pursue after it, that we may attain it. For this is the true glory. Let us henceforth stand aloof from the things of this life, that we may find grace and mercy in Christ Jesus our Lord: with whom to the Father, together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor and worship, now and for ever, and world without end. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “[5.] Ver. 4, 5. “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting Him to an open shame.”

He refers to **Hebrews 6 (KJV):4** For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

He continues, “And see how putting them to shame, and forbiddingly he begins. “Impossible.” No longer (he says) expect that which is not possible; (For he said not, It is not seemly, or, It is not expedient, or, It is not lawful, but “impossible,” so as to cast [them] into despair), if ye have once been altogether enlightened.

Then he adds, “and have tasted of the heavenly gift. If ye have tasted” (he says) “of the heavenly gift,” that is, of forgiveness. “And been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good word of God” (he is speaking here of the doctrine) “and the powers of the world to come” (what powers is he speaking of? either the working of miracles, or “the earnest of the Spirit”— 2 Cor. i. 22)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 1 (KJV):22** Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

He continues, ““and have fallen away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame.” “Renew them,” he says, “unto repentance,” that is, by repentance, for unto repentance is by repentance. What then, is repentance excluded? Not repentance, far from it! But the renewing again by the laver. For he did not say, “impossible” to be renewed “unto repentance,” and stop, but added how “impossible, [by] crucifying afresh.”

To “be renewed,” that is, to be made new, for to make men new is [the work] of the laver only: for (it is said) “thy youth shall be renewed as the eagle’s.” (Ps. ciii. 5)”

He refers to **Psalms 103 (KJV):5** Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy

youth is renewed like the eagle's.

He continues, "But it is [the work of] repentance, when those who have been made new, have afterwards become old through sins, to set them free from this old age, and to make them strong. To bring them to that former brightness however, is not possible; for there the whole was Grace.

[6.] "Crucifying to themselves," he says, "the Son of God afresh, and putting Him to an open shame." What he means is this. Baptism is a Cross, and "our old man was crucified with [Him]" (Rom. vi. 6), for we were "made conformable to the likeness of His death" (Rom. vi. 5; Philip. iii. 10), and again, "we were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death." (Rom. vi. 4)"

He refers in context to **Romans 6 (KJV):4** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

And to **Philippians 3 (KJV):10** That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

He continues, "Wherefore, as it is not possible that Christ should be crucified a second time, for that is to "put Him to an open shame." For "if death shall no more have dominion over Him" (Rom. vi. 9), if He rose again, by His resurrection becoming superior to death;"

He refers to **Romans 6 (KJV):9** Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

He continues, "if by death He wrestled with and overcame death, and then is crucified again, all those things become a fable and a mockery. He then that baptizeth a second time, crucifies Him again.

But what is "crucifying afresh"? [It is] crucifying over again. For as Christ died on the cross, so do we in baptism, not as to the flesh, but as to sin. Behold two deaths. He died as to the flesh; in our case the old man was buried, and the new man arose, made conformable to the likeness of His death. If therefore it is necessary to be baptized [again], it is necessary that this same [Christ] should die again. For baptism is nothing else than the putting to death of the baptized, and his rising again.

And he well said, "crucifying afresh unto themselves." For he that does this, as having forgotten the former grace, and ordering his own life carelessly, acts in all respects as if there were another baptism. It behooves us therefore to take heed and to make ourselves safe."

But the writer of Hebrews is giving a hypothetical example of one who would fall away after having been "enlightened", and having "tasted of the heavenly gift", and been "made partakers of the Holy Ghost" in verse 4, and to "have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come", in verse 5. This one would not be able to be renewed "again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame", in verse 6.

But as we continue to read we see that the writer is encouraging these Hebrews not to be slothful, as we read in **Hebrews 6 (KJV):7** For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing



from God: 8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. 9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. 10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: 12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Chrysostom continues, “[7.] What is, “having tasted of the heavenly gift”? it is, “of the remission of sins”: for this is of God alone to bestow, and the grace is a grace once for all. “What then? shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Far from it!” (Rom. vi. 1, 2)”

He refers to **Romans 6 (KJV):**1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

He continues, “But if we should be always going to be saved by grace we shall never be good. For where there is but one grace, and we are yet so indolent, should we then cease sinning if we knew that it is possible again to have our sins washed away? For my part I think not.”

But if we have truly believed, we have passed from death to life. The Spirit of life is now the life of our spirits. The grace of God has saved us through faith, the gift of God, and we stand in grace, as we read in **Romans 5 (NKJV):**1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, [a]we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Chrysostom continues, “He here shows that the gifts are many: and to explain it, Ye were counted worthy (he says) of so great forgiveness; for he that was sitting in darkness, he that was at enmity, he that was at open war, that was alienated, that was hated of God, that was lost, he having been suddenly enlightened, counted worthy of the Spirit, of the heavenly gift, of adoption as a son, of the kingdom of heaven, of those other good things, the unspeakable mysteries; and who does not even thus become better, but while indeed worthy of perdition, obtained salvation and honor, as if he had successfully accomplished great things; how could he be again baptized?”

And we were at enmity with God in our minds as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):**7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

And we were enemies of God, as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):**10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

And we were alienated from the life of God, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

But God so loved us that He gave His only begotten son for us, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):**32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

And in **John 3 (KJV):**16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Chrysostom continues, “On two grounds then he said that the thing was impossible, and

he put the stronger last: first, because he who has been deemed worthy of such [blessings], and who has betrayed all that was granted to him, is not worthy to be again renewed; neither is it possible that [Christ] should again be crucified afresh: for this is to “put Him to an open shame.”

There is not then any second laver: there is not [indeed]. And if there is, there is also a third, and a fourth; for the former one is continually disannulled by the later, and this continually by another, and so on without end.

“And tasted,” he says, “the good word of God”; and he does not unfold it; “and the powers of the world to come,” for to live as Angels and to have no need of earthly things, to know that this is the means of our introduction to the enjoyment of the worlds to come; this may we learn through the Spirit, and enter into those sacred recesses.

What are “the powers of the world to come”? Life eternal, angelic conversation. Of these we have already received the earnest through our Faith from the Spirit. Tell me then, if after having been introduced into a palace, and entrusted with all things therein, thou hadst then betrayed all, wouldest thou have been entrusted with them again?

[8.] What then (you say)? Is there no repentance? There is repentance, but there is no second baptism: but repentance there is, and it has great force, and is able to set free from the burden of his sins, if he will, even him that hath been baptized much in sins, and to establish in safety him who is in danger, even though he should have come unto the very depth of wickedness. And this is evident from many places. “For,” says one, “doth not he that falleth rise again? Or he that turneth away, doth not he turn back to [God]?” (Jer. viii. 4)”

He refers to **Jeremiah 8 (KJV):4** Moreover thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord; Shall they fall, and not arise? shall he turn away, and not return?

He continues, “It is possible, if we will, that Christ should be formed in us again: for hear Paul saying, “My little children of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you.” (Gal. iv. 19) Only let us lay hold on repentance.”

He refers in context to **Galatians 4 (KJV):19** My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, 20 I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you. 21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

But Paul was not saying that Christ was not in them, for he calls them “My little children” in verse 19 above, and as he says in **Galatians 3 (KJV):24** Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

He was giving them an analogy of how a baby is formed in the womb. That is, he wanted them to grow in grace and knowledge, and live a more Christ like life. Going back “under the law”, they were living as if grace had not come yet, as he alludes to in **Galatians 3 (KJV):1** O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? 2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

He continues, “For behold the love of God to man! We ought on every ground to have been punished at the first; in that having received the natural law, and enjoyed innumerable

blessings, we have not acknowledged our Master, and have lived an unclean life. Yet He not only has not punished us, but has even made us partakers of countless blessings, just as if we had accomplished great things. Again we fell away, and not even so does He punish us, but has given medicine of repentance, which is sufficient to put away and blot out all our sins; only if we knew the nature of the medicine, and how we ought to apply it.

What then is the medicine of Repentance and how is it made up? First, of the condemnation of our own sins; “For” (it is said) “mine iniquity have I not hid” (Ps. xxxii. 5); and again, “I will confess against myself my lawlessness unto the Lord, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my heart.” And “Declare thou at the first thy sins, that thou mayest be justified.” (Isa. xliii. 26) And, “The righteous man is an accuser of himself at the first speaking.” (Prov. xviii. 17)”

He refers to **Psalm 32 (KJV):5** I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

And to **Isaiah 43 (KJV):26** Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.

And to **Proverbs 18 (Septuagint):17** A righteous man accuses himself at the beginning of his speech, but when he has entered upon the attack, the adversary is reproved.

And to **Proverbs 18 (KJV):17** He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.

He continues, “Secondly, of great humbleness of mind: For it is like a golden chain; if one have hold of the beginning, all will follow. Because if thou confess thy sin as one ought to confess, the soul is humbled. For conscience turning it on itself causeth it to be subdued.

Other things too must be added to humbleness of mind if it be such as the blessed David knew, when he said, “A broken and a contrite heart God will not despise.” (Ps. li. 17)”

He refers to **Psalm 51 (KJV):17** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

He continues, “For that which is broken does not rise up, does not strike, but is ready to be ill-treated and itself riseth not up. Such is contrition of heart: though it be insulted, though it be evil entreated, it is quiet, and is not eager for vengeance.

And after humbleness of mind, there is need of intense prayers, of many tears, tears by day, and tears by night: for, he says, “every night, will I wash my bed, I will water my couch with my tears. I am weary with my groaning.” (Ps. vi. 6) And again, “For I have eaten ashes as it were bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.” (Ps. cii. 9)”

He refers to **Psalm 6 (KJV):6** I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.

And to **Psalm 102 (KJV):9** For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.

And godly sorrow is evident in repentance as we read in **2 Corinthians 7 (KJV):9** Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.”

He continues, “And after prayer thus intense, there is need of much almsgiving: for this it is which especially gives strength to the medicine of repentance. And as there is a medicine among the physicians’ helps which receives many herbs, but one is the essential, so also in case

of repentance this is the essential herb, yea, it may be everything. For hear what the Divine Scripture says, “Give alms, and all things shall be clean.” (Luke xi. 41)”

He refers in context to **Luke 11 (KJV):37** And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. 38 And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner. 39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. 40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? 41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

Jesus was pointing out that the Pharisees looked good on the outside, but on the inside they were “full of ravening and wickedness”. The Greek word for “alms” in verse 41 is **ἐλεημοσύνη** (pronounced e-le-a-mo-sü'-na), from G1656; compassionateness, i.e. (as exercised towards the poor) beneficence, or (concretely) a benefaction:—alms(-deeds). **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1654**

This Greek word is derived from another Greek word, **ἔλεος** (pronounced e'-le-os), of uncertain affinity; compassion (human or divine, especially active):—(+ tender) mercy. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1656**

He continues, “And again, “By alms-giving and acts of faithfulness (**Schaff Note: καὶ πίστειν**. [These same two words, **ἐλεημοσύνη καὶ πίστειν**, “almsgiving and acts of faithfulness,” are used by the Septuagint to translate “mercy and truth” in Prov. iii. 3 also, as if **πίστειν** were the distinct *acts of faithfulness* which go to make up *truth*, comp. *true of heart* throughout the Psalms.])”

Chrysostom continues, “sins are purged away.” (Prov. xvi. 6) And, “Water will quench a flaming fire, and alms will do away with great sins.” (Ecclus. iii. 30)”

He refers to **Proverbs 16 (KJV):6** By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.

And to **Ecclesiasticus 3 (KJV):30** Water will quench a flaming fire; and alms maketh an atonement for sins.

Ecclesiasticus is not in the canon of the New Testament. He continues, “Next not being angry with any one, not bearing malice; the forgiving all their trespasses. For, it is said, “Man retaineth wrath against man, and yet seeketh healing from the Lord.” (Ecclus. xxviii. 3) “Forgive that ye may be forgiven.” (Mark xi. 25)

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 28 (KJV):3** One man beareth hatred against another, and doth he seek pardon from the Lord?

And to **Mark 11 (KJV):25** And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

Also, the converting our brethren from their wandering. For, it is said, (**Schaff Note:** This seems to be an expression of the doctrine of James v. 19, 20, partially in the language of our Lord, Luke xxii. 32. [Cf. Acts iii. 19.]) “Go thou, and convert thy brethren, that thy sins may be forgiven thee.” And from one’s being in close relations with the priests, “and if,” it is said, “a man hath committed sins it shall be forgiven him.” (Jas. v. 15) To stand forward in defense of those who are wronged. Not to retain anger: to bear all things meekly.”

He refers to **James 5 (KJV):15** And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

And we read in **James 5 (KJV):19** Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

And in context in **Luke 22 (KJV):31** And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

And in **Acts 3 (KJV):19** Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

He continues, “[9.] Now then, before you learned that it is possible to have our sins washed away by means of repentance, were ye not in an agony, because there is no second laver, and were ye not in despair of yourselves? But now that we have learned by what means repentance and remission is brought to a successful issue, and that we shall be able entirely to escape, if we be willing to use it aright, what forgiveness can we possibly obtain, if we do not even enter on the thought of our sins? since if this were done, all would be accomplished.”

And we read in **Isaiah 30 (KJV):15** For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.

The word “returning” in the Hebrew is **שׁוּבָה** (pronounced shü·vä'), from H7725; a return:—returning. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H7729**

This word is derived from the Hebrew word **שׁוּב** (pronounced shüv), a primitive root; to turn back (hence, away) transitively or intransitively, literally or figuratively (not necessarily with the idea of return to the starting point); generally to retreat; ... **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H7725**

We read as in **2 Corinthians 7 (KJV):10** For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

The word “repentance” in the Greek is **μετάνοια** (pronounced me-tä'-noi-ä), from G3340; (subjectively) compunction (for guilt, including reformation); by implication, reversal (of (another's) decision):—repentance. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H7729**

This Greek word is derived from **μετανοέω** (pronounced me-tä-no-e'-o), from G3326 and G3539; to think differently or afterwards, i.e. reconsider (morally, feel compunction):—repent. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3340**

And this Greek word is derived from two Greek words, **μετά** (pronounced me-tä'), — after(-ward), × that he again, against, among, × and, + follow, hence, hereafter, in, of, (up)on, + our, ×and setting, since, (un-)to, + together, when, with (+ -out). **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3326**

And **νοέω** (pronounced no-e'-o), to exercise the mind (observe), i.e. (figuratively) to comprehend, heed:—consider, perceive, think, understand. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3539**

So it means to “think afterwards”. Moulton says it means “to undergo a change in frame of mind and feeling, to repent”. **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised, 1978 Edition, Harold K. Moulton**

Some of Jesus' final words to the disciples are what we read in **Luke 24 (KJV):45** Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, 46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third

day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

And Peter preached, as in **Acts 2 (KJV):38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

And again Peter preached at the house of Cornelius in **Acts 10 (KJV):43** To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

And when they believed, they received, as we read in **Acts 10 (KJV):44** While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Chrysostom continues, “For as he who enters the door, is within; so he who reckons up his own evils will also certainly come to get them cured. But should he say, I am a sinner, without reckoning them up specifically, and saying, This and this sin have I committed, he will never leave off, confessing indeed continually, but never caring in earnest for amendment. For should he have laid down a beginning, all the rest will unquestionably follow too, if only in one point he have shown a beginning: for in every case the beginning and the preliminaries are difficult. This then let us lay as a foundation, and all will be smooth and easy.

Let us begin therefore, I entreat you, one with making his prayers intense: another with continual weeping: another with downcast countenance. For not even is this, which is so small, unprofitable: for “I saw” (it is said) “that he was grieved and went downcast, and I healed his ways.” (Isa. lvii. 17, 18)”

He refers to **Isaiah 57 (Septuagint):17** On account of sin for a little while I grieved him, and smote him, and turned away my face from him; and he was grieved, and he went on sorrowful in his ways. 18 I have seen his ways, and healed him, and comforted him, and given him true comfort; 19 peace upon peace to them that are far off, and to them that are nigh: and the Lord has said, I will heal them.

And in **Isaiah 57 (KJV):17** For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. 18 I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners. 19 I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him.

Chrysostom continues, “But let us all humble our own souls by alms-giving and forgiving our neighbors their trespasses, by not remembering injuries, nor avenging ourselves. If we continually reflect on our sins, no external circumstances can make us elated: neither riches, nor power, nor authority, nor honor; nay, even should we sit in the imperial chariot itself, we shall sigh bitterly: Since even the blessed David was a King, and yet he said, “Every night I will wash my bed,” [&c.] (Ps. vi. 6): and he was not at all hurt by the purple robe and the diadem: he was not puffed up; for he knew himself to be a man, and inasmuch as his heart had been made



contrite, he went mourning.”

He refers to **Psalm 6 (KJV):6** I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.

He continues, “[10.] For what are all things human? Ashes and dust, and as it were spray before the wind; a smoke and a shadow, and a leaf driven here and there; and a flower; a dream, and a tale, and a fable, wind and air vainly puffed out and wasting away; a feather that hath no stay, a stream flowing by, or if there be aught of more nothingness than these.

For, tell me, what dost thou esteem great? What dignity thinkest thou to be great? is it that of the Consul? For the many think no greater dignity than that. He who is not Consul is not a whit inferior to him who is in so great splendor, who is so greatly admired. Both one and the other are of the same dignity; both of them alike, after a little while, are no more.

When was he made [Consul]? For how long a time? tell me: for two days? Nay, this takes place even in dreams. But that is [only] a dream, you say. And what is this? For (tell me) what is by day, is it [therefore] not a dream? Why do we not rather call these things a dream? For as dreams when the day comes on are proved to be nothing: so these things also, when the night comes on, are proved to be nothing. For night and day have received each an equal portion of time, and have equally divided all duration. Therefore as in the day a person rejoices not in what happened at night, so neither in the night is it possible for him to reap the fruit of what is done in the day. Thou hast been made Consul? So was I in the night; only I in the night, thou in the day. And what of this? Not even so hast thou any advantage over me, except haply its being said, Such an one is Consul, and the pleasure that springs from the words, gives him the advantage.

I mean something of this kind, for I will express it more plainly: if I say “Such an one is Consul,” and bestow on him the name, is it not gone as soon as it is spoken? So also are the things themselves; no sooner doth the Consul appear, than he is no more. But let us suppose [that he is Consul] for a year, or two years, or three or four years. Where are they who were ten times Consul? Nowhere.

But Paul is not so. For he was, and also is living continually: he did not live one day, nor two, nor ten, and twenty, nor thirty; nor ten and twenty, nor yet thirty years—and die. Even the four hundredth year is now past, and still even yet is he illustrious, yea much more illustrious than when he was alive. And these things indeed [are] on earth; but the glory of the saints in heaven what word could set forth?

Wherefore I entreat you, let us seek this glory; let us pursue after it, that we may attain it. For this is the true glory. Let us henceforth stand aloof from the things of this life, that we may find grace and mercy in Christ Jesus our Lord: with whom to the Father, together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor and worship, now and for ever, and world without end. Amen.”

And Jesus taught us to be humble, as we read in **Matthew 6 (KJV):1** Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. 2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: 4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. 5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets,

that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

But alms do not atone for sins. Remission of sin comes with faith in Jesus Christ, as Peter preached in **Acts 10 (KJV):43** To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

In the thinking of the early Church, baptism gave one remission of sins. But any sin after baptism had to be atoned for by repentance, and that by alms, or penance. The early Church did not understand the standing of the believer. Once one has been born again by faith in Jesus Christ, God justifies us, and puts His righteousness down to our account. We then have a standing as sons and daughters before Him. If we sin, and confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us of all sin as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

The one who believes in Jesus Christ begins as a babe in Christ. We then grow in grace and knowledge. As we walk in the light of the word of God, and we become aware of sin in our life, we confess it and He cleanses us in a progressive sanctification until we see Him and we are changed to be like Him, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

## **Punishing Ourselves**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY XXVIII, page 492-493**

[5.] For he who repents ought not to be angry, nor to be fierce, but to be contrite, as one condemned, as not having boldness, as one on whom sentence has been passed, as one who ought to be saved by mercy alone, as one who has shown himself ungrateful toward his Benefactor, as unthankful, as reprobate, as worthy of punishments innumerable. If he considers these things, he will not be angry, he will not be indignant, but will mourn, will weep, will groan, and lament night and day.

He that is penitent ought never to forget his sin, but on the one hand, to beseech God not to remember it; while on the other, he himself never forgets it. If we remember it, God will forget it. Let us exact punishment from ourselves; let us accuse ourselves; thus shall we propitiate the Judge. For sin confessed becomes less, but not confessed worse. For if sin add to itself shamelessness and ingratitude, how will he who does not know that he sinned before be at all able to guard himself from falling again into the same [evils]?



Let us then not deny [our sins], I beseech you, nor be shameless, that we may not unwillingly pay the penalty. Cain heard God say, "Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not; am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. iv. 9) Seest thou how this made his sin more grievous? But his father did not act thus. What then? When he heard, "Adam, where art thou?" (Gen. iii. 9), he said, "I heard Thy voice, and I was afraid, because I am naked, and I hid myself." (Gen. iii. 10) It is a great good to acknowledge our sins, and to bear them in mind continually. Nothing so effectually cures a fault, as a continual remembrance of it. Nothing makes a man so slow to wickedness.

[6.] I know that conscience starts back, and endures not to be scourged by the remembrance of evil deeds; but hold tight thy soul and place a muzzle on it. For like an ill-broken horse, so it bears impatiently [what is put upon it], and is unwilling to persuade itself that it has sinned: but all this is the work of Satan. But let us persuade it that it has sinned; let us persuade it that it has sinned, that it may also repent, in order that having repented it may escape torment. How dost thou think to obtain pardon for thy sins, tell me, when thou hast not yet confessed them? Assuredly he is worthy of compassion and kindness who has sinned. But thou who hast not yet persuaded thyself [that thou hast sinned], how dost thou think to be pitied, when thou art thus without shame for some things?

Let us persuade ourselves that we have sinned. Let us say it not with the tongue only, but also with the mind. Let us not call ourselves sinners, but also count over our sins, going over them each specifically. I do not say to thee, Make a parade of thyself, nor accuse thyself before others: but be persuaded by the prophet when he saith, "Reveal thy way unto the Lord." (Ps. xxxvii. 5) Confess these things before God. Confess before the Judge thy sins with prayer; if not with tongue, yet in memory, and be worthy of mercy.

If thou keep thy sins continually in remembrance, thou wilt never bear in mind the wrongs of thy neighbor. I do not say, if thou art persuaded that thou art thyself a sinner; this does not avail so to humble the soul, as sins themselves [taken] by themselves, and examined specifically. Thou wilt have no remembrance of wrongs [done thee], if thou hast these things continually in remembrance; thou wilt feel no anger, thou wilt not revile, thou wilt have no high thoughts, thou wilt not fall again into the same [sins], thou wilt be more earnest towards good things.

[7.] Seest thou how many excellent [effects] are produced from the remembrance of our sins? Let us then write them in our minds. I know that the soul does not endure a recollection which is so bitter: but let us constrain and force it. It is better that it should be gnawed with the remembrance now, than at that time with vengeance.

Now, if thou remember them, and continually present them before God (see p. 448), and pray for them, thou wilt speedily blot them out; but if thou forget them now, thou wilt then be reminded of them even against thy will, when they are brought out publicly before the whole world, displayed before all, both friends and enemies, and Angels. For surely He did not say to David only, "What thou didst secretly, I will make manifest to" (2 Sam. xii. 12) all, but even to us all. Thou wert afraid of men (he said) and respected them more than God; and God seeing thee, thou caredst not, but wert ashamed before men. For it says, "the eyes of men, this is their fear." Therefore thou shalt suffer punishment in that very point; for I will reprove thee, setting thy sins before the eyes of all. For that this is true, and that in that day the sins of us all are [to be] publicly displayed, unless we now do them away by continual remembrance, hear how

cruelty and inhumanity are publicly exposed, “I was an hungered” (He says) “and ye gave Me no meat.” (Matt. xxv. 42) When are these things said? Is it in a corner? Is it in a secret place? By no means. When then? “When the Son of Man shall come in His glory” (Matt. xxv. 31, 32), and “all the nations” are gathered together, when He has separated the one from the other, then will He speak in the audience of all, and will “set” them “on His right hand” and “on” His “left” (Matt. xxv. 33): “I was an hungered and ye gave Me no meat.”

See again the five virgins also, hearing before all, “I know you not.” (Matt. xxv. 12) For the five and five do not set forth the number of five only, but those virgins who are wicked and cruel and inhuman, and those who are not such. So also he that buried his one talent, heard before all, even of those who had brought the five and the two, “Thou wicked and slothful servant.” (Matt. xxv. 26) But not by words alone, but by deeds also does He then convict them: even as the Evangelist also says, “They shall look on Him whom they pierced.” (John xix. 37) For the resurrection shall be of all at the same time, of sinners and of the righteous. At the same time shall He be present to all in the judgment.

[8.] Consider therefore who they are who shall then be in dismay, who in grief, who dragged away to the fire, while the others are crowned. “Come” (He says), “ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom which hath been prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Matt. xxv. 34) And again, “Depart from Me into the fire which hath been prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matt. xxv. 41)

Let us not merely hear the words but write them also before our sight, and let us imagine Him to be now present and saying these things, and that we are led away to that fire. What heart shall we have? What consolation? And what, when we are cut asunder? And what when we are accused of rapacity? What excuse shall we have to utter? What specious argument? None: but of necessity bound, bending down, we must be dragged to the mouths of the furnace, to the river of fire, to the darkness, to then ever-dying punishments, and entreat no one. For it is not, it is not possible, He says, to pass across from this side to that: for “there is a great gulf betwixt us and you” (Luke xvi. 26), and it is not possible even for those who wish it to go across, and stretch out a helping hand: but we must needs burn continually, no one aiding us, even should it be father or mother, or any whosoever, yea though he have much boldness toward God. For, it says, “A brother doth not redeem; shall man redeem?” (Ps. xlix. 8)

Since then it is not possible to have one’s hopes of salvation in another, but [it must be] in one’s self after the lovingkindness of God, let us do all things, I entreat you, so that our conduct may be pure, and our course of life the best, and that it may not receive any stain even from the beginning. But if not, at all events, let us not sleep after the stain, but continue always washing away the pollution by repentance, by tears, by prayers, by works of mercy.

What then, you say, if I cannot do works of mercy? But thou hast “a cup of cold water” (Matt. x. 42), however poor thou art. But thou hast “two mites” (Mark xii. 42), in whatever poverty thou art; but thou hast feet, so as to visit the sick, so as to enter into a prison; but thou hast a roof, so as to receive strangers. For there is no pardon, no, none for him who does not do works of mercy.

These things we say to you continually, that we may effect if it be but a little by the continued repetition: these things we say, not caring so much for those who receive the benefits, as for yourselves. For ye give to them indeed things here, but in return you receive heavenly things: which may we all obtain, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father be glory,

together with the Holy Ghost, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “[5.] For he who repents ought not to be angry, nor to be fierce, but to be contrite, as one condemned, as not having boldness, as one on whom sentence has been passed, as one who ought to be saved by mercy alone, as one who has shown himself ungrateful toward his Benefactor, as unthankful, as reprobate, as worthy of punishments innumerable. If he considers these things, he will not be angry, he will not be indignant, but will mourn, will weep, will groan, and lament night and day.”

Sorrow is a part of repentance, as we read in **2 Corinthians 7 (KJV):10** For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

Grief is a process, but not the norm. We grieve for a loss. But after a time of grieving, we will find joy, as we read in **Psalms 30 (KJV):5** For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; Weeping may last for the night, But a shout of joy comes in the morning.

And joy is the norm, as we read in **1 Thessalonians 5 (NASB):16** Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

Chrysostom continues, “He that is penitent ought never to forget his sin, but on the one hand, to beseech God not to remember it; while on the other, he himself never forgets it. If we remember it, God will forget it. Let us exact punishment from ourselves; let us accuse ourselves; thus shall we propitiate the Judge.”

Again, the early Church did not understand the standing of the believer. The blood of Jesus is the propitiation for our sins, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):25** Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

And in **1 John 2 (KJV):2** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

And in **1 John 4 (KJV):10** Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

The word “propitiation” in the Greek is **ἱλασμός** (pronounced he-lä-smo's), atonement, i.e. (concretely) an expiator:—propitiation. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3539**

Jesus is the atonement for our sins. By one offering He has put away sin as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):26** For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all as we read in context in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):6** In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said

he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

Because of His one offering for sin, we only need to confess our sins, and He is faithful and just to forgive us, as we read again in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

It is His blood that cleanses us as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Chrysostom continues, “For sin confessed becomes less, but not confessed worse. For if sin add to itself shamelessness and ingratitude, how will he who does not know that he sinned before be at all able to guard himself from falling again into the same [evils]?”

Let us then not deny [our sins], I beseech you, nor be shameless, that we may not unwillingly pay the penalty. Cain heard God say, “Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not; am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gen. iv. 9)”

He refers to **Genesis 4 (KJV):9** And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

He continues, “Seest thou how this made his sin more grievous? But his father did not act thus. What then? When he heard, “Adam, where art thou?” (Gen. iii. 9), he said, “I heard Thy voice, and I was afraid, because I am naked, and I hid myself.” (Gen. iii. 10)”

He refers to **Genesis 3 (KJV):9** And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? 10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

He continues, “It is a great good to acknowledge our sins, and to bear them in mind continually. Nothing so effectually cures a fault, as a continual remembrance of it. Nothing makes a man so slow to wickedness.”

But, in a sense, to remember our sins is not to let them go. Remembering our sins becomes a heavy burden. One thing we must remember is that forgiveness means not only to forgive someone for a wrong done to us, but to let it go. In other words, don’t keep it. This is what God has done for us, as we read in **Psalms 103 (KJV):12** As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

And Jeremiah speaks of the new covenant in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV):31** Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

And Jesus said in **Luke 22 (KJV):20** Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This

cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

The word for “testament” in the Greek is **διαθήκη** (pronounced de-ä-tha'-ka), from G1303; properly, a disposition, i.e. (specially) a contract (especially a devisory will):—covenant, testament.

Jesus is saying that we are in the new covenant now in the Church. Israel will also enter the new covenant at the end of the tribulation period.

Jesus came to give us rest, as we read in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Paul encourages us to discipline our minds, as we read in **Philippians 4 (KJV):8** Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

The truth is that when we confess our sins, God takes them as far as the east is from the west, and His peace keeps our heart and mind as we read in **Philippians 4 (KJV):6** Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

There is no need for us to remember our sins, if God has put them away, and we have forsaken them.

Chrysostom continues, “[6.] I know that conscience starts back, and endures not to be scourged by the remembrance of evil deeds; but hold tight thy soul and place a muzzle on it. For like an ill-broken horse, so it bears impatiently [what is put upon it], and is unwilling to persuade itself that it has sinned: but all this is the work of Satan. But let us persuade it that it has sinned; let us persuade it that it has sinned, that it may also repent, in order that having repented it may escape torment. How dost thou think to obtain pardon for thy sins, tell me, when thou hast not yet confessed them? Assuredly he is worthy of compassion and kindness who has sinned. But thou who hast not yet persuaded thyself [that thou hast sinned], how dost thou think to be pitied, when thou art thus without shame for some things?”

Repentance is a continual turning to the Lord, as we read again in **Isaiah 30 (KJV):15** For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.

He continues, “Let us persuade ourselves that we have sinned. Let us say it not with the tongue only, but also with the mind. Let us not call ourselves sinners, but also count over our sins, going over them each specifically. I do not say to thee, Make a parade of thyself, nor accuse thyself before others: but be persuaded by the prophet when he saith, “Reveal thy way unto the Lord.” (Ps. xxxvii. 5)”

He refers in context to **Psalms 37 (Septuagint):5** Disclose thy way to the Lord, and hope in him; and he shall bring it to pass. 6 And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day.

And to **Psalms 37 (KJV):5** Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. 6 And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

He continues, “Confess these things before God. Confess before the Judge thy sins with prayer; if not with tongue, yet in memory, and be worthy of mercy.

If thou keep thy sins continually in remembrance, thou wilt never bear in mind the wrongs of thy neighbor. I do not say, if thou art persuaded that thou art thyself a sinner; this does not avail so to humble the soul, as sins themselves [taken] by themselves, and examined specifically. Thou wilt have no remembrance of wrongs [done thee], if thou hast these things continually in remembrance; thou wilt feel no anger, thou wilt not revile, thou wilt have no high thoughts, thou wilt not fall again into the same [sins], thou wilt be more earnest towards good things.”

But Paul encourages in **Philippians 3 (KJV):**8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

And Paul says in **1 Corinthians 4 (NASB):**4 For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.

Our task is to walk in constant fellowship with the Lord. As He examines us, sin will be revealed. As it is revealed, we confess it, and He cleanses us. Then we must forget “things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before”, we are to “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”. This is a continual process as we walk in the light of His word, and grow in grace and knowledge.

Chrysostom continues, “[7.] Seest thou how many excellent [effects] are produced from the remembrance of our sins? Let us then write them in our minds. I know that the soul does not endure a recollection which is so bitter: but let us constrain and force it. It is better that it should be gnawed with the remembrance now, than at that time with vengeance.”

Continual remembrance of our sins will only bring us down. Trusting in the Lord means trusting in what He has done for us. This brings us unending joy. It is not about us, but about Him.

Chrysostom continues, “Now, if thou remember them, and continually present them before God (see p. 448), and pray for them, thou wilt speedily blot them out; but if thou forget them now, thou wilt then be reminded of them even against thy will, when they are brought out publicly before the whole world, displayed before all, both friends and enemies, and Angels. For surely He did not say to David only, “What thou didst secretly, I will make manifest to” (2 Sam. xii. 12) all, but even to us all.”

He refers in context to **2 Samuel 12 (KJV):**7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; 8 And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would

moreover have given unto thee such and such things. 9 Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. 10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. 11 Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. 12 For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. 13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

David confessed his sin, and the Lord put it away. But there were consequences of his sin, as we continue in **2 Samuel 12 (KJV)**: 14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die. 15 And Nathan departed unto his house. And the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. 16 David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. 17 And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. 18 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead? 19 But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead. 20 Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

Chrysostom continues, “Thou wert afraid of men (he said) and respected them more than God; and God seeing thee, thou caredst not, but wert ashamed before men. For it says, “the eyes of men, this is their fear.” Therefore thou shalt suffer punishment in that very point; for I will reprove thee, setting thy sins before the eyes of all.”

And we read in **Proverbs 28 (KJV)**: 13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

He continues, “For that this is true, and that in that day the sins of us all are [to be] publicly displayed, unless we now do them away by continual remembrance, hear how cruelty and inhumanity are publicly exposed, “I was an hungered” (He says) “and ye gave Me no meat.” (Matt. xxv. 42)”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV)**: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

However, we do away with our sins as we confess them, and the Lord is faithful and just to cleanse us, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV)**: 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Chrysostom continues, “When are these things said? Is it in a corner? Is it in a secret place? By no means. When then? “When the Son of Man shall come in His glory” (Matt. xxv. 31, 32), and “all the nations” are gathered together, when He has separated the one from the other, then will He speak in the audience of all, and will “set” them “on His right hand” and

“on” His “left” (Matt. xxv. 33): “I was an hungered and ye gave Me no meat.””

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):31** When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Chrysostom continues, “See again the five virgins also, hearing before all, “I know you not.” (Matt. xxv. 12)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 25 (KJV):12** But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

He continues, “For the five and five do not set forth the number of five only, but those virgins who are wicked and cruel and inhuman, and those who are not such. So also he that buried his one talent, heard before all, even of those who had brought the five and the two, “Thou wicked and slothful servant.” (Matt. xxv. 26)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 25 (KJV):24** Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. 26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

He continues, “But not by words alone, but by deeds also does He then convict them: even as the Evangelist also says, “They shall look on Him whom they pierced.” (John xix. 37)”

He refers to **John 19 (KJV):37** And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

And to **Zechariah 12 (KJV):10** And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

He continues, “For the resurrection shall be of all at the same time, of sinners and of the righteous. At the same time shall He be present to all in the judgment.”

This was the perception of the early Church in the time of Chrysostom. For the early Church, the one final judgment was in Matthew 25 (KJV):31-46. But Jesus spoke of two resurrections, as we read in **John 5 (KJV):28** Marvel not at this for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

And again we read in **Luke 14 (KJV):13** But when thou makest a feast, call the poor and maimed, the lame, the blind. 14 And thou shalt be blessed for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

Two resurrections are spoken of here, one of the just, and one of the evil. The Scriptures speak of a first resurrection in **Revelation 20 (KJV):5** But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

One is blessed if they have part in the first resurrection. The first resurrection is made up



of three groups, as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order, Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming. 24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

The First Resurrection is pictured as a great harvest being gathered with firstfruits, harvest, and gleanings. The first fruits are spoken of in **Matthew 27 (KJV):50** Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. 51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; 52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

The harvest proper will occur at the rapture, just before the beginning of the tribulation, as we read in **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):13** But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

The gleanings are all those who will die in the Lord during the great tribulation, as we read in **Revelation 7 (KJV):9** After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. 13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

It will also include those who die during the Kingdom age of one thousand years. The early Church did not understand that the one final judgment is only for the wicked dead. The judgment of the wicked dead will be at the end of the thousand year reign of Christ. Satan shall be loosed, as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):7** And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Then the final judgment will occur, as we continue in **Revelation 20 (KJV):11** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

In this judgment the dead are “judged every man according to their works”.

Chrysostom continues, “[8.] Consider therefore who they are who shall then be in dismay, who in grief, who dragged away to the fire, while the others are crowned. “Come” (He says), “ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom which hath been prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Matt. xxv. 34)”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

We notice that Christ is sitting on the throne of His glory on earth, as we read again in **Matthew 25 (KJV):31** When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

And before him are gathered all nations. In this judgment, those nations who treated the Jews, Christ’s brethren, with mercy will enter into the kingdom age when Christ will reign for a thousand years.

Chrysostom continues, “And again, “Depart from Me into the fire which hath been prepared for the devil and his angels.” ( Matt. xxv. 41)”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Those nations who didn’t treat the Jews with mercy during the great tribulation will be sent into everlasting fire, into hell.

Chrysostom continues, “Let us not merely hear the words but write them also before our sight, and let us imagine Him to be now present and saying these things, and that we are led away to that fire. What heart shall we have? What consolation? And what, when we are cut asunder? And what when we are accused of rapacity? What excuse shall we have to utter? What specious argument? None: but of necessity bound, bending down, we must be dragged to the mouths of the furnace, to the river of fire, to the darkness, to then ever-dying punishments, and entreat no one. For it is not, it is not possible, He says, to pass across from this side to that: for “there is a great gulftwixt us and you” (Luke xvi. 26), and it is not possible even for those who wish it to go across, and stretch out a helping hand: but we must needs burn continually, no one aiding us, even should it be father or mother, or any whosoever, yea though he have much boldness toward God.”

He refers in context to **Luke 16 (KJV):24** And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my

tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

This account speaks of Sheol, which was where the dead went in the Old Testament before Christ died on the cross to make a way into heaven for the righteous. Sheol was divided into two parts, Abraham's bosom where the righteous dead went, and hell where the unrighteous dead went.

Chrysostom continues, "For, it says, "A brother doth not redeem; shall man redeem?" (Ps. xlix. 8)"

He refers in context to **Psalm 49 (Septuagint):**7 A brother does not redeem, shall a man redeem? he shall not give to God a ransom for himself, 8 or the price of the redemption of his soul, though he labour for ever, 9 and live to the end, so that he should not see corruption.

And to **Psalm 49 (KJV):**7 None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: 8 (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:) 9 That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.

Chrysostom continues, "Since then it is not possible to have one's hopes of salvation in another, but [it must be] in one's self after the lovingkindness of God, let us do all things, I entreat you, so that our conduct may be pure, and our course of life the best, and that it may not receive any stain even from the beginning. But if not, at all events, let us not sleep after the stain, but continue always washing away the pollution by repentance, by tears, by prayers, by works of mercy."

But Jesus taught in John 13 that one who is washed only needs to wash his feet and he is all clean. And we read in **Proverbs 28 (KJV):**13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

A simple confession of our sin, and the forsaking of that sin, is enough to keep us in fellowship with the Lord. But if we have wronged someone, we must make amends in as much as possible.

Chrysostom continues, "What then, you say, if I cannot do works of mercy? But thou hast "a cup of cold water" (Matt. x. 42), however poor thou art."

He refers to **Matthew 10 (KJV):**42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

He continues, "But thou hast "two mites" (Mark xii. 42), in whatever poverty thou art;"

He refers to **Mark 12 (KJV):**42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

He continues, "but thou hast feet, so as to visit the sick, so as to enter into a prison; but thou hast a roof, so as to receive strangers. For there is no pardon, no, none for him who does not do works of mercy."

But we are not saved by our works, but by God's grace, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):**8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

He concludes, “These things we say to you continually, that we may effect if it be but a little by the continued repetition: these things we say, not caring so much for those who receive the benefits, as for yourselves. For ye give to them indeed things here, but in return you receive heavenly things: which may we all obtain, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father be glory, together with the Holy Ghost, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.”

We can agree with Chrysostom in his encouragement to live a life pleasing to the Lord. But telling disciples to continually remember their sins is equivalent to shaming on them continually. It does not allow us to be free from our past. And this God has provided for by the blood of Jesus Christ. There is no other remission for sin other than the blood of Jesus Christ.

## Commentary Summary

Concerning **The Doctrine of Repentance**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY IX, page 410-413**, he refers to **Hebrews 6 (KJV):**4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

He then says, “What then (you say)? Is there no repentance? There is repentance, but there is no second baptism: but repentance there is, and it has great force, and is able to set free from the burden of his sins, if he will, even him that hath been baptized much in sins, and to establish in safety him who is in danger, even though he should have come unto the very depth of wickedness. And this is evident from many places. “For,” says one, “doth not he that falleth rise again? Or he that turneth away, doth not he turn back to [God]?” (Jer. viii. 4)”

And he says, “Again we fell away, and not even so does He punish us, but has given medicine of repentance, which is sufficient to put away and blot out all our sins; only if we knew the nature of the medicine, and how we ought to apply it.”

And he says, “What then is the medicine of Repentance and how is it made up? First, of the condemnation of our own sins;”

And he says, “Secondly, of great humbleness of mind: For it is like a golden chain; if one have hold of the beginning, all will follow. Because if thou confess thy sin as one ought to confess, the soul is humbled. For conscience turning it on itself causeth it to be subdued.”

And he says, “Other things too must be added to humbleness of mind if it be such as the blessed David knew, when he said, “A broken and a contrite heart God will not despise.””

And he says, “And after humbleness of mind, there is need of intense prayers, of many tears, tears by day, and tears by night: for, he says, “every night, will I wash my bed, I will water my couch with my tears. I am weary with my groaning.” (Ps. vi. 6) And again, “For I have eaten ashes as it were bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.” (Ps. cii. 9)”

And he says, “And after prayer thus intense, there is need of much almsgiving: for this it is which especially gives strength to the medicine of repentance.”

And he adds, “And as there is a medicine among the physicians’ helps which receives many herbs, but one is the essential, so also in case of repentance this is the essential herb, yea,

it may be everything. For hear what the Divine Scripture says, “Give alms, and all things shall be clean.” (Luke xi. 41)”

And he says, “But let us all humble our own souls by alms-giving and forgiving our neighbors their trespasses, by not remembering injuries, nor avenging ourselves.”

And he says, “Also, the converting our brethren from their wandering.”

And he adds, “But now that we have learned by what means repentance and remission is brought to a successful issue, and that we shall be able entirely to escape, if we be willing to use it aright, what forgiveness can we possibly obtain, if we do not even enter on the thought of our sins? since if this were done, all would be accomplished.”

Chrysostom believed that at baptism, our sins were washed away. Then, if we sinned after baptism, we had to atone for our sins. The process whereby this was done was in repentance. Repentance was like a “medicine” made up of first, the condemnation of our sins, second, the humbleness of mind, then prayer, and then the essential herb of giving alms.

But repentance in the Greek means to have a change of mind. In the Hebrew, it had to do with returning, or turning back to God. So the sense in the Scriptures of repentance is to have a change of mind about our sin, and about Jesus. Then it is a turning to God, that is, a surrender to God. It has nothing to do with making atonement for our sin. Our sin has already been atoned for by Jesus’ death on the cross. He is the propitiation for our sins. It is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins, as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):4** For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

The only one who could atone for our sins was Jesus Christ, who was without sin. And this He has done by dying on the cross. He is the way, the truth, and the life, as we read in **John 14 (KJV):6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

After we are born again, we are to walk in the light, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

When we are born again, our spirit is born of God and made new. We are washed from all our sin, and we have a standing of righteousness. Now we will go through a progressive sanctification in our soul, that is, our mind, will, heart, emotions, and conscience. If we sin, we only have to confess our sin, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Concerning **Punishing Ourselves**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY XXVIII, page 492-493**, he says, “He that is penitent ought never to forget his sin, but on the one hand, to beseech God not to remember it; while on the other, he himself never forgets it. If we remember it, God will forget it. Let us exact punishment from ourselves; let us accuse ourselves; thus shall we propitiate the Judge.”

Speaking of our soul, he says, “But let us persuade it that it has sinned; let us persuade it that it has sinned, that it may also repent, in order that having repented it may escape torment. How dost thou think to obtain pardon for thy sins, tell me, when thou hast not yet confessed them?”

And he adds, “Assuredly he is worthy of compassion and kindness who has sinned. But thou who hast not yet persuaded thyself [that thou hast sinned], how dost thou think to be pitied, when thou art thus without shame for some things?”

And he says, “I do not say to thee, Make a parade of thyself, nor accuse thyself before others: but be persuaded by the prophet when he saith, “Reveal thy way unto the Lord.” (Ps. xxxvii. 5)”

And he says, “[7.] Seest thou how many excellent [effects] are produced from the remembrance of our sins? Let us then write them in our minds. I know that the soul does not endure a recollection which is so bitter: but let us constrain and force it. It is better that it should be gnawed with the remembrance now, than at that time with vengeance.”

But continual remembrance of our sins will only bring us down. Trusting in the Lord means trusting in what He has done for us. This brings us unending joy. It is not about us, but about Him.

And he says, “For that this is true, and that in that day the sins of us all are [to be] publicly displayed, unless we now do them away by continual remembrance, hear how cruelty and inhumanity are publicly exposed, “I was an hungered” (He says) “and ye gave Me no meat.” (Matt. xxv. 42)”

And speaking of sin after baptism, he says, “But if not, at all events, let us not sleep after the stain, but continue always washing away the pollution by repentance, by tears, by prayers, by works of mercy.”

Let us read again in **Proverbs 28 (KJV):13** He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

And in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

God does not require us to punish ourselves. We just need to confess our sins, and He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness. But He will chasten us, and scourge every child He receives as a good Father. If we have wronged someone, He would have us make amends. This may take time, and may not depend on us if the one we have wronged is not willing to forgive.

# Marriage

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, Letters to the Fallen Theodore, Letter 2, page 87, 113-114**

## INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTERS TO THEODORE.

These two letters, which are the earliest of Chrysostom's extant works, are addressed to a friend who had been a member of the little ascetic brotherhood which Chrysostom and Basil formed, soon after they had abandoned secular life, as described in the first book of the Treatise on the Priesthood. Theodore, like Maximus, afterwards Bishop of Isaurian Seleucia, who was another member of the same fraternity, had been a fellow student with Chrysostom and Basil in the school of Libanius, but was a few years younger than either of them. The strain upon his powers of religious devotion had proved too much for him; he had withdrawn from the ascetic brotherhood, and relapsed for a season into worldly habits, being fascinated by the beauty of a young lady named Hermione, whom he was anxious to marry. His fall was regarded with almost as much sorrow and dismay by his austere friends as if he had plunged into deadly vice. Prayers were continually offered, and great efforts made for his restoration, amongst which must be reckoned the two letters which are here translated. They are the productions of a youthful enthusiast, and as such allowances must be made for them; but they abound in passages of great beauty and power, especially upon the infinite love and forbearance of God, as encouraging to repentance and withholding from despair and recklessness into which Theodore seems to have been inclined to sink. The appeal of Chrysostom, combined with the efforts of his other friends, was not in vain. Theodore once more renounced the world and his matrimonial intentions, and retired into the seclusion of the fraternity. In A.D. 383, when he was about thirty-three years of age, he was ordained priest, and in 392 he became Bishop of Mopsuestia, where he died in A.D. 428 at the age of seventy-eight. Chrysostom seems to have retained his affection to him to the last, and during his own exile at Cucusus, A.D. 404-7, wrote a letter to him which is full of expressions of fervent admiration and regard. He was a most voluminous writer, and may be regarded as the ablest representative of the school of Biblical interpretation founded by Diodorus of Tarsus, under whom he had studied, together with Chrysostom and Basil. A fierce controversy raged during the fifth and sixth centuries respecting the orthodoxy of some of his writings which some accused of preparing the way for Nestorianism. When this had died down his name was comparatively forgotten, and it is only in modern times that his great merits as a commentator, who boldly applied the historical and grammatical methods of examination to the books of Holy Scripture, have been fully recognized.

3. Which of all things in the world seems to you most desirable and enviable? No doubt you will say government, and wealth, and public reputation. And yet what is more wretched than these things when they are compared with the liberty of Christians. For the ruler is subjected to the wrath of the populace and to the irrational impulses of the multitude, and to the fear of higher rulers, and to anxieties on behalf of those who are ruled, and the ruler of yesterday becomes a private citizen today; for this present life in no wise differs from a stage, but just as there, one man fills the position of a king, a second of a general, and a third of a soldier, but when evening has come on the king is no king, the ruler no ruler, and the general no

general, even so also in that day each man will receive his due reward not according to the outward part which he has played but according to his works. Well! is glory a precious thing which perishes like the power of grass? or wealth, the possessors of which are pronounced unhappy? “For woe” we read, “to the rich;” (Luke 6:24) and again, “Woe unto them who trust in their strength and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches!” (Psalm 49:6) But the Christian never becomes a private person after being a ruler, or a poor man after being rich, or without honour after being held in honour; but he abides rich even when he is poor, and is exalted when he strives to humble himself; and from the rule which he exercises no human being can depose him, but only one of those rulers who are under the power of this world’s potentate of darkness.

“Marriage is right,” you say; I also assent to this. For “marriage,” we read, “is honourable and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge;” (Hebrews 13:4) but it is no longer possible for thee to observe the right conditions of marriage. For if he who has been attached to a heavenly bridegroom deserts him, and joins himself to a wife the act is adultery, even if you call it marriage ten thousand times over; or rather it is worse than adultery in proportion as God is greater than man. Let no one deceive thee saying: “God hath not forbidden to marry;” I know this as well as you; He has not forbidden to marry, but He has forbidden to commit adultery, may you be preserved from ever engaging thyself in marriage! And why dost thou marvel if marriage is judged as if it were adultery, when God is disregarded? Slaughter has brought about righteousness, and mercy has been a cause of condemnation more than slaughter; because the latter has been according to the mind of God but the former has been forbidden. It was reckoned to Phinees for righteousness that he pierced to death the woman who committed fornication, together with the fornicator; (Numbers 25:7-11) but Samuel, that saint of God although he wept and mourned and entreated for whole nights, could not rescue Saul from the condemnation which God issued against him, because he saved, contrary to the design of God, the king of the alien tribes whom he ought to have slain. (1 Samuel 13, 1 Samuel 15:11) If then mercy has been a cause of condemnation more than slaughter because God was disobeyed, what wonder is it if marriage condemns more than adultery when it involves the rejection of Christ? For, as I said at the beginning, if you were a private person no one would indict you for shunning to serve as a soldier; but now thou art no longer thy own master, being engaged in the service of so great a king. For if the wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband, (1 Corinthians 7:4) much more they who live in Christ must be unable to have authority over their body. He who is now despised, the same will then be our judge; think ever on Him and the river of fire: “For a river of fire” we read, “winds before His face;” (Daniel 7:10) for it is impossible for one who has been delivered over by Him to the fire to expect any end of his punishment. But the unseemly pleasures of this life no-wise differ from shadows and dreams; for before the deed of sin is completed, the conditions of pleasure are extinguished; and the punishments for these have no limit. And the sweetness lasts for a little while but the pain is everlasting.

Tell me, what is there stable in this world? Wealth which often does not last even to the evening? Or glory? Hear what a certain righteous man says: “My life is swifter than a runner.” (Job 9:25) For as they dash away before they stand still, even so does this glory take to flight before it has fairly reached us. Nothing is more precious than the soul; and even they who have gone to the extremity of folly have not been ignorant of this; for “there is no equivalent of the soul” is the saying of a heathen poet. (Homer Il. ix. 401) I know that thou hast become much



weaker for the struggle with the Evil One; I know that thou art standing in the very midst of the flame of pleasures; but if thou wilt say to the enemy “We do not serve thy pleasures, and we do not bow down to the root of all thy evils;” if thou wilt bend thine eye upward, the Saviour will even now shake out the fire, and will burn up those who have flung thee into it, and will send to thee in the midst of the furnace a cloud, and dew, and a rustling breeze, so that the fire may not lay hold of thy thought or thy conscience. Only do not consume thyself with fire. For the arms and engines of besiegers have often been unable to destroy the fortification of cities, but the treachery of one or two of the citizens dwelling inside has betrayed them to the enemy without any trouble on his part. And now if none of thy thoughts within betray thee, should the Evil One bring countless engines against thee from without he will bring them in vain.

**Commentary:** Chrysostom is writing to Theodore about his decision to marry which Chrysostom was against because Theodore had already committed to a the “brotherhood”. We read in the INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTERS TO THEODORE, “The strain upon his powers of religious devotion had proved too much for him; he had withdrawn from the ascetic brotherhood, and relapsed for a season into worldly habits, being fascinated by the beauty of a young lady named Hermione, whom he was anxious to marry. His fall was regarded with almost as much sorrow and dismay by his austere friends as if he had plunged into deadly vice.”

With this understanding of the background of this letter, Chrysostom says, “3. Which of all things in the world seems to you most desirable and enviable? No doubt you will say government, and wealth, and public reputation. And yet what is more wretched than these things when they are compared with the liberty of Christians. For the ruler is subjected to the wrath of the populace and to the irrational impulses of the multitude, and to the fear of higher rulers, and to anxieties on behalf of those who are ruled, and the ruler of yesterday becomes a private citizen today; for this present life in no wise differs from a stage, but just as there, one man fills the position of a king, a second of a general, and a third of a soldier, but when evening has come on the king is no king, the ruler no ruler, and the general no general, even so also in that day each man will receive his due reward not according to the outward part which he has played but according to his works. Well! is glory a precious thing which perishes like the power of grass? or wealth, the possessors of which are pronounced unhappy? “For woe” we read, “to the rich;” (Luke 6:24) and again, “Woe unto them who trust in their strength and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches!” (Psalm 49:6)”

He refers to **Luke 6 (KJV):24** But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

And to **Psalm 49 (KJV):6** They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; 7 None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:

He continues, “But the Christian never becomes a private person after being a ruler, or a poor man after being rich, or without honour after being held in honour; but he abides rich even when he is poor, and is exalted when he strives to humble himself; and from the rule which he exercises no human being can depose him, but only one of those rulers who are under the power of this world’s potentate of darkness.

“Marriage is right,” you say; I also assent to this. For “marriage,” we read, “is honourable and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge;” (Hebrews 13:4)”

He refers to **Hebrews 13 (KJV):4** Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

He continues, “but it is no longer possible for thee to observe the right conditions of marriage. For if he who has been attached to a heavenly bridegroom deserts him, and joins himself to a wife the act is adultery, even if you call it marriage ten thousand times over; or rather it is worse than adultery in proportion as God is greater than man.”

Theodore was part of the ascetic brotherhood which Chrysostom and Basil formed, soon after they had abandoned secular life. So Chrysostom will not allow Theodore to marry because, according to the rules of the brotherhood, they were already married to the “heavenly bridegroom”.

He continues, “Let no one deceive thee saying: “God hath not forbidden to marry;” I know this as well as you; He has not forbidden to marry, but He has forbidden to commit adultery, may you be preserved from ever engaging thyself in marriage! And why dost thou marvel if marriage is judged as if it were adultery, when God is disregarded?”

If Theodore were to marry the girl he had met, in the eyes of Chrysostom, this would be committing adultery.

He continues, “Slaughter has brought about righteousness, and mercy has been a cause of condemnation more than slaughter; because the latter has been according to the mind of God but the former has been forbidden. It was reckoned to Phinees for righteousness that he pierced to death the woman who committed fornication, together with the fornicator; (Numbers 25:7-11) but Samuel, that saint of God although he wept and mourned and entreated for whole nights, could not rescue Saul from the condemnation which God issued against him, because he saved, contrary to the design of God, the king of the alien tribes whom he ought to have slain. (1 Samuel 13, 1 Samuel 15:11)”

He refers in context to **Numbers 25 (KJV):1** And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. 2 And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. 3 And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. 4 And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel. 5 And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baalpeor. 6 And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 7 And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; 8 And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel.

And to **1 Samuel 13 (KJV):11** And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; 12 Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering. 13 And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God,

which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. 14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee.

Now to give context, let us read in **1 Samuel 15 (KJV)**: 1 Samuel also said unto Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord. 2 Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. 3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

And in **1 Samuel 15 (KJV)**: 7 And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt. 8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly. 10 Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying, 11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night.

And in **1 Samuel 15 (KJV)**: 22 And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

The Lord spoke to Saul through Samuel, and told Saul to “smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass”. But Saul “rejected the word of the Lord”, and kept “the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good”, and he spared Agag, “the king of the Amalekites alive”.

Chrysostom continues, “If then mercy has been a cause of condemnation more than slaughter because God was disobeyed, what wonder is it if marriage condemns more than adultery when it involves the rejection of Christ?”

But marriage does not involve the rejection of Christ. It was the doctrine of the priesthood of the early Church that had taken over the ministry of the churches. It was also this doctrine that made celibacy a requirement. Once one had made a vow of some sort to be a priest, it was considered adultery if one were to seek to be married. But we read in **1 Timothy 3 (KJV)**: 1 This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

There is no mention of priests here. The bishop was an overseer. The doctrine of the priesthood in the early Church had so darkened their understanding of the Scripture, that the plain sense of the Scripture was ignored.

Chrysostom continues, “For, as I said at the beginning, if you were a private person no one would indict you for shunning to serve as a soldier; but now thou art no longer thy own

master, being engaged in the service of so great a king. For if the wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband, (1 Corinthians 7:4) much more they who live in Christ must be unable to have authority over their body.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):4** The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

Did Chrysostom imagine that only priests “live in Christ”? But all believers are baptized into the body of Christ, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

He continues, “He who is now despised, the same will then be our judge; think ever on Him and the river of fire: “For a river of fire” we read, “winds before His face;” (Daniel 7:10) for it is impossible for one who has been delivered over by Him to the fire to expect any end of his punishment.”

He refers to **Daniel 7 (KJV):10** A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

He continues, “But the unseemly pleasures of this life nowise differ from shadows and dreams; for before the deed of sin is completed, the conditions of pleasure are extinguished; and the punishments for these have no limit. And the sweetness lasts for a little while but the pain is everlasting.

Tell me, what is there stable in this world? Wealth which often does not last even to the evening? Or glory? Hear what a certain righteous man says: “My life is swifter than a runner.” (Job 9:25)”

He refers to **Job 9 (KJV):25** Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good.

He continues, “For as they dash away before they stand still, even so does this glory take to flight before it has fairly reached us. Nothing is more precious than the soul; and even they who have gone to the extremity of folly have not been ignorant of this; for “there is no equivalent of the soul” is the saying of a heathen poet. (**Schaff Note:** Homer Il. ix. 401) I know that thou hast become much weaker for the struggle with the Evil One; I know that thou art standing in the very midst of the flame of pleasures; but if thou wilt say to the enemy “We do not serve thy pleasures, and we do not bow down to the root of all thy evils;” if thou wilt bend thine eye upward, the Saviour will even now shake out the fire, and will burn up those who have flung thee into it, and will send to thee in the midst of the furnace a cloud, and dew, and a rustling breeze, so that the fire may not lay hold of thy thought or thy conscience. Only do not consume thyself with fire. For the arms and engines of besiegers have often been unable to destroy the fortification of cities, but the treachery of one or two of the citizens dwelling inside has betrayed them to the enemy without any trouble on his part. And now if none of thy thoughts within betray thee, should the Evil One bring countless engines against thee from without he will bring them in vain.”

Chrysostom imagined that Theodore was destined for hell because of his “adultery” with the woman, for according to Chrysostom, Theodore was already married to the “Bridegroom” by his commitment to the “ascetic brotherhood”.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, Homily VII, Matt. II. 4-5, page 49**

8. “Well,” saith one, “and what dost thou require us to do? to occupy the mountains, and become monks?” Why it is this which makes me sigh, that ye think them alone to be properly concerned with decency and chastity; and yet assuredly Christ made His laws common to all. Thus, when He saith, “if any one look on a woman to lust after her,” He speaks not to the solitary, but to him also that hath a wife; since in fact that mount was at that time filled with all kinds of persons of that description. Form then in thy mind an image of that amphitheatre, and hate thou this, which is the devil’s. Neither do thou condemn the severity of my speech. For I neither “forbid to marry,” (1 Tim. iv. 4) nor hinder thy taking pleasure; but I would have this be done in chastity, not with shame, and reproach, and imputations without end. I do not make it a law that you are to occupy the mountains and the deserts, but to be good and considerate and chaste, dwelling in the midst of the city. For in fact all our laws are common to the monks also, except marriage; yea rather, even with respect to this, Paul commands us to put ourselves altogether on a level with them; saying, “For the fashion of this world passeth away:” that “they that have wives be as though they had none.” (1 Cor. vii. 31, 29)

**Commentary:** In summary, he says, “For I neither “forbid to marry,” (1 Tim. iv. 2) nor hinder thy taking pleasure; but I would have this be done in chastity, not with shame, and reproach, and imputations without end.”

He refers to **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):3** Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

Chrysostom, unlike Augustine, would not hinder those who are married from their “taking pleasure”.

And as he says, “For in fact all our laws are common to the monks also, except marriage”, he refers to the law of celibacy in the early Church for the priests and for the monks.

And he refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):31** And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

And to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):29** But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none;

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XIX, page 105-108**

1 Cor. vii. 1, 2

Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote to me: it is good for a man not to touch a woman. But because of fornications, let each man have his own wife; and let each woman have her own husband.

Having corrected the three heaviest things laid to their charge, one, the distraction of the Church, another, about the fornicator, a third, about the covetous person, he thenceforth uses a milder sort of speech. And he interposes some exhortation and advice about marriage and

virginity, giving the hearers some respite from more unpleasant subjects. But in the second Epistle he does the contrary; he begins from the milder topics, and ends with the more distressing. And here also, after he has finished his discourse about virginity, he again launches forth into matter more akin to reproof; not setting all down in regular order, but varying his discourse in either kind, as the occasion required and the exigency of the matters in hand.

Wherefore he says, “Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me.” For they had written to him, “Whether it was right to abstain from one’s wife, or not:” and writing back in answer to this and giving rules about marriage, he introduces also the discourse concerning virginity: “It is good for a man not to touch a woman.” “For if,” says he, “thou enquire what is the excellent and greatly superior course, it is better not to have any connection whatever with a woman: but if you ask what is safe and helpful to thine own infirmity, be connected by marriage.”

But since it was likely, as also happens now, that the husband might be willing but the wife not, or perhaps the reverse, mark how he discusses each case. Some indeed say that this discourse was addressed by him to priests. But I, judging from what follows, could not affirm that it was so: since he would not have given his advice in general terms. For if he were writing these things only for the priests, he would have said, “It is good for the teacher not to touch a woman.” But now he has made it of universal application, saying, “It is good for a man;” not for priest only. And again, “Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife.” He said not, “You who are a priest and teacher,” but indefinitely. And the whole of his speech goes on entirely in the same tones. And in saying, “Because of fornications, let every man have his own wife” by the very cause alleged for the concession he guides men to continence.

[2.] Ver. 3. “Let the husband pay the wife the honor due to her: in like manner the wife the husband.”

Now what is the meaning of “the due honor? The wife hath not power over her own body;” but is both the slave and the mistress of the husband. And if you decline the service which is due, you have offended God. But if thou wish to withdraw thyself, it must be with the husband’s permission, though it be but a for short time. For this is why he calls the matter a debt, to shew that no one is master of himself but that they are servants to each other.

When therefore thou seest an harlot tempting thee, say, “My body is not mine, but my wife’s.” The same also let the woman say to those who would undermine her chastity, “My body is not mine, but my husband’s.”

Now if neither husband nor wife hath power even over their own body, much less have they over their property. Hear ye, all that have husbands and all that have wives: that if you must not count your body your own, much less your money.

Elsewhere I grant He gives to the husband abundant precedence, both in the New Testament, and the Old saying, (**Schaff Note:** ἡ ἀποστρόφή σου, LXX Gen. iii. 16) “Thy turning shall be towards thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” Paul doth so too by making a distinction thus, and writing, (Ephes. v. 25, 33) “Husbands, love your wives; and let the wife see that she reverence her husband.” But in this place we hear no more of greater and less, but it is one and the same right. Now why is this? Because his speech was about chastity. “In all other things,” says he, “let the husband have the prerogative; but not so where the question is about chastity.” “The husband hath no power over his own body, neither the wife.” There is great equality of honor, and no prerogative.

[3.] Ver. 5. “Defraud ye not one the other, except it be by consent.”

What then can this mean? “Let not the wife,” says he, “exercise continence, if the husband be unwilling; nor yet the husband without the wife’s consent.” Why so? Because great evils spring from this sort of continence. For adulteries and fornications and the ruin of families have often arisen from hence. For if when men have their own wives they commit fornication, much more if you defraud them of this consolation. And well says he, “Defraud not; fraud” here, and “debt” above, that he might shew the strictness of the right of dominion in question. For that one should practice continence against the will of the other is “defrauding;” but not so, with the other’s consent: any more than I count myself defrauded, if after persuading me you take away any thing of mine. Since only he defrauds who takes against another’s will and by force. A thing which many women do, working sin rather than righteousness, and thereby becoming accountable for the husband’s uncleanness, and rending all asunder. Whereas they should value concord above all things, since this is more important than all beside.

We will, if you please, consider it with a view to actual cases. Thus, suppose a wife and husband, and let the wife be continent, without consent of her husband; well then, if hereupon he commit fornication, or though abstaining from fornication fret and grow restless and be heated and quarrel and give all kind of trouble to his wife; where is all the gain of the fasting and the continence, a breach being made in love? There is none. For what strange reproaches, how much trouble, how great a war must of course arise! since when in an house man and wife are at variance, the house will be no better off than a ship in a storm when the master is upon ill terms with the man at the head. Wherefore he saith, “Defraud not one another, unless it be by consent for a season, that ye may give yourselves unto prayer.” It is prayer with unusual earnestness which he here means. For if he is forbidding those who have intercourse with one another to pray, how could “pray without ceasing” have any place? It is possible then to live with a wife and yet give heed unto prayer. But by continence prayer is made more perfect. For he did not say merely, “That ye may pray;” but, “That ye may give yourselves unto it;” as though what he speaks of might cause not uncleanness but much occupation.

“And may be together again, that Satan tempt you not.” Thus lest it should seem to be a matter of express enactment, he adds the reason. And what is it? “That Satan tempt you not.” And that you may understand that it is not the devil only who causeth this crime, I mean adultery, he adds, “because of your incontinency.”

“But this I say by way of permission, not of commandment. For I would that all men were even as I myself; in a state of continence.” This he doth in many places when he is advising about difficult matters; he brings forward himself, and says, “Be ye imitators of me.”

“Howbeit each man hath his own gift from God, one after this manner, and another after that.” Thus since he had heavily charged them saying, “for your incontinence,” he again comforteth them by the words, “each one hath his own gift of God;” not declaring that towards that virtue there is no need of zeal on our part, but, as I was saying before, to comfort them. For if it be a “gift,” and man contributes nothing thereunto, how sayest thou, “But (v. 8) I say to the unmarried and to widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I: (v. 9) but if they have not continency let them marry?” Do you see the strong sense of Paul how he both signifies that continence is better, and yet puts no force on the person who cannot attain to it; fearing lest some offence arise?

“For it is better to marry than to burn.” He indicates how great is the tyranny of

concupiscence. What he means is something like this: “If you have to endure much violence and burning desire, withdraw yourself from your pains and toils, lest haply you be subverted.”

[4.] Ver. 10. “But to the married I give charge, yet not I, but the Lord.”

Because it is a law expressly appointed by Christ which he is about to read to them about the “not putting away a wife without fornication;” (S. Matt. v. 32., xix. 9; S. Mark x. 11; S. Luke xvi. 18) therefore he says, “Not I.” True it is what was before spoken though it were not expressly stated, yet it also is His decree. But this, you see, He had delivered in express words. So that the words “I and not I” have this difference of meaning. For that you might not imagine even his own words to be human, therefore he added, “For I think that I also have the Spirit of God.”

Now what is that which “to the married the Lord commanded? That the wife depart not from her husband: (v. 11) but if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled unto her husband.” Here, seeing that both on the score of continence and other pretexts, and because of infirmities of temper, (μικροψυχίας.) it fell out that separations took place: it were better, he says, that such things should not be at all; but however if they take place, let the wife remain with her husband, if not to cohabit with him, yet so as not to introduce any other to be her husband.

Ver. 12. “But to the rest speak I, not the Lord. If any brother have a wife that believeth not, and she is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her. And if any woman hath an husband that believeth not, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave him.”

For as when discoursing about separating from fornicators, he made the matter easy by the correction which he applied to his words, saying, “Howbeit, not altogether with the fornicators of this world;” so also in this case he provideth for the abundant easiness of the duty, saying, “If any wife have a husband, or husband a wife, that believeth not, let him not leave her.” What sayest thou? “If he be an unbeliever, let him remain with the wife, but not if he be a fornicator? And yet fornication is a less sin than unbelief.” I grant, fornication is a less sin: but God spares thine infirmities extremely. And this is what He doth about the sacrifice, saying, (S. Matt. v. 24) “Leave the sacrifice, and be reconciled to thy brother.” This also in the case of the man who owed ten thousand talents. For him too He did not punish for owing him ten thousand talents, but for demanding back a hundred pence from his fellow servant He took vengeance on him.

Then lest the woman might fear, as though she became unclean because of intercourse with her husband, he says, “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the husband.” And yet, if “he that is joined to an harlot is one body,” it is quite clear that the woman also who is joined to an idolater is one body. Well: it is one body; nevertheless she becomes not unclean, but the cleanness of the wife overcomes the uncleanness of the husband; and again, the cleanness of the believing husband overcomes the uncleanness of the unbelieving wife.

How then in this case is the uncleanness overcome, and therefore the intercourse allowed; while in the woman who prostitutes herself, the husband is not condemned in casting her out? Because here there is hope that the lost member may be saved through the marriage; but in the other case the marriage has already been dissolved; and there again both are corrupted; but here the fault is in one only of the two. I mean something like this: she that has been guilty of fornication is utterly abominable: if then “he that is joined to an harlot is one body,” he also



becomes abominable by having connection with an harlot; wherefore all the purity flits away. But in the case before us it is not so. But how? The idolater is unclean but the woman is not unclean. For if indeed she were a partner with him in that wherein he is unclean, I mean his impiety, she herself would also become unclean. But now the idolater is unclean in one way, and the wife holds communion with him in another wherein he is not unclean. For marriage and mixture of bodies is that wherein the communion consists.

Again, there is a hope that this man may be reclaimed by his wife for she is made completely his own: but for the other it is not very easy. For how will she who dishonored him in former times and became another's and destroyed the rights of marriage, have power to reclaim him whom she had wronged; him, moreover, who still remains to her as an alien?

Again in that case, after the fornication the husband is not a husband: but here, although the wife be an idolatress, the husband's rights are not destroyed.

However, he doth not simply recommend cohabitation with the unbeliever, but with the qualification that he wills it. Wherefore he said, "And he himself be content to dwell with her." For, tell me, what harm is there when the duties of piety remain unimpaired and there are good hopes about the unbeliever, that those already joined should so abide and not bring in occasions of unnecessary warfare? For the question now is not about those who have never yet come together, but about those who are already joined. He did not say, If any one wish to take an unbelieving wife, but, "If any one hath an unbelieving wife." Which means, If any after marrying or being married have received the word of godliness, and then the other party which had continued in unbelief still yearn for them to dwell together, let not the marriage be broken off. "For," saith he, "the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife." So great is the superabundance of thy purity.

What then, is the Greek holy? Certainly not: for he said not, He is holy; but, "He is sanctified in his wife." And this he said, not to signify that he is holy, but to deliver the woman as completely as possible from her fear and lead the man to desire the truth. For the uncleanness is not in the bodies wherein there is communion, but in the mind and the thoughts. And here follows the proof; namely, that if thou continuing unclean have offspring, the child, not being of thee alone, is of course unclean or half clean. But now it is not unclean. To which effect he adds, "else were your children unclean; but now are they holy;" that is, not unclean. But the Apostle calls them, "holy," by the intensity of the expression again casting out the dread arising from that sort of suspicion.

Ver. 15. "Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart," for in this case the matter is no longer fornication. But what is the meaning of, "if the unbelieving departeth?" For instance, if he bid thee sacrifice and take part in his ungodliness on account of thy marriage, or else part company; it were better the marriage were annulled, and no breach made in godliness. Wherefore he adds, "A brother is not under bondage, nor yet a sister, in such cases." If day by day he buffet thee and keep up combats on this account, it is better to separate. For this is what he glances at, saying, "But God hath called us in peace." For it is the other party who furnished the ground of separation, even as he did who committed uncleanness.

Ver. 16. "For how knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thine husband?" This again refers to that expression, "let her not leave him." That is, "if he makes no disturbance, remain," saith he, "for there is even profit in this; remain and advise and give counsel and persuade." For no teacher will have such power to prevail (Reg. *πεῖσαι*. Bened. *ισχυῖσαι*.) as a

wife. And neither, on one hand, doth he lay any necessity upon her and absolutely demand the point of her, that he may not again do what would be too painful; nor, on the other, doth he tell her to despair: but he leaves the matter in suspense through the uncertainty of the future, saying, “For how knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O husband whether thou shalt save thy wife?”

[5.] And again, ver. 17. “Only as God hath distributed to each man, as the Lord hath called each, so let him walk. Was any one called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Was any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God. Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called. Wast thou called, being a slave? Care not for it.” These things contribute nothing unto faith, saith he. Be not then contentious neither be troubled; for the faith hath cast out all these things.

“Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called. Hast thou been called, having an unbelieving wife? Continue to have her. Cast not out thy wife for the faith’s sake. Hast thou been called, being a slave? Care not for it. Continue to be a slave. Hast thou been called, being in uncircumcision? Remain uncircumcised. Being circumcised, didst thou become a believer? Continue circumcised. For this is the meaning of, “As God hath distributed unto each man.” For these are no hindrances to piety. Thou art called, being a slave; another, with an unbelieving wife; another, being circumcised.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “1 Cor. vii. 1, 2

Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote to me: it is good for a man not to touch a woman. But because of fornications, let each man have his own wife; and let each woman have her own husband.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):** 1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

He continues, “Having corrected the three heaviest things laid to their charge, one, the distraction of the Church, another, about the fornicator, a third, about the covetous person, he thenceforth uses a milder sort of speech. And he interposes some exhortation and advice about marriage and virginity, giving the hearers some respite from more unpleasant subjects. But in the second Epistle he does the contrary; he begins from the milder topics, and ends with the more distressing. And here also, after he has finished his discourse about virginity, he again launches forth into matter more akin to reproof; not setting all down in regular order, but varying his discourse in either kind, as the occasion required and the exigency of the matters in hand.

Wherefore he says, “Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me.” For they had written to him, “Whether it was right to abstain from one’s wife, or not:” and writing back in answer to this and giving rules about marriage, he introduces also the discourse concerning virginity: “It is good for a man not to touch a woman.” “For if,” says he, “thou enquire what is the excellent and greatly superior course, it is better not to have any connection whatever with a woman: but if you ask what is safe and helpful to thine own infirmity, be connected by marriage.”

But since it was likely, as also happens now, that the husband might be willing but the

wife not, or perhaps the reverse, mark how he discusses each case. Some indeed say that this discourse was addressed by him to priests. But I, judging from what follows, could not affirm that it was so: since he would not have given his advice in general terms. For if he were writing these things only for the priests, he would have said, “It is good for the teacher not to touch a woman.” But now he has made it of universal application, saying, “It is good for a man;” not for priest only.”

It is interesting that Paul never mentions anything about priests in his epistles. Yet the assumption of the early Church was that “teachers” were priests. Chrysostom is making an assertion here that has no basis in the Scripture. We must not exceed what is written, as we read in **1 Corinthians 4 (NASB):6** Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.

He continues, “And again, “Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife.” He said not, “You who are a priest and teacher,” but indefinitely. And the whole of his speech goes on entirely in the same tones. And in saying, “Because of fornications, let every man have his own wife” by the very cause alleged for the concession he guides men to continence.”

We can follow Chrysostom up to this point. Priests were the ministers of the word in that time. But Paul never mentions priests. And Paul distinctly says, “let every man have his own wife” in 1 Corinthians 7:2, whether a minister or not.

He continues, “[2.] Ver. 3. “Let the husband pay the wife the honor due to her: in like manner the wife the husband.””

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):3** Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

He continues, “Now what is the meaning of “the due honor? The “wife hath not power over her own body;” but is both the slave and the mistress of the husband. And if you decline the service which is due, you have offended God. But if thou wish to withdraw thyself, it must be with the husband’s permission, though it be but a for short time. For this is why he calls the matter a debt, to shew that no one is master of himself but that they are servants to each other.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):5** Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

Now the meaning of “due benevolence” in 1 Corinthians 7:3 is derived from two Greek words. The word “due” in the Greek is **ὀφείλω** (pronounced o-fa'-lo), probably from the base of G3786 (through the idea of accruing); to owe (pecuniarily); figuratively, to be under obligation (ought, must, should); morally, to fail in duty:—behave, be bound, (be) debt(-or), (be) due(-ty), be guilty (indebted), (must) need(-s), ought, owe, should. See also G3785.

**Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3784**

And the word “benevolence” in the Greek is **εὐνοια** (pronounced yü'-noi-ä), from the same as G2132; kindness; euphemistically, conjugal duty:—benevolence, good will. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2133**

From the context in these verses, we see that what is owed is conjugal duty.

Chrysostom continues, “When therefore thou seest an harlot tempting thee, say, “My

body is not mine, but my wife's." The same also let the woman say to those who would undermine her chastity, "My body is not mine, but my husband's."

Now if neither husband nor wife hath power even over their own body, much less have they over their property. Hear ye, all that have husbands and all that have wives: that if you must not count your body your own, much less your money."

He continues, "Elsewhere I grant He gives to the husband abundant precedence, both in the New Testament, and the Old saying, (ἡ ἀποστρόφή σου, LXX Gen. iii. 16) "Thy turning shall be towards thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

He refers to **Genesis 3 (Septuagint):17** And to the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy pains and thy groanings; in pain thou shalt bring forth children, and thy submission shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

And to **Genesis 3 (KJV):16** Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

He continues, "Paul doth so too by making a distinction thus, and writing, (Ephes. v. 25, 33) "Husbands, love your wives; and let the wife see that she reverence her husband."

He refers to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):25** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

And to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):33** Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

And we read also in **Ephesians 5 (NASB):33** Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she respects her husband.

The word "respects" in the Greek is φοβέω (pronounced fo-be'-o), from G5401; to frighten, i.e. (passively) to be alarmed; by analogy, to be in awe of, i.e. revere:—be (+ sore) afraid, fear (exceedingly), reverence. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5399**

Chrysostom continues, "But in this place we hear no more of greater and less, but it is one and the same right. Now why is this? Because his speech was about chastity. "In all other things," says he, "let the husband have the prerogative; but not so where the question is about chastity." "The husband hath no power over his own body, neither the wife." There is great equality of honor, and no prerogative."

Husband and wife are equal heirs of the grace of life, as we read in **1 Peter 3 (KJV):7** Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

He continues, "[3.] Ver. 5. "Defraud ye not one the other, except it be by consent."

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):5** Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

He continues, "What then can this mean? "Let not the wife," says he, "exercise continence, if the husband be unwilling; nor yet the husband without the wife's consent." Why so? Because great evils spring from this sort of continence. For adulteries and fornications and the ruin of families have often arisen from hence. For if when men have their own wives they commit fornication, much more if you defraud them of this consolation. And well says he,

“Defraud not; fraud” here, and “debt” above, that he might shew the strictness of the right of dominion in question. For that one should practice continence against the will of the other is “defrauding;” but not so, with the other’s consent: any more than I count myself defrauded, if after persuading me you take away any thing of mine. Since only he defrauds who takes against another’s will and by force. A thing which many women do, working sin rather than righteousness, and thereby becoming accountable for the husband’s uncleanness, and rending all asunder. Whereas they should value concord above all things, since this is more important than all beside.”

Chrysostom is wise here. He has rightly interpreted this Scripture.

He continues, “We will, if you please, consider it with a view to actual cases. Thus, suppose a wife and husband, and let the wife be continent, without consent of her husband; well then, if hereupon he commit fornication, or though abstaining from fornication fret and grow restless and be heated and quarrel and give all kind of trouble to his wife; where is all the gain of the fasting and the continence, a breach being made in love? There is none. For what strange reproaches, how much trouble, how great a war must of course arise! since when in an house man and wife are at variance, the house will be no better off than a ship in a storm when the master is upon ill terms with the man at the head. Wherefore he saith, “Defraud not one another, unless it be by consent for a season, that ye may give yourselves unto prayer.” It is prayer with unusual earnestness which he here means. For if he is forbidding those who have intercourse with one another to pray, how could “pray without ceasing” have any place? It is possible then to live with a wife and yet give heed unto prayer. But by continence prayer is made more perfect. For he did not say merely, “That ye may pray;” but, “That ye may give yourselves unto it;” as though what he speaks of might cause not uncleanness but much occupation.

“And may be together again, that Satan tempt you not.” Thus lest it should seem to be a matter of express enactment, he adds the reason. And what is it? “That Satan tempt you not.” And that you may understand that it is not the devil only who causeth this crime, I mean adultery, he adds, “because of your incontinency.””

So far Chrysostom has interpreted these verses well. Defraud means to say no to your spouse when they want intimacy.

He continues, ““But this I say by way of permission, not of commandment. For I would that all men were even as I myself; in a state of continence.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):6** But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. **7** For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

He continues, “This he doth in many places when he is advising about difficult matters; he brings forward himself, and says, “Be ye imitators of me.”

“Howbeit each man hath his own gift from God, one after this manner, and another after that.” Thus since he had heavily charged them saying, “for your incontinence,” he again comforteth them by the words, “each one hath his own gift of God;” not declaring that towards that virtue there is no need of zeal on our part, but, as I was saying before, to comfort them. For if it be a “gift,” and man contributes nothing thereunto, how sayest thou, “But (v. 8) I say to the unmarried and to widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I: (v. 9) but if they have not continency let them marry?””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):8** I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. 9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

He continues, “Do you see the strong sense of Paul how he both signifies that continence is better, and yet puts no force on the person who cannot attain to it; fearing lest some offence arise?”

“For it is better to marry than to burn.” He indicates how great is the tyranny of concupiscence. What he means is something like this: “If you have to endure much violence and burning desire, withdraw yourself from your pains and toils, lest haply you be subverted.”

[4.] Ver. 10. “But to the married I give charge, yet not I, but the Lord.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):10** And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:

He continues, “Because it is a law expressly appointed by Christ which he is about to read to them about the “not putting away a wife without fornication;” (S. Matt. v. 32., xix. 9; S. Mark x. 11; S. Luke xvi. 18) therefore he says, “Not I.””

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):32** But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

And to **Matthew 19 (KJV):9** And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

And to **Mark 10 (KJV):11** And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. 12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

And to **Luke 16 (KJV):18** Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

He continues, “True it is what was before spoken though it were not expressly stated, yet it also is His decree. But this, you see, He had delivered in express words. So that the words “I and not I” have this difference of meaning. For that you might not imagine even his own words to be human, therefore he added, “For I think that I also have the Spirit of God.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):40** But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

He continues, “Now what is that which “to the married the Lord commanded? That the wife depart not from her husband: (v. 11) but if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled unto her husband.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):11** But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

He continues, “Here, seeing that both on the score of continence and other pretexts, and because of infirmities of temper, (μικροψυχίας) it fell out that separations took place: it were better, he says, that such things should not be at all; but however if they take place, let the wife remain with her husband, if not to cohabit with him, yet so as not to introduce any other to be her husband.

Ver. 12. “But to the rest speak I, not the Lord. If any brother have a wife that believeth

not, and she is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her. And if any woman hath an husband that believeth not, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave him.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):12** But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. 13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

He continues, “For as when discoursing about separating from fornicators, he made the matter easy by the correction which he applied to his words, saying, “Howbeit, not altogether with the fornicators of this world;” so also in this case he provideth for the abundant easiness of the duty, saying, “If any wife have a husband, or husband a wife, that believeth not, let him not leave her.””

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 5 (KJV):9** I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: 10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. 11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. 12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

He continues, “What sayest thou? “If he be an unbeliever, let him remain with the wife, but not if he be a fornicator? And yet fornication is a less sin than unbelief.” I grant, fornication is a less sin: but God spares thine infirmities extremely. And this is what He doth about the sacrifice, saying, (S. Matt. v. 24) “Leave the sacrifice, and be reconciled to thy brother.””

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):24** Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

He continues, “This also in the case of the man who owed ten thousand talents. For him too He did not punish for owing him ten thousand talents, but for demanding back a hundred pence from his fellow servant He took vengeance on him.”

He refers to **Matthew 18 (KJV):28** But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. 29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

And to **Matthew 18 (KJV):32** Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: 33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? 34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. 35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Chrysostom continues, “Then lest the woman might fear, as though she became unclean because of intercourse with her husband, he says, “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the husband.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):14** For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the

wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

He continues, “And yet, if “he that is joined to an harlot is one body,” it is quite clear that the woman also who is joined to an idolater is one body. Well: it is one body; nevertheless she becomes not unclean, but the cleanness of the wife overcomes the uncleanness of the husband; and again, the cleanness of the believing husband overcomes the uncleanness of the unbelieving wife.

How then in this case is the uncleanness overcome, and therefore the intercourse allowed; while in the woman who prostitutes herself, the husband is not condemned in casting her out? Because here there is hope that the lost member may be saved through the marriage; but in the other case the marriage has already been dissolved; and there again both are corrupted; but here the fault is in one only of the two. I mean something like this: she that has been guilty of fornication is utterly abominable: if then “he that is joined to an harlot is one body,” he also becomes abominable by having connection with an harlot; wherefore all the purity flits away. But in the case before us it is not so. But how? The idolater is unclean but the woman is not unclean. For if indeed she were a partner with him in that wherein he is unclean, I mean his impiety, she herself would also become unclean. But now the idolater is unclean in one way, and the wife holds communion with him in another wherein he is not unclean. For marriage and mixture of bodies is that wherein the communion consists.”

Fornication is grounds for divorce whether one is a believer or not a believer. The Lord does not want us to be victims in our relationships. But one who accepts the Lord when married to an unbeliever is not to divorce them.

Chrysostom continues, “Again, there is a hope that this man may be reclaimed by his wife for she is made completely his own: but for the other it is not very easy. For how will she who dishonored him in former times and became another’s and destroyed the rights of marriage, have power to reclaim him whom she had wronged; him, moreover, who still remains to her as an alien?

Again in that case, after the fornication the husband is not a husband: but here, although the wife be an idolatress, the husband’s rights are not destroyed.

However, he doth not simply recommend cohabitation with the unbeliever, but with the qualification that he wills it. Wherefore he said, “And he himself be content to dwell with her.””

He refers again to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):13** And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

He continues, “For, tell me, what harm is there when the duties of piety remain unimpaired and there are good hopes about the unbeliever, that those already joined should so abide and not bring in occasions of unnecessary warfare? For the question now is not about those who have never yet come together, but about those who are already joined. He did not say, If any one wish to take an unbelieving wife, but, “If any one hath an unbelieving wife.” Which means, If any after marrying or being married have received the word of godliness, and then the other party which had continued in unbelief still yearn for them to dwell together, let not the marriage be broken off. “For,” saith he, “the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife.” So great is the superabundance of thy purity.”

All in all, Chrysostom has interpreted the Scripture well here.

He continues, “What then, is the Greek holy? Certainly not: for he said not, He is holy;



but, "He is sanctified in his wife." And this he said, not to signify that he is holy, but to deliver the woman as completely as possible from her fear and lead the man to desire the truth. For the uncleanness is not in the bodies wherein there is communion, but in the mind and the thoughts. And here follows the proof; namely, that if thou continuing unclean have offspring, the child, not being of thee alone, is of course unclean or half clean. But now it is not unclean. To which effect he adds, "else were your children unclean; but now are they holy;" that is, not unclean. But the Apostle calls them, "holy," by the intensity of the expression again casting out the dread arising from that sort of suspicion.

Ver. 15. "Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart," for in this case the matter is no longer fornication."

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):15** But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

He continues, "But what is the meaning of, "if the unbelieving departeth?" For instance, if he bid thee sacrifice and take part in his ungodliness on account of thy marriage, or else part company; it were better the marriage were annulled, and no breach made in godliness. Wherefore he adds, "A brother is not under bondage, nor yet a sister, in such cases." If day by day he buffet thee and keep up combats on this account, it is better to separate. For this is what he glances at, saying, "But God hath called us in peace." For it is the other party who furnished the ground of separation, even as he did who committed uncleanness.

Ver. 16. "For how knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thine husband?"

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):16** For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?

He continues, "This again refers to that expression, "let her not leave him." That is, "if he makes no disturbance, remain," saith he, "for there is even profit in this; remain and advise and give counsel and persuade." For no teacher will have such power to prevail (**Schaff Note:** Reg. *πεῖσαι*. Bened. *ισχυῖσαι*.) as a wife. And neither, on one hand, doth he lay any necessity upon her and absolutely demand the point of her, that he may not again do what would be too painful; nor, on the other, doth he tell her to despair: but he leaves the matter in suspense through the uncertainty of the future, saying, "For how knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O husband whether thou shalt save thy wife?"

[5.] And again, ver. 17. "Only as God hath distributed to each man, as the Lord hath called each, so let him walk. Was any one called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Was any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God. Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called. Wast thou called, being a slave? Care not for it."

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):17** But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. 18 Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. 20 Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. 21 Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. 22 For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the

Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. 23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. 24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

He continues, "These things contribute nothing unto faith, saith he. Be not then contentious neither be troubled; for the faith hath cast out all these things.

"Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called. Hast thou been called, having an unbelieving wife? Continue to have her. Cast not out thy wife for the faith's sake. Hast thou been called, being a slave? Care not for it. Continue to be a slave. Hast thou been called, being in uncircumcision? Remain uncircumcised. Being circumcised, didst thou become a believer? Continue circumcised. For this is the meaning of, "As God hath distributed unto each man." For these are no hindrances to piety. Thou art called, being a slave; another, with an unbelieving wife; another, being circumcised.""

Chrysostom has done well here. This is the plain sense of the Scripture.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER II, page 15**

Ver. 4. "And that because of the false brethren, privily brought in."

Here arises a very important question, Who were these false brethren? (**Schaff Note:** ["These were formerly Pharisees (Acts xv. 5) and were still so in spirit although they professed Christianity and were baptized." Schaff in *Pop. Com.*—G.A.]) If the Apostles permitted circumcision at Jerusalem, why are those who enjoined it, in accordance with the Apostolic sentence, to be called false brethren? First; because there is a difference between commanding an act to be done, and allowing it after it is done. He who enjoins an act, does it with zeal as necessary, and of primary importance; but he who, without himself commanding it, alloweth another to do it who wishes yields not from a sense of its being necessary but in order to subserve some purpose. We have a similar instance, in Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, in his command to husbands and wives to come together again. To which, that he might not be thought to be legislating for them, he subjoins, "But this I say by way of permission, not of commandment." (1 Cor. vii. 5) For this was not a judgment authoritatively given but an indulgence to their incontinence; as he says, "for your incontinency." Would you know Paul's sentence in this matter? hear his words, "I would that all men were even as I myself," (1 Cor. vii. 7) in continence. And so here, the Apostles made this concession, not as vindicating the law, but as condescending to the infirmities of Judaism. Had they been vindicating the law, they would not have preached to the Jews in one way, and to the Gentiles in another. Had the observance been necessary for unbelievers, then indeed it would plainly have likewise been necessary for all the faithful. But by their decision not to harass the Gentiles on this point, they showed that they permitted it by way of condescension to the Jews. Whereas the purpose of the false brethren was to cast them out of grace, and reduce them under the yoke of slavery again. This is the first difference, and a very wide one. The second is, that the Apostles so acted in Judæa, where the Law was in force, but the false brethren, everywhere, for all the Galatians were influenced by them. Whence it appears that their intention was, not to build up, but entirely to pull down the Gospel, and that the thing was permitted by the Apostles on one ground and zealously practiced by the false brethren on another.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 4. “And that because of the false brethren, privily brought in.”

He refers to **Galatians 2 (KJV):4** And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

He continues, “Here arises a very important question, Who were these false brethren? (**Schaff Note:** [“These were formerly Pharisees (Acts xv. 5) and were still so in spirit although they professed Christianity and were baptized.” Schaff in *Pop. Com.*—G.A.])”

Actually, the false brethren are mentioned in **Acts 15 (KJV):1** And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. 2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

And then we read in **Acts 15 (KJV):5** But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

He continues, “If the Apostles permitted circumcision at Jerusalem, why are those who enjoined it, in accordance with the Apostolic sentence, to be called false brethren? First; because there is a difference between commanding an act to be done, and allowing it after it is done. He who enjoins an act, does it with zeal as necessary, and of primary importance; but he who, without himself commanding it, alloweth another to do it who wishes yields not from a sense of its being necessary but in order to subserve some purpose.”

But when this happened with the apostles, they immediately discussed the matter, as we continue in **Acts 15 (KJV):6** And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. 7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; 9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

Chrysostom continues, “We have a similar instance, in Paul’s Epistle to the Corinthians, in his command to husbands and wives to come together again. To which, that he might not be thought to be legislating for them, he subjoins, “But this I say by way of permission, not of commandment.” (1 Cor. vii. 5) For this was not a judgment authoritatively given but an indulgence to their incontinence; as he says, “for your incontinency.” Would you know Paul’s sentence in this matter? hear his words, “I would that all men were even as I myself,” (1 Cor. vii. 7) in continence.”

Paul actual words in context are as in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):5** Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. 6 But I speak this by

permission, and not of commandment. 7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

So Paul is saying that one has the gift to be married, and one has the gift to be single.

Chrysostom continues, “And so here, the Apostles made this concession, not as vindicating the law, but as condescending to the infirmities of Judaism. Had they been vindicating the law, they would not have preached to the Jews in one way, and to the Gentiles in another. Had the observance been necessary for unbelievers, then indeed it would plainly have likewise been necessary for all the faithful. But by their decision not to harass the Gentiles on this point, they showed that they permitted it by way of condescension to the Jews. Whereas the purpose of the false brethren was to cast them out of grace, and reduce them under the yoke of slavery again. This is the first difference, and a very wide one. The second is, that the Apostles so acted in Judæa, where the Law was in force, but the false brethren, everywhere, for all the Galatians were influenced by them. Whence it appears that their intention was, not to build up, but entirely to pull down the Gospel, and that the thing was permitted by the Apostles on one ground and zealously practiced by the false brethren on another.”

And so we read in **Acts 15 (KJV):**23 And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia. 24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: 25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; 29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILIPPIANS, HOMILY XII, page 316-321**

... These eyes saw Paradise, saw the third heaven: but I count not them so blessed because of this sight, as because of those tears, through which they saw Christ. Blessed, indeed, was that sight; for he himself even glories in it, saying, “Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?” (1 Cor. ix. 1); but more blessed so to weep.

In that sight many have been partakers, and those who have not so been, Christ the rather calls blessed, saying, “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (John xx. 29); but unto this not many have attained. For if to stay here for Christ’s sake were more needful than to depart to Him (Philip. i. 23, 24), for the sake of the salvation of others; surely then to groan for others’ sakes, is more needful even than to see Him. For if for His sake to be in hell, (**Schaff Note:** See St. Chrysostom on Rom. ix. 3, where he says the wish was “to be separated from His presence, not from His love.”) is rather to be desired, than to be with Him; and to be separated from Him for His sake more to be desired than to be with Him, (for this is what he said, “For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ” (Rom. ix. 3), much more is

weeping for His sake. "I ceased not," he saith, "to admonish everyone with tears." (Acts xx. 31) Wherefore? Not fearing the dangers; no; but as if one sitting by a sick man's side, and not knowing what would be the end, should weep for affection, fearing lest he should lose his life; so too did he; when he saw any one diseased, and could not prevail by rebuke, he thenceforward wept. So did Christ also, that happily they might reverence His tears: thus, one sinned, He rebuked him; the rebuked spat upon Him, and sprang aloof; He wept, that haply He might win him even so.

Remember we these tears: thus let us bring up our daughters, thus our sons; weeping when we see them in evil. As many women as wish to be loved, let them remember Paul's tears, and groan: as many of you as are counted blest, as many as are in bridal chambers, as many as are in pleasure, remember these; as many as are in mourning, exchange tears for tears. He mourned not for the dead; but for those that were perishing whilst alive. Shall I tell of other tears? Timothy also wept; for he was this man's disciple; wherefore also when writing to him he said, "Remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy." (2 Tim. i. 4) Many weep even from pleasure. So it is also a matter of pleasure, and that of the utmost intensity. So the tears are not painful: yea, the tears that flow from such sorrow are even better far than those due to worldly pleasure. Hear the Prophet saying, "The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping, he hath heard the voice of my supplication." (Ps. vi. 8) For where is the tear not useful? in prayers? in exhortations? We get them an ill name, by using them not to what they are given us for. When we entreat a sinning brother, we ought to weep, grieving and groaning; when we exhort any one, and he giveth us no heed, but goeth on perishing, we ought to weep. These are the tears of heavenly wisdom. When however one is in poverty, or bodily disease, or dead, not so; for these are not things worthy of tears.

As then we gain an ill name for laughter also, when we use it out of season; so too do we for tears, by having recourse to them unseasonably. For the virtue of each thing then discovers itself when it is brought to its own fitting work, but when to one that is alien, it doth no longer so. For instance, wine is given for cheerfulness, not drunkenness, bread for nourishment, sexual intercourse for the procreation of children. As then these things have gained an ill name, so also have tears. Be there a law laid down, that they be used in prayers and exhortations only, and see how desirable a thing they will become. Nothing doth so wipe out sins, as tears. Tears show even this bodily countenance beautiful; for they win the spectator to pity, they make it respected in our eyes. Nothing is sweeter than tearful eyes. For this is the noblest member we have, and the most beautiful, and the soul's own. And therefore we are so bowed therewith, as though we saw the soul itself lamenting.

I have not spoken these things without a reason; but in order that ye may cease your attendance at weddings, at dancings, at Satanical performances. For see what the devil hath invented. Since nature itself hath withheld women from the stage, and the disgraceful things enacted there, he hath introduced into the women's apartment the furniture of the theater, I mean, wanton men and harlots. This pestilence the custom of marriages hath introduced, or rather, not of marriages, far be it, but of our own silliness. What is it thou doest, O man? Dost thou not know what thou art at? Thou marriest a wife for chastity, and procreation of children; what then mean these harlots? That there may be, one answereth, greater gladness. And yet is not this rather madness? Thou insultest thy bride, thou insultest the women that are invited. For if they are delighted with such proceedings, the thing is an insult. If to see harlots acting

indecorously conferreth any honor, wherefore dost thou not drag thy bride also thither, that she too may see? It is quite indecent and disgraceful to introduce into one's house lewd fellows and dancers, and all that Satanic pomp.

“Remember,” he saith, “my bonds.” Marriage is a bond, a bond ordained of God, a harlot is a severing and a dissolving. It is permitted you to embellish marriage with other things, such as full tables, and apparel. I do not cut off these things, lest I should seem to be clownish to an extreme; and yet Rebecca was content with her veil (**Schaff Note:** θέριστρον, “summer robe.”) only (Gen. xxiv. 65); still I do not cut them off. It is permitted you to embellish and set off marriage with apparel, with the presence of reverend men and reverend women. Why introduceth thou those mockeries? (**Schaff Note:** ἐπιχάρματα, subjects of rejoicing for the enemy.) why those monsters? Tell us what it is thou hearest from them? What? dost thou blush to tell? Dost thou blush, and yet force them to do it? If it is honorable, wherefore dost thou not do it thyself as well? but if disgraceful, wherefore dost thou compel another? Everything should be full of chasteness, of gravity, of orderliness; but I see the reverse, people frisking like camels and mules. For the virgin, her chamber is the only befitting place. “But,” saith one, “she is poor.” Because she is poor, she ought to be modest also; let her have her character in the place of a fortune. Has she no dowry to give with herself? Then why dost thou make her otherwise contemptible through her life and manners? I praise the custom, that virgins attend to do honor to their fellow; matrons attend to do honor to her who is made one of their order. Rightly hath this been ordered. For these are two companies, one of virgins, the other of the married; the one are giving her up, the other receiving her. The bride is between them, neither virgin, nor wife, for she is coming forth from those, and entering into the fellowship of these. But those harlots, what mean they? They ought to hide their faces when marriage is celebrated; they ought to be dug into the earth, (for harlotry is the corruption of marriage,) but we introduce them at our marriages. And, when ye are engaged in any work, ye count it ill omened to speak even a syllable of what is adverse to it; for instance, when thou sowest, when thou drawest off the wine from thy vats, thou wouldest not, even if asked, utter a syllable about vinegar; but here, where the object is chasteness, introduce ye the vinegar? for such is an harlot. When ye are preparing sweet ointment, ye suffer nought ill-scented to be near. Marriage is a sweet ointment. Why then introduceth thou the foul stench of the dunghill into the preparation of thy ointment? What sayest thou? Shall the virgin dance, and yet feel no shame before her fellow? For she ought to have more gravity than the other; she hath at least come forth from the [nurse's] arm, and not from the palæstra. For the virgin ought not to appear publicly at all at a marriage.

Seest thou not how in kings' houses, the honored are within, about the king, the unhonored without? Do thou too be within about the bride. But remain in the house in chasteness, expose not thy virginity. Either company is standing by, the one to show of what sort she is whom they are giving up, the other in order that they may guard her. Why disgracest thou the virgin estate? For if thou art such as this, the same will the bridegroom suspect her to be. If thou wishest to have men in love with thee, this is the part of saleswomen, green-grocers, and handicrafts people. Is not this a shame? To act unseemly is a shame even though it be a king's daughter. For doth her poverty stand in the way? or her course of life? Even if a virgin be a slave, let her abide in modesty. “For in Christ Jesus there can be neither bond nor free.” (Gal. iii. 28)

What? is marriage a theater? It is a mystery and a type of a mighty thing; and even if thou

reverence not it, reverence that whose type it is. "This mystery," saith he, "is great, but I speak in regard of Christ and of the Church." (Eph. v. 32) It is a type of the Church, and of Christ, and dost thou introduce harlots at it? If then, saith one, neither virgins dance, nor the married, who is to dance? No one, for what need is there of dancing? In the Grecian mysteries there are dancings, but in ours, silence and decency, modesty, and bashfulness. A great mystery is being celebrated: forth with the harlots! forth with the profane! How is it a mystery? They come together, and the two make one. Wherefore is it that at his entrance indeed, there was no dancing, no cymbals, but great silence, great stillness; but when they come together, making not a lifeless image, nor yet the image of anything upon earth, but of God Himself, and after his likeness, thou introducest so great an uproar, and disturbest those that are there, and putteth the soul to shame, and confoundest it? They come, about to be made one body. See again a mystery of love! If the two become not one, so long as they continue two, they make not many, but when they are come into oneness, they then make many. What do we learn from this? That great is the power of union. The wise counsel of God at the beginning divided the one into two; and being desirous of showing that even after division it remaineth still one, He suffered not that the one should be of itself enough for procreation. For he is not one who is not yet [united,] but the half of one; and it is evident from this, that he begetteth no offspring, as was the case also beforetime. Seest thou the mystery of marriage? He made of one, one; and again, having made these two, one, He so maketh one, so that now also man is produced of one. For man and wife are not two men, but one Man. And this may be confirmed from many sources; for instance, from James, from Mary the Mother of Christ, from the words, "He made them male and female." (Gen. i. 27) If he be the head, and she the body, how are they two? Therefore the one holdeth the rank of a disciple, the other of a teacher, the one of a ruler, the other of a subject. Moreover, from the very fashioning of her body, one may see that they are one, for she was made from his side, and they are, as it were, two halves.

For this cause He also calleth her a help, to show that they are one (Gen. ii. 18); for this cause He honoreth their cohabitation beyond both father and mother, to show that they are one. (Gen. ii. 24) And in like manner a father rejoiceth both when son and daughter marry, as though the body were hastening to join a member of its own; and though so great a charge and expenditure of money is incurred still he cannot bear with indifference to see her unmarried. For as though her own flesh itself were severed from her, each one separately is imperfect for the procreation of children, each one is imperfect as regards the constitution of this present life. Wherefore also the Prophet saith, "the residue of thy spirit." (Mal. ii. 15, Sept) And how become they one flesh? As if thou shouldst take away the purest part of gold, and mingle it with other gold; so in truth here also the woman as it were receiving the richest part fused by pleasure, nourisheth it and cherisheth it, and withal contributing her own share, restoreth it back a Man. And the child is a sort of bridge, so that the three become one flesh, the child connecting, on either side, each to other. For like as two cities, which a river divides throughout, become one, if a bridge connect them on both sides, so is it in this case; and yet more, when the very bridge in this case is formed of the substance of each. As the body and the head are one body; for they are divided by the neck; but not divided more than connected, for it, lying between them brings together each with the other. And it is the same as if a chorus that had been severed should, by taking one part of itself from this quarter, and the other again from the right, make one; or as these when come into close rank, and extending hands, become one;

for the hands extended admit not of their being two. Therefore to wit He said with accuracy of expression, not “they shall be one flesh” but joined together “into one flesh” (Gen. ii. 24, Sept), namely, that of the child.”

What then? when there is no child, will they not be two? Nay, for their coming together hath this effect, it diffuses and commingles the bodies of both. And as one who hath cast ointment into oil, hath made the whole one; so in truth is it also here.

I know that many are ashamed at what is said, and the cause of this is what I spoke of, your own lasciviousness, and unchasteness. The fact of marriages being thus performed, thus depraved, hath gained the thing an ill name: for “marriage is honorable, and the bed undefiled.” (Heb. xiii. 4) Why art thou ashamed of the honorable, why blushest thou at the undefiled? This is for heretics, (**Schaff Note:** On 1 Tim. iv. 3 he mentions the Manichees, Marcionites, and Encratites.) this is for such as introduce harlots thither. For this cause I am desirous of having it thoroughly purified, so as to bring it back again to its proper nobleness, so as to stop the mouths of the heretics. The gift of God is insulted, the root of our generation; for about that root there is much dung and filth. This then let us cleanse away by our discourse. Endure then a little while, for he that holdeth filth must endure the stench. I wish to show you that ye ought not to be ashamed at these things, but at those which ye do; but thou, passing by all shame at those, art ashamed at these; surely then thou condemnest God who hath thus decreed.

Shall I tell how marriage is also a mystery of the Church? As Christ came into the Church, and she was made of him, and he united with her in a spiritual intercourse, “for,” saith one, “I have espoused you to one husband, a pure virgin.” (2 Cor. xi. 2) And that we are of Him, he saith, of His members, “and of His flesh.” Thinking then on all these things, let us not cast shame upon so great a mystery. Marriage is a type of the presence of Christ, and art thou drunken at it? Tell me; if thou sawest an image of the king, wouldest thou dishonor it? By no means.

Now the practices at marriages seem to be a matter of indifference, but they are the causes of great mischiefs. All is full of lawlessness. “Filthiness, and foolish talking, and jesting, let it not proceed,” saith he, “out of your mouth.” (Eph. v. 4; iv. 29) Now all these things are filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting; and not these simply, but with aggravation, for the thing has become an art, and there are great praises for those that pursue it. Sins have become an art! We pursue them not in any chance way, but with earnestness, with science, and thenceforth the devil takes the command of his own array. For where drunkenness is, there is unchasteness: where filthy talking, there the devil is at hand bringing in his own contributions; with such an entertainment, tell me, dost thou celebrate the mystery of Christ? and invitest thou the devil?

I dare say you consider me offensive. For this too is a property of extreme pervertedness, that even one that rebuketh you incurs your ridicule as one that is austere. Hear ye not Paul, saying, “Whatsoever ye do, whether ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God”? (1 Cor. x. 31) But ye do all to ill report and dishonor. Hear ye not the Prophet, saying, “Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto Him with trembling?” (Ps. ii. 11) But ye are wholly without restraint. (**Schaff Note:** διαχεῖσθε, are dissolute; lit. “poured abroad.”) Is it not possible both to enjoy pleasure, and to do so with safety? Art thou desirous of hearing beautiful songs? Best of all indeed, thou oughtest not; nevertheless, I condescend if thou wilt have it so: do not hear those Satanic ones, but the spiritual. Art thou desirous of seeing choirs of dancers? Behold the choir of Angels. And how is it possible, saith one, to see them? If thou drive away all these



things, even Christ will come to such a marriage, and Christ being present, the choir of Angels is present also. If thou wilt, He will even now work miracles as He did then; He will make even now the water, wine (John ii); and what is much more wonderful, He will convert this unstable and dissolving pleasure, this cold desire, and change it into the spiritual. This is to make of water, wine. Where pipers are, by no means there is Christ; but even if He should have entered, He first casts these forth, (**Schaff Note:** As when He would raise Jairus's daughter, Matt. ix. 25) and then He works His wonders. What can be more disagreeable than this Satanic pomp? where everything is inarticulate, everything without significancy; and if there be anything articulate, again all is shameful, all is noisome.

Nothing is more pleasurable than virtue, nothing sweeter than orderliness, nothing more amiable than gravity. Let any celebrate such a marriage as I speak of; and he shall find the pleasure; but what sort of marriages these are, take heed. First seek a husband for the virgin, who will be truly a husband, and a protector; as though thou wert intending to place a head upon a body; as though about to give not a slave, but a daughter into his hands. Seek not money, nor splendor of family, nor greatness of country; all these things are superfluous; but piety of soul, gentleness, the true understanding, the fear of God, if thou wishest thy darling to live with pleasure. For if thou seek a wealthier husband, not only wilt thou not benefit her, but thou wilt even harm her, by making her a slave instead of free. For the pleasure she will reap from her golden trinkets will not be so great as will be the annoyance that comes of her slavery. I pray thee, seek not these things, but most of all, one of equal condition; if however this cannot be, rather one poorer than in better circumstances; if at least thou be desirous not of selling thy daughter to a master, but of giving her to a husband. When thou hast thoroughly investigated the virtue of the man, and art about to give her to him, beseech Christ to be present: for He will not be ashamed to be so; it is the mystery of His presence. Yea rather beseech Him even in the first instance, to grant her such a suitor. Be not worse than the servant of Abraham, who, when sent on a pilgrimage so important, saw whither he ought to have recourse; wherefore also he obtained everything. When thou art taking anxious pains, and seeking a husband for her, pray; say unto God, "whomsoever Thou wilt do Thou provide:" into His hands commit the matter; and He, honored in this way by thee, will requite thee with honor.

Two things indeed it is necessary to do; to commit the thing into His hands, and to seek such an orderly person as He Himself approves.

When (**Schaff Note:** Here he addresses the mother, all the participles being feminine.) then thou makest a marriage, go not round from house to house borrowing mirrors and dresses; for the matter is not one of display, nor dost thou lead thy daughter to a pageant; but decking out thine house with what is in it, invite thy neighbors, and friends, and kindred. As many as thou knowest to be of a good character, those invite, and bid them be content with what there is. Let no one from the orchestra be present, for such expense is superfluous, and unbecoming. Before all the rest, invite Christ. Knowest thou whereby thou wilt invite Him? Whosoever, saith He, "hath done it to one of these least, hath done it to Me." (Matt. xxv. 40) And think it not an annoying thing to invite the poor for Christ's sake; to invite harlots is an annoyance. For to invite the poor is a means of wealth, the other of ruin. Adorn the bride not with these ornaments that are made of gold, but with gentleness and modesty, and the customary robes; in place of all golden ornament and braiding, arraying her in blushes, and shamefacedness, and the not desiring such things. Let there be no uproar, no confusion; let the bridegroom be called, let him

receive the virgin. The dinners and suppers, let them not be full of drunkenness, but of abundance and pleasure. See how many good things will result, whenever we see such marriages as those; but from the marriages that are now celebrated, (if at least one ought to call them marriages and not pageants,) how many are the evils! The banquet hall is no sooner broken up, than straightway comes care and fear, lest aught that is borrowed should have been lost, and there succeeds to the pleasure melancholy intolerable. But this distress belongs to the mother-in-law,—nay, rather not even is the bride herself free; all that follows at least belongs to the bride herself. For to see all broken up, is a ground for sadness, to see the house desolate.

There is Christ, here is Satan; there is cheerfulness, here anxious care; there pleasure, here pain; there expense, here nothing of the kind; there indecency, here modesty; there envy, here no envy; there drunkenness, here soberness, here health, here temperance. Bearing in mind all these things, let us stay the evil at this point, that we may please God, and be counted worthy to obtain the good things promised to them that love Him, through the grace and love toward man of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom, to the Father, together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor, now and for ever, and world without end. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, "...These eyes saw Paradise, saw the third heaven: but I count not them so blessed because of this sight, as because of those tears, through which they saw Christ. Blessed, indeed, was that sight; for he himself even glories in it, saying, "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" (1 Cor. ix. 1); but more blessed so to weep."

He refers to **2 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**1 It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) 4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

And to **1 Corinthians 9 (KJV):**1 Am I am not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?

He continues, "In that sight many have been partakers, and those who have not so been, Christ the rather calls blessed, saying, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John xx. 29);"

He refers to **John 20 (KJV):**29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

He continues, "but unto this not many have attained. For if to stay here for Christ's sake were more needful than to depart to Him (Philip. i. 23, 24), for the sake of the salvation of others; surely then to groan for others' sakes, is more needful even than to see Him."

He refers in context to **Philippians 1 (KJV):**22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. 23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: 24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

He continues, "For if for His sake to be in hell, (**Schaff Note:** See St. Chrysostom on Rom. ix. 3, where he says the wish was "to be separated from His presence, not from His love.") is rather to be desired, than to be with Him; and to be separated from Him for His sake more to be desired than to be with Him, (for this is what he said, "For I could wish that I myself

were anathema from Christ” (Rom. ix. 3), much more is weeping for His sake.”

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):3** For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

He continues, ““I ceased not,” he saith, “to admonish everyone with tears.” (Acts xx. 31)”

He refers to **Acts 20 (KJV):31** Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

He continues, “Wherefore? Not fearing the dangers; no; but as if one sitting by a sick man’s side, and not knowing what would be the end, should weep for affection, fearing lest he should lose his life; so too did he; when he saw any one diseased, and could not prevail by rebuke, he thenceforward wept. So did Christ also, that happily they might reverence His tears: thus, one sinned, He rebuked him; the rebuked spat upon Him, and sprang aloof; He wept, that haply He might win him even so.

Remember we these tears: thus let us bring up our daughters, thus our sons; weeping when we see them in evil. As many women as wish to be loved, let them remember Paul’s tears, and groan: as many of you as are counted blest, as many as are in bridal chambers, as many as are in pleasure, remember these; as many as are in mourning, exchange tears for tears. He mourned not for the dead; but for those that were perishing whilst alive. Shall I tell of other tears? Timothy also wept; for he was this man’s disciple; wherefore also when writing to him he said, “Remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy.” (2 Tim. i. 4)”

He refers in context to **2 Timothy 1 (KJV):4** Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; **5** When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

He continues, “Many weep even from pleasure. So it is also a matter of pleasure, and that of the utmost intensity. So the tears are not painful: yea, the tears that flow from such sorrow are even better far than those due to worldly pleasure. Hear the Prophet saying, “The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping, he hath heard the voice of my supplication.” (Ps. vi. 8)”

He refers to **Psalms 6 (KJV):8** Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping. **9** The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer.

He continues, “For where is the tear not useful? in prayers? in exhortations? We get them an ill name, by using them not to what they are given us for. When we entreat a sinning brother, we ought to weep, grieving and groaning; when we exhort any one, and he giveth us no heed, but goeth on perishing, we ought to weep. These are the tears of heavenly wisdom. When however one is in poverty, or bodily disease, or dead, not so; for these are not things worthy of tears.”

Actually, any loss is a cause of sadness. Grief is a process. Denying our feelings only leads to more problems.

He continues, “As then we gain an ill name for laughter also, when we use it out of season; so too do we for tears, by having recourse to them unseasonably. For the virtue of each thing then discovers itself when it is brought to its own fitting work, but when to one that is alien, it doth no longer so. For instance, wine is given for cheerfulness, not drunkenness, bread for nourishment, sexual intercourse for the procreation of children. As then these things have

gained an ill name, so also have tears.”

But sexual intercourse was also given for intimacy between a man and his wife. The desire for intimacy in marriage is natural, and not lust.

Chrysostom continues, “Be there a law laid down, that they be used in prayers and exhortations only, and see how desirable a thing they will become. Nothing doth so wipe out sins, as tears. Tears show even this bodily countenance beautiful; for they win the spectator to pity, they make it respected in our eyes. Nothing is sweeter than tearful eyes. For this is the noblest member we have, and the most beautiful, and the soul’s own. And therefore we are so bowed therewith, as though we saw the soul itself lamenting.

I have not spoken these things without a reason; but in order that ye may cease your attendance at weddings, at dancings, at Satanical performances. For see what the devil hath invented. Since nature itself hath withheld women from the stage, and the disgraceful things enacted there, he hath introduced into the women’s apartment the furniture of the theater, I mean, wanton men and harlots. This pestilence the custom of marriages hath introduced, or rather, not of marriages, far be it, but of our own silliness. What is it thou doest, O man? Dost thou not know what thou art at? Thou marriest a wife for chastity, and procreation of children; what then mean these harlots? That there may be, one answereth, greater gladness. And yet is not this rather madness? Thou insultest thy bride, thou insultest the women that are invited. For if they are delighted with such proceedings, the thing is an insult. If to see harlots acting indecorously conferreth any honor, wherefore dost thou not drag thy bride also thither, that she too may see? It is quite indecent and disgraceful to introduce into one’s house lewd fellows and dancers, and all that Satanic pomp.

“Remember,” he saith, “my bonds.” Marriage is a bond, a bond ordained of God, a harlot is a severing and a dissolving. It is permitted you to embellish marriage with other things, such as full tables, and apparel. I do not cut off these things, lest I should seem to be clownish to an extreme; and yet Rebecca was content with her veil (**Schaff Note:** *θήριστρον*, “summer robe.”) only (Gen. xxiv. 65);”

He refers in context to **Genesis 24 (KJV):**64 And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. 65 For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself.

He continues, “still I do not cut them off. It is permitted you to embellish and set off marriage with apparel, with the presence of reverend men and reverend women. Why introducest thou those mockeries? (**Schaff Note:** *ἐπιχάρματα*, subjects of rejoicing for the enemy.) why those monsters? Tell us what it is thou hearest from them? What? dost thou blush to tell? Dost thou blush, and yet force them to do it? If it is honorable, wherefore dost thou not do it thyself as well? but if disgraceful, wherefore dost thou compel another? Everything should be full of chasteness, of gravity, of orderliness; but I see the reverse, people frisking like camels and mules. For the virgin, her chamber is the only befitting place. “But,” saith one, “she is poor.” Because she is poor, she ought to be modest also; let her have her character in the place of a fortune. Has she no dowry to give with herself? Then why dost thou make her otherwise contemptible through her life and manners? I praise the custom, that virgins attend to do honor to their fellow; matrons attend to do honor to her who is made one of their order. Rightly hath this been ordered. For these are two companies, one of virgins, the other of the married; the one

are giving her up, the other receiving her. The bride is between them, neither virgin, nor wife, for she is coming forth from those, and entering into the fellowship of these. But those harlots, what mean they? They ought to hide their faces when marriage is celebrated; they ought to be dug into the earth, (for harlotry is the corruption of marriage,) but we introduce them at our marriages. And, when ye are engaged in any work, ye count it ill omened to speak even a syllable of what is adverse to it; for instance, when thou sowest, when thou drawest off the wine from thy vats, thou wouldest not, even if asked, utter a syllable about vinegar; but here, where the object is chasteness, introduce ye the vinegar? for such is an harlot. When ye are preparing sweet ointment, ye suffer nought ill-scented to be near. Marriage is a sweet ointment. Why then introducest thou the foul stench of the dunghill into the preparation of thy ointment? What sayest thou? Shall the virgin dance, and yet feel no shame before her fellow? For she ought to have more gravity than the other; she hath at least come forth from the [nurse's] arm, and not from the palæstra. For the virgin ought not to appear publicly at all at a marriage.

Seest thou not how in kings' houses, the honored are within, about the king, the unhonored without? Do thou too be within about the bride. But remain in the house in chasteness, expose not thy virginity. Either company is standing by, the one to show of what sort she is whom they are giving up, the other in order that they may guard her. Why disgracest thou the virgin estate? For if thou art such as this, the same will the bridegroom suspect her to be. If thou wishest to have men in love with thee, this is the part of saleswomen, green-grocers, and handicrafts people. Is not this a shame? To act unseemly is a shame even though it be a king's daughter. For doth her poverty stand in the way? or her course of life? Even if a virgin be a slave, let her abide in modesty. "For in Christ Jesus there can be neither bond nor free." (Gal. iii. 28)"

He refers in context to **Galatians 3 (KJV):**27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

He continues, "What? is marriage a theater? It is a mystery and a type of a mighty thing; and even if thou reverence not it, reverence that whose type it is. "This mystery," saith he, "is great, but I speak in regard of Christ and of the Church." (Eph. v. 32)"

He refers to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):**30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

He continues, "It is a type of the Church, and of Christ, and dost thou introduce harlots at it? If then, saith one, neither virgins dance, nor the married, who is to dance? No one, for what need is there of dancing? In the Grecian mysteries there are dancings, but in ours, silence and decency, modesty, and bashfulness. A great mystery is being celebrated: forth with the harlots! forth with the profane! How is it a mystery? They come together, and the two make one. Wherefore is it that at his entrance indeed, there was no dancing, no cymbals, but great silence, great stillness; but when they come together, making not a lifeless image, nor yet the image of anything upon earth, but of God Himself, and after his likeness, thou introducest so great an uproar, and disturbest those that are there, and putttest the soul to shame, and confoundest it? They come, about to be made one body. See again a mystery of love! If the two become not one, so long as they continue two, they make not many, but when they are come into oneness,

they then make many. What do we learn from this? That great is the power of union. The wise counsel of God at the beginning divided the one into two; and being desirous of showing that even after division it remaineth still one, He suffered not that the one should be of itself enough for procreation. For he is not one who is not yet [united,] but the half of one; and it is evident from this, that he begetteth no offspring, as was the case also beforetime. Seest thou the mystery of marriage? He made of one, one; and again, having made these two, one, He so maketh one, so that now also man is produced of one. For man and wife are not two men, but one Man. And this may be confirmed from many sources; for instance, from James, from Mary the Mother of Christ, from the words, "He made them male and female." (Gen. i. 27)"

He refers to **Genesis 1 (KJV):27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

He continues, "If he be the head, and she the body, how are they two? Therefore the one holdeth the rank of a disciple, the other of a teacher, the one of a ruler, the other of a subject. Moreover, from the very fashioning of her body, one may see that they are one, for she was made from his side, and they are, as it were, two halves.

For this cause He also calleth her a help, to show that they are one (Gen. ii. 18);"

He refers to **Genesis 2 (KJV):18** And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

He continues, "for this cause He honoreth their cohabitation beyond both father and mother, to show that they are one. (Gen. ii. 24)"

He refers to **Genesis 2 (KJV):24** Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

He continues, "And in like manner a father rejoiceth both when son and daughter marry, as though the body were hastening to join a member of its own; and though so great a charge and expenditure of money is incurred still he cannot bear with indifference to see her unmarried. For as though her own flesh itself were severed from her, each one separately is imperfect for the procreation of children, each one is imperfect as regards the constitution of this present life. Wherefore also the Prophet saith, "the residue of thy spirit." (Mal. ii. 15, Sept.)"

He refers in context to **Malachi 2 (Septuagint):14** Yet ye said, Wherefore? Because the Lord has borne witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, whom thou has forsaken, and *yet* she was thy partner, and the wife of thy covenant. 15 And did he not do well? and *there was* the residue of his spirit. But ye said, What does God seek but a seed? But take ye heed to your spirit, and forsake not the wife of thy youth. 16 But if thou shouldest hate *thy wife* and put her away, saith the Lord God of Israel, then ungodliness shall cover thy thoughts, saith the Lord Almighty: therefore take ye heed to your spirit, and forsake *them* not, 17 ye that have provoked God with your words. But ye said, Wherein have we provoked him? In that ye say, Every one that does evil is a pleasing *object* in the sight of the Lord, and he takes pleasure in such; and where is the God of justice?

And in context to **Malachi 2 (KJV):14** Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. 15 And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

16 For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously. 17 Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?

He continues, “And how become they one flesh? As if thou shouldst take away the purest part of gold, and mingle it with other gold; so in truth here also the woman as it were receiving the richest part fused by pleasure, nourisheth it and cherisheth it, and withal contributing her own share, restoreth it back a Man. And the child is a sort of bridge, so that the three become one flesh, the child connecting, on either side, each to other. For like as two cities, which a river divides throughout, become one, if a bridge connect them on both sides, so is it in this case; and yet more, when the very bridge in this case is formed of the substance of each. As the body and the head are one body; for they are divided by the neck; but not divided more than connected, for it, lying between them brings together each with the other. And it is the same as if a chorus that had been severed should, by taking one part of itself from this quarter, and the other again from the right, make one; or as these when come into close rank, and extending hands, become one; for the hands extended admit not of their being two. Therefore to wit He said with accuracy of expression, not “they shall be one flesh” but joined together “into one flesh” (Gen. ii. 24, Sept.), namely, that of the child.”

He refers to **Genesis 2 (Septuagint):24** Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

And to **Genesis 2 (KJV):24** Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

He continues, “What then? when there is no child, will they not be two? Nay, for their coming together hath this effect, it diffuses and commingles the bodies of both. And as one who hath cast ointment into oil, hath made the whole one; so in truth is it also here.

I know that many are ashamed at what is said, and the cause of this is what I spoke of, your own lasciviousness, and unchasteness. The fact of marriages being thus performed, thus depraved, hath gained the thing an ill name: for “marriage is honorable, and the bed undefiled.” (Heb. xiii. 4)”

He refers to **Hebrews 13 (KJV):4** Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

He continues, “Why art thou ashamed of the honorable, why blushest thou at the undefiled? This is for heretics, (**Schaff Note:** On 1 Tim. iv. 3 he mentions the Manichees, Marcionites, and Encratites.) this is for such as introduce harlots thither. For this cause I am desirous of having it thoroughly purified, so as to bring it back again to its proper nobleness, so as to stop the mouths of the heretics. The gift of God is insulted, the root of our generation; for about that root there is much dung and filth. This then let us cleanse away by our discourse. Endure then a little while, for he that holdeth filth must endure the stench. I wish to show you that ye ought not to be ashamed at these things, but at those which ye do; but thou, passing by all shame at those, art ashamed at these; surely then thou condemnest God who hath thus decreed.

Shall I tell how marriage is also a mystery of the Church? As Christ came into the Church, and she was made of him, and he united with her in a spiritual intercourse, “for,” saith

one, "I have espoused you to one husband, a pure virgin." (2 Cor. xi. 2)"

He refers to **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):2** For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

He continues, "And that we are of Him, he saith, of His members, "and of His flesh." Thinking then on all these things, let us not cast shame upon so great a mystery. Marriage is a type of the presence of Christ, and art thou drunken at it? Tell me; if thou sawest an image of the king, wouldest thou dishonor it? By no means.

Now the practices at marriages seem to be a matter of indifference, but they are the causes of great mischiefs. All is full of lawlessness. "Filthiness, and foolish talking, and jesting, let it not proceed," saith he, "out of your mouth." (Eph. v. 4; iv. 29)"

He refers to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):4** Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

And to **Ephesians 4 (KJV):29** Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

He continues, "Now all these things are filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting; and not these simply, but with aggravation, for the thing has become an art, and there are great praises for those that pursue it. Sins have become an art! We pursue them not in any chance way, but with earnestness, with science, and thenceforth the devil takes the command of his own array. For where drunkenness is, there is unchasteness: where filthy talking, there the devil is at hand bringing in his own contributions; with such an entertainment, tell me, dost thou celebrate the mystery of Christ? and invitest thou the devil?"

I dare say you consider me offensive. For this too is a property of extreme pervertedness, that even one that rebuketh you incurs your ridicule as one that is austere. Hear ye not Paul, saying, "Whatsoever ye do, whether ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"? (1 Cor. x. 31)"

He refers to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):31** Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

He continues, "But ye do all to ill report and dishonor. Hear ye not the Prophet, saying, "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto Him with trembling?" (Ps. ii. 11)"

He refers to **Psalms 2 (KJV):11** Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

He continues, "But ye are wholly without restraint. (**Schaff Note:** διαχεῖσθε, are dissolute; lit. "poured abroad.") Is it not possible both to enjoy pleasure, and to do so with safety? Art thou desirous of hearing beautiful songs? Best of all indeed, thou oughtest not; nevertheless, I condescend if thou wilt have it so: do not hear those Satanic ones, but the spiritual. Art thou desirous of seeing choirs of dancers? Behold the choir of Angels. And how is it possible, saith one, to see them? If thou drive away all these things, even Christ will come to such a marriage, and Christ being present, the choir of Angels is present also. If thou wilt, He will even now work miracles as He did then; He will make even now the water, wine (John ii. );"

He refers to **John 2 (KJV):9** When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, 10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. 11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee,



and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

He continues, “and what is much more wonderful, He will convert this unstable and dissolving pleasure, this cold desire, and change it into the spiritual. This is to make of water, wine. Where pipers are, by no means there is Christ; but even if He should have entered, He first casts these forth, (**Schaff Note:** As when He would raise Jairus’s daughter, Matt. ix. 25) and then He works His wonders.”

And we read in context in **Matthew 9 (KJV):**24 He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. 25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

He continues, “What can be more disagreeable than this Satanic pomp? where everything is inarticulate, everything without significancy; and if there be anything articulate, again all is shameful, all is noisome.

Nothing is more pleasurable than virtue, nothing sweeter than orderliness, nothing more amiable than gravity. Let any celebrate such a marriage as I speak of; and he shall find the pleasure; but what sort of marriages these are, take heed. First seek a husband for the virgin, who will be truly a husband, and a protector; as though thou wert intending to place a head upon a body; as though about to give not a slave, but a daughter into his hands. Seek not money, nor splendor of family, nor greatness of country; all these things are superfluous; but piety of soul, gentleness, the true understanding, the fear of God, if thou wishest thy darling to live with pleasure. For if thou seek a wealthier husband, not only wilt thou not benefit her, but thou wilt even harm her, by making her a slave instead of free. For the pleasure she will reap from her golden trinkets will not be so great as will be the annoyance that comes of her slavery. I pray thee, seek not these things, but most of all, one of equal condition; if however this cannot be, rather one poorer than in better circumstances; if at least thou be desirous not of selling thy daughter to a master, but of giving her to a husband. When thou hast thoroughly investigated the virtue of the man, and art about to give her to him, beseech Christ to be present: for He will not be ashamed to be so; it is the mystery of His presence. Yea rather beseech Him even in the first instance, to grant her such a suitor. Be not worse than the servant of Abraham, who, when sent on a pilgrimage so important, saw whither he ought to have recourse; wherefore also he obtained everything. When thou art taking anxious pains, and seeking a husband for her, pray; say unto God, “whomsoever Thou wilt do Thou provide:” into His hands commit the matter; and He, honored in this way by thee, will requite thee with honor.

Two things indeed it is necessary to do; to commit the thing into His hands, and to seek such an orderly person as He Himself approves.

When (**Schaff Note:** Here he addresses the mother, all the participles being feminine.) then thou makest a marriage, go not round from house to house borrowing mirrors and dresses; for the matter is not one of display, nor dost thou lead thy daughter to a pageant; but decking out thine house with what is in it, invite thy neighbors, and friends, and kindred. As many as thou knowest to be of a good character, those invite, and bid them be content with what there is. Let no one from the orchestra be present, for such expense is superfluous, and unbecoming. Before all the rest, invite Christ. Knowest thou whereby thou wilt invite Him? Whosoever, saith He, “hath done it to one of these least, hath done it to Me.” (Matt. xxv. 40)”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):**40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have

done it unto me.

He continues, “And think it not an annoying thing to invite the poor for Christ’s sake; to invite harlots is an annoyance. For to invite the poor is a means of wealth, the other of ruin. Adorn the bride not with these ornaments that are made of gold, but with gentleness and modesty, and the customary robes; in place of all golden ornament and braiding, arraying her in blushes, and shamefacedness, and the not desiring such things. Let there be no uproar, no confusion; let the bridegroom be called, let him receive the virgin. The dinners and suppers, let them not be full of drunkenness, but of abundance and pleasure. See how many good things will result, whenever we see such marriages as those; but from the marriages that are now celebrated, (if at least one ought to call them marriages and not pageants,) how many are the evils! The banquet hall is no sooner broken up, than straightway comes care and fear, lest aught that is borrowed should have been lost, and there succeeds to the pleasure melancholy intolerable. But this distress belongs to the mother-in-law,—nay, rather not even is the bride herself free; all that follows at least belongs to the bride herself. For to see all broken up, is a ground for sadness, to see the house desolate.

There is Christ, here is Satan; there is cheerfulness, here anxious care; there pleasure, here pain; there expense, here nothing of the kind; there indecency, here modesty; there envy, here no envy; there drunkenness, here soberness, here health, here temperance. Bearing in mind all these things, let us stay the evil at this point, that we may please God, and be counted worthy to obtain the good things promised to them that love Him, through the grace and love toward man of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom, to the Father, together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor, now and for ever, and world without end. Amen.”

Chrysostom gives us a window into his time concerning marriage. His encouragement as to how to celebrate a wedding is healthy, and even applicable to today.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY V, page 396-397**

What then does He say to those who are not teachers? Each of you, if he will, is a teacher, although not of another, yet of himself. Teach thyself first. If thou teachest to observe all things whatsoever He commanded, even by this means thou wilt have many emulating thee. For as a lamp, when it is shining, is able to light ten thousand others, but being extinguished will not give light even to itself, nor can it lighten other lamps; so also in the case of a pure life, if the light that is in us be shining, we shall make both disciples and teachers numberless, being set before them as a pattern to copy. For neither will the words proceeding from me be able so to benefit the hearers, as your life. For let a man, tell me, be dear to God, and shining in virtue, and having a wife; (for it is possible for a man having a wife and children and servants and friends to please God;) will he not be able much more than I to benefit them all? For me they will hear once or twice in a month, or not even once, and even though they have kept what they have heard as far as the threshold of the Church, they presently let it drop away from them: but seeing the life of that man constantly, they receive great advantage. For when being insulted he insults not again, does he not almost infix and engrave upon the soul of the insulter the reverence of his meekness? And though he does not immediately confess the benefit, being ashamed from anger, or put to confusion, yet nevertheless he immediately is made sensible of it.

And it is impossible for a man that is insolent, though he be a very beast, to associate with one who is patient of evil, without going away much benefited. For although we do not what is good, we however all praise it and admire it. Again, the wife, if she see her husband gentle, being always with him receives great advantage, and the child also. It is therefore in the power of every one to be a teacher. For he says, "Build each other up, even as also ye do." (1 Thess. v. 11) For tell me, has any loss befallen the family? The wife is disturbed, as being weaker, and more extravagant, and fond of ornament; the man if he be a philosopher, and a derider of loss, both consoles her, and persuades her to bear it with fortitude. Tell me, then, will he not benefit her much more than our words? For it is easy to talk, but to act, when we are reduced to the necessity, is in every way difficult. On this account human nature is wont rather to be regulated by deeds. And such is the superiority of virtue, that even a slave often benefits a whole family together with the master.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, "What then does He say to those who are not teachers? Each of you, if he will, is a teacher, although not of another, yet of himself. Teach thyself first. If thou teachest to observe all things whatsoever He commanded, even by this means thou wilt have many emulating thee. For as a lamp, when it is shining, is able to light ten thousand others, but being extinguished will not give light even to itself, nor can it lighten other lamps; so also in the case of a pure life, if the light that is in us be shining, we shall make both disciples and teachers numberless, being set before them as a pattern to copy. For neither will the words proceeding from me be able so to benefit the hearers, as your life. For let a man, tell me, be dear to God, and shining in virtue, and having a wife; (for it is possible for a man having a wife and children and servants and friends to please God;) will he not be able much more than I to benefit them all?"

Chrysostom believed in healthy marriage.

He continues, "For me they will hear once or twice in a month, or not even once, and even though they have kept what they have heard as far as the threshold of the Church, they presently let it drop away from them: but seeing the life of that man constantly, they receive great advantage. For when being insulted he insults not again, does he not almost infix and engrave upon the soul of the insulter the reverence of his meekness? And though he does not immediately confess the benefit, being ashamed from anger, or put to confusion, yet nevertheless he immediately is made sensible of it. And it is impossible for a man that is insolent, though he be a very beast, to associate with one who is patient of evil, without going away much benefited. For although we do not what is good, we however all praise it and admire it. Again, the wife, if she see her husband gentle, being always with him receives great advantage, and the child also. It is therefore in the power of every one to be a teacher. For he says, "Build each other up, even as also ye do." (1 Thess. v. 11)"

He refers to **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):11** Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

He continues, "For tell me, has any loss befallen the family? The wife is disturbed, as being weaker, and more extravagant, and fond of ornament; the man if he be a philosopher, and a derider of loss, both consoles her, and persuades her to bear it with fortitude. Tell me, then, will he not benefit her much more than our words? For it is easy to talk, but to act, when we are reduced to the necessity, is in every way difficult. On this account human nature is wont rather

to be regulated by deeds. And such is the superiority of virtue, that even a slave often benefits a whole family together with the master.”

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TITUS, HOMILY V, page 536**

“And should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world.”

Dost thou see, what I always affirm, that it is not sobriety only to abstain from fornication, but that we must be free from other passions. So then he who loves wealth is not sober. For as the fornicator loves women, so the other loves money, and even more inordinately, for he is not impelled by so strong a passion. And he is certainly a more powerless charioteer who cannot manage a gentle horse, than he who cannot restrain a wild and unruly one. What then? says he, is the love of wealth weaker than the love of women? This is manifest from many reasons. In the first place, lust springs from the necessity of nature, and what arises from this necessity must be difficult to restrain, since it is implanted in our nature. Secondly, because the ancients had no regard for wealth, but for women they had great regard, in respect of their chastity. And no one blamed him who cohabited with his wife according to law, even to old age, but all blamed him who hoarded money. And many of the Heathen philosophers despised money, but none of them were indifferent to women, so that this passion is more imperious than the other. But since we are addressing the Church, let us not take our examples from the Heathens, but from the Scriptures. This then the blessed Paul places almost in the rank of a command. “Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.” (1 Tim. vi. 8) But concerning women he says, “Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent”—and “come together again.” (1 Cor. vii. 5) And you see him often laying down rules for a lawful intercourse, and he permits the enjoyment of this desire, and allows of a second marriage, and bestows much consideration upon the matter, and never punishes on account of it. But he everywhere condemns him that is fond of money. Concerning wealth also Christ often commanded that we should avoid the corruption of it, but He says nothing about abstaining from a wife. For hear what He says concerning money; “Whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath” (Luke xiv. 33); but he nowhere says, “Whosoever forsaketh not his wife”; for he knew how imperious that passion is. And the blessed Paul says, “Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled” (Heb. xiii. 4); but he has nowhere said that the care of riches is honorable, but the reverse. Thus he says to Timothy, “They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts.” (1 Tim. vi. 9) He says not, they that will be covetous, but, they that will be rich.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, ““And should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world.”

He refers to **Titus 2 (KJV):12** Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

He continues, “Dost thou see, what I always affirm, that it is not sobriety only to abstain from fornication, but that we must be free from other passions. So then he who loves wealth is not sober. For as the fornicator loves women, so the other loves money, and even more inordinately, for he is not impelled by so strong a passion. And he is certainly a more powerless

charioteer who cannot manage a gentle horse, than he who cannot restrain a wild and unruly one. What then? says he, is the love of wealth weaker than the love of women? This is manifest from many reasons. In the first place, lust springs from the necessity of nature, and what arises from this necessity must be difficult to restrain, since it is implanted in our nature. Secondly, because the ancients had no regard for wealth, but for women they had great regard, in respect of their chastity. And no one blamed him who cohabited with his wife according to law, even to old age, but all blamed him who hoarded money. And many of the Heathen philosophers despised money, but none of them were indifferent to women, so that this passion is more imperious than the other. But since we are addressing the Church, let us not take our examples from the Heathens, but from the Scriptures. This then the blessed Paul places almost in the rank of a command. “Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.” (1 Tim. vi. 8)”

He refers to **1 Timothy 6 (KJV):8** And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

He continues, “But concerning women he says, “Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent”—and “come together again.” (1 Cor. vii. 5)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):5** Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

He continues, “And you see him often laying down rules for a lawful intercourse, and he permits the enjoyment of this desire, and allows of a second marriage, and bestows much consideration upon the matter, and never punishes on account of it.”

He is referring to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):8** I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. **9** But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

He continues, “But he everywhere condemns him that is fond of money. Concerning wealth also Christ often commanded that we should avoid the corruption of it, but He says nothing about abstaining from a wife. For hear what He says concerning money; “Whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath” (Luke xiv. 33);”

He refers to **Luke 14 (KJV):33** So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

He continues, “but he nowhere says, “Whosoever forsaketh not his wife”; for he knew how imperious that passion is. And the blessed Paul says, “Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled” (Heb. xiii. 4);”

He refers to **Hebrews 13 (KJV):4** Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

He continues, “but he has nowhere said that the care of riches is honorable, but the reverse. Thus he says to Timothy, “They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts.” (1 Tim. vi. 9)”

He refers to **1 Timothy 6 (KJV):9** But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

He concludes, “He says not, they that will be covetous, but, they that will be rich.”

But may ye not be such, O young men! for not even for you is there the excuse for sinning. Why so? Because it is possible to be old in youth: just as there are youths in old age, so also the reverse. For as in the one case the white hair saves no one, so in the other the black is no impediment. For if it is disgraceful for the old man to do these things of which I have spoken, much more than for the young man, yet still the young man is not freed from accusation. For a young man can have an excuse only, in case he is called to the management of affairs, when he is still inexperienced, when he needs time and practice; but no longer when it is necessary to display temperance and courage, nor yet when it is needful to keep his property.

For it sometimes happens that the young man is blamed more than the old. For the one needs much service, old age making him feeble: but the other being able, if he will, to provide for himself, what sort of excuse should he meet with, when he plunders more than the old, when he remembers injuries, when he is contemptuous, when he does not stand forward to protect others more than the old man, when he utters many things unseasonably, when he is insolent, when he reviles, when he is drunken?

And if in the [matter of] chastity he think that he cannot be impleaded, consider that here also he has many helps, if he will. For although desire trouble him more violently than it doth the old, yet nevertheless there are many things which he can do more than an old man, and so charm that wild beast. What are these things? Labors, readings, watchings through the night, fastings.

[11.] What then are these things to us (one says) who are not monastics? Sayest thou this to me? Say it to Paul, when he says, "Watching with all perseverance and supplication" (Eph. vi. 18), when he says, "Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." (Rom. xiii. 14) For surely he wrote not these things to solitaries only, but to all that are in cities. For ought the man who lives in the world to have any advantage over the solitary, save only the living with a wife? In this point he has allowance, but in others none, but it is his duty to do all things equally with the solitary.

Moreover the Beatitudes [pronounced] by Christ, were not addressed to solitaries only: since in that case the whole world would have perished, and we should be accusing God of cruelty. And if these beatitudes were spoken to solitaries only, and the secular person cannot fulfill them, yet He permitted marriage, then He has destroyed all men. For if it be not possible, with marriage, to perform the duties of solitaries, all things have perished and are destroyed, and the [functions] of virtue are shut up in a strait.

And, how can marriage be honorable, which so hinders us? What then? It is possible, yea very possible, even if we have wives, to pursue after virtue, if we will. How? If having "wives," we "be as though we had none," if we rejoice not over our "possessions," if we "use the world as not abusing it." (1 Cor. vii. 29, 31)

And if any persons have been hindered by marriage state, let them know that marriage is not the hindrance, but their purpose which made an ill use of marriage. Since it is not wine which makes drunkenness, but the evil purpose, and the using it beyond due measure. Use marriage with moderation, and thou shalt be first in the kingdom, and shalt enjoy all good things, which may we all attain by the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost be glory, might, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “But may ye not be such, O young men! for not even for you is there the excuse for sinning. Why so? Because it is possible to be old in youth: just as there are youths in old age, so also the reverse. For as in the one case the white hair saves no one, so in the other the black is no impediment. For if it is disgraceful for the old man to do these things of which I have spoken, much more than for the young man, yet still the young man is not freed from accusation. For a young man can have an excuse only, in case he is called to the management of affairs, when he is still inexperienced, when he needs time and practice; but no longer when it is necessary to display temperance and courage, nor yet when it is needful to keep his property.

For it sometimes happens that the young man is blamed more than the old. For the one needs much service, old age making him feeble: but the other being able, if he will, to provide for himself, what sort of excuse should he meet with, when he plunders more than the old, when he remembers injuries, when he is contemptuous, when he does not stand forward to protect others more than the old man, when he utters many things unseasonably, when he is insolent, when he reviles, when he is drunken?

And if in the [matter of] chastity he think that he cannot be impleaded, consider that here also he has many helps, if he will.”

The word “impleaded” means “to sue or prosecute at law”.

**(Merriam Webster)**

He continues, “For although desire trouble him more violently than it doth the old, yet nevertheless there are many things which he can do more than an old man, and so charm that wild beast. What are these things? Labors, readings, watchings through the night, fastings.

[11.] What then are these things to us (one says) who are not monastics? Sayest thou this to me? Say it to Paul, when he says, “Watching with all perseverance and supplication” (Eph. vi. 18), when he says, “Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.” (Rom. xiii. 14)”

He refers to **Ephesians 6 (KJV):18** Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

And to **Romans 13 (KJV):14** But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

He continues, “For surely he wrote not these things to solitaries only, but to all that are in cities. For ought the man who lives in the world to have any advantage over the solitary, save only the living with a wife? In this point he has allowance, but in others none, but it is his duty to do all things equally with the solitary.

Moreover the Beatitudes [pronounced] by Christ, were not addressed to solitaries only: since in that case the whole world would have perished, and we should be accusing God of cruelty. And if these beatitudes were spoken to solitaries only, and the secular person cannot fulfill them, yet He permitted marriage, then He has destroyed all men. For if it be not possible, with marriage, to perform the duties of solitaries, all things have perished and are destroyed, and the [functions] of virtue are shut up in a strait.”

So by “solitaries”, he is referring to a “monastic” or someone who is not in the laity.

He continues, “And, how can marriage be honorable, which so hinders us? What then? It is possible, yea very possible, even if we have wives, to pursue after virtue, if we will. How? If

having “wives,” we “be as though we had none,” if we rejoice not over our “possessions,” if we “use the world as not abusing it.” (1 Cor. vii. 29, 31)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):**29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; 30 And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; 31 And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

He concludes, “And if any persons have been hindered by marriage state, let them know that marriage is not the hindrance, but their purpose which made an ill use of marriage. Since it is not wine which makes drunkenness, but the evil purpose, and the using it beyond due measure. Use marriage with moderation, and thou shalt be first in the kingdom, and shalt enjoy all good things, which may we all attain by the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost be glory, might, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.”

Marriage was a good thing in the eyes of Chrysostom. And he is in agreement with the Scripture.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, Letters to the Fallen Theodore, Letter 2, page 87, 113-114**, he says, writing to Theodore, “Marriage is right,” you say; I also assent to this. For “marriage,” we read, “is honourable and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge;” (Hebrews 13:4) but it is no longer possible for thee to observe the right conditions of marriage. For if he who has been attached to a heavenly bridegroom deserts him, and joins himself to a wife the act is adultery, even if you call it marriage ten thousand times over; or rather it is worse than adultery in proportion as God is greater than man.”

And he says, “Let no one deceive thee saying: “God hath not forbidden to marry;” I know this as well as you; He has not forbidden to marry, but He has forbidden to commit adultery, may you be preserved from ever engaging thyself in marriage! And why dost thou marvel if marriage is judged as if it were adultery, when God is disregarded?”

Theodore became warmly attached to a young lady named Hermione, and resolved to marry and to leave the ascetic brotherhood of which Chrysostom and Theodore were members. In the eyes of Chrysostom, this would be committing adultery because as a member of the ascetic brotherhood, he had pledged himself in “marriage” to the Lord.

And he says, “If then mercy has been a cause of condemnation more than slaughter because God was disobeyed, what wonder is it if marriage condemns more than adultery when it involves the rejection of Christ?”

And he says, “For if the wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband, (1 Corinthians 7:4) much more they who live in Christ must be unable to have authority over their body.”

Did Chrysostom imagine that only priests “live in Christ”? But all believers are baptized into the body of Christ.

And he says, “But the unseemly pleasures of this life nowise differ from shadows and dreams; for before the deed of sin is completed, the conditions of pleasure are extinguished; and



the punishments for these have no limit. And the sweetness lasts for a little while but the pain is everlasting.”

Chrysostom imagined that Theodore was destined for hell because of his “adultery” with the woman, for according to Chrysostom, Theodore was already married to the “Bridegroom” by his commitment to the “ascetic brotherhood”.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, Homily VII, Matt. II. 4-5, page 49**, he says, “For I neither “forbid to marry,” (1 Tim. iv. 2) nor hinder thy taking pleasure; but I would have this be done in chastity, not with shame, and reproach, and imputations without end.”

He refers to **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):3** Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

Chrysostom, unlike Augustine, would not hinder those who are married from “taking pleasure”.

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XIX, page 105-108**, he says, referring to 1 Corinthians 7:3, “Now what is the meaning of “the due honor? The wife hath not power over her own body;” but is both the slave and the mistress of the husband. And if you decline the service which is due, you have offended God. But if thou wish to withdraw thyself, it must be with the husband’s permission, though it be but a for short time. For this is why he calls the matter a debt, to shew that no one is master of himself but that they are servants to each other.”

And he says, “What then can this mean? “Let not the wife,” says he, “exercise continence, if the husband be unwilling; nor yet the husband without the wife’s consent.””

And he explains, “For that one should practice continence against the will of the other is “defrauding;” but not so, with the other’s consent: any more than I count myself defrauded, if after persuading me you take away any thing of mine.”

So defraud means to say no to your spouse when they want intimacy. Chrysostom has interpreted this Scripture well here.

Chrysostom says that the only valid case for divorce is fornication, which is in agreement with Jesus in **Matthew 19 (KJV):9** And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Chrysostom correctly interprets the case where one in the marriage is an unbeliever. The believing spouse should not leave if the unbelieving is content to stay in the marriage, as he says, “He did not say, If any one wish to take an unbelieving wife, but, “If any one hath an unbelieving wife.” Which means, If any after marrying or being married have received the word of godliness, and then the other party which had continued in unbelief still yearn for them to dwell together, let not the marriage be broken off. “For,” saith he, “the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife.””

And he says, “But what is the meaning of, “if the unbelieving departeth?” For instance, if he bid thee sacrifice and take part in his ungodliness on account of thy marriage, or else part company; it were better the marriage were annulled, and no breach made in godliness. Wherefore he adds, “A brother is not under bondage, nor yet a sister, in such cases.” If day by day he buffet thee and keep up combats on this account, it is better to separate. For this is what

he glances at, saying, “But God hath called us in peace.” For it is the other party who furnished the ground of separation, even as he did who committed uncleanness.”

Chrysostom has done well here. God does not want us to be victims. This is the plain sense of the Scripture.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER II, page 15**, he says, “We have a similar instance, in Paul’s Epistle to the Corinthians, in his command to husbands and wives to come together again. To which, that he might not be thought to be legislating for them, he subjoins, “But this I say by way of permission, not of commandment.” (1 Cor. vii. 5) For this was not a judgment authoritatively given but an indulgence to their incontinence; as he says, “for your incontinency.” Would you know Paul’s sentence in this matter? hear his words, “I would that all men were even as I myself,” (1 Cor. vii. 7) in continence.”

Paul’s actual words are as in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):6** But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. **7** For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

Paul was single, and he wished that all were single for he says that it is good for a man not to touch a woman in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):1** Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. **2** Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

So he is saying in verse 7 that not everyone has the gift to be single, and not everyone has the gift to be married.

Chrysostom then compares this “permission” with the apostles’ judgment in Acts 15 when some “false brethren” were saying that believers had to be circumcised. The apostles’ judgment was that it was permissible to be circumcised, but not a requirement. And so it is permissible for one to marry or not to marry.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILIPPIANS, HOMILY XII, page 316-321**, he says, “For instance, wine is given for cheerfulness, not drunkenness, bread for nourishment, sexual intercourse for the procreation of children. As then these things have gained an ill name, so also have tears.”

But sexual intercourse was also given for intimacy between a man and his wife. The desire for intimacy in marriage is natural, and not lust.

He also says, “Thou marriest a wife for chastity, and procreation of children; what then mean these harlots?”

And he says, “Remember,” he saith, “my bonds.” Marriage is a bond, a bond ordained of God, a harlot is a severing and a dissolving. It is permitted you to embellish marriage with other things, such as full tables, and apparel. I do not cut off these things, lest I should seem to be clownish to an extreme; and yet Rebecca was content with her veil (**Schaff Note:** θέριστρον, “summer robe.”) only (Gen. xxiv. 65);”

And speaking of weddings in his time, he says, “Everything should be full of chasteness, of gravity, of orderliness; but I see the reverse, people frisking like camels and mules. For the virgin, her chamber is the only befitting place.”

And he adds, “But those harlots, what mean they? They ought to hide their faces when marriage is celebrated; they ought to be dug into the earth, (for harlotry is the corruption of marriage,) but we introduce them at our marriages.”

And he says, "Marriage is a sweet ointment. Why then introducest thou the foul stench of the dunghill into the preparation of thy ointment?"

And he says, "What? is marriage a theater? It is a mystery and a type of a mighty thing; and even if thou reverence not it, reverence that whose type it is. "This mystery," saith he, "is great, but I speak in regard of Christ and of the Church." (Eph. v. 32)"

And he says, "How is it a mystery? They come together, and the two make one."

And he says, "I know that many are ashamed at what is said, and the cause of this is what I spoke of, your own lasciviousness, and unchasteness. The fact of marriages being thus performed, thus depraved, hath gained the thing an ill name: for "marriage is honorable, and the bed undefiled." (Heb. xiii. 4)"

And, speaking of marriage, he says, "For this cause I am desirous of having it thoroughly purified, so as to bring it back again to its proper nobleness, so as to stop the mouths of the heretics. The gift of God is insulted, the root of our generation; for about that root there is much dung and filth. This then let us cleanse away by our discourse."

And he says, "Shall I tell how marriage is also a mystery of the Church? As Christ came into the Church, and she was made of him, and he united with her in a spiritual intercourse, "for," saith one, "I have espoused you to one husband, a pure virgin." (2 Cor. xi. 2) "And that we are of Him, he saith, of His members, "and of His flesh." Thinking then on all these things, let us not cast shame upon so great a mystery. Marriage is a type of the presence of Christ, and art thou drunken at it? Tell me; if thou sawest an image of the king, wouldest thou dishonor it? By no means."

Chrysostom gives us a window into marriage in his time. His encouragement as to how to celebrate a wedding is healthy, and even applicable to today.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY V, page 396-397**, he says, "For let a man, tell me, be dear to God, and shining in virtue, and having a wife; (for it is possible for a man having a wife and children and servants and friends to please God;) will he not be able much more than I to benefit them all?"

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TITUS, HOMILY V, page 536**, speaking of Paul, he says, "And you see him often laying down rules for a lawful intercourse, and he permits the enjoyment of this desire, and allows of a second marriage, and bestows much consideration upon the matter, and never punishes on account of it."

And he says, "But he everywhere condemns him that is fond of money. Concerning wealth also Christ often commanded that we should avoid the corruption of it, but He says nothing about abstaining from a wife."

And he says, "And the blessed Paul says, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled" (Heb. xiii. 4);"

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY VII, page 402**, he says, "Moreover the Beatitudes [pronounced] by Christ, were not addressed to solitaries only: since in that case the whole world would have perished, and we should be accusing God of cruelty. And if these beatitudes were spoken to solitaries only, and the secular person cannot fulfill them, yet He permitted marriage, then He has destroyed all men. For if it be not possible, with marriage, to perform the duties of solitaries, all things have perished and are destroyed, and the [functions] of virtue are shut up in a strait."

So by “solitaries”, he is referring to a “monastic” or someone who is not in the laity.

He continues, “And, how can marriage be honorable, which so hinders us? What then? It is possible, yea very possible, even if we have wives, to pursue after virtue, if we will. How? If having “wives,” we “be as though we had none,” if we rejoice not over our “possessions,” if we “use the world as not abusing it.” (1 Cor. vii. 29, 31)”

And he concludes, “And if any persons have been hindered by marriage state, let them know that marriage is not the hindrance, but their purpose which made an ill use of marriage.”

Marriage was a good thing in the eyes of Chrysostom. And he is in agreement with the Scriptures. But Chrysostom did not understand that marriage is about intimacy between a man and a woman, and not only about the procreation of children.

# Catechumens

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, Instructions to Catechumens, page 159-161

## INSTRUCTIONS TO CATECHUMENS

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### FIRST INSTRUCTION

To those about to be illuminated; (**Schaff Note:** *I.e.*, to be baptized. A common name for Baptism was “illumination,” partly with reference to the instructions which preceded it, as Justin Martyr says; “The laver is called illumination because the minds of those who learn these things are enlightened:” partly also (perhaps rather) because baptism was regarded as a translation from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, the recipient becoming a child of God, and as such entitled to the grace of the illuminating Spirit. Catechumens were divided into four classes according to the stages of their preparation. It is to those who were in the final stage, the competentes or elect as they were called, that the following instructions are addressed.) and for what reason the laver is said to be of regeneration and not of remission of sins; and that it is a dangerous thing not only to forswear oneself, but also to take an oath, even though we swear truly.

1. How delightful and lovable is our band of young brethren! For brethren I call you, even now before you have been brought forth, and before your birth I welcome this relationship with you: For I know, I know clearly, to how great an honour you are about to be led, and to how great a dignity; and those who are about to receive dignity, all are wont to honor, even before the dignity is conferred, laying up for themselves beforehand by their attention good will for the future. And this also I myself now do. For ye are not about to be led to an empty dignity, but to an actual kingdom: and not simply to a kingdom, but to the kingdom of the Heavens itself. Wherefore I beseech and entreat you that you remember me when you come into that kingdom, and as Joseph said to the chief butler “Remember me when it shall be well with thee,” (Genesis 40:14) this also I say now to you, do ye remember me when it is well with you. I do not ask this in return for interpreting your dreams, as he; for I have not come to interpret dreams for you, but to discourse of matters celestial, and to convey to you glad tidings of such good things as “eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard and which have entered not into the heart of man, such are the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” (1 Corinthians 2:9-10) Now Joseph indeed said to that chief butler, “yet three days and Pharaoh will restore thee to thy chief butlership.” But I do not say, yet three days and ye shall be set to pour out the wine of a tyrant, but yet thirty days, and not Pharaoh but the king of Heaven shall restore you to the country which is on high, Jerusalem, which is free—to the city which is in the heavens; and *he* said indeed, “Thou shalt give the cup into the hands of Pharaoh.” But I say not that you shall give the cup into the hands of the king, but that the king shall give the cup into your hand—that dread cup, full of much power, and more precious than any created thing. The initiated know the virtue of this cup, and you yourselves shall know it a little while hence. Remember me, therefore, when you come into that kingdom, when you receive the royal robe, when you are girt with the purple dipped in the master’s blood, when you will be crowned with the diadem, which has lustre leaping forth from it on all sides, more brilliant than the rays of the sun. Such

are the gifts of the Bridegroom, greater indeed than your worth, but worthy of his lovingkindness.

Wherefore, I count you blessed already before those sacred nuptials, and I do not only count you blessed, but I praise your prudence in that you have not come to your illumination as the most slothful among men, at your last breath, but already, like prudent servants, prepared with much goodwill to obey your master, have brought the neck of your soul with much meekness and readiness beneath the bands of Christ, and have received His easy yoke, and have taken His light burden. For if the grace bestowed be the same both for you and for those who are initiated at their last hour, yet the matter of the intention is not the same, nor yet the matter of the preparation for the rite. For they indeed receive it on their bed, but you in the bosom of the Church, which is the common mother of us all; they indeed with lamentation and weeping, but you rejoicing, and exceeding glad: they sighing, you giving thanks; they indeed lethargic with much fever, you filled with much spiritual pleasure; wherefore in your case all things are in harmony with the gift, but in theirs all are adverse to it. For there is wailing and much lamentation on the part of the initiated, and children stand around crying, wife tearing her cheeks, and dejected friends and tearful servants; the whole aspect of the house resembles some wintry and gloomy day. And if thou shalt open the heart of him who is lying there, thou wilt find it more downcast than are these. For as winds meeting one another with many a contrary blast, break up the sea into many parts, so too the thought of the terrors preying upon him assail the soul of the sick man, and distract his mind with many anxieties. Whenever he sees his children, he thinks of their fatherless condition; whenever he looks from them to his wife, he considers her widowhood; when he sees the servants, he beholds the desolation of the whole house; when he comes back to himself, he calls to mind his own present life, and being about to be torn from it, experiences a great cloud of despondency. Of such a kind is the soul of him who is about to be initiated. Then in the midst of its tumult and confusion, the Priest enters, more formidable than the fever itself, and more distressing than death to the relatives of the sick man. For the entrance of the Presbyter is thought to be a greater reason for despair than the voice of the physician despairing of his life, and that which suggests eternal life seems to be a symbol of death. But I have not yet put the finishing stroke to these ills. For in the midst of relatives raising a tumult and making preparations, the soul has often taken its flight, leaving the body desolate; and in many cases, while it was present it was useless, for when it neither recognizes those who are present, nor hears their voice, nor is able to answer those words by which it will make that blessed covenant with the common master of us all, but is as a useless log, or a stone, and he who is about to be illuminated lies there differing nothing from a corpse, what is the profit of initiation in a case of such insensibility?

2. For he who is about to approach these holy and dread mysteries must be awake and alert, must be clean from all cares of this life, full of much self-restraint, much readiness; he must banish from his mind every thought foreign to the mysteries, and on all sides cleanse and prepare his home, as if about to receive the king himself. Such is the preparation of your mind: such are your thoughts; such the purpose of your soul. Await therefore a return worthy of this most excellent decision from God, who overpowers with His recompense those who show forth obedience to Him. But since it is necessary for his fellow servants to contribute of their own, then we will contribute of our own; yea rather not even are these things our own, but these too are our Master's. "For what hast thou," saith He, "that thou didst not receive? but if thou didst

receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Corinthians 4:7) I wished to say this first of all, why in the world our fathers, passing by the whole year, settled that the children of the Church should be initiated at this season; and for what reason, after the instruction from us, removing your shoes and raiment, unclad and unshod, with but one garment on, they conduct you to hear the words of the exorcisers. For it is not thoughtlessly and rashly that they have planned this dress and this season for us. But both these things have a certain mystic and secret reason. And I wish to say this to you. But I see that our discourse now constrains us to something more necessary to say what baptism is, and for what reason it enters into our life, and what good things it conveys to us.

But, if you will, let us discourse about the name which this mystic cleansing bears: for its name is not one, but very many and various. For this purification is called the laver of regeneration. "He saved us," he saith, "through the laver of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus 3:5) It is called also illumination, and this St. Paul again has called it, "For call to remembrance the former days in which after ye were illuminated ye endured a great conflict of sufferings;" (Hebrews 10:32) and again, "For it is impossible for those who were once illuminated, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and then fell away, to renew them again unto repentance." (Hebrews 6:4-6) It is called also, baptism: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27) It is called also burial: "For we were buried" saith he, "with him, through baptism, into death." (Romans 6:4) It is called circumcision: "In whom ye were also circumcised, with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh." (Colossians 2:11) It is called a cross: "Our old man was crucified with him that the body of sin might be done away." (Romans 6:6) It is also possible to speak of other names besides these, but in order that we should not spend our whole time over the names of this free gift, come, return to the first name, and let us finish our discourse by declaring its meaning; but in the meantime, let us extend our teaching a little further. There is that laver by means of the baths, common to all men, which is wont to wipe off bodily uncleanness; and there is the Jewish laver, more honorable than the other, but far inferior to that of grace; and it too wipes off bodily uncleanness but not simply uncleanness of body, since it even reaches to the weak conscience. For there are many matters, which by nature indeed are not unclean, but which become unclean from the weakness of the conscience. And as in the case of little children, masks, and other bugbears are not in themselves alarming, but seem to little children to be alarming, by reason of the weakness of their nature, so it is in the case of those things of which I was speaking; just as to touch dead bodies is not naturally unclean, but when this comes into contact with a weak conscience, it makes him who touches them unclean. For that the thing in question is not unclean naturally, Moses himself who ordained this law showed, when he bore off the entire corpse of Joseph, and yet remained clean. On this account Paul also, discoursing to us about this uncleanness which does not come naturally but by reason of the weakness of the conscience, speaks somewhat in this way, "Nothing is common of itself save to him who accounteth anything to be common." (Romans 14:14) Dost thou not see that uncleanness does not arise from the nature of the thing, but from the weakness of the reasoning about it? And again: "All things indeed are clean, howbeit it is evil to that man who eateth with offense." (Romans 14:20) Dost thou see that it is not to eat, but to eat with offense, that is the cause of uncleanness?

**Commentary:** Chrysostom begins, as he says, “To those about to be illuminated; (**Schaff Note:** *I.e.*, to be baptized. A common name for Baptism was “illumination,” partly with reference to the instructions which preceded it, as Justin Martyr says; “The laver is called illumination because the minds of those who learn these things are enlightened:” partly also (perhaps rather) because baptism was regarded as a translation from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, the recipient becoming a child of God, and as such entitled to the grace of the illuminating Spirit. Catechumens were divided into four classes according to the stages of their preparation. It is to those who were in the final stage, the competentes or elect as they were called, that the following instructions are addressed.)”

Chrysostom continues, “and for what reason the laver is said to be of regeneration and not of remission of sins; and that it is a dangerous thing not only to forswear oneself, but also to take an oath, even though we swear truly.”

He continues, “1. How delightful and lovable is our band of young brethren! For brethren I call you, even now before you have been brought forth, and before your birth I welcome this relationship with you: For I know, I know clearly, to how great an honour you are about to be led, and to how great a dignity; and those who are about to receive dignity, all are wont to honor, even before the dignity is conferred, laying up for themselves beforehand by their attention good will for the future. And this also I myself now do. For ye are not about to be led to an empty dignity, but to an actual kingdom: and not simply to a kingdom, but to the kingdom of the Heavens itself. Wherefore I beseech and entreat you that you remember me when you come into that kingdom, and as Joseph said to the chief butler “Remember me when it shall be well with thee,” (Genesis 40:14) this also I say now to you, do ye remember me when it is well with you.”

He refers to **Genesis 40 (KJV):14** But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house:

He continues, “I do not ask this in return for interpreting your dreams, as he; for I have not come to interpret dreams for you, but to discourse of matters celestial, and to convey to you glad tidings of such good things as “eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard and which have entered not into the heart of man, such are the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” (1 Corinthians 2:9-10)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):9** But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

He continues, “Now Joseph indeed said to that chief butler, “yet three days and Pharaoh will restore thee to thy chief butlership.” But I do not say, yet three days and ye shall be set to pour out the wine of a tyrant, but yet thirty days, and not Pharaoh but the king of Heaven shall restore you to the country which is on high, Jerusalem, which is free—to the city which is in the heavens; and *he* said indeed, “Thou shalt give the cup into the hands of Pharaoh.””

He refers to **Genesis 40 (KJV):13** Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler.

He continues, “But I say not that you shall give the cup into the hands of the king, but



that the king shall give the cup into your hand—that dread cup, full of much power, and more precious than any created thing. The initiated know the virtue of this cup, and you yourselves shall know it a little while hence. Remember me, therefore, when you come into that kingdom, when you receive the royal robe, when you are girt with the purple dipped in the master’s blood, when you will be crowned with the diadem, which has lustre leaping forth from it on all sides, more brilliant than the rays of the sun. Such are the gifts of the Bridegroom, greater indeed than your worth, but worthy of his lovingkindness.”

And this reminds us of the prodigal son in **Luke 15 (KJV):**21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

He continues, “Wherefore, I count you blessed already before those sacred nuptials, and I do not only count you blessed, but I praise your prudence in that you have not come to your illumination as the most slothful among men, at your last breath, but already, like prudent servants, prepared with much goodwill to obey your master, have brought the neck of your soul with much meekness and readiness beneath the bands of Christ, and have received His easy yoke, and have taken His light burden.”

He refers to **Matthew 11 (KJV):**28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

He continues, “For if the grace bestowed be the same both for you and for those who are initiated at their last hour, yet the matter of the intention is not the same, nor yet the matter of the preparation for the rite. For they indeed receive it on their bed, but you in the bosom of the Church, which is the common mother of us all;”

Chrysostom is speaking of those who wait until their dying day to be baptized. And the reason he says that one receives this rite “in the bosom of the Church, which is the common mother of us all”, is because, according to the belief of the Church in that time, one was regenerated, or born again, by means of the Church who performed the rite of baptism.

He continues, “they indeed with lamentation and weeping, but you rejoicing, and exceeding glad: they sighing, you giving thanks; they indeed lethargic with much fever, you filled with much spiritual pleasure; wherefore in your case all things are in harmony with the gift, but in theirs all are adverse to it. For there is wailing and much lamentation on the part of the initiated, and children stand around crying, wife tearing her cheeks, and dejected friends and tearful servants; the whole aspect of the house resembles some wintry and gloomy day. And if thou shalt open the heart of him who is lying there, thou wilt find it more downcast than are these. For as winds meeting one another with many a contrary blast, break up the sea into many parts, so too the thought of the terrors preying upon him assail the soul of the sick man, and distract his mind with many anxieties. Whenever he sees his children, he thinks of their fatherless condition; whenever he looks from them to his wife, he considers her widowhood; when he sees the servants, he beholds the desolation of the whole house; when he comes back to himself, he calls to mind his own present life, and being about to be torn from it, experiences

a great cloud of despondency. Of such a kind is the soul of him who is about to be initiated. Then in the midst of its tumult and confusion, the Priest enters, more formidable than the fever itself, and more distressing than death to the relatives of the sick man. For the entrance of the Presbyter is thought to be a greater reason for despair than the voice of the physician despairing of his life, and that which suggests eternal life seems to be a symbol of death.”

Notice here how he seems to use the term Priest to be the same as Presbyter. He continues, “But I have not yet put the finishing stroke to these ills. For in the midst of relatives raising a tumult and making preparations, the soul has often taken its flight, leaving the body desolate; and in many cases, while it was present it was useless, for when it neither recognizes those who are present, nor hears their voice, nor is able to answer those words by which it will make that blessed covenant with the common master of us all, but is as a useless log, or a stone, and he who is about to be illuminated lies there differing nothing from a corpse, what is the profit of initiation in a case of such insensibility?”

Chrysostom makes a good case for not putting off baptism until your dying day.

He continues, “2. For he who is about to approach these holy and dread mysteries must be awake and alert, must be clean from all cares of this life, full of much self-restraint, much readiness; he must banish from his mind every thought foreign to the mysteries, and on all sides cleanse and prepare his home, as if about to receive the king himself. Such is the preparation of your mind: such are your thoughts; such the purpose of your soul. Await therefore a return worthy of this most excellent decision from God, who overpowers with His recompense those who show forth obedience to Him. But since it is necessary for his fellow servants to contribute of their own, then we will contribute of our own; yea rather not even are these things our own, but these too are our Master’s. “For what hast thou,” saith He, “that thou didst not receive? but if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Corinthians 4:7)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 4 (KJV):7** For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

He continues, “I wished to say this first of all, why in the world our fathers, passing by the whole year, settled that the children of the Church should be initiated at this season; and for what reason, after the instruction from us, removing your shoes and raiment, unclad and unshod, with but one garment on, they conduct you to hear the words of the exorcisers. For it is not thoughtlessly and rashly that they have planned this dress and this season for us. But both these things have a certain mystic and secret reason. And I wish to say this to you. But I see that our discourse now constrains us to something more necessary to say what baptism is, and for what reason it enters into our life, and what good things it conveys to us.

But, if you will, let us discourse about the name which this mystic cleansing bears: for its name is not one, but very many and various. For this purification is called the laver of regeneration. “He saved us,” he saith, “through the laver of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” (Titus 3:5)”

And we read in **Titus 3 (Latin Vulgate: Douay Rheims):5** Not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the laver of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost.

But we read as in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

The word “laver” is not in the Greek. The Greek word is **λουτρόν** (pronounced lü-tro'n), from G3068; a bath, i.e. (figuratively), baptism:—washing.

He continues, “It is called also illumination, and this St. Paul again has called it, “For call to remembrance the former days in which after ye were illuminated ye endured a great conflict of sufferings;” (Hebrews 10:32) and again, “For it is impossible for those who were once illuminated, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and then fell away, to renew them again unto repentance.” (Hebrews 6:4-6)”

He refers to **Hebrews 10 (KJV):32** But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

And to **Hebrews 6 (KJV):4** For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

However, nothing is said about baptism in these Scriptures. Chrysostom is interpreting them based on the tradition of the Church in his time. The words “enlightened” and “illuminated” refer to the word of God which is a light to us, as we read in **Psalms 119 (KJV):105** Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

He continues, “It is called also, baptism: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.” (Galatians 3:27)”

He refers to **Galatians 3 (KJV):27** For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

He continues, “It is called also burial: “For we were buried” saith he, “with him, through baptism, into death.” (Romans 6:4)”

He refers to **Romans 6 (KJV):4** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

He continues, “It is called circumcision: “In whom ye were also circumcised, with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh.” (Galatians 2:11)”

He refers to **Colossians 2 (KJV):11** In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

He continues, “It is called a cross: “Our old man was crucified with him that the body of sin might be done away.” (Romans 6:6)”

He refers to **Romans 6 (KJV):6** Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

He continues, “It is also possible to speak of other names besides these, but in order that we should not spend our whole time over the names of this free gift, come, return to the first name, and let us finish our discourse by declaring its meaning; but in the meantime, let us extend our teaching a little further. There is that laver by means of the baths, common to all

men, which is wont to wipe off bodily uncleanness; and there is the Jewish laver, more honorable than the other, but far inferior to that of grace; and it too wipes off bodily uncleanness but not simply uncleanness of body, since it even reaches to the weak conscience. For there are many matters, which by nature indeed are not unclean, but which become unclean from the weakness of the conscience. And as in the case of little children, masks, and other bugbears are not in themselves alarming, but seem to little children to be alarming, by reason of the weakness of their nature, so it is in the case of those things of which I was speaking; just as to touch dead bodies is not naturally unclean, but when this comes into contact with a weak conscience, it makes him who touches them unclean. For that the thing in question is not unclean naturally, Moses himself who ordained this law showed, when he bore off the entire corpse of Joseph, and yet remained clean. On this account Paul also, discoursing to us about this uncleanness which does not come naturally but by reason of the weakness of the conscience, speaks somewhat in this way, “Nothing is common of itself save to him who accounteth anything to be common.” (Romans 14:14)”

He refers to **Romans 14 (KJV):14** I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

He continues, “Dost thou not see that uncleanness does not arise from the nature of the thing, but from the weakness of the reasoning about it? And again: “All things indeed are clean, howbeit it is evil to that man who eateth with offense.” (Romans 14:20)”

He refers to **Romans 14 (KJV):20** For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

He concludes, “Dost thou see that it is not to eat, but to eat with offense, that is the cause of uncleanness?”

All of the Scriptures he has referred to happen at regeneration, but not at baptism. Baptism is like circumcision, which is “a seal of the righteousness of the faith” which one has yet being unbaptized. This is what Paul explained in **Romans 4 (KJV):6** Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. 9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

Let us continue to look at what Chrysostom believed about baptism and regeneration.

## Baptism

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, Instructions to Catechumens, page 161-162**

### INSTRUCTIONS TO CATECHUMENS

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## FIRST INSTRUCTION

3. Such is the defilement from which the laver of the Jews cleansed. But the laver of grace, not such, but the real uncleanness which has introduced defilement into the soul as well as into the body. For it does not make those who have touched dead bodies clean, but those who have set their hand to dead works: and if any man be effeminate, or a fornicator, or an idolator, or a doer of whatever ill you please, or if he be full of all the wickedness there is among men: should he fall into this pool of waters, he comes up again from the divine fountain purer than the sun's rays. And in order that thou mayest not think that what is said is mere vain boasting, hear Paul speaking of the power of the laver, "Be not deceived: neither idolators, nor fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor covetous, not drunkards, not revilers, not extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-10) And what has this to do with what has been spoken? says one, "for prove the question whether the power of the laver thoroughly cleanses all these things." Hear therefore what follows: "And such were some of you, but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the spirit of our God." *We* promise to show you that they who approach the laver become clean from all fornication: but the word has shown more, that they have become not only clean, but both holy and just, for it does not say only "ye were washed," but also "ye were sanctified and were justified." What could be more strange than this, when without toil, and exertion, and good works, righteousness is produced? For such is the lovingkindness of the Divine gift that it makes men just without this exertion. For if a letter of the Emperor, a few words being added, sets free those who are liable to countless accusations, and brings others to the highest honors; much rather will the Holy Spirit of God, who is able to do all things, free us from all evil and grant us much righteousness, and fill us with much assurance, and as a spark falling into the wide sea would straightway be quenched, or would become invisible, being overwhelmed by the multitude of the waters, so also all human wickedness, when it falls into the pool of the divine fountain, is more swiftly and easily overwhelmed, and made invisible, than that spark. And for what reason, says one, if the laver take away all our sins, is it called, not a laver of remission of sins, nor a laver of cleansing, but a laver of regeneration? Because it does not simply take away our sins, nor simply cleanse us from our faults, but so as if we were born again. For it creates and fashions us anew not forming us again out of earth, but creating us out of another element, namely, of the nature of water. For it does not simply wipe the vessel clean, but entirely remoulds it again. For that which is wiped clean, even if it be cleaned with care, has traces of its former condition, and bears the remains of its defilement, but that which falls into the new mould, and is renewed by means of the flames, laying aside all uncleanness, comes forth from the furnace, and sends forth the same brilliancy with things newly formed. As therefore any one who takes and recasts a golden statue which has been tarnished by time, smoke, dust, rust, restores it to us thoroughly cleansed and glistening: so too this nature of ours, rusted with the rust of sin, and having gathered much smoke from our faults, and having lost its beauty, which He had from the beginning bestowed upon it from himself, God has taken and cast anew, and throwing it into the waters as into a mould, and instead of fire sending forth the grace of the Spirit, then brings us forth with much brightness, renewed, and made afresh, to rival the beams of the sun, having

crushed the old man, and having fashioned a new man, more brilliant than the former.

4. And speaking darkly of this crushing, and this mystic cleansing, the prophet of old said, "Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Psalm 2:9) For that the word is in reference to the faithful, what goes before sufficiently shows us, "For thou art my Son," he says, "today have I begotten thee, ask of me and I will give the heathen for three inheritance, the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Psalm 2:7-8) Dost thou see how he has made mention of the church of the Gentiles, and has spoken of the kingdom of Christ extended on all sides? Then he says again, "Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron;" not grievous, but strong: "thou shalt break them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Psalm 2:9) Behold then, the laver is more mystically brought forward. For he does not say earthen vessels: but vessels of the potter. But, give heed: For earthen vessels when crushed would not admit of refashioning, on account of the hardness which was gained by them from the fire. But the fact is that the vessels of the potter are not earthen, but of clay; wherefore, also, when they have been distorted, they can easily, by the skill of the artificer, be brought again to a second shape. When, therefore, God speaks of an irremediable calamity, he does not say vessels of the potter, but an earthen vessel; when, for instance, he wished to teach the prophet and the Jews that he delivered up the city to an irremediable calamity, he bade him take an earthen wine-vessel, and crush it before all the people, and say, "Thus shall this city be destroyed, be broken in pieces." (Jeremiah 19:11) But when he wishes to hold out good hopes to them, he brings the prophet to a pottery, and does not show him an earthen vessel, but shows him a vessel of clay, which was in the hands of the potter, falling to the ground: and brings him to it saying, "If this potter has taken up and remodeled his vessel which has fallen, shall I not much rather be able to restore you when you have fallen?" (Jeremiah 18:6) It is possible therefore for God not only to restore those who are made of clay, through the laver of regeneration, but to bring back again to their original state, on their careful repentance, those who have received the power of the Spirit, and have lapsed. But this is not the time for you to hear words about repentance, rather may the time never come for you to fall into the need of these remedies, but may you always remain in preservation of the beauty and the brightness which ye are now about to receive, unsullied. In order, then, that ye may ever remain thus, come and let us discourse to you a little about your manner of life. For in the wrestling schools falls of the athletes are devoid of danger. For the wrestling is with friends, and they practice all their exercises on the persons of their teachers. But when the time of the contest has come, when the lists are open, when the spectators are seated above, when the president has arrived, it necessarily follows that the combatants, if they become careless, fall and retire in great disgrace, or if they are in earnest, win the crowns and the prizes. So then, in your case these thirty days are like some wrestling school, both for exercise and practice: let us learn from thence already to get the better of that evil demon. For it is to contend with him that we have to strip ourselves, with him after baptism are we to box and fight. Let us learn from thence already his grip, on what side he is aggressive, on what side he can easily threaten us, in order that, when the contest comes on, we may not feel strange, nor become confused, as seeing new forms of wrestling; but having already practiced them amongst ourselves, and having learnt all his methods, may engage in these forms of wrestling against him with courage. In all ways, therefore, is he accustomed to threaten us, but especially by means of the tongue, and the mouth. For there is no organ so convenient for him for our deception and our destruction as an unchastened tongue and an unchecked utterance. Hence come many slips on our part: hence

many serious accusations against us. And the ease of these falls through the tongue a certain one showed, when he said, “Many fell by the sword, but not so many as by the tongue.” (Ecclesiasticus 28:18) Now the gravity of the fall the same person shows us again when he says: “To slip upon a pavement is better than to slip with the tongue.” (Ecclesiasticus 20:18) And what he speaks of is of this kind. Better it is, says he, that the body should fall and be crushed, than that such a word should go forth as destroys the soul; and he does not speak of falls merely; he also admonishes us that much forethought should be exercised, so that we should not be tripped up, thus saying “Make a door and bars for thy mouth,” (Ecclesiasticus 28:25) not that we should prepare doors and bars, but that with much security, we should shut the tongue off from outrageous words; and again in another place, after showing that we need influence from above, both as accompanying and preceding our own effort so as to keep this wild beast within: stretching forth his hands to God, the prophet said, “Let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice, set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips;” and he who before admonished, himself too (Psalm 141:2-3) says again “Who shall set a watch before my mouth, and a seal of wisdom upon my lips?” (Ecclesiasticus 22:27) Dost thou not see, each one fearing these falls and bewailing them, both giving advice, and praying that the tongue may have the benefit of much watchfulness? and for what reason, says one, if this organ brings us such ruin, did God originally place it within us? Because indeed, it is of great use, and if we are careful, it is of use only, and brings no ruin. Hear, for example, what he says who spoke the former words, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue.” (Proverbs 18:21) And Christ points to the same thing when he says, “By thy words thou shalt be condemned, and by thy words thou shalt be justified.” (Mark 12:37) For the tongue stands in the midst ready for use on either hand. Thou art its master. Thus indeed a sword lies in the midst, and if thou use it against thine enemies, this organ becomes a means of safety for thee. But if thou thrust its stroke against thyself, not the nature of the iron, but thine own transgression becomes the cause of thy slaughter. Let us then take this view of the tongue. It is a sword lying in the midst; sharpen it for the purpose of accusing thine own sins. Thrust not the stroke against thy brother. For this reason God surrounded it with a double fortification; with the fence of the teeth and the barrier of the lips, that it may not rashly and without circumspection utter words which are not convenient. Well, dost thou say it will not endure this? Bridle it therefore within. Restrain it by means of the teeth, as though giving over its body to these executioners and making them bite it. For it is better that when it sins now it should be bitten by the teeth, than one day when it seeks a drop of water and is parched with heat, to be unable to obtain this consolation. In many other ways indeed it is wont to sin, by raillery and blasphemy, by uttering foul words, by slander, swearing, and perjury.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “3. Such is the defilement from which the laver of the Jews cleansed. But the laver of grace, not such, but the real uncleanness which has introduced defilement into the soul as well as into the body.”

So he is saying that baptism, “the laver of grace”, cleanses the real uncleanness, the defilement of soul and body.

He continues, “For it does not make those who have touched dead bodies clean, but those who have set their hand to dead works: and if any man be effeminate, or a fornicator, or an idolator, or a doer of whatever ill you please, or if he be full of all the wickedness there is

among men: should he fall into this pool of waters, he comes up again from the divine fountain purer than the sun's rays. And in order that thou mayest not think that what is said is mere vain boasting, hear Paul speaking of the power of the laver, "Be not deceived: neither idolators, nor fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor covetous, not drunkards, not revilers, not extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)"

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 6 (NKJV):9** Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

He continues, "And what has this to do with what has been spoken? says one, "for prove the question whether the power of the laver thoroughly cleanses all these things." Hear therefore what follows: "And such were some of you, but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the spirit of our God." *We* promise to show you that they who approach the laver become clean from all fornication: but the word has shown more, that they have become not only clean, but both holy and just, for it does not say only "ye were washed," but also "ye were sanctified and were justified.""

He interprets the washing in 1 Corinthians 6:11 as baptism. But this washing speaks of the cleansing of our sins when we believe, for we are justified by faith, as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

And in **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Our faith is all that is necessary for us to be born again, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

He continues, "What could be more strange than this, when without toil, and exertion, and good works, righteousness is produced? For such is the lovingkindness of the Divine gift that it makes men just without this exertion. For if a letter of the Emperor, a few words being added, sets free those who are liable to countless accusations, and brings others to the highest honors; much rather will the Holy Spirit of God, who is able to do all things, free us from all evil and grant us much righteousness, and fill us with much assurance, and as a spark falling into the wide sea would straightway be quenched, or would become invisible, being overwhelmed by the multitude of the waters, so also all human wickedness, when it falls into the pool of the divine fountain, is more swiftly and easily overwhelmed, and made invisible, than that spark. And for what reason, says one, if the laver take away all our sins, is it called, not a laver of remission of sins, nor a laver of cleansing, but a laver of regeneration? Because it does not simply take away our sins, nor simply cleanse us from our faults, but so as if we were born again."



His wording about the new birth, “as if we were born again”, is so vague and indefinite. Chrysostom does not seem to understand the change that happens when one is born of the Spirit of God. Jesus did not say that unless you have something like a birth of the Spirit, you cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. But Jesus spoke as in **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Chrysostom continues, “For it creates and fashions us anew not forming us again out of earth, but creating us out of another element, namely, of the nature of water.”

But what does water have to do with spirit? Jesus said, “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”. Chrysostom does not seem to understand the nature of our spirit. In fact, he thought that our spirit was our soul. He did not understand that there was a difference between soul and spirit. Our spirit is where we connect with God. When we were dead in our trespasses and sins, we had not connection with God. But when we were born again, our spirit was given new life. We now have an awareness of the spiritual realm, and of God’s presence. In our spirit is a new divine nature, being born of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God became the life of our spirit. We now have eternal life. Our soul, which is our mind, will, heart, which is the center of our emotions, and conscience, will go through a progressive sanctification as we walk in obedience to the word of God.

Chrysostom continues, “For it does not simply wipe the vessel clean, but entirely remoulds it again. For that which is wiped clean, even if it be cleaned with care, has traces of its former condition, and bears the remains of its defilement, but that which falls into the new mould, and is renewed by means of the flames, laying aside all uncleanness, comes forth from the furnace, and sends forth the same brilliancy with things newly formed. As therefore any one who takes and recasts a golden statue which has been tarnished by time, smoke, dust, rust, restores it to us thoroughly cleansed and glistening: so too this nature of ours, rusted with the rust of sin, and having gathered much smoke from our faults, and having lost its beauty, which He had from the beginning bestowed upon it from himself, God has taken and cast anew, and throwing it into the waters as into a mould, and instead of fire sending forth the grace of the Spirit, then brings us forth with much brightness, renewed, and made afresh, to rival the beams of the sun, having crushed the old man, and having fashioned a new man, more brilliant than the former.”

Chrysostom makes it sound as if baptism makes us entirely a new man. We are not merely “wiped clean”, or even “cleaned with care”, but we have layed “aside all uncleanness”, as a recast “golden statue”. He did not take into account the “law of sin” which is in our flesh, which is mortal, and not changed when one is born again. The “law of sin” in our “members” will not be removed until we are “changed” at the resurrection to be immortal, as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):51** Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Chrysostom continues, and says, “4. And speaking darkly of this crushing, and this mystic cleansing, the prophet of old said, “Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” (Psalm 2:9)”

He refers to **Psalm 2 (KJV):9** Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash

them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

He continues, "For that the word is in reference to the faithful, what goes before sufficiently shows us, "For thou art my Son," he says, "today have I begotten thee, ask of me and I will give the heathen for thy inheritance, the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Psalm 2:7-8)"

He refers to **Psalm 2 (KJV):**7 I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. 8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Actually, Psalm 2:9 above does not refer to the faithful, as we read in **Revelation 2 (KJV):** 26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

And in **Psalm 110 (KJV):**4 The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. 5 The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. 6 He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

And in **Revelation 12 (KJV):**5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

And in **Revelation 19 (KJV):**15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

He continues, "Dost thou see how he has made mention of the church of the Gentiles, and has spoken of the kingdom of Christ extended on all sides? Then he says again, "Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron;" not grievous, but strong: "thou shalt break them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Psalm 2:9)"

This Scripture is speaking of the Gentile nations, as we read in **Psalm 2 (KJV):**1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, 3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

Chrysostom confused this with the "church of the Gentiles". Christ will "rule them with a rod of iron" from the "holy hill of Zion" in the thousand year reign of Christ, the millennium, as we continue in **Psalm 2 (KJV):**4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. 5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. 6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. 7 I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. 8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Israel will be restored, and made the head of the nations during the millennium, as we read in **Deuteronomy 28 (KJV):**13 And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them:

Israel will be made the "head" when they repent, which we read of in

**Zechariah 12 (KJV):**10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

He continues, “Behold then, the laver is more mystically brought forward. For he does not say earthen vessels: but vessels of the potter. But, give heed: For earthen vessels when crushed would not admit of refashioning, on account of the hardness which was gained by them from the fire. But the fact is that the vessels of the potter are not earthen, but of clay; wherefore, also, when they have been distorted, they can easily, by the skill of the artificer, be brought again to a second shape. When, therefore, God speaks of an irremediable calamity, he does not say vessels of the potter, but an earthen vessel; when, for instance, he wished to teach the prophet and the Jews that he delivered up the city to an irremediable calamity, he bade him take an earthen wine-vessel, and crush it before all the people, and say, “Thus shall this city be destroyed, be broken in pieces.” (Jeremiah 19:11)”

He refers to **Jeremiah 19 (KJV):**11 And shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury.

He continues, “But when he wishes to hold out good hopes to them, he brings the prophet to a pottery, and does not show him an earthen vessel, but shows him a vessel of clay, which was in the hands of the potter, falling to the ground: and brings him to it saying, “If this potter has taken up and remodeled his vessel which has fallen, shall I not much rather be able to restore you when you have fallen?” (Jeremiah 18:6)”

He refers to **Jeremiah 18 (KJV):**6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

He continues, “It is possible therefore for God not only to restore those who are made of clay, through the laver of regeneration, but to bring back again to their original state, on their careful repentance, those who have received the power of the Spirit, and have lapsed.”

Actually, the Scripture is clear. We are born again when we believe. We are then baptized because we believe. Baptism is symbolic of what happens when we believe. Chrysostom thought that one received the grace of the Spirit when one was baptized. This made it easy for him to believe that, if one lapsed, they could be brought “back again to their original state, on their careful repentance”. But when we realize that when one is born of the Spirit of God, and that they are made alive to God in their spirit, and that they receive a new divine nature in their spirit, and that the Spirit of God is now the life of their spirit, then we understand that the believer now has eternal life.

It is also evident Chrysostom is not clear on the justification of the believer. He does not understand that the one who has been born again has been justified by God, which means that God has declared him or her righteous, and put His righteousness down to their account. Therefore they stand in grace. We will then be rewarded for good works, but we will suffer for our bad choices in this life if we do not follow the Lord, and only build wood, hay, or stubble on the foundation of Jesus Christ. But we will still be saved, yet as by the fire of our bad choices in this life.

He continues, “But this is not the time for you to hear words about repentance, rather may

the time never come for you to fall into the need of these remedies, but may you always remain in preservation of the beauty and the brightness which ye are now about to receive, unsullied. In order, then, that ye may ever remain thus, come and let us discourse to you a little about your manner of life. For in the wrestling schools falls of the athletes are devoid of danger. For the wrestling is with friends, and they practice all their exercises on the persons of their teachers. But when the time of the contest has come, when the lists are open, when the spectators are seated above, when the president has arrived, it necessarily follows that the combatants, if they become careless, fall and retire in great disgrace, or if they are in earnest, win the crowns and the prizes. So then, in your case these thirty days are like some wrestling school, both for exercise and practice: let us learn from thence already to get the better of that evil demon. For it is to contend with him that we have to strip ourselves, with him after baptism are we to box and fight. Let us learn from thence already his grip, on what side he is aggressive, on what side he can easily threaten us, in order that, when the contest comes on, we may not feel strange, nor become confused, as seeing new forms of wrestling; but having already practiced them amongst ourselves, and having learnt all his methods, may engage in these forms of wrestling against him with courage. In all ways, therefore, is he accustomed to threaten us, but especially by means of the tongue, and the mouth. For there is no organ so convenient for him for our deception and our destruction as an unchastened tongue and an unchecked utterance. Hence come many slips on our part: hence many serious accusations against us. And the ease of these falls through the tongue a certain one showed, when he said, “Many fell by the sword, but not so many as by the tongue.” (Ecclesiasticus 28:18)”

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 28 (KJV):18** Many have fallen by the edge of the sword: but not so many as have fallen by the tongue.

He continues, “Now the gravity of the fall the same person shows us again when he says: “To slip upon a pavement is better than to slip with the tongue.” (Ecclesiasticus 20:18)”

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 20 (KJV):18** To slip upon a pavement is better than to slip with the tongue: so the fall of the wicked shall come speedily.

He continues, “And what he speaks of is of this kind. Better it is, says he, that the body should fall and be crushed, than that such a word should go forth as destroys the soul; and he does not speak of falls merely; he also admonishes us that much forethought should be exercised, so that we should not be tripped up, thus saying “Make a door and bars for thy mouth,” (Ecclesiasticus 28:25) not that we should prepare doors and bars, but that with much security, we should shut the tongue off from outrageous words;”

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 28 (KJV):25** And weigh thy words in a balance, and make a door and bar for thy mouth.

He continues, “and again in another place, after showing that we need influence from above, both as accompanying and preceding our own effort so as to keep this wild beast within: stretching forth his hands to God, the prophet said, “Let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice, set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips;” and he who before admonished, himself too (Psalm 141:2-3) says again “Who shall set a watch before my mouth, and a seal of wisdom upon my lips?” (Ecclesiasticus 22:27)”

He refers to **Psalms 141 (KJV):2** Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. 3 Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

And to **Ecclesiasticus 22 (KJV):27** Who shall set a watch before my mouth, and a seal of wisdom upon my lips, that I fall not suddenly by them, and that my tongue destroy me not?

He continues, “Dost thou not see, each one fearing these falls and bewailing them, both giving advice, and praying that the tongue may have the benefit of much watchfulness? and for what reason, says one, if this organ brings us such ruin, did God originally place it within us? Because indeed, it is of great use, and if we are careful, it is of use only, and brings no ruin. Hear, for example, what he says who spoke the former words, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue.” (Proverbs 18:21)”

He refers to **Proverbs 18 (KJV):21** Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

He continues, “And Christ points to the same thing when he says, “By thy words thou shalt be condemned, and by thy words thou shalt be justified.” (Mark 12:37)”

He refers to **Mark 12 (KJV):37** For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

He continues, “For the tongue stands in the midst ready for use on either hand. Thou art its master. Thus indeed a sword lies in the midst, and if thou use it against thine enemies, this organ becomes a means of safety for thee. But if thou thrust its stroke against thyself, not the nature of the iron, but thine own transgression becomes the cause of thy slaughter. Let us then take this view of the tongue. It is a sword lying in the midst; sharpen it for the purpose of accusing thine own sins. Thrust not the stroke against thy brother. For this reason God surrounded it with a double fortification; with the fence of the teeth and the barrier of the lips, that it may not rashly and without circumspection utter words which are not convenient. Well, dost thou say it will not endure this? Bridle it therefore within. Restrain it by means of the teeth, as though giving over its body to these executioners and making them bite it. For it is better that when it sins now it should be bitten by the teeth, than one day when it seeks a drop of water and is parched with heat, to be unable to obtain this consolation. In many other ways indeed it is wont to sin, by raillery and blasphemy, by uttering foul words, by slander, swearing, and perjury.”

And we read in **James 3 (KJV):1** My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. 2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. 3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. 4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. 5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. 7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: 8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. 11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? 12 Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no

fountain both yield salt water and fresh. 13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, Instructions to Catechumens, page 165-166**

## INSTRUCTIONS TO CATECHUMENS

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### SECOND INSTRUCTION

To those about to be illuminated; and concerning women who adorn themselves with plaiting of hair, and gold, and concerning those who have used omens, and amulets, and incantations, all which are foreign to Christianity.

1. I have come to ask first of all for some fruit in return for the words lately said out of brotherly love to you. For we do not speak in order that ye should hear simply, but in order that ye should remember what has been said, and may afford us evidence of this, by your works. Yea, rather, not us, but, God, who knows the secrets of the heart. On this account indeed instruction is so called, in order that even when we are absent, our discourse may instruct your hearts. (**Schaff Note:** Catechism, or oral instruction, “Catechesis,” in Greek is called by that name. Chrysostom says, a word derived from ἤχη, a sound, in order that it may “resound” in your minds ἐνηχη. It is impossible to preserve the play upon words in the translation consistently with an exact rendering. ) And be not surprised if, after an interval of ten days only, we have come asking for fruit from the seed sown. For in one day it is possible at once to let the seed fall, and to accomplish the harvest. For strengthened not by our own power alone, but by the influence which comes from God, we are summoned to the conflict. Let as many therefore as have received what has been spoken, and have fulfilled it by their works, remain reaching forth to the things which are before. But let as many as have not yet arrived at this good achievement, arrive at it straightway, that they may dispel the condemnation which arises out of their sloth by their diligence for the future. For it is possible, it is indeed possible for him who has been very slothful, by using diligence for the future to recover the whole loss of the time that is past. Wherefore, He says, “Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the day of provocation.” (Psalm 95:8) And this, He says, exhorting and counseling us; that we should never despair, but so long as we are here, should have good hopes, and should lay hold on what is before us, and hasten towards the prize of our high calling of God. This then let us do, and let us inquire into the names of this great gift. For as ignorance of the greatness of this dignity makes those who are honored with it more slothful, so when it is known it renders them thankful, and makes them more earnest; and anyhow it would be disgraceful and ridiculous that they who enjoy such glory and honors from God, should not even know what the names of it are intended to show forth. And why do I speak about this gift, for if thou wilt consider the common name of our race, thou wilt receive the greatest instruction and incentive to virtue. For this name “Man,” we do not define according as they who are without define it, but as the Divine Scripture has bidden us. For a man is not merely whosoever has hands and feet of a man, nor whosoever is rational only, but whosoever practices piety and virtue with boldness. Hear, at least, what he says concerning Job. For in saying that “there was a man in the land of Ausis,”

**(Schaff Note:** This is the Septuagint word for Uz, the situation of which is a matter of great uncertainty. A curious note at the end of the book of Job in the Septuagint states that it was on the borders of the Euphrates.) he does not describe him in those terms in which they who are without describe him, nor does he say this because he had two feet and broad nails, but he added the evidences of his piety and said, “just, true, fearing God, eschewing every evil deed,” (Job 1:1) showing that this is a man; even as therefore another says, “Fear God, and keep his commandments, because this is the whole man.” (Ecclesiastes 12:13) But if the name man affords such a great incentive to virtue, much rather the term faithful. For thou art called faithful on this account, because thou hast faith in God, and thyself art entrusted from Him with righteousness, sanctification, cleansing of soul, adoption, the kingdom of heaven. He entrusted thee with these, and handed them over to thee. Thou in turn hast entrusted, and handed over other things to him, almsgiving, prayers, self-control and every other virtue. And why do I say almsgiving? If thou givest him even a cup of cold water, thou shalt not indeed lose this, but even this he keeps with care against that day, and will restore it with overflowing abundance. For this truly is wonderful, that he does not keep only that which has been entrusted to him, but in recompensing it increases it.

This too he has bidden thee do according to thy power, with what has been entrusted to thee, to extend the holiness which thou hast received, and to make the righteousness which comes from the laver brighter, and the gift of grace more radiant; even as therefore Paul did, increasing all the good things which he received by his subsequent labors, and his zeal, and his diligence. And look at the carefulness of God; neither did he give the whole to thee then, nor withhold the whole, but gave part, and promised part. And for what reason did he not give the whole then? In order that thou mightest show thy faith about Him, believing, on his promise alone, in what was not yet given. And for what reason again did he not there dispense the whole, but did give the grace of the Spirit, and righteousness and sanctification? In order that he might lighten thy labors for thee, and by what has been already given may also put thee in good hope for that which is to come. On this account, too, thou art about to be called newly-enlightened, because thy light is ever new, if thou wilt, and is never quenched. For this light of day, whether we will or no, the night succeeds, but darkness knows not that light’s ray. “For the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness apprehended it not.” (John 1:5) Not so bright at least is the world, when the sunbeams come forth, as the soul shines and becomes brighter when it has received grace from the Spirit and learns more exactly the nature of the case. For when night prevails, and there is darkness, often a man has seen a coil of rope and has thought it was a serpent, and has fled from an approaching friend as from an enemy, and being aware of some noise, has become very much alarmed; but when the day has come, nothing of this sort could happen, but all appears just as it really is; which thing also occurs in the case of our soul. For when grace has come, and driven away the darkness of the understanding, we learn the exact nature of things, and what was before dreadful to us becomes contemptible. For we no longer fear death, after learning exactly, from this sacred initiation, that death is not death, but a sleep and a seasonable slumber; nor poverty nor disease, nor any other such thing, knowing that we are on our way to a better life, undefiled and incorruptible, and free from all such vicissitudes.

2. Let us not therefore remain craving after the things of this life, neither after the luxury of the table, or costliness of raiment. For thou hast the most excellent of raiment, thou hast a spiritual table thou hast the glory from on high, and Christ is become to thee all things, thy

table, thy raiment, thy home, thy head, thy stem. “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, did put on Christ.” (Galatians 3:27) See how he has become raiment for thee. Dost thou wish to learn how he becomes a table for thee? “He who eateth me,” says He, “as I live because of the Father, he also shall live because of me;” (John 6:57) and that he becometh a home for thee, “he that eateth my flesh abideth in me, and I in him;” (John 6:56) and that He is stem He says again, “I am the vine, ye the branches,” (John 15:5) and that he is brother, and friend, and bride-groom, “I no longer call you servants: for ye are my friends;” (John 15:15) and Paul again, “I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ;” (2 Corinthians 11:2) and again, “That he might be the firstborn among many brethren;” (Romans 8:29) and we become not his brethren only, but also his children, “For behold,” he says, “I and the children which God has given me” (Isaiah 8:18) and not this only, but His members, and His body. For as if what has been said were not enough to show forth the love and the good will which He has shown forth towards us, He has added another thing greater and nearer still, calling himself besides, our head. Knowing all these matters, beloved, requite thy benefactor by the best conversation, and considering the greatness of the sacrifice, adorn the members of thy body; consider what thou receivest in thine hand, and never suffer it to strike any one, nor shame what has been honored with so great a gift by the sin of a blow. Consider what thou receivest in thine hand, and keep it clean from all covetousness and extortion; think that thou dost not receive this in thy hand, but also putteth it to thy mouth, and guard thy tongue in purity from base and insolent words, blasphemy, perjury, and all other such things. For it is disastrous that what is ministered to by such most dread mysteries, and has been dyed red with such blood, and has become a golden sword, should be perverted to purposes of raillery, and insult, and buffoonery. Reverence the honor with which God has honoured it, and bring it not down to the vileness of sin, but having reflected again that after the hand and the tongue, the heart receives this dread mystery, do not ever weave a plot against thy neighbor, but keep thy thoughts pure from all evil. Thus thou shalt be able to keep thine eyes too, and thy hearing safe. For is it not monstrous, after this mystic voice is borne from heaven—I mean the voice of the Cherubim—to defile thy hearing with lewd songs, and dissolute melodies? and does it not deserve the utmost punishment if, with the same eyes with which thou lookest upon the unspeakable and dread mysteries, thou lookest upon harlots, and dost commit adultery in thy heart. Thou art called to a marriage, beloved: enter not in clad in sordid raiment, but take a robe suitable to the marriage. For if when men are called to a material marriage, though they be poorer than all others, they often possess themselves of or buy clean raiment, and so go to meet those who called them. Do thou too who hast been called to a spiritual marriage, and to a royal banquet, consider what kind of raiment it would be right for thee to buy, but rather there is not even need to purchase, yea he himself who calls thee gives it thee gratis, in order that thou mayest not be able to plead poverty in excuse. Keep, therefore, the raiment which thou receivedst. For if thou lovest it, thou wilt not be able to use it henceforth, or to buy it. For this kind of raiment is nowhere sold. Hast thou heard how those who were initiated, in old time, groaned, and beat their breasts, their conscience thereupon exciting them? Beware then, beloved, that thou do not at any time suffer like this. But how wilt thou not suffer, if thou dost not cast off the wicked habit of evil men? For this reason I said before, and speak now and will not cease speaking, if any has not rectified the defects in his morals, nor furnished himself with easily acquired virtue, let him not be baptized. For the laver is able to remit former sins, but there is no little fear, and no ordinary



danger lest we return to them, and our remedy become a wound. For by how much greater the grace is, by so much is the punishment more for those who sin after these things.

**Commentary:** Chrysostom begins, as he says, “To those about to be illuminated; and concerning women who adorn themselves with plaiting of hair, and gold, and concerning those who have used omens, and amulets, and incantations, all which are foreign to Christianity.

1. I have come to ask first of all for some fruit in return for the words lately said out of brotherly love to you. For we do not speak in order that ye should hear simply, but in order that ye should remember what has been said, and may afford us evidence of this, by your works. Yea, rather, not us, but, God, who knows the secrets of the heart. On this account indeed instruction is so called, in order that even when we are absent, our discourse may instruct your hearts. (**Schaff Note:** Catechism, or oral instruction, “Catechesis,” in Greek is called by that name. Chrysostom says, a word derived from ἤχη, a sound, in order that it may “resound” in your minds ἐνηχη. It is impossible to preserve the play upon words in the translation consistently with an exact rendering.)”

Chrysostom continues, “And be not surprised if, after an interval of ten days only, we have come asking for fruit from the seed sown. For in one day it is possible at once to let the seed fall, and to accomplish the harvest. For strengthened not by our own power alone, but by the influence which comes from God, we are summoned to the conflict. Let as many therefore as have received what has been spoken, and have fulfilled it by their works, remain reaching forth to the things which are before. But let as many as have not yet arrived at this good achievement, arrive at it straightway, that they may dispel the condemnation which arises out of their sloth by their diligence for the future. For it is possible, it is indeed possible for him who has been very slothful, by using diligence for the future to recover the whole loss of the time that is past. Wherefore, He says, “Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the day of provocation.” (Psalm 95:8)”

He refers in context to **Psalm 95 (KJV):7** For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today if ye will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

He continues, “And this, He says, exhorting and counseling us; that we should never despair, but so long as we are here, should have good hopes, and should lay hold on what is before us, and hasten towards the prize of our high calling of God.”

He refers to **Philippians 3 (KJV):14** I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

He continues, “This then let us do, and let us inquire into the names of this great gift. For as ignorance of the greatness of this dignity makes those who are honored with it more slothful, so when it is known it renders them thankful, and makes them more earnest; and anyhow it would be disgraceful and ridiculous that they who enjoy such glory and honors from God, should not even know what the names of it are intended to show forth. And why do I speak about this gift, for if thou wilt consider the common name of our race, thou wilt receive the greatest instruction and incentive to virtue. For this name “Man,” we do not define according as they who are without define it, but as the Divine Scripture has bidden us. For a man is not merely whosoever has hands and feet of a man, nor whosoever is rational only, but whosoever

practices piety and virtue with boldness. Hear, at least, what he says concerning Job. For in saying that “there was a man in the land of Ausis,” (**Schaff Note:** This is the Septuagint word for Uz, the situation of which is a matter of great uncertainty. A curious note at the end of the book of Job in the Septuagint states that it was on the borders of the Euphrates.) he does not describe him in those terms in which they who are without describe him, nor does he say this because he had two feet and broad nails, but he added the evidences of his piety and said, “just, true, fearing God, eschewing every evil deed,” (Job 1:1) showing that this is a man;”

He refers to **Job 1 (Septuagint):1** There was a certain man in the land of Ausis, whose name was Job; and that man was true, blameless, righteous, and godly, abstaining from everything evil.

And to **Job 1 (KJV):1** There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

He continues, “even as therefore another says, “Fear God, and keep his commandments, because this is the whole man.” (Ecclesiastes 12:13)”

He refers to **Ecclesiastes 12 (Septuagint):13** Hear the end of the matter, the sun: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole man.

And to **Ecclesiastes 12 (KJV):13** Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

He continues, “But if the name man affords such a great incentive to virtue, much rather the term faithful. For thou art called faithful on this account, because thou hast faith in God, and thyself art entrusted from Him with righteousness, sanctification, cleansing of soul, adoption, the kingdom of heaven. He entrusted thee with these, and handed them over to thee. Thou in turn hast entrusted, and handed over other things to him, almsgiving, prayers, self-control and every other virtue. And why do I say almsgiving? If thou givest him even a cup of cold water, thou shalt not indeed lose this, but even this he keeps with care against that day, and will restore it with overflowing abundance. For this truly is wonderful, that he does not keep only that which has been entrusted to him, but in recompensing it increases it.”

But almsgiving is a good work. We are not saved by works, good or bad, as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Nevertheless, this was the thinking of the Church in his time.

He continues, “This too he has bidden thee do according to thy power, with what has been entrusted to thee, to extend the holiness which thou hast received, and to make the righteousness which comes from the laver brighter, and the gift of grace more radiant;”

While he doesn’t say exactly what the gift of grace is, the understanding of the Church in his time appears to be that one received the grace of the Spirit when one was baptized. Then if one fell away from God, they would lose this grace, but could regain it again upon repentance.

Chrysostom continues, “even as therefore Paul did, increasing all the good things which he received by his subsequent labors, and his zeal, and his diligence. And look at the carefulness of God; neither did he give the whole to thee then, nor withhold the whole, but gave part, and promised part. And for what reason did he not give the whole then? In order that thou mightest show thy faith about Him, believing, on his promise alone, in what was not yet given.

And for what reason again did he not there dispense the whole, but did give the grace of the Spirit, and righteousness and sanctification? In order that he might lighten thy labors for thee, and by what has been already given may also put thee in good hope for that which is to come. On this account, too, thou art about to be called newly-enlightened, because thy light is ever new, if thou wilt, and is never quenched. For this light of day, whether we will or no, the night succeeds, but darkness knows not that light's ray. "For the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness apprehended it not." (John 1:5)"

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):5** And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

He continues, "Not so bright at least is the world, when the sunbeams come forth, as the soul shines and becomes brighter when it has received grace from the Spirit and learns more exactly the nature of the case. For when night prevails, and there is darkness, often a man has seen a coil of rope and has thought it was a serpent, and has fled from an approaching friend as from an enemy, and being aware of some noise, has become very much alarmed; but when the day has come, nothing of this sort could happen, but all appears just as it really is; which thing also occurs in the case of our soul. For when grace has come, and driven away the darkness of the understanding, we learn the exact nature of things, and what was before dreadful to us becomes contemptible. For we no longer fear death, after learning exactly, from this sacred initiation, that death is not death, but a sleep and a seasonable slumber; nor poverty nor disease, nor any other such thing, knowing that we are on our way to a better life, undefiled and incorruptible, and free from all such vicissitudes."

The understanding of Chrysostom about the regeneration was that when one is baptized, they are regenerated, or born again. And "grace has come, and driven away the darkness of the understanding", as he says above. He did not understand that being born of the Spirit of God makes us new creations. Our spirit, being born of the Spirit of God, now has a new divine nature, as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):3** According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

It is not just a matter of receiving the "grace of the Spirit". There has been a change in our nature because of being born of the Spirit of God.

He continues, "2. Let us not therefore remain craving after the things of this life, neither after the luxury of the table, or costliness of raiment. For thou hast the most excellent of raiment, thou hast a spiritual table thou hast the glory from on high, and Christ is become to thee all things, thy table, thy raiment, thy home, thy head, thy stem. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, did put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27)"

He refers to **Galatians 3 (KJV):27** For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

He continues, "See how he has become raiment for thee. Dost thou wish to learn how he becomes a table for thee? "He who eateth me," says He, "as I live because of the Father, he also shall live because of me;" (John 6:57) and that he becometh a home for thee, "he that eateth my flesh abideth in me, and I in him;" (John 6:56) and that He is stem He says again, "I am the vine, ye the branches," (John 15:5) and that he is brother, and friend, and bridegroom, "I no

longer call you servants: for ye are my friends;” (John 15:15) and Paul again, “I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ;” (2 Corinthians 11:2) and again, “That he might be the firstborn among many brethren;” (Romans 8:29) and we become not his brethren only, but also his children, “For behold,” he says, “I and the children which God has given me” (Isaiah 8:18) and not this only, but His members, and His body.”

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):56** He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. **57** As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

And to **John 15 (KJV):5** I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

And to **John 15 (KJV):15** Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

And to **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):2** For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

And to **Romans 8 (KJV):29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

And to **Isaiah 8 (KJV):18** Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.

And we could add **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. **2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

And to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):27** Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

He continues, “For as if what has been said were not enough to show forth the love and the good will which He has shown forth towards us, He has added another thing greater and nearer still, calling himself besides, our head.”

And we read in **Ephesians 5 (KJV):23** For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

He continues, “Knowing all these matters, beloved, requite thy benefactor by the best conversation, and considering the greatness of the sacrifice, adorn the members of thy body; consider what thou receivest in thine hand, and never suffer it to strike any one, nor shame what has been honored with so great a gift by the sin of a blow. Consider what thou receivest in thine hand, and keep it clean from all covetousness and extortion; think that thou dost not receive this in thy hand, but also puttest it to thy mouth, and guard thy tongue in purity from base and insolent words, blasphemy, perjury, and all other such things. For it is disastrous that what is ministered to by such most dread mysteries, and has been dyed red with such blood, and has become a golden sword, should be perverted to purposes of raillery, and insult, and buffoonery. Reverence the honor with which God has honoured it, and bring it not down to the vileness of sin, but having reflected again that after the hand and the tongue, the heart receives this dread mystery, do not ever weave a plot against thy neighbor, but keep thy thoughts pure from all evil. Thus thou shalt be able to keep thine eyes too, and thy hearing safe. For is it not monstrous,

after this mystic voice is borne from heaven—I mean the voice of the Cherubim—to defile thy hearing with lewd songs, and dissolute melodies? and does it not deserve the utmost punishment if, with the same eyes with which thou lookest upon the unspeakable and dread mysteries, thou lookest upon harlots, and dost commit adultery in thy heart. Thou art called to a marriage, beloved: enter not in clad in sordid raiment, but take a robe suitable to the marriage. For if when men are called to a material marriage, though they be poorer than all others, they often possess themselves of or buy clean raiment, and so go to meet those who called them. Do thou too who hast been called to a spiritual marriage, and to a royal banquet, consider what kind of raiment it would be right for thee to buy, but rather there is not even need to purchase, yea he himself who calls thee gives it thee gratis, in order that thou mayest not be able to plead poverty in excuse. Keep, therefore, the raiment which thou receivedst. For if thou lovest it, thou wilt not be able to use it henceforth, or to buy it. For this kind of raiment is nowhere sold.”

But the “raiment” that we receive when we are born again, and God justifies us, is spoken of in **Revelation 19 (KJV):7** Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

This is also spoken of in **Revelation 3 (KJV):5** He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

This Scripture is speaking to the Church in Philadelphia.

And in **Revelation 3 (KJV):18** I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

This Scripture is speaking to the Church of the Laodiceans.

And in **Revelation 4 (KJV):4** And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

This Scripture is speaking of the Church raptured in heaven, represented by the four and twenty elders.

When we are born again, God justifies us because of our faith. This is revealed in **Romans 5 (NKJV):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

When God justifies us, He puts His righteousness down to our account, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

And as a result, these are Paul’s words in **Romans 8 (KJV):31** What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Chrysostom continues, “Hast thou heard how those who were initiated, in old time, groaned, and beat their breasts, their conscience thereupon exciting them? Beware then, beloved, that thou do not at any time suffer like this. But how wilt thou not suffer, if thou dost not cast off the wicked habit of evil men? For this reason I said before, and speak now and will not cease speaking, if any has not rectified the defects in his morals, nor furnished himself with easily acquired virtue, let him not be baptized. For the laver is able to remit former sins, but there is no little fear, and no ordinary danger lest we return to them, and our remedy become a wound. For by how much greater the grace is, by so much is the punishment more for those who sin after these things.”

So Chrysostom mentions the possibility of losing the garment, as he said above, “Keep, therefore, the raiment which thou receivedst. For if thou lovest it, thou wilt not be able to use it henceforth, or to buy it.”

But as we saw above, the “raiment” is the righteousness of God imputed to the saints when God justifies us, as we read also in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Just as it was imputed to Abraham, so it is imputed to us as we read in **Romans 4 (KJV):21** And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

That He imputes, or puts, His righteousness down to our account, we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

We now have a standing of righteousness that is not based upon our works. For any good works that we do after being born again, and justified by God, we will receive a reward at the judgment seat of Christ. If we do not do any good works, but only build wood, hay, or stubble, we will suffer for our bad choices in this life, and receive no rewards at the judgment seat of Christ. But we will still be saved.

This understanding of our standing was not in the Church in the time of Chrysostom.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, EUTROPIUS, PATRICIAN AND CONSUL, Homily II, After Eutropius having been found outside the Church had been taken captive, page 259**

11. Tell me then, O evangelist, did He shine more brightly than the sun, and yet dost thou say, “as the sun?” Yea: wishing to make that light known to thee, I know not any other greater luminary, I have no other comparison which holds a royal place amongst luminaries. I have said these things that thou mayest not rest contentedly in the poverty of the language used: I have pointed out to thee the fall of the disciples: they fell to the earth, and were stupified and overwhelmed with slumber. “Arise” He said, and lifted them up, and yet they were oppressed. For they could not endure the excessive brightness of that shining, but heavy sleep took possession of their eyes: so far did the light which was manifested exceed the light of the sun. Yet the evangelist said “as the sun,” because that luminary is familiar to us and surpasses all the rest.

But as I was saying, He who was thus great and powerful desired an harlot. I speak of our human nature under that name. If a man indeed desire an harlot he is condemned, and doth God desire one? Yea verily. Again a man desireth an harlot that he may become a fornicator: but God that He may convert the harlot into a virgin: so that the desire of the man is the destruction of her who is desired: but the desire of God is salvation to her who is desired. And why did He who is so great and powerful desire an harlot? that He might become the husband thereof. How doth He act? He doth not send to her any of His servants, He sendeth not angel, archangel, Cherubim, or Seraphim; but He himself draws nigh Who loves her. Again when thou hearest of love, deem it not sensuous. Cull out the thoughts which are contained in the words, even as an excellent bee settles on the flowers, and takes the honey comb, but leaves the herbs God desired an harlot, and how doth He act? He does not conduct her on high; for He would not bring an harlot into Heaven, but He Himself comes down. Since she could not ascend on high, He descends to earth. He cometh to the harlot, and is not ashamed: He cometh to her secret dwelling place. He beholds her in her drunkenness. And how doth He come? not in the bare essence of His original nature, but He becomes that which the harlot was, not in intention but in reality does He become this, in order that she may not be scared when she sees Him, that she may not rush away, and escape. He cometh to the harlot, and becomes man. And how does He become this? He is conceived in the womb, he increases little by little and follows like me the course of human growth. Who is it who does this? the Deity as manifested, not the Godhead; the form of the servant not that of the Master; the flesh which belongs to me, not the essential nature which belongs to Him: He increases little by little, and has intercourse with mankind. Although He finds the harlot, human nature, full of sores, brutalized, and oppressed by devils, how does He act? He draws nigh to her. She sees Him and flees away. He calleth the wise men saying Why are ye afraid? I am not a judge, but a physician. “I came not to judge the world but to save the world.” (John 12:47) Straightway He calleth the wise men. Oh! new and strange event. The immediate firstfruits of His coming are wise men. He who upholds the world lieth in a manger, and He who careth for all things is a nursling in swaddling bands. The temple is founded and the God dwelleth therein. And wise men come and straightway worship Him: the

publican comes and is turned into an evangelist: the harlot comes and is turned into a maiden: the Canaanitish woman comes and partakes of his lovingkindness. This is the mark of one who loves, to forbear demanding an account of sins, and to forgive transgressions and offences. And how does He act? He takes the sinner and espouses her to himself. And what doth He give her? a signet ring. Of what nature? the Holy Spirit. Paul saith “now He who establisheth us with you is God who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit.” (2 Corinthians 1:21-22) The Spirit then He giveth her. Next He saith “Did not I plant thee in a garden?” She saith “yea.” And how didst thou fall from thence? “The devil came and cast me out of the garden.” Thou wast planted in the garden and he cast thee out: behold I plant thee in myself, I uphold thee. How? The devil dares not approach me. Neither do I take thee up into Heaven; but something greater than Heaven is here: I carry thee in myself who am the Lord of Heaven. The shepherd carries thee and the wolf no longer comes: or rather I permit him to approach. And so the Lord carrieth our nature: and the devil approaches and is worsted. “I have planted thee in myself:” therefore He saith “I am the root, ye are the branches:” (John 15:5) so He planted her in Himself. “But,” she saith, “I am a sinner and unclean.” “Let not this trouble thee, I am a physician. I know my vessel, I know how it was perverted. It was formerly a vessel of clay, and it was perverted. I remodel it by means of the laver of regeneration and I submit it to the action of fire.” For observe: He took dust from the earth and made the man; He formed him. The devil came, and perverted him. Then the Lord came, took him again, and remoulded, and recast him in baptism, and He suffered not his body to be of clay, but made it of a harder ware. He subjected the soft clay to the fire of the Holy Spirit. “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:” (Matthew 3:11) He was baptized with water that he might be remodelled, with fire that he might be hardened. Therefore the Prophet speaking beforehand under divine guidance declared “Thou shalt dash them in pieces like vessels of the potter.” (Psalm 2:9) He did not say like vessels of earthenware which every one possesses: for by a potter’s vessels are meant those which the potter is fashioning on the wheel: now the potter’s vessels are of clay, but ours are of harder ware. Speaking beforehand therefore of the remoulding which is wrought by means of baptism he saith, “thou shalt dash them in pieces like vessels of a potter”—He means that He remodels and recasts them. I descend into the water of baptism, and the fashion of my nature is remoulded, and the fire of the Spirit recasts it, and it is turned into a harder ware. And that my words are no empty vaunt hear what Job says, “He hath made us as clay,” (Job 10:9) and Paul, “but we have this treasure in earthen vessels.” (2 Corinthians 4:7) But consider the strength of the earthen vessel: for it has been hardened not by fire, but by the Spirit. How was it proved to be an earthen vessel? “Five times received I forty stripes save one, thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned,” (2 Corinthians 11:24) and yet the earthen vessel was not shattered. “A day and a night have I been in the deep.” He hath been in the deep, and the earthen vessel was not dissolved: he suffered shipwreck and the treasure was not lost; the ship was submerged and yet the freight floated. “But we have this treasure” he says. What kind of treasure? a supply of the Spirit, righteousness, sanctification, redemption. Of what nature, tell me? “in the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk.” (Acts 3:6) “Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole,” (Acts 9:34) I say unto thee thou evil spirit, go out of him. (Acts 16:18)

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “11. Tell me then, O evangelist, did He shine more brightly than the sun, and yet dost thou say, “as the sun?” Yea: wishing to make that light



known to thee, I know not any other greater luminary, I have no other comparison which holds a royal place amongst luminaries. I have said these things that thou mayest not rest contentedly in the poverty of the language used: I have pointed out to thee the fall of the disciples: they fell to the earth, and were stupified and overwhelmed with slumber. "Arise" He said, and lifted them up, and yet they were oppressed. For they could not endure the excessive brightness of that shining, but heavy sleep took possession of their eyes: so far did the light which was manifested exceed the light of the sun. Yet the evangelist said "as the sun," because that luminary is familiar to us and surpasses all the rest."

He refers in context to **Matthew 17 (KJV):**1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. 3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. 4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. 6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. 7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. 8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

And Paul said in **Acts 26 (KJV):**13 at midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who were journeying with me.

He continues, "But as I was saying, He who was thus great and powerful desired an harlot. I speak of our human nature under that name. If a man indeed desire an harlot he is condemned, and doth God desire one? Yea verily. Again a man desireth an harlot that he may become a fornicator: but God that He may convert the harlot into a virgin: so that the desire of the man is the destruction of her who is desired: but the desire of God is salvation to her who is desired. And why did He who is so great and powerful desire an harlot? that He might become the husband thereof. How doth He act? He doth not send to her any of His servants, He sendeth not angel, archangel, Cherubim, or Seraphim; but He himself draws nigh Who loves her. Again when thou hearest of love, deem it not sensuous. Cull out the thoughts which are contained in the words, even as an excellent bee settles on the flowers, and takes the honey comb, but leaves the herbs God desired an harlot, and how doth He act? He does not conduct her on high; for He would not bring an harlot into Heaven, but He Himself comes down. Since she could not ascend on high, He descends to earth. He cometh to the harlot, and is not ashamed: He cometh to her secret dwelling place. He beholds her in her drunkenness. And how doth He come? not in the bare essence of His original nature, but He becomes that which the harlot was, not in intention but in reality does He become this, in order that she may not be scared when she sees Him, that she may not rush away, and escape. He cometh to the harlot, and becomes man. And how does He become this? He is conceived in the womb, he increases little by little and follows like me the course of human growth. Who is it who does this? the Deity as manifested, not the Godhead; the form of the servant not that of the Master; the flesh which belongs to me, not the essential nature which belongs to Him: He increases little by little, and has intercourse with mankind. Although He finds the harlot, human nature, full of sores, brutalized, and oppressed by devils, how does He act? He draws nigh to her. She sees Him and flees away. He calleth the

wise men saying Why are ye afraid? I am not a judge, but a physician. “I came not to judge the world but to save the world.” (John 12:47)”

He refers to **John 12 (KJV):47** And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

He continues, “Straightway He calleth the wise men. Oh! new and strange event. The immediate firstfruits of His coming are wise men. He who upholds the world lieth in a manger, and He who careth for all things is a nursling in swaddling bands. The temple is founded and the God dwelleth therein. And wise men come and straightway worship Him: the publican comes and is turned into an evangelist: the harlot comes and is turned into a maiden: the Canaanitish woman comes and partakes of his lovingkindness. This is the mark of one who loves, to forbear demanding an account of sins, and to forgive transgressions and offences. And how does He act? He takes the sinner and espouses her to himself. And what doth He give her? a signet ring. Of what nature? the Holy Spirit. Paul saith “now He who establisheth us with you is God who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit.” (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 1 (KJV):21** Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; **22** Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

And to **Matthew 2 (KJV):11** And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh.

And to **Luke 5 (KJV):27** And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.

Levi was Matthew, as in **Matthew 10 (KJV):3** Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;

And to **Matthew 15 (KJV):22** And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. **23** But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. **24** But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. **25** Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. **26** But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. **27** And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. **28** Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

He continues, “The Spirit then He giveth her. Next He saith “Did not I plant thee in a garden?” She saith “yea.” And how didst thou fall from thence? “The devil came and cast me out of the garden.” Thou wast planted in the garden and he cast thee out: behold I plant thee in myself, I uphold thee. How? The devil dares not approach me. Neither do I take thee up into Heaven; but something greater than Heaven is here: I carry thee in myself who am the Lord of Heaven. The shepherd carries thee and the wolf no longer comes: or rather I permit him to approach. And so the Lord carrieth our nature: and the devil approaches and is worsted. “I have planted thee in myself:” therefore He saith “I am the root, ye are the branches:” (John 15:5) so He planted her in Himself.”

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):5** I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in

me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

He continues, ““But,” she saith, “I am a sinner and unclean.” “Let not this trouble thee, I am a physician. I know my vessel, I know how it was perverted. It was formerly a vessel of clay, and it was perverted. I remodel it by means of the laver of regeneration and I submit it to the action of fire.” For observe: He took dust from the earth and made the man; He formed him. The devil came, and perverted him. Then the Lord came, took him again, and remoulded, and recast him in baptism, and He suffered not his body to be of clay, but made it of a harder ware. He subjected the soft clay to the fire of the Holy Spirit. “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:” (Matthew 3:11)”

He refers to **Matthew 3 (KJV):11** I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

He continues, “He was baptized with water that he might be remodelled, with fire that he might be hardened. Therefore the Prophet speaking beforehand under divine guidance declared “Thou shalt dash them in pieces like vessels of the potter.” (Psalm 2:9)”

He refers again in context to **Psalms 2 (KJV):8** Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

But this verse does not refer to believers, but to the nations, whom the Lord Jesus in the Kingdom Age will rule as with a rod of iron, as we read in **Revelation 2 (KJV):15** And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords.

And in **Revelation 2 (KJV):26** And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

And the fire referred to in Matthew 3:11 was as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):1** And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Chrysostom did not understand that John the Baptist was speaking of a different baptism, the baptism with the Holy Spirit. To Chrysostom, there was only one baptism, that is, water baptism.

Chrysostom continues, “He did not say like vessels of earthenware which every one possesses: for by a potter’s vessels are meant those which the potter is fashioning on the wheel: now the potter’s vessels are of clay, but ours are of harder ware. Speaking beforehand therefore of the remoulding which is wrought by means of baptism he saith, “thou shalt dash them in pieces like vessels of a potter”—He means that He remodels and recasts them. I descend into the water of baptism, and the fashion of my nature is remoulded, and the fire of the Spirit recasts it, and it is turned into a harder ware. And that my words are no empty vaunt hear what Job says, “He hath made us as clay,” (Job 10:9) and Paul, “but we have this treasure in earthen

vessels.” (2 Corinthians 4:7)”

He refers to **Job 10 (KJV):9** Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again?

And to **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):7** But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

He continues, “But consider the strength of the earthen vessel: for it has been hardened not by fire, but by the Spirit. How was it proved to be an earthen vessel? “Five times received I forty stripes save one, thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned,” (2 Corinthians 11:24) and yet the earthen vessel was not shattered. “A day and a night have I been in the deep.””

He refers to **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):24** Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

But Chrysostom did not understand that the birth of the Holy Spirit is in our spirit when we are born again, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

This is where we are remodelled, or recast as he says.

He continues, “He hath been in the deep, and the earthen vessel was not dissolved: he suffered shipwreck and the treasure was not lost; the ship was submerged and yet the freight floated. “But we have this treasure” he says. What kind of treasure? a supply of the Spirit, righteousness, sanctification, redemption. Of what nature, tell me? “in the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk.” (Acts 3:6) “Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole,” (Acts 9:34) I say unto thee thou evil spirit, go out of him. (Acts 16:18)””

He refers to **Acts 3 (KJV):6** Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

And to **Acts 9 (KJV):34** And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

And to **Acts 16 (KJV):18** And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

And to **Luke 4 (KJV):33** And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, 34 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. 35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not. 36 And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY III, page 12-13**

[6.] Ver. 14. “I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius.” “Why are you elated at having baptized, when I for my part even give thanks that I have not done so!” Thus saying, by a kind of divine art (οικονομικῶς) he does away with their swelling pride upon this point; not with the efficacy of the baptism, (God forbid,) but with the folly of those who were puffed up at having been baptizers: first, by showing that the Gift is not theirs; and,

secondly, by thanking God therefore. For Baptism truly is a great thing: but its greatness is not the work of the person baptizing, but of Him who is invoked in the Baptism: since to baptize is nothing as regards man's labor, but is much less than preaching the Gospel. Yea, again I say, great indeed is Baptism, and without baptism it is impossible to obtain the kingdom. Still a man of no singular excellence is able to baptize, but to preach the Gospel there is need of great labor.

Ver. 15. He states also the reason, why he giveth thanks that he had baptized no one. What then is this reason? "Lest anyone should say that ye were baptized into my own name." Why, did he mean that they said this in those other cases? Not at all; but, "I fear," saith he, "lest the disease should proceed even to that. For if, when insignificant persons and of little worth baptize, a heresy ariseth, had I, the first announcer of Baptism, baptized many, it was likely that they forming a party, would not only call themselves by my name, but also ascribe the Baptism to me." For if from the inferiors so great an evil arose, from those of higher order it would perhaps have gone on to something far more grievous.

Ver. 16. Then, having abashed those who were unsound in this respect and subjoining, "I baptized also the house of Stephanas," he again drags down their pride, saying besides, "I know not whether I baptized any other." For by this he signifies that neither did he seek much to enjoy the honor accruing hereby from the multitude, nor did he set about this work for glory's sake.

Ver. 17. And not by these only, but also by the next words, he greatly represses their pride, saying, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel:" for the more laborious part, and that which needed much toil and a soul of iron, and that on which all depended, was this. And therefore it was that Paul had it put into his hand.

And why, not being sent to baptize, did he baptize? Not in contention with Him that sent him, but in this instance laboring beyond his task. For he saith not, "I was forbidden," but, "I was not sent for this, but for that which was of the greatest necessity." For preaching the Gospel is a work perhaps for one or two; but baptizing, for everyone endowed with the priesthood. For a man being instructed and convinced, to take and baptize him is what any one whatever might do: for the rest, it is all effected by the will of the person drawing near, and the grace of God. But when unbelievers are to be instructed, there must be great labor, great wisdom. And at that time there was danger also annexed. In the former case the whole thing is done, and he is convinced, who is on the point of initiation: and it is no great thing when a man is convinced, to baptize him. But in the later case the labor is great, to change the deliberate will, to alter the turn of mind, and to tear up error by the roots, and to plant the truth in its place.

Not that he speaks out all this, neither doth he argue in so many words that Baptism has no labor, but that preaching has. For he knows how always to subdue his tone, whereas in the comparison with heathen wisdom he is very earnest, the subject enabling him to use more vehemency of language.

Not therefore in opposition to Him that sent him did he baptize; but, as in the case of the widows, though the apostles had said, (Acts vi. 2) "it is not fit that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables," he discharged the office (Acts xii. 25. τὴν διακονίαν) of a deacon, not in opposition to them, but as something beyond his task: so also here."

For even now, we commit this matter to the simpler sort of presbyters, but the word of doctrine unto the wiser: for there is the labor and the sweat. Wherefore he saith himself, (1 Tim. v. 17) "Let the Elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who

labor in the word and in teaching.”

For as to teach the wrestlers in the games is the part of a spirited and skillful trainer, but to place the crown on the conquerors head may be that of one who cannot even wrestle, (although it be the crown which adds splendor to the conqueror,) so also in Baptism. It is impossible to be saved without it, yet it is no great thing which the baptizer doth, finding the will ready prepared.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “[6.] Ver. 14. “I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):14** I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

He continues, ““Why are you elated at having baptized, when I for my part even give thanks that I have not done so!” Thus saying, by a kind of divine art (οἰκονομικῶς) he does away with their swelling pride upon this point; not with the efficacy of the baptism, (God forbid,) but with the folly of those who were puffed up at having been baptizers: first, by showing that the Gift is not theirs; and, secondly, by thanking God therefore. For Baptism truly is a great thing: but its greatness is not the work of the person baptizing, but of Him who is invoked in the Baptism: since to baptize is nothing as regards man’s labor, but is much less than preaching the Gospel. Yea, again I say, great indeed is Baptism, and without baptism it is impossible to obtain the kingdom. Still a man of no singular excellence is able to baptize, but to preach the Gospel there is need of great labor.”

Baptism is only a ritual. This is why Paul thanked God that he had baptized none of them, “but Crispus and Gaius”. Chrysostom is upholding the Church’s teaching of regeneration by baptism by his interpretation of these verses. But Paul would never give such thanks if baptism had any ability to save.

He continues, “Ver. 15. He states also the reason, why he giveth thanks that he had baptized no one. What then is this reason? “Lest anyone should say that ye were baptized into my own name.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):15** Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

He continues, “Why, did he mean that they said this in those other cases? Not at all; but, “I fear,” saith he, “lest the disease should proceed even to that. For if, when insignificant persons and of little worth baptize, a heresy ariseth, had I, the first announcer of Baptism, baptized many, it was likely that they forming a party, would not only call themselves by my name, but also ascribe the Baptism to me.” For if from the inferiors so great an evil arose, from those of higher order it would perhaps have gone on to something far more grievous.”

This sounds logical, but Paul would never have said that he “baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius”, if baptism had any saving power. Chrysostom is simply making the case for his own opinion.

He continues, “Ver. 16. Then, having abashed those who were unsound in this respect and subjoining, “I baptized also the house of Stephanas,” he again drags down their pride, saying besides, “I know not whether I baptized any other.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):16** And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

He continues, “For by this he signifies that neither did he seek much to enjoy the honor accruing hereby from the multitude, nor did he set about this work for glory’s sake.

Ver. 17. And not by these only, but also by the next words, he greatly represses their pride, saying, “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel:” for the more laborious part, and that which needed much toil and a soul of iron, and that on which all depended, was this. And therefore it was that Paul had it put into his hand.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):17** For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

And this is how we are saved, by the preaching of the gospel, for faith comes by hearing, as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):15** And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? 17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

And it is by this word that He gives us birth, as we read in **James 1 (KJV):18** Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Chrysostom continues, “And why, not being sent to baptize, did he baptize? Not in contention with Him that sent him, but in this instance laboring beyond his task. For he saith not, “I was forbidden,” but, “I was not sent for this, but for that which was of the greatest necessity.” For preaching the Gospel is a work perhaps for one or two; but baptizing, for everyone endowed with the priesthood.”

The Church in Chrysostom’s time did not understand that the Aaronic priesthood was no more because in the Church we are not under the law of the priesthood. But the priesthood fits the thinking of the Church in his time because of the belief in the ritual of baptism.

He continues, “For a man being instructed and convinced, to take and baptize him is what any one whatever might do: for the rest, it is all effected by the will of the person drawing near, and the grace of God. But when unbelievers are to be instructed, there must be great labor, great wisdom. And at that time there was danger also annexed. In the former case the whole thing is done, and he is convinced, who is on the point of initiation: and it is no great thing when a man is convinced, to baptize him. But in the later case the labor is great, to change the deliberate will, to alter the turn of mind, and to tear up error by the roots, and to plant the truth in its place.

Not that he speaks out all this, neither doth he argue in so many words that Baptism has no labor, but that preaching has. For he knows how always to subdue his tone, whereas in the comparison with heathen wisdom he is very earnest, the subject enabling him to use more vehemency of language.

Not therefore in opposition to Him that sent him did he baptize; but, as in the case of the widows, though the apostles had said, (Acts vi. 2) “it is not fit that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables,” he discharged the office (Acts xii. 25. τὴν διακονίαν) of a deacon, not in opposition to them, but as something beyond his task: so also here.”

He refers in context to **Acts 6 (KJV):2** Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

He refers to **Acts 12 (KJV):25** And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when

they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

The word “ministry” in the Greek is **διακονίαν** (pronounced de-ä-ko-ne'-än), from G1249; attendance (as a servant, etc.); figuratively (eleemosynary) aid, (official) service (especially of the Christian teacher, or technically of the diaconate):—(ad-)minister(-ing, -tration, -try), office, relief, service(-ing). **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1248**

He continues, “For even now, we commit this matter to the simpler sort of presbyters, but the word of doctrine unto the wiser: for there is the labor and the sweat. Wherefore he saith himself, (1 Tim. v. 17) “Let the Elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and in teaching.””

He refers to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):17** Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

It is interesting that he still refers to presbyters and elders, but with the understanding that they were priests.

He concludes, “For as to teach the wrestlers in the games is the part of a spirited and skilful trainer, but to place the crown on the conquerors head may be that of one who cannot even wrestle, (although it be the crown which adds splendor to the conqueror,) so also in Baptism. It is impossible to be saved without it, yet it is no great thing which the baptizer doth, finding the will ready prepared.”

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY VII, page 34**

[2.] “But we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery.” What mystery? For surely Christ saith, (**Schaff Note:** St. Matt. x. 27. ηκούσατε rec. text ἀκούετε.) “What ye have heard in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops.” How then does he call it “a mystery?” Because that neither angel nor archangel, nor any other created power knew of it before it actually took place. Wherefore he saith, (Ephes. iii. 10) “That now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.” And this hath God done in honor to us, so that they not without us should hear the mysteries. For we, too, ourselves, whomsoever we make our friends, use to speak of this as a sure proof of friendship towards them, that we tell our secrets to no one in preference to them. Let those hear who expose to shame the secrets of the Gospel, and unto all indiscriminately display the “pearls” and the doctrine, and who cast “the holy things” unto “dogs,” and “swine,” and useless reasonings. For the Mystery wants no argumentation; but just what it is, that only is to be declared. Since it will not be a mystery, divine and whole in all its parts, when thou addest any thing to it of thyself also.

And in another sense, too, a mystery is so called; because we do not behold the things which we see, but some things we see and others we believe. For such is the nature of our Mysteries. I, for instance, feel differently upon these subjects from an unbeliever. I hear, “Christ was crucified;” and forthwith I admire His lovingkindness unto men: the other hears, and esteems it weakness. I hear, “He became a servant;” and I wonder at his care for us: the other hears, and counts it dishonor. I hear, “He died;” and am astonished at His might, that being in death He was not holden, but even broke the bands of death: the other hears, and surmises it to be helplessness. He hearing of the resurrection, saith, the thing is a legend; I, aware of the facts



which demonstrate it, fall down and worship the dispensation of God. He hearing of a laver, counts it merely as water: but I behold not simply the thing which is seen, but the purification of the soul which is by the Spirit. He considers only that my body hath been washed; but I have believed that the soul also hath become both pure and holy; and I count it the sepulchre, the resurrection, the sanctification, the righteousness, the redemption, the adoption, the inheritance, the kingdom of heaven, the plenary effusion (χορηγίαν) of the Spirit. For not by the sight do I judge of the things that appear, but by the eyes of the mind. I hear of the “Body of Christ:” in one sense I understand the expression, in another sense the unbeliever.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “[2.] “But we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):7** But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

He continues, “What mystery? For surely Christ saith, (St. Matt. x. 27. ηκούσατε rec. text ἀκούετε.) “What ye have heard in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops.””

He refers to **Matthew 10 (KJV):27** What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.

He continues, “How then does he call it “a mystery?” Because that neither angel nor archangel, nor any other created power knew of it before it actually took place. Wherefore he saith, (Ephes. iii. 10) “That now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.””

He refers in context to **Ephesians 3 (KJV):9** And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: 10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

He continues, “And this hath God done in honor to us, so that they not without us should hear the mysteries. For we, too, ourselves, whomsoever we make our friends, use to speak of this as a sure proof of friendship towards them, that we tell our secrets to no one in preference to them. Let those hear who expose to shame the secrets of the Gospel, and unto all indiscriminately display the “pearls” and the doctrine, and who cast “the holy things” unto “dogs,” and “swine,” and useless reasonings. For the Mystery wants no argumentation; but just what it is, that only is to be declared. Since it will not be a mystery, divine and whole in all its parts, when thou addest any thing to it of thyself also.

And in another sense, too, a mystery is so called; because we do not behold the things which we see, but some things we see and others we believe. For such is the nature of our Mysteries. I, for instance, feel differently upon these subjects from an unbeliever. I hear, “Christ was crucified;” and forthwith I admire His lovingkindness unto men: the other hears, and esteems it weakness. I hear, “He became a servant;” and I wonder at his care for us: the other hears, and counts it dishonor. I hear, “He died;” and am astonished at His might, that being in death He was not holden, but even broke the bands of death: the other hears, and surmises it to be helplessness. He hearing of the resurrection, saith, the thing is a legend; I, aware of the facts which demonstrate it, fall down and worship the dispensation of God. He hearing of a laver, counts it merely as water: but I behold not simply the thing which is seen, but the purification of the soul which is by the Spirit. He considers only that my body hath been washed; but I have

believed that the soul also hath become both pure and holy; and I count it the sepulchre, the resurrection, the sanctification, the righteousness, the redemption, the adoption, the inheritance, the kingdom of heaven, the plenary effusion (χορηγίαν) of the Spirit.”

But the laver is not what saves us, nor does faith in the laver. It is faith in Jesus Christ that saves us in order to be resurrected, sanctified, justified, redeemed, adopted, made joint heirs with Christ, and recipients of the Spirit. Baptism is only an outward sign of an inward work, much like circumcision which avails nothing, as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):6** For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Our salvation is of Him as we read in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

And the “purification of the soul” is not by the Spirit in water baptism. The purification of the soul will be a progressive work of sanctification after one is born again. As our minds are renewed by the knowledge of the word of God, we will grow in grace and knowledge. Our hurts in our past will be healed as we process our feelings with the Lord, and let go of our old ways. But our spirit is made new by the new birth from above by the Spirit of God.

He continues, “For not by the sight do I judge of the things that appear, but by the eyes of the mind. I hear of the “Body of Christ:” in one sense I understand the expression, in another sense the unbeliever.”

A mystery is “something not understood or beyond understanding”. (**Merriam Webster**)

In the Biblical sense it is something not completely understood. And so we read in context in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):7** But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY IV, page 390**

Ver. 16, 17. “Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God our Father, which loved us, and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish

them in every good work and word.”

Again a prayer after an admonition. For this is truly to benefit. “Which loved us,” he says, “and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace.” Where now are those who lessen the Son, because He is named in the grace of the Laver after the Father? For, lo, here it is the contrary. “Which loved us,” he says, “and gave us eternal comfort.” Of what sort then is this? Even the hope of things future. Seest thou how by the method of prayer he stirs up their mind, giving them the unspeakable care of God for pledges and signs. “Comfort your heart,” he says, “in every good work and word,” that is, through every good work and word. For this is the comfort of Christians, to do something good and pleasing to God. See how he brings down their spirit. “Which gave us comfort,” he says, “and good hope through grace.” At the same time he makes them also full of good hopes with respect to future things. For if He has given so many things by grace, much more things future. I indeed, he says, have spoken, but the whole is of God. “Stablish”; confirm you, that you be not shaken, nor turned aside. For this is both His work and ours, so that it is in the way both of doctrines, and of actions. For this is comfort, to be stablished. For when any one is not turned aside, he bears all things, whatever may happen to him, with much longsuffering; whereas if his mind be shaken, he will no longer perform any good or noble action, but like one whose hands are paralyzed, so also his soul is shaken, when it is not fully persuaded that it is advancing to some good end.

**Commentary:** “Ver. 16, 17. “Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God our Father, which loved us, and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish them in every good work and word.”

He refers to **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):**16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, 17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

He continues, “Again a prayer after an admonition. For this is truly to benefit. “Which loved us,” he says, “and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace.” Where now are those who lessen the Son, because He is named in the grace of the Laver after the Father?”

Where do we find any reference in the Scriptures to “the grace of the Laver”? There is no such reference in the Scriptures. We are saved by grace through faith, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):**8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Chrysostom continues, “For, lo, here it is the contrary. “Which loved us,” he says, “and gave us eternal comfort.” Of what sort then is this? Even the hope of things future. Seest thou how by the method of prayer he stirs up their mind, giving them the unspeakable care of God for pledges and signs. “Comfort your heart,” he says, “in every good work and word,” that is, through every good work and word. For this is the comfort of Christians, to do something good and pleasing to God. See how he brings down their spirit. “Which gave us comfort,” he says, “and good hope through grace.” At the same time he makes them also full of good hopes with respect to future things. For if He has given so many things by grace, much more things future. I indeed, he says, have spoken, but the whole is of God. “Stablish”; confirm you, that you be not shaken, nor turned aside. For this is both His work and ours, so that it is in the way both of doctrines, and of actions. For this is comfort, to be stablished. For when any one is not turned aside, he bears all things, whatever may happen to him, with much longsuffering; whereas if his

mind be shaken, he will no longer perform any good or noble action, but like one whose hands are paralyzed, so also his soul is shaken, when it is not fully persuaded that it is advancing to some good end.”

Chrysostom has ended well here. Not only are we saved by Jesus Christ, but we have “good hope through grace” of “future things”. And this is a great comfort to our souls.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY IV, page 419-420**

1 Timothy i. 15, 16

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.”

The favors of God so far exceed human hope and expectation, that often they are not believed. For God has bestowed upon us such things as the mind of man never looked for, never thought of. It is for this reason that the Apostles spend much discourse in securing a belief of the gifts that are granted us of God. For as men, upon receiving some great good, ask themselves if it is not a dream, as not believing it; so it is with respect to the gifts of God. What then was it that was thought incredible? That those who were enemies, and sinners, neither justified by the law, nor by works, should immediately through faith alone be advanced to the highest favor. Upon this head accordingly Paul has discoursed at length in his Epistle to the Romans, and here again at length. “This is a faithful saying,” he says, “and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

As the Jews were chiefly attracted by this, he persuades them not to give heed to the law, since they could not attain salvation by it without faith. Against this he contends; for it seemed to them incredible, that a man who had mis-spent all his former life in vain and wicked actions, should afterwards be saved by his faith alone. On this account he says, “It is a saying to be believed.” But some not only disbelieved but even objected, as the Greeks do now. “Let us then do evil, that good may come.” This was the consequence they drew in derision of our faith, from his words, “Where sin abounded grace did much more abound.” (Rom. iii. 8, and v. 20) So when we discourse to them of Hell they say, How can this be worthy of God? When man has found his servant offending, he forgives it, and thinks him worthy of pardon and does God punish eternally? And when we speak of the Laver, and of the remission of sins through it, this too they say is unworthy of God, that he who has committed offenses without number should have his sins remitted. What perverseness of mind is this, what a spirit of contention does it manifest! Surely if forgiveness is an evil, punishment is a good; but if punishment is an evil, remission of it is a good. I speak according to their notions, for according to ours, both are good. This I shall show at another time, for the present would not suffice for a matter so deep, and which requires to be elaborately argued. I must lay it before your Charity at a fitting season. At present let us proceed with our proposed subject. “This is a faithful saying,” he says. But why is it to be believed?

This appears both from what precedes and from what follows. Observe how he prepares us (**Schaff Note:** Or, “gives proof beforehand.”) for this assertion, and how he then dwells

upon it. For he hath previously declared that He showed mercy to me “a blasphemer and a persecutor”; this was in the way of preparation. And not only did He show mercy, but “He accounted me faithful.” So far should we be, he means, from disbelieving that He showed mercy. For no one, who should see a prisoner admitted into a palace, could doubt whether he obtained mercy. And this was visibly the situation of Paul, for he makes himself the example. Nor is he ashamed to call himself a sinner, but rather delights in it, as he thus can best demonstrate the miracle of God’s regard for him, and that He had thought him worthy of such extraordinary kindness.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “1 Timothy i. 15, 16

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.”

He refers to **1 Timothy 1 (KJV):15** This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

He continues, “The favors of God so far exceed human hope and expectation, that often they are not believed. For God has bestowed upon us such things as the mind of man never looked for, never thought of. It is for this reason that the Apostles spend much discourse in securing a belief of the gifts that are granted us of God. For as men, upon receiving some great good, ask themselves if it is not a dream, as not believing it; so it is with respect to the gifts of God. What then was it that was thought incredible? That those who were enemies, and sinners, neither justified by the law, nor by works, should immediately through faith alone be advanced to the highest favor. Upon this head accordingly Paul has discoursed at length in his Epistle to the Romans, and here again at length. “This is a faithful saying,” he says, “and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.””

He refers to **1 Timothy 1 (KJV):15** This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

And so it is by faith alone, as we read in **Galatians 2 (KJV):16** Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

He continues, “As the Jews were chiefly attracted by this, he persuades them not to give heed to the law, since they could not attain salvation by it without faith. Against this he contends; for it seemed to them incredible, that a man who had misspent all his former life in vain and wicked actions, should afterwards be saved by his faith alone. On this account he says, “It is a saying to be believed.” But some not only disbelieved but even objected, as the Greeks do now. “Let us then do evil, that good may come.” This was the consequence they drew in derision of our faith, from his words, “Where sin abounded grace did much more abound.” (Rom. iii. 8, and v. 20)”

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):8** And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

And to **Romans 5 (KJV):20** Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

He continues, “So when we discourse to them of Hell they say, How can this be worthy of God? When man has found his servant offending, he forgives it, and thinks him worthy of pardon and does God punish eternally? And when we speak of the Laver, and of the remission of sins through it, this too they say is unworthy of God, that he who has committed offenses without number should have his sins remitted.”

He stated before this, “That those who were enemies, and sinners, neither justified by the law, nor by works, should immediately through faith alone be advanced to the highest favor”, and yet he speaks of the Laver as if remission of sins were through it.

He continues, “What perverseness of mind is this, what a spirit of contention does it manifest! Surely if forgiveness is an evil, punishment is a good; but if punishment is an evil, remission of it is a good. I speak according to their notions, for according to ours, both are good. This I shall show at another time, for the present would not suffice for a matter so deep, and which requires to be elaborately argued. I must lay it before your Charity at a fitting season. At present let us proceed with our proposed subject. “This is a faithful saying,” he says. But why is it to be believed?

This appears both from what precedes and from what follows. Observe how he prepares us (**Schaff Note:** Or, “gives proof beforehand.”) for this assertion, and how he then dwells upon it. For he hath previously declared that He showed mercy to me “a blasphemer and a persecutor”; this was in the way of preparation.”

He refers to **1 Timothy 1 (KJV):13** Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

He continues, “And not only did He show mercy, but “He accounted me faithful.” So far should we be, he means, from disbelieving that He showed mercy. For no one, who should see a prisoner admitted into a palace, could doubt whether he obtained mercy. And this was visibly the situation of Paul, for he makes himself the example. Nor is he ashamed to call himself a sinner, but rather delights in it, as he thus can best demonstrate the miracle of God’s regard for him, and that He had thought him worthy of such extraordinary kindness.”

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILEMON, ARGUMENT, page 545**

First, it is necessary to state the argument of the Epistle, then also the matters that are questioned respecting it. What then is the argument? Philemon was a man of admirable and noble character. That he was an admirable man is evident from the fact, that his whole household was of believers, and of such believers as even to be called a Church: therefore he says in this Epistle, “And to the Church that is in thy house.” (v. 2) He bears witness also to his great obedience, and that “the bowels of the Saints are refreshed in him.” (v. 7) And he himself in this Epistle commanded him to prepare him a lodging. (v. 22) It seems to me therefore that his house was altogether a lodging for the Saints. This excellent man, then, had a certain slave named Onesimus. This Onesimus, having stolen something from his master, had run away. For that he had stolen, hear what he says: “If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, I will repay thee.” (v. 18, 19) Coming therefore to Paul at Rome, and having found him in prison, and

having enjoyed the benefit of his teaching, he there also received Baptism. For that he obtained there the gift of Baptism is manifest from his saying, “Whom I have begotten in my bonds.” (v. 10) Paul therefore writes, recommending him to his master, that on every account he should forgive him, and receive him as one now regenerate.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “First, it is necessary to state the argument of the Epistle, then also the matters that are questioned respecting it. What then is the argument? Philemon was a man of admirable and noble character. That he was an admirable man is evident from the fact, that his whole household was of believers, and of such believers as even to be called a Church: therefore he says in this Epistle, “And to the Church that is in thy house.” (v. 2)”

He refers in context to **Philemon 1 (KJV):1** Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer, 2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:

He continues, “He bears witness also to his great obedience, and that “the bowels of the Saints are refreshed in him.” (v. 7)”

He refers to **Philemon 1 (KJV):7** For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

He continues, “And he himself in this Epistle commanded him to prepare him a lodging. (v. 22)”

He refers to **Philemon 1 (KJV):22** But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.

He continues, “It seems to me therefore that his house was altogether a lodging for the Saints. This excellent man, then, had a certain slave named Onesimus. This Onesimus, having stolen something from his master, had run away. For that he had stolen, hear what he says: “If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, I will repay thee.” (v. 18, 19)”

He refers to **Philemon 1 (KJV):18** If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; 19 I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

He continues, “Coming therefore to Paul at Rome, and having found him in prison, and having enjoyed the benefit of his teaching, he there also received Baptism. For that he obtained there the gift of Baptism is manifest from his saying, “Whom I have begotten in my bonds.” (v. 10)”

He refers in context to **Philemon 1 (KJV):10** I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: 11 Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

But how would Paul have the resources to baptize anyone while he was in prison? Onesimus simply believed the gospel preached by Paul, and he was born again. Faith is about relationship, not ritual.

He concludes, “Paul therefore writes, recommending him to his master, that on every account he should forgive him, and receive him as one now regenerate.”

Ver. 25. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."

Moral. He hath closed his Epistle with a prayer. And indeed prayer is a great good, salutary, and preservative of our souls. But it is great when we do things worthy of it, and do not render ourselves unworthy. And thou too, therefore, when thou goest to the priest, and he shall say to thee, "The Lord will have mercy on thee, my son," do not confide in the word only, but add also works. Do acts worthy of mercy, God will bless thee, my son, if indeed thou doest things worthy of blessing. He will bless thee, if thou showest mercy to thy neighbor. For the things which we wish to obtain from God, of those we ought first to impart to our neighbors. But if we deprive our neighbors of them, how can we wish to obtain them? "Blessed," He says, "are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." (Matt. v. 7) For if men show mercy to such, much more will God, but to the unmerciful by no means. "For he shall have judgment without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy." (Jas. ii. 13)

An excellent thing is mercy! Why then hast thou not done it to another? Dost thou wish to be pardoned, when thou offendest? why then dost thou not thyself pardon him who has offended thee? But thou comest to God, asking of Him the kingdom of heaven, and thou thyself dost not give money when it is begged of thee. For this cause we do not obtain mercy, because we do not show mercy. But why? you say. Is not this also a part of mercy, to show mercy to the unmerciful? Nay! For he that treated with the greatest kindness the hardhearted cruel man, that had done numberless ills to his neighbor, how should he be merciful? What then, say you? Hath not the Laver saved us, who had committed infinite evils? It hath delivered us from them, not that we should commit them again, but that we may not commit them. For "how shall we," it is said, "that are dead to sin, live any longer therein"? (Rom. vi. 2)

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, "Ver. 25. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."

He refers to **Philemon 1 (KJV):25** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

He continues, "Moral. He hath closed his Epistle with a prayer. And indeed prayer is a great good, salutary, and preservative of our souls. But it is great when we do things worthy of it, and do not render ourselves unworthy. And thou too, therefore, when thou goest to the priest, and he shall say to thee, "The Lord will have mercy on thee, my son," do not confide in the word only, but add also works. Do acts worthy of mercy, God will bless thee, my son, if indeed thou doest things worthy of blessing. He will bless thee, if thou showest mercy to thy neighbor. For the things which we wish to obtain from God, of those we ought first to impart to our neighbors. But if we deprive our neighbors of them, how can we wish to obtain them? "Blessed," He says, "are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." (Matt. v. 7)"

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):7** Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

He continues, "For if men show mercy to such, much more will God, but to the unmerciful by no means. "For he shall have judgment without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy." (Jas. ii. 13)"

He refers to **James 2 (KJV):13** For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

He continues, "An excellent thing is mercy! Why then hast thou not done it to another?"



Dost thou wish to be pardoned, when thou offendest? Why then dost thou not thyself pardon him who has offended thee? But thou comest to God, asking of Him the kingdom of heaven, and thou thyself dost not give money when it is begged of thee. For this cause we do not obtain mercy, because we do not show mercy. But why? you say. Is not this also a part of mercy, to show mercy to the unmerciful? Nay! For he that treated with the greatest kindness the hardhearted cruel man, that had done numberless ills to his neighbor, how should he be merciful? What then, say you? Hath not the Laver saved us, who had committed infinite evils? It hath delivered us from them, not that we should commit them again, but that we may not commit them. For “how shall we,” it is said, “that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Rom. vi. 2)”

He refers to **Romans 6 (KJV):2** God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

When he asks, “Hath not the Laver saved us, who had committed infinite evils?”, he is giving credit to the ritual of baptism for saving us. This takes away our focus on what Jesus Christ has done for us. His focus is on the ritual, and not on Jesus Christ. When our focus is on rituals, it makes one feel a distance between ourselves and God. But we are to come boldly before the throne of grace, as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):14** Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

As we fix our eyes on Jesus, our focus will change. Instead of trying not to sin, we will try to serve the Lord, as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):1** Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XXV, page 88-89**

The first creation then, that of Adam, was from earth; the next, that of the woman, from his rib; the next, that of Abel, from seed; yet we cannot arrive at the comprehension of any one of these, nor prove the circumstances by argument, though they are of a most earthly nature; how then shall we be able to give account of the unseen generation by Baptism, which is far more exalted than these, or to require arguments for that strange and marvelous Birth? Since even Angels stand by while that Generation takes place, but they could not tell the manner of that marvelous working, they stand by only, not performing anything, but beholding what takes place. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, worketh all. Let us then believe the declaration of God; that is more trustworthy than actual seeing. The sight often is in error, it is impossible that God’s Word should fail; let us then believe it; that which called the things that were not into existence may well be trusted when it speaks of their nature. What then says it? That what is effected is a Generation. If any ask, “How,” stop his mouth with the declaration of God, which is the strongest and a plain proof. If any enquire, “Why is water included?” let us also in

return ask, “Wherefore was earth employed at the beginning in the creation of man?” for that it was possible for God to make man without earth, is quite plain to every one. Be not then over curious.

That the need of water is absolute and indispensable, you may learn in this way. On one occasion, when the Spirit had flown down before the water was applied, the Apostle did not stay at this point, but, as though the water were necessary and not superfluous, observe what he says; “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” (Acts x. 47)

What then is the use of the water? This too I will tell you hereafter, when I reveal to you the hidden mystery. There are also other points of mystical teaching connected with the matter, but for the present I will mention to you one out of many. What is this one? In Baptism are fulfilled the pledges of our covenant with God; burial and death, resurrection and life; and these take place all at once. For when we immerse our heads in the water, the old man is buried as in a tomb below, and wholly sunk forever; (**Schaff Note:** Morel. “having been immersed below, is hidden wholly once for all.” [The whole passage is important for the patristic view of the *mode* of baptism.—P.S.]) then as we raise them again, the new man rises in its stead. As it is easy for us to dip and to lift our heads again, so it is easy for God to bury the old man, and to show forth the new. And this is done thrice, that you may learn that the power of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost fulfilleth all this. To show that what we say is no conjecture, hear Paul saying, “We are buried with Him by Baptism into death”: and again, “Our old man is crucified with Him”: and again, “We have been planted together in the likeness of His death.” (Rom. vi. 4, 5, 6) And not only is Baptism called a “cross,” but the “cross” is called “Baptism.” “With the Baptism,” saith Christ, “that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized” (Mark x. 39): and, “I have a Baptism to be baptized with” (Luke xii. 50) (which ye know not); for as we easily dip and lift our heads again, so He also easily died and rose again when He willed or rather much more easily, though He tarried the three days for the dispensation of a certain mystery.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “The first creation then, that of Adam, was from earth; the next, that of the woman, from his rib; the next, that of Abel, from seed; yet we cannot arrive at the comprehension of any one of these, nor prove the circumstances by argument, though they are of a most earthly nature; how then shall we be able to give account of the unseen generation by Baptism, which is far more exalted than these, or to require arguments for that strange and marvelous Birth? Since even Angels stand by while that Generation takes place, but they could not tell the manner of that marvelous working, they stand by only, not performing anything, but beholding what takes place. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, worketh all. Let us then believe the declaration of God; that is more trustworthy than actual seeing. The sight often is in error, it is impossible that God’s Word should fail; let us then believe it; that which called the things that were not into existence may well be trusted when it speaks of their nature.”

He refers in context to **Romans 4 (KJV):17** (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

He continues, “What then says it? That what is effected is a Generation. If any ask, “How,” stop his mouth with the declaration of God, which is the strongest and a plain proof.”

But the answer is very simple if you leave out baptism. We are born again when we believe, that is we have faith, as we read in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Chrysostom continues, “If any enquire, “Why is water included?” let us also in return ask, “Wherefore was earth employed at the beginning in the creation of man?” for that it was possible for God to make man without earth, is quite plain to every one. Be not then over curious.

That the need of water is absolute and indispensable, you may learn in this way. On one occasion, when the Spirit had flown down before the water was applied, the Apostle did not stay at this point, but, as though the water were necessary and not superfluous, observe what he says; “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” (Acts x. 47)”

He refers in context to **Acts 10 (KJV):44** While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

To receive the Holy Spirit in this way is an evidence of their faith, which saved them. They were born again when they believed, without having been baptized. They then received the baptism with the Holy Spirit and spoke with tongues and magnified God.

It is here that their tradition seems to have created a blindness in Chrysostom’s thinking. To receive the Holy Spirit in this way is to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, as Peter testified that the apostles were also baptized with the Holy Spirit in the same way, as in **Acts 2 (KJV):2** And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And if we have already received the Holy Spirit, it follows that we have been born again. We are only baptized in obedience to the Lord’s command, as an outward sign of the inward work of the Holy Spirit.

He continues, “What then is the use of the water? This too I will tell you hereafter, when I reveal to you the hidden mystery. There are also other points of mystical teaching connected with the matter, but for the present I will mention to you one out of many. What is this one? In Baptism are fulfilled the pledges of our covenant with God; burial and death, resurrection and life; and these take place all at once. For when we immerse our heads in the water, the old man is buried as in a tomb below, and wholly sunk forever;”

The old man is buried with Him, as we read in **Romans 6 (KJV):4** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

And in **Colossians 2 (KJV):12** Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

But all of this is “through the faith of the operation of God”, and not by the ritual.

We continue, “(**Schaff Note:** Morel. “having been immersed below, is hidden wholly once for all.” [The whole passage is important for the patristic view of the *mode* of baptism.—P.S.]) then as we raise them again, the new man rises in its stead. As it is easy for us to dip and to lift our heads again, so it is easy for God to bury the old man, and to show forth the new.”

And baptism is just an outward sign of what God has done in us. God has given us new birth in our spirit by the Holy Spirit, that we should receive a new divine nature in our spirit, and be a new creation, being born of the Spirit of God.

Chrysostom continues, “And this is done thrice, that you may learn that the power of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost fulfilleth all this. To show that what we say is no conjecture, hear Paul saying, “We are buried with Him by Baptism into death”: and again, “Our old man is crucified with Him”: and again, “We have been planted together in the likeness of His death.” (Rom. vi. 4, 5, 6)”

He refers to **Romans 6 (KJV):4** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

So baptism is a likeness of what has been done inside of us by faith in Jesus Christ. It is not faith in baptism, but faith in Jesus Christ that saves us.

And we note that in the ritual of baptism in the time of Chrysostom, they immersed thrice, or three times.

He continues, “And not only is Baptism called a “cross,” but the “cross” is called “Baptism.” “With the Baptism,” saith Christ, “that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized” (Mark x. 39): and, “I have a Baptism to be baptized with” (Luke xii. 50) (which ye know not);”

He refers in context to **Mark 10 (KJV):35** And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. 36 And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? 37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. 38 But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? 39 And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: 40 But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.

And to **Luke 12 (KJV):50** But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

But Jesus was speaking of the baptism of suffering, which is one of the six baptisms in the New Testament for the believer. To Chrysostom and the Church in his time, there was just one baptism, and that was water baptism.

He continues, “for as we easily dip and lift our heads again, so He also easily died and rose again when He willed or rather much more easily, though He tarried the three days for the

dispensation of a certain mystery.”

## Regeneration

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XXVI, page 90-92

John iii. 6

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

[1.] Great mysteries are they, of which the Only Begotten Son of God has counted us worthy; great, and such as we were not worthy of, but such as it was meet for Him to give. For if one reckon our desert, we were not only unworthy of the gift, but also liable to punishment and vengeance; but He, because He looked not to this, not only delivered us from punishment, but freely gave us a life much more bright than the first, introduced us into another world, made us another creature; “If any man be in Christ,” saith Paul, “he is a new creature.” (2 Cor. v. 17) What kind of “new creature”? Hear Christ Himself declare; “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.” Paradise was entrusted to us, and we were shown unworthy to dwell even there, yet He hath exalted us to heaven. In the first things we were found unfaithful, and He hath committed to us greater; we could not refrain from a single tree, and He hath provided for us the delights above; we kept not our place in Paradise, and He hath opened to us the doors of heaven. Well said Paul, “O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” (Rom. xi. 33) There is no longer a mother, or pangs, or sleep, or coming together, and embracings of bodies; henceforth all the fabric of our nature is framed above, of the Holy Ghost and water. The water is employed, being made the Birth to him who is born; what the womb is to the embryo, the water is to the believer; for in the water he is fashioned and formed. At first it was said, “Let the waters bring forth the creeping things that have life” (Gen. i. 20, LXX); but from the time that the Lord entered the streams of Jordan, the water no longer gives forth the “creeping thing that hath life,” but reasonable and Spirit-bearing souls; and what has been said of the sun, that he is “as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber” (Ps. xix. 5), we may now rather say of the faithful, for they send forth rays far brighter than he. That which is fashioned in the womb requires time, not so that in water, but all is done in a single moment. Here our life is perishable, and takes its origin from the decay of other bodies; that which is to be born comes slowly, (for such is the nature of bodies, they acquire perfection by time,) but it is not so with spiritual things. And why? Because the things made are formed perfect from the beginning.

When Nicodemus still hearing these things was troubled, see how Christ partly opens to him the secret of this mystery, and makes that clear which was for a while obscure to him. “That which is born,” saith He, “of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” He leads him away from all the things of sense, and suffers him not vainly to pry into the mysteries revealed with his fleshly eyes; “We speak not,” saith He, “of flesh, but of Spirit, O Nicodemus,” (by this word He directs him heavenward for a while,) “seek then nothing relating to things of sense; never can the Spirit appear to those eyes, think not that the Spirit bringeth forth the flesh.” “How then,” perhaps one may ask, “was the Flesh of the Lord brought

forth?" Not of the Spirit only, but of flesh; as Paul declares, when he says, "Made of a woman, made under the Law" (Gal. iv. 4); for the Spirit fashioned Him not indeed out of nothing, (for what need was there then of a womb?) but from the flesh of a Virgin. How, I cannot explain unto you; yet it was done, that no one might suppose that what was born is alien to our nature. For if even when this has taken place there are some who disbelieve in such a birth, into what impiety would they not have fallen had He not partaken of the Virgin's flesh.

"That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Seest thou the dignity of the Spirit? It appears performing the work of God; for above he said of some, that, "they were begotten of God," (c. i. 13) here He saith, that the Spirit begetteth them.

"That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." His meaning is of this kind; "He that is born of the Spirit is spiritual." For the Birth which He speaks of here is not that according to essence, but according to honor and grace. Now if the Son is so born also, in what shall He be superior to men so born? And how is He, Only Begotten? For I too am born of God, though not of His Essence, and if He also is not of His Essence, how in this respect does He differ from us? Nay, He will then be found to be inferior to the Spirit; for birth of this kind is by the grace of the Spirit. Needs He then the help of the Spirit that He may continue a Son? And in what do these differ from Jewish doctrines?

Christ then having said, "He that is born of the Spirit is spirit," when He saw him again confused, leads His discourse to an example from sense, saying,

Ver. 7, 8. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. (**Schaff Note:** or, "from above.") The wind bloweth where it listeth."

For by saying, "Marvel not," He indicates the confusion of his soul, and leads him to something lighter than body. He had already led him away from fleshly things, by saying, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit"; but when Nicodemus knew not what "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" meant, He next carries him to another figure, not bringing him to the density of bodies, nor yet speaking of things purely incorporeal, (for had he heard he could not have received this,) but having found a something between what is and what is not body, namely, the motion of the wind, He brings him to that next. And He saith of it, "Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth."

Though He saith, "it bloweth where it listeth," He saith it not as if the wind had any power of choice, but declaring that its natural motion cannot be hindered, and is with power. For Scripture knoweth how to speak thus of things without life, as when it saith, "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly." (Rom. viii. 20) The expression therefore, "bloweth where it listeth," is that of one who would show that it cannot be restrained, that it is spread abroad everywhere, and that none can hinder its passing hither and thither, but that it goes abroad with great might, and none is able to turn aside its violence.

[2.] "And thou hearest its voice," (that is, its rustle, its noise,) "but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Here is the conclusion of the whole matter. "If," saith He, "thou knowest not how to explain the motion nor the path of this wind which thou perceivest by hearing and touch, why art thou over anxious about the working of the Divine Spirit, when thou understandest not that of the wind, though thou hearest its voice?" The expression, "bloweth where it listeth," is also used to establish the power of the Comforter; for if none can hold the wind, but it moveth where it listeth, much less will the laws of nature, or limits of bodily generation, or anything of the like

kind, be able to restrain the operations of the Spirit.

That the expression, “thou hearest its voice,” is used respecting the wind, is clear from this circumstance; He would not, when conversing with an unbeliever and one unacquainted with the operation of the Spirit, have said, “Thou hearest its voice.” As then the wind is not visible, although it utters a sound, so neither is the birth of that which is spiritual visible to our bodily eyes; yet the wind is a body, although a very subtle one; for whatever is the object of sense is body. If then you do not complain because you cannot see this body, and do not on this account disbelieve, why do you, when you hear of “the Spirit,” hesitate and demand such exact accounts, although you act not so in the case of a body? What then doth Nicodemus? still he continues in his low Jewish opinion, and that too when so clear an example has been mentioned to him. Wherefore when he again says doubtingly,

Ver. 9, 10. “How can these things be?” Christ now speaks to him more chidingly; “Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?”

Observe how He nowhere accuses the man of wickedness, but only of weakness and simplicity. “And what,” one may ask, “has this birth in common with Jewish matters?” Tell me rather what has it that is not in common with them? For the first created man, and the woman formed from his side, and the barren women, and the things accomplished by water, I mean what relates to the fountain on which Elisha made the iron tool to swim, to the Red Sea which the Jews passed over, to the pool which the Angel troubled, to Naaman the Syrian who was cleansed in Jordan, all these proclaimed beforehand, as by a figure, the Birth and the purification which were to be. And the words of the Prophet allude to the manner of this Birth, as, “It shall be announced unto the Lord a generation which cometh, and they shall announce His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, whom the Lord hath made” (Ps. xxii. 30;31, LXX); and, “Thy youth shall be renewed as an eagle’s” (Ps. ciii. 5, LXX); and, “Shine, O Jerusalem; behold, Thy King cometh!” (Isa. lx. 1; Zech. ix. 9); and, “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven.” (Ps. xxxii. 1, LXX) Isaac also was a type of this Birth. For tell me, Nicodemus, how was he born? was it according to the law of nature? By no means; the mode of his generation was midway between this of which we speak and the natural; the natural, because he was begotten by cohabitation; the other, because he was begotten not of blood, (**Schaff Note:** lit “of bloods,” as in c. i. 13) (but by the will of God.) I shall show that these figures proclaimed beforehand not only this birth, but also that from the Virgin. For, because no one would easily have believed that a virgin could bear a child, barren women first did so, then such as were not only barren, but aged also. That a woman should be made from a rib was indeed far more wonderful than that the barren should conceive; but because that was of early and old time, another figure, new and fresh, was given, that of the barren women; to prepare the way for belief in the Virgin’s travail. To remind him then of these things, Jesus said, “Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?”

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “John iii. 6

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

He continues, “[1.] Great mysteries are they, of which the Only Begotten Son of God has counted us worthy; great, and such as we were not worthy of, but such as it was meet for Him to

give. For if one reckon our desert, we were not only unworthy of the gift, but also liable to punishment and vengeance; but He, because He looked not to this, not only delivered us from punishment, but freely gave us a life much more bright than the first, introduced us into another world, made us another creature; “If any man be in Christ,” saith Paul, “he is a new creature.” (2 Cor. v. 17)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

He continues, “What kind of “new creature”? Hear Christ Himself declare; “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.””

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

He continues, “Paradise was entrusted to us, and we were shown unworthy to dwell even there, yet He hath exalted us to heaven. In the first things we were found unfaithful, and He hath committed to us greater; we could not refrain from a single tree, and He hath provided for us the delights above;”

He refers to **Genesis 2 (KJV):16** And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

He continues, “we kept not our place in Paradise, and He hath opened to us the doors of heaven.””

He refers to **Genesis 3 (KJV):23** Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

And to **Hebrews 9 (KJV):24** For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

He continues, “Well said Paul, “O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” (Rom. xi. 33)”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):33** O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

He continues, “There is no longer a mother, or pangs, or sleep, or coming together, and embracings of bodies; henceforth all the fabric of our nature is framed above, of the Holy Ghost and water. The water is employed, being made the Birth to him who is born; what the womb is to the embryo, the water is to the believer; for in the water he is fashioned and formed.”

But the water that Jesus refers to is the water relating to our physical birth, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

One must be born of water, relating to our physical birth, and one must be born of the Spirit, relating to our spiritual birth of the Spirit of God, in order to enter the kingdom of God. This birth happens when we believe in Jesus, as we read in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I



say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

He continues, “At first it was said, “Let the waters bring forth the creeping things that have life” (Gen. i. 20 , LXX);”

He refers to **Genesis 1 (Septuagint):20** And God said, Let the waters bring forth reptiles having life, and winged creatures flying above the earth in the firmament of heaven, and it was so.

And to **Genesis 1 (KJV):20** And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

But this was a creative act of God. Water doesn't give life. Water only provides living space for living creatures.

He continues, “but from the time that the Lord entered the streams of Jordan, the water no longer gives forth the “creeping thing that hath life,” but reasonable and Spirit-bearing souls; and what has been said of the sun, that he is “as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber” (Ps. xix. 5), we may now rather say of the faithful, for they send forth rays far brighter than he.”

He refers in context to **Psalms 19 (KJV):4** Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, 5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. 6 His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

He continues, “That which is fashioned in the womb requires time, not so that in water, but all is done in a single moment. Here our life is perishable, and takes its origin from the decay of other bodies; that which is to be born comes slowly, (for such is the nature of bodies, they acquire perfection by time,) but it is not so with spiritual things. And why? Because the things made are formed perfect from the beginning.

When Nicodemus still hearing these things was troubled, see how Christ partly opens to him the secret of this mystery, and makes that clear which was for a while obscure to him. “That which is born,” saith He, “of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” He leads him away from all the things of sense, and suffers him not vainly to pry into the mysteries revealed with his fleshly eyes; “We speak not,” saith He, “of flesh, but of Spirit, O Nicodemus,” (by this word He directs him heavenward for a while,) “seek then nothing relating to things of sense; never can the Spirit appear to those eyes, think not that the Spirit bringeth forth the flesh.” “How then,” perhaps one may ask, “was the Flesh of the Lord brought forth?” Not of the Spirit only, but of flesh; as Paul declares, when he says, “Made of a woman, made under the Law” (Gal. iv. 4);”

He refers to **Galatians 4 (KJV):4** But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

He continues, “for the Spirit fashioned Him not indeed out of nothing, (for what need was there then of a womb?) but from the flesh of a Virgin. How, I cannot explain unto you; yet it was done, that no one might suppose that what was born is alien to our nature.”

The only explanation of the virgin birth we need is found in **Matthew 1 (KJV):20** But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which

is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

He continues, “For if even when this has taken place there are some who disbelieve in such a birth, into what impiety would they not have fallen had He not partaken of the Virgin’s flesh.

“That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Seest thou the dignity of the Spirit? It appears performing the work of God; for above he said of some, that, “they were begotten of God,” (c. i. 13) here He saith, that the Spirit begetteth them.”

He refers in context to **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

That the Spirit is God, we read as in **Acts 5 (KJV):3** But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

He continues, ““That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” His meaning is of this kind; “He that is born of the Spirit is spiritual.” For the Birth which He speaks of here is not that according to essence, but according to honor and grace.”

But that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, not honor and grace. Spirit has essence, as it were, since it is unique to the person. That we have a spirit is stated in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

And in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):14** For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

Since we have a spirit, it follows that it is different from every other spirit. This understanding was not in the Church in the time of Chrysostom.

He continues, “Now if the Son is so born also, in what shall He be superior to men so born? And how is He, Only Begotten? For I too am born of God, though not of His Essence, and if He also is not of His Essence, how in this respect does He differ from us?”

But His birth was of the Holy Spirit, as we read in **Luke 1 (KJV):35** And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

And our regeneration is similar, since when we have faith in Jesus Christ, we are born of the Spirit of God, and we receive a new divine nature, as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Chrysostom did not understand what happens at regeneration because the tradition of the Church had created a blindness in his understanding.

He continues, “Nay, He will then be found to be inferior to the Spirit; for birth of this kind is by the grace of the Spirit. Needs He then the help of the Spirit that He may continue a Son? And in what do these differ from Jewish doctrines?”

To Chrysostom and the Church in his time, one received the “grace of the Spirit” when

they were baptized. Then you had to keep the “grace of the Spirit” by doing good works, or risk losing your salvation.

He continues, “Christ then having said, “He that is born of the Spirit is spirit,” when He saw him again confused, leads His discourse to an example from sense, saying,

Ver. 7, 8. “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. (**Schaff Note:** or, “from above.”) The wind bloweth where it listeth.”

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):7** Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

In verse 7, the word “again” in the Greek is *ἄνωθεν* (pronounced ä'-no-then), from G507; from above; by analogy, from the first; by implication, anew:—from above, again, from the beginning (very first), the top. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G509**

He continues, “For by saying, “Marvel not,” He indicates the confusion of his soul, and leads him to something lighter than body. He had already led him away from fleshly things, by saying, “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit”; but when Nicodemus knew not what “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” meant, He next carries him to another figure, not bringing him to the density of bodies, nor yet speaking of things purely incorporeal, (for had he heard he could not have received this,) but having found a something between what is and what is not body, namely, the motion of the wind, He brings him to that next. And He saith of it, “Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth.”

Though He saith, “it bloweth where it listeth,” He saith it not as if the wind had any power of choice, but declaring that its natural motion cannot be hindered, and is with power. For Scripture knoweth how to speak thus of things without life, as when it saith, “The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly.” (Rom. viii. 20)”

He refers in context to **Romans 8 (KJV):20** For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

He continues, “The expression therefore, “bloweth where it listeth,” is that of one who would show that it cannot be restrained, that it is spread abroad everywhere, and that none can hinder its passing hither and thither, but that it goes abroad with great might, and none is able to turn aside its violence.

[2.] “And thou hearest its voice,” (that is, its rustle, its noise,) “but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.””

And so the birth of the Spirit does not come with observation because it is of the will of God, and not of our own will, that we are born again, as we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And in **James 1 (KJV):18** Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

He continues, “Here is the conclusion of the whole matter. “If,” saith He, “thou knowest not how to explain the motion nor the path of this wind which thou perceivest by hearing and touch, why art thou over anxious about the working of the Divine Spirit, when thou

understandest not that of the wind, though thou hearest its voice?" The expression, "bloweth where it listeth," is also used to establish the power of the Comforter; for if none can hold the wind, but it moveth where it listeth, much less will the laws of nature, or limits of bodily generation, or anything of the like kind, be able to restrain the operations of the Spirit."

The words "bloweth where it listeth" also describe the will of God. We did not choose Him, but He chose us, as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):4** According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

He continues, "That the expression, "thou hearest its voice," is used respecting the wind, is clear from this circumstance; He would not, when conversing with an unbeliever and one unacquainted with the operation of the Spirit, have said, "Thou hearest its voice." As then the wind is not visible, although it utters a sound, so neither is the birth of that which is spiritual visible to our bodily eyes; yet the wind is a body, although a very subtle one; for whatever is the object of sense is body. If then you do not complain because you cannot see this body, and do not on this account disbelieve, why do you, when you hear of "the Spirit," hesitate and demand such exact accounts, although you act not so in the case of a body? What then doth Nicodemus? Still he continues in his low Jewish opinion, and that too when so clear an example has been mentioned to him. Wherefore when he again says doubtingly,

Ver. 9, 10. "How can these things be?" Christ now speaks to him more chidingly; "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?"

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):9** Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

He continues, "Observe how He nowhere accuses the man of wickedness, but only of weakness and simplicity. "And what," one may ask, "has this birth in common with Jewish matters?" Tell me rather what has it that is not in common with them? For the first created man, and the woman formed from his side, and the barren women, and the things accomplished by water, I mean what relates to the fountain on which Elisha made the iron tool to swim, to the Red Sea which the Jews passed over, to the pool which the Angel troubled, to Naaman the Syrian who was cleansed in Jordan, all these proclaimed beforehand, as by a figure, the Birth and the purification which were to be. And the words of the Prophet allude to the manner of this Birth, as, "It shall be announced unto the Lord a generation which cometh, and they shall announce His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, whom the Lord hath made" (Ps. xxii. 30;31, LXX); and, "Thy youth shall be renewed as an eagle's" (Ps. ciii. 5, LXX); and, "Shine, O Jerusalem; behold, Thy King cometh!" (Isa. lx. 1; Zech. ix. 9); and, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven." (Ps. xxxii. 1, LXX)"

He refers to **Psalms 22 (Septuagint):30** And my seed shall serve him: the generation that is coming shall be reported to the Lord. 31 And they shall report his righteousness to the people that shall be born, whom the Lord has made.

And to **Psalms 22 (KJV):30** A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. 31 They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.

And to **Psalm 103 (Septuagint):5** who satisfies thy desire with good things: *so that* thy youth shall be renewed like *that* of the eagle.

And to **Psalm 103 (KJV):5** Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

And to **Isaiah 60 (KJV):1** Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

And to **Zechariah 9 (KJV):9** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

And to **Psalm 32 (Septuagint):1** Blessed *are they* whose transgressions are forgiven, and who sins are covered.

And to **Psalm 32 (KJV):1** Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

He continues, "Isaac also was a type of this Birth. For tell me, Nicodemus, how was he born? Was it according to the law of nature? By no means; the mode of his generation was midway between this of which we speak and the natural; the natural, because he was begotten by cohabitation; the other, because he was begotten not of blood, (**Schaff Note:** lit "of bloods," as in c. i. 13.) (but by the will of God.) I shall show that these figures proclaimed beforehand not only this birth, but also that from the Virgin. For, because no one would easily have believed that a virgin could bear a child, barren women first did so, then such as were not only barren, but aged also. That a woman should be made from a rib was indeed far more wonderful than that the barren should conceive; but because that was of early and old time, another figure, new and fresh, was given, that of the barren women; to prepare the way for belief in the Virgin's travail. To remind him then of these things, Jesus said, "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?"

And we read in **Genesis 18 (KJV):10** And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. 11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. 12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? 13 And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? 14 Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LI, page 183-184**

John vii. 37, 38

"In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

[1.] They who come to the divine preaching and give heed to the faith, must manifest the desire of thirsty men for water, and kindle in themselves a similar longing; so will they be able also very carefully to retain what is said. For as thirsty men, when they have taken a bowl,

eagerly drain it and then desist, so too they who hear the divine oracles if they receive them thirsting, will never be weary until they have drunk them up. For to show that men ought ever to thirst and hunger, “Blessed,” It saith, “are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness” (Matt. v. 6); and here Christ saith, “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.” What He saith is of this kind, “I draw no man to Me by necessity and constraint; but if any hath great zeal, if any is inflamed with desire, him I call.”

But why hath the Evangelist remarked that it was “on the last day, that great day”? For both the first day and the last were “great,” while the intermediate days they spent rather in enjoyment. Wherefore then saith he, “in the last day”? Because on that day they were all collected together. For on the first day He came not, and told the reason to His brethren, nor yet on the second and third days saith He anything of this kind, lest His words should come to nought, the hearers being about to run into indulgence. But on the last day when they were returning home He giveth them supplies for their salvation, and crieth aloud, partly by this showing to us His boldness, and partly for the greatness of the multitude. And to show that He spake not of material drink, He addeth, “He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” By “belly” he here meaneth the heart, as also in another place It saith, “And Thy Law in the midst of my belly.” (Ps. xl. 10; Theodotion) But where hath the Scripture said, that “rivers of living water shall flow from his belly”? Nowhere. What then meaneth, “He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture saith”? Here we must place a stop, so that the, “rivers shall flow from his belly,” may be an assertion of Christ. (**Schaff Note:** i.e. not of the Scripture.) For because many said, “This is the Christ”; and, “When the Christ cometh will He do more miracles?” He showeth that it behooveth to have a correct knowledge, and to be convinced not so much from the miracles as from the Scriptures. Many, in fact, who even saw Him working marvels received Him not as Christ, and were ready to say, “Do not the Scriptures say that Christ cometh of the seed of David?” and on this they continually dwelt. He then, desiring to show that He did not shun the proof from the Scriptures, again referreth them to the Scriptures. He had said before, “Search the Scriptures” (c. v. 39); and again, “It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be taught of God” (c. vi. 45); and, “Moses accuseth you” (c. v. 45); and here, “As the Scripture hath said, rivers shall flow from his belly,” alluding to the largeness and abundance of grace. As in another place He saith, “A well of water springing up unto eternal life” (c. iv. 14), that is to say, “he shall possess much grace”; and elsewhere He calleth it, “eternal life,” but here, “living water.” He calleth that “living” which ever worketh; for the grace of the Spirit, when it hath entered into the mind and hath been established, springeth up more than any fountain, faileth not, becometh not empty, stayeth not. To signify therefore at once its unfailing supply and unlimited (**Schaff Note:** lit. “unspeakable.”) operation, He hath called it “a well” and “rivers,” not one river but numberless; and in the former case He hath represented its abundance by the expression, “springing.” And one may clearly perceive what is meant, if he will consider the wisdom of Stephen, the tongue of Peter, the vehemence of Paul, how nothing bare, nothing withstood them, not the anger of multitudes, not the risings up of tyrants, not the plots of devils, not daily deaths, but as rivers borne along with a great rushing sound, so they went on their way hurrying all things with them.

Ver. 39. “But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given.”

[2.] How then did the Prophets prophesy and work those ten thousand wonders? For the



Apostles cast not out devils by the Spirit, but by power received from Him; as He saith Himself, “If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out?” (Matt. xii. 27) And this He said, signifying that before the Crucifixion (**Schaff Note:** lit. “the Cross.”) not all cast out devils by the Spirit, but that some did so by the power received from Him. So when He was about to send them, He said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (c. xx. 22); and again, “The Holy Ghost came upon them” (Acts xix. 6), and then they wrought miracles. But when He was sending them, the Scripture said not, that “He gave to them the Holy Ghost,” but that He gave to them “power,” saying, “Cleanse the lepers, cast out devils, raise the dead, freely ye have received, freely give.” (Matt. x. 1, 8) But in the case of the Prophets, all allow that the Gift was that of the Holy Spirit. But this Grace was stunted and departed and failed from off the earth, from the day in which it was said, “Your house is left unto you desolate” (Matt. xxiii. 38); and even before that day its dearth had begun, for there was no longer any prophet among them, nor did Grace visit their holy (**Schaff Note:** al. “divine.”) things. Since then the Holy Ghost had been withheld, but was for the future to be shed forth abundantly, and since the beginning of this imparting was after the Crucifixion, not only as to its abundance, but also as to the increased greatness of the gifts, (for the Gift was more marvelous, as when It saith, “Ye know not what Spirit ye are of” (Luke ix. 55); and again, “For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage, but the Spirit of adoption” (Rom. viii. 15); and the men of old possessed the Spirit themselves, but imparted It not to others, while the Apostles filled tens of thousands with It,) since then, I say, they were to receive this Gift, but It was not yet given, for this cause he addeth, “The Holy Ghost was not yet.” Since then the Lord spoke of this grace, the Evangelist hath said, “For the Holy Ghost was not yet,” that is, “was not yet given,”  
 “Because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “John vii. 37, 38  
 “In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.””

He refers to **John 7 (KJV):**37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

He continues, “[1.] They who come to the divine preaching and give heed to the faith, must manifest the desire of thirsty men for water, and kindle in themselves a similar longing; so will they be able also very carefully to retain what is said. For as thirsty men, when they have taken a bowl, eagerly drain it and then desist, so too they who hear the divine oracles if they receive them thirsting, will never be weary until they have drunk them up. For to show that men ought ever to thirst and hunger, “Blessed,” It saith, “are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness” (Matt. v. 6);”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):**6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

He continues, “and here Christ saith, “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.” What He saith is of this kind, “I draw no man to Me by necessity and constraint; but if any hath great zeal, if any is inflamed with desire, him I call.”

Chrysostom exceeds what is written here. Those he calls are those He foreknew, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

The thirst Jesus is speaking of in John 7:37 above is a thirst for the presence of God.

Chrysostom continues, “But why hath the Evangelist remarked that it was “on the last day, that great day”? For both the first day and the last were “great,” while the intermediate days they spent rather in enjoyment. Wherefore then saith he, “in the last day”? Because on that day they were all collected together. For on the first day He came not, and told the reason to His brethren, nor yet on the second and third days saith He anything of this kind, lest His words should come to nought, the hearers being about to run into indulgence. But on the last day when they were returning home He giveth them supplies for their salvation, and crieth aloud, partly by this showing to us His boldness, and partly for the greatness of the multitude. And to show that He spake not of material drink, He addeth, “He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” By “belly” he here meaneth the heart, as also in another place It saith, “And Thy Law in the midst of my belly.” (Ps. xl. 10; Theodotion)”

He refers to **Psalms 40 (NASB):10** I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have spoken of Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great congregation.

He continues, “But where hath the Scripture said, that “rivers of living water shall flow from his belly”? Nowhere. What then meaneth, “He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture saith”? Here we must place a stop, so that the, “rivers shall flow from his belly,” may be an assertion of Christ. (**Schaff Note:** i.e. not of the Scripture.) For because many said, “This is the Christ”; and, “When the Christ cometh will He do more miracles?” He showeth that it behooveth to have a correct knowledge, and to be convinced not so much from the miracles as from the Scriptures. Many, in fact, who even saw Him working marvels received Him not as Christ, and were ready to say, “Do not the Scriptures say that Christ cometh of the seed of David?” and on this they continually dwelt. He then, desiring to show that He did not shun the proof from the Scriptures, again referreth them to the Scriptures. He had said before, “Search the Scriptures” (c. v. 39); and again, “It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be taught of God” (c. vi. 45); and, “Moses accuseth you” (c. v. 45); and here, “As the Scripture hath said, rivers shall flow from his belly,” alluding to the largeness and abundance of grace.”

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):39** Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

And to **John 6 (KJV):45** It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

And to **John 5 (KJV):45** Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.

He continues, “As in another place He saith, “A well of water springing up unto eternal life” (c. iv. 14), that is to say, “he shall possess much grace”;

He refers to **John 4 (KJV):14** But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing



up into everlasting life.

He continues, “and elsewhere He calleth it, “eternal life,” but here, “living water.” He calleth that “living” which ever worketh; for the grace of the Spirit, when it hath entered into the mind and hath been established, springeth up more than any fountain, faileth not, becometh not empty, stayeth not.”

He did not understand what happens to our spirits when we are born again. It is not just having the grace of the Spirit, which leads us to believe we could lose it if we did not walk rightly. It is a birth in our spirits by the Spirit of God.

Chrysostom continues, “To signify therefore at once its unfailing supply and unlimited (**Schaff Note:** lit. “unspeakable.”) operation, He hath called it “a well” and “rivers,” not one river but numberless; and in the former case He hath represented its abundance by the expression, “springing.” And one may clearly perceive what is meant, if he will consider the wisdom of Stephen, the tongue of Peter, the vehemence of Paul, how nothing bare, nothing withstood them, not the anger of multitudes, not the risings up of tyrants, not the plots of devils, not daily deaths, but as rivers borne along with a great rushing sound, so they went on their way hurrying all things with them.

Ver. 39. “But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given.””

He refers in context to **John 7 (KJV):38** He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

The water Jesus was speaking of in verse 38 was a type of the Holy Spirit, as He explains in verse 39.

He continues, “[2.] How then did the Prophets prophesy and work those ten thousand wonders? For the Apostles cast not out devils by the Spirit, but by power received from Him; as He saith Himself, “If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out?” (Matt. xii. 27)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 12 (KJV):27** And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. 28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

But Jesus explains in verse 28 that He did cast out demons by the Spirit of God. Casting out devils is a gift of the Spirit, that is, the working of miracles, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):10** To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

Chrysostom continues, “And this He said, signifying that before the Crucifixion (**Schaff Note:** lit. “the Cross.”) not all cast out devils by the Spirit, but that some did so by the power received from Him. So when He was about to send them, He said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (c. xx. 22); and again, “The Holy Ghost came upon them” (Acts xix. 6), and then they wrought miracles.”

He refers to **John 20 (KJV):22** And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

And to **Acts 19 (KJV):6** And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

He continues, “But when He was sending them, the Scripture said not, that “He gave to them the Holy Ghost,” but that He gave to them “power,” saying, “Cleanse the lepers, cast out devils, raise the dead, freely ye have received, freely give.” (Matt. x. 1, 8)”

He refers to **Matthew 10 (KJV):1** And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

And to **Matthew 10 (KJV):8** Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

And Jesus also taught, as in **John 14 (KJV):17** Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

They still ministered by the Spirit of God, but they had not been filled with the Spirit of God yet. This came on Pentecost, as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):1** And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. **2** And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. **3** And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. **4** And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

He continues, “But in the case of the Prophets, all allow that the Gift was that of the Holy Spirit. But this Grace was stinted and departed and failed from off the earth, from the day in which it was said, “Your house is left unto you desolate” (Matt. xxiii. 38);”

He refers in context to **Matthew 23 (KJV):37** O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! **38** Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. **39** For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

He continues, “and even before that day its dearth had begun, for there was no longer any prophet among them, nor did Grace visit their holy (**Schaff Note:** al. “divine.”) things. Since then the Holy Ghost had been withheld, but was for the future to be shed forth abundantly, and since the beginning of this imparting was after the Crucifixion, not only as to its abundance, but also as to the increased greatness of the gifts, (for the Gift was more marvelous, as when It saith, “Ye know not what Spirit ye are of” ( Luke ix. 55 ); and again, “For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage, but the Spirit of adoption” ( Rom. viii. 15 );”

He refers to **Luke 9 (KJV):55** But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

And to **Romans 8 (KJV):15** For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

He continues, “and the men of old possessed the Spirit themselves, but imparted It not to others, while the Apostles filled tens of thousands with It,) since then, I say, they were to receive this Gift, but It was not yet given, for this cause he addeth, “The Holy Ghost was not yet.” Since then the Lord spoke of this grace, the Evangelist hath said, “For the Holy Ghost was not yet,” that is, “was not yet given,”

“Because Jesus was not yet glorified.””

He refers again in context to **John 7 (KJV):38** He that believeth on me, as the scripture

hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

And the one who would receive the Holy Spirit was “He that believeth on me”, that is, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is for all believers.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, Instructions to Catechumens, page 159-161**, he writes, “To those about to be illuminated; (**Schaff Note: I.e., to be baptized.**”

And speaking of baptism, he says, “But, if you will, let us discourse about the name which this mystic cleansing bears: for its name is not one, but very many and various. For this purification is called the laver of regeneration. “He saved us,” he saith, “through the laver of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” (Titus 3:5)”

And we read in **Titus 3 (Latin Vulgate: Douay Rheims):5** Not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the laver of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost.

But we read as in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

The word “laver” is not in the Greek. The Greek word is **λουτρόν** (pronounced lü-tro'n), from G3068; a bath, i.e. (figuratively), baptism:—washing.

Since regeneration is not about baptism but about being born from above by the Holy Spirit when we believe in Jesus Christ, the washing that is referred to in Titus 3:5 is about the cleansing of our sins which God does as a result of our faith in Jesus Christ. Water baptism is then done to show that we have believed.

Chrysostom also says, “It is called also illumination, and this St. Paul again has called it, “For call to remembrance the former days in which after ye were illuminated ye endured a great conflict of sufferings;” (Hebrews 10:32) and again, “For it is impossible for those who were once illuminated, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and then fell away, to renew them again unto repentance.” (Hebrews 6:4-6)”

However, nothing is said about baptism in these Scriptures. Chrysostom is interpreting them based on the tradition of the Church in his time. His whole speech seems to be about introducing the Catechumens to the Church, and preparing them for the first ritual of water baptism.

Concerning **Baptism**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, Instructions to Catechumens, page 161-162**, he is saying that baptism, “the laver of grace”, cleanses the real uncleanness, the defilement of soul and body.

He refers to **1 Corinthians 6 (NKJV):11** And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

And he interprets the washing in this verse as baptism. But the washing here speaks of the cleansing of our sins when we believe, for we are justified by faith, as we read in **Romans 5**

**(NASB):**1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

Our faith is all that is necessary for us to be born again, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):**16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

And he says, “And for what reason, says one, if the laver take away all our sins, is it called, not a laver of remission of sins, nor a laver of cleansing, but a laver of regeneration? Because it does not simply take away our sins, nor simply cleanse us from our faults, but so as if we were born again.”

His wording about the new birth, “as if we were born again”, is so vague and indefinite. Chrysostom does not seem to understand the change that happens when one is born of the Spirit of God. Jesus did not say that unless you have something like a birth of the Spirit, you cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. Jesus said that we must be born again, as in **John 3 (KJV):**4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

And Chrysostom says, “For it creates and fashions us anew not forming us again out of earth, but creating us out of another element, namely, of the nature of water. For it does not simply wipe the vessel clean, but entirely remoulds it again.”

Chrysostom thought that the new birth was about the grace of the Spirit. So in his thinking, the one who is born again has a vessel that is clean and remoulded by the grace of God abiding in it. In his understanding, it is then possible to lose the grace of God, and be destined for hell. But it is still possible, in his understanding, to come back by repentance. But if one lost the grace of God, then according to his understanding, if they repented they would have to be born again, again. This is not in agreement with the Scripture.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, Instructions to Catechumens, page 165-166**, he says, “This too he has bidden thee do according to thy power, with what has been entrusted to thee, to extend the holiness which thou hast received, and to make the righteousness which comes from the laver brighter, and the gift of grace more radiant;”

While he doesn't say exactly what the gift of grace is, the understanding of the Church in his time appears to be that one received the grace of the Spirit when one was baptized. Then if one fell away from God, they would lose this grace, but could regain it again upon repentance.

The understanding of Chrysostom about regeneration was that when one is baptized, they are regenerated, or born again.

And he says, “For when grace has come, and driven away the darkness of the understanding, we learn the exact nature of things, and what was before dreadful to us becomes contemptible.” He did not understand that being born of the Spirit of God makes us new creations, that is, our spirit, being born of the Spirit of God, now has a new divine nature, as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):**3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that

pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

It is not just a matter of receiving the “grace of the Spirit”. There has been a change in our nature in our spirit because of being born of the Spirit of God.

He also says, “For this reason I said before, and speak now and will not cease speaking, if any has not rectified the defects in his morals, nor furnished himself with easily acquired virtue, let him not be baptized. For the laver is able to remit former sins, but there is no little fear, and no ordinary danger lest we return to them, and our remedy become a wound. For by how much greater the grace is, by so much is the punishment more for those who sin after these things.”

Chrysostom does not realize that one only had to believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord, to be born again. Our spirit then receives eternal life, and our standing before God is as righteous ones, having been justified by God because of our faith which He gave us. We are not in danger of losing our salvation as Chrysostom intimates. God has made provision for us to be restored to fellowship with Him by confessing our sins. He is then faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

This fear of losing salvation caused the Church to hold back those who had become Catechumens from being baptized for three years. They had to undergo three years of instruction and probation before they were allowed to be baptized.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, EUTROPIUS, PATRICIAN AND CONSUL, Homily II, After Eutropius having been found outside the Church had been taken captive, page 259**, he says, “For observe: He took dust from the earth and made the man; He formed him. The devil came, and perverted him. Then the Lord came, took him again, and remoulded, and recast him in baptism, and He suffered not his body to be of clay, but made it of a harder ware. He subjected the soft clay to the fire of the Holy Spirit. “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:” (Matthew 3:11) He was baptized with water that he might be remodelled, with fire that he might be hardened. Therefore the Prophet speaking beforehand under divine guidance declared “Thou shalt dash them in pieces like vessels of the potter.” (Psalm 2:9)”

Chrysostom did not understand that in Matthew 3:11 John the Baptist was speaking of a different baptism, that is, the baptism with the Holy Spirit. To Chrysostom, there was only one baptism, that is, water baptism. And in Psalm 2:9, this verse does not refer to believers, but to the nations, whom the Lord Jesus in the Kingdom Age will rule as with a rod of iron, as we read in **Revelation 2 (KJV):15** And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords.

And in **Revelation 2 (KJV):26** And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

And Chrysostom says, “Speaking beforehand therefore of the remoulding which is wrought by means of baptism he saith, “thou shalt dash them in pieces like vessels of a

potter”—He means that He remodels and recasts them. I descend into the water of baptism, and the fashion of my nature is remoulded, and the fire of the Spirit recasts it, and it is turned into a harder ware. And that my words are no empty vaunt hear what Job says, “He hath made us as clay,” (Job 10:9) and Paul, “but we have this treasure in earthen vessels.” (2 Corinthians 4:7)”

The remoulding he refers to is the new birth of the Spirit of God. But this birth does not happen at baptism, but when one believes in Jesus Christ. And it is not just a remodeling, but a new creation, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):24** And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

The fire that John the Baptist spoke of in Matthew 3:11 relates to the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer. This happens when one is baptized with the Holy Spirit, as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):1** And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is for the empowering of the believer, as Jesus taught in **Acts 1 (KJV):5** For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

And in **Acts 1 (KJV):8** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

And in **Luke 24 (KJV):49** And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

This baptism was not about salvation, for the disciples were already clean, except for Judas, as we read in **John 13 (KJV):10** Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY III, page 12-13**, he refers to 1 Corinthians 1:14, and, speaking for Paul, he says, ““Why are you elated at having baptized, when I for my part even give thanks that I have not done so!” Thus saying, by a kind of divine art (οἰκονομικῶς) he does away with their swelling pride upon this point; not with the efficacy of the baptism, (God forbid,) but with the folly of those who were puffed up at having been baptizers: first, by showing that the Gift is not theirs; and, secondly, by thanking God therefore. For Baptism truly is a great thing: but its greatness is not the work of the person baptizing, but of Him who is invoked in the Baptism: since to baptize is nothing as regards man’s labor, but is much less than preaching the Gospel. Yea, again I say, great indeed is Baptism, and without baptism it is impossible to obtain the kingdom. Still a man of no singular excellence is able to baptize, but to preach the Gospel there is need of great labor.”

And, speaking of Paul again, he says, “And why, not being sent to baptize, did he baptize? Not in contention with Him that sent him, but in this instance laboring beyond his task. For he saith not, “I was forbidden,” but, “I was not sent for this, but for that which was of the greatest necessity.” For preaching the Gospel is a work perhaps for one or two; but baptizing, for everyone endowed with the priesthood.”

But Baptism is only a ritual, and doesn't save anyone. This is why Paul thanked God that he had baptized none of them, "but Crispus and Gaius". Chrysostom is upholding the Church's teaching of regeneration by baptism by his interpretation of these verses. But Paul would never give such thanks if baptism had any ability to save.

And he concludes, "For as to teach the wrestlers in the games is the part of a spirited and skilful trainer, but to place the crown on the conquerors head may be that of one who cannot even wrestle, (although it be the crown which adds splendor to the conqueror,) so also in Baptism. It is impossible to be saved without it, yet it is no great thing which the baptizer doth, finding the will ready prepared."

When we believe in Jesus Christ, we pass from death to life. We then, in obedience to the Lord's command, take another step of faith, and we are baptized. Baptism is only an outward display of the faith that we already have in Jesus Christ. We are baptized because we believe, not in order to believe.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY VII, page 34**, he says of the unbeliever, "He hearing of a laver, counts it merely as water: but I behold not simply the thing which is seen, but the purification of the soul which is by the Spirit. He considers only that my body hath been washed; but I have believed that the soul also hath become both pure and holy; and I count it the sepulchre, the resurrection, the sanctification, the righteousness, the redemption, the adoption, the inheritance, the kingdom of heaven, the plenary effusion (χορηγίαν) of the Spirit."

But the laver is not what saves us, nor does faith in the laver. It is faith in Jesus Christ that saves us in order to be resurrected, sanctified, justified, redeemed, adopted, made joint heirs with Christ, and recipients of the Spirit. And it is not in the soul that regeneration takes place, but in our spirit, as Jesus taught in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Baptism is only an outward sign of an inward work, much like circumcision which avails nothing, as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):6** For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

And the "purification of the soul" is not by the Spirit in water baptism. The purification of the soul will be a progressive work of sanctification after one is born again. As our minds are renewed by the knowledge of the word of God, we will grow in grace and knowledge. Our hurts in our past will be healed as we process our feelings with the Lord, and let go of our old ways. But our spirit is made new by the new birth from above by the Spirit of God.

The Church in the time of Chrysostom did not understand that it is in our spirit where one is born again. Then in our soul we will be renewed as we walk in the light of the word of God. The Church in his time thought that one had to be pure before they could even be baptized. So they had a class for Catechumens, whom they would not permit to be baptized until they had reached a certain purity. But baptism is only a sign like circumcision, as we read in **Romans 4 (KJV):8** Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. **9** Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. **10** How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. **11** And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not

circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: 12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

Abraham's faith is what justified him, just as the faith of all believers justifies them today, and not water baptism.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY IV, page 390**, he asks, "Where now are those who lessen the Son, because He is named in the grace of the Laver after the Father?"

But where do we find any reference in the Scriptures to "the grace of the Laver"? There is no such reference in the Scriptures.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY IV, page 419-420**, he says, "What then was it that was thought incredible? That those who were enemies, and sinners, neither justified by the law, nor by works, should immediately through faith alone be advanced to the highest favor. Upon this head accordingly Paul has discoursed at length in his Epistle to the Romans, and here again at length. "This is a faithful saying," he says, "and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

As the Jews were chiefly attracted by this, he persuades them not to give heed to the law, since they could not attain salvation by it without faith. Against this he contends; for it seemed to them incredible, that a man who had misspent all his former life in vain and wicked actions, should afterwards be saved by his faith alone."

But then he says, "And when we speak of the Laver, and of the remission of sins through it, this too they say is unworthy of God, that he who has committed offenses without number should have his sins remitted."

Chrysostom has just stated that salvation is by faith alone, and not by works, and yet he speaks of the Laver as if remission of sins were through it.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILEMON, HOMILY III, page 556**, he says, "Hath not the Laver saved us, who had committed infinite evils? It hath delivered us from them, not that we should commit them again, but that we may not commit them. For "how shall we," it is said, "that are dead to sin, live any longer therein"? (Rom. vi. 2)"

When he asks, "Hath not the Laver saved us, who had committed infinite evils?", he is giving credit to the ritual of baptism for saving us. This takes away our focus on what Jesus Christ has done for us. His focus is on the ritual, and not on Jesus Christ. Jesus is our advocate with the Father. He is our mediator. He is our propitiation. He is the way, the truth, and the life for us. When our focus is on rituals, it makes one feel a distance between ourselves and God. But we are to come boldly before the throne of grace. The Lord wants intimacy with us.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XXV, page 88-89**, he says, "The first creation then, that of Adam, was from earth; the next, that of the woman, from his rib; the next, that of Abel, from seed; yet we cannot arrive at the comprehension of any one of these, nor prove the circumstances by argument, though they are of a most earthly nature; how then shall we be able to give account of the unseen generation by Baptism, which is far more exalted than these, or to require arguments for that strange and marvelous Birth? Since even Angels stand by while that Generation takes place, but



they could not tell the manner of that marvelous working, they stand by only, not performing anything, but beholding what takes place. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, worketh all.”

And he says, ““What then says it? That what is effected is a Generation. If any ask, “How,” stop his mouth with the declaration of God, which is the strongest and a plain proof.”

But the answer is very simple if you leave out baptism. We are born again when we believe, that is, when we have faith, as we read in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

A regeneration is a passing from death to life. And it occurs by the will of God, unseen like the wind, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Concerning **Regeneration**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XXVI, page 90-92**, he says, “There is no longer a mother, or pangs, or sleep, or coming together, and embracings of bodies; henceforth all the fabric of our nature is framed above, of the Holy Ghost and water. The water is employed, being made the Birth to him who is born; what the womb is to the embryo, the water is to the believer; for in the water he is fashioned and formed.”

And he says, “At first it was said, “Let the waters bring forth the creeping things that have life” (Gen. i. 20 , LXX);”

He refers to **Genesis 1 (Septuagint):20** And God said, Let the waters bring forth reptiles having life, and winged creatures flying above the earth in the firmament of heaven, and it was so.

And to **Genesis 1 (KJV):20** And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

But this was a creative act of God. Water doesn't give life.

And he says, ““That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” His meaning is of this kind; “He that is born of the Spirit is spiritual.” For the Birth which He speaks of here is not that according to essence, but according to honor and grace.”

But that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, not “honor and grace”. Spirit has essence, as it were, since it is unique to the person. That we have a spirit is stated in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Since we have a spirit, it follows that it is different from every other spirit. This understanding was not in the Church in the time of Chrysostom. They thought that the spirit was synonymous with soul. They did not understand the difference between soul and spirit. Our spirit is where we connect with God. Our soul is where we connect with our fellow man.

He then says, “Christ then having said, “He that is born of the Spirit is spirit,” when He saw him again confused, leads His discourse to an example from sense, saying,

Ver. 7, 8. “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. (**Schaff Note:** or, “from above.”) The wind bloweth where it listeth.”

And he explains, “The expression therefore, “bloweth where it listeth,” is that of one who would show that it cannot be restrained, that it is spread abroad everywhere, and that none can hinder its passing hither and thither, but that it goes abroad with great might, and none is able to turn aside its violence.

[2.] “And thou hearest its voice,” (that is, its rustle, its noise,) “but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.””

Chrysostom had no understanding of what it means to be born of the Spirit. To him it just meant that “honor and grace” were bestowed on an individual.

We can see the blindness that tradition caused in the early Church. That the Spirit moves like the wind, and we cannot tell where He is going, describes the birth of the Christian who in a moment receives faith from God, and believes in Jesus Christ, and is born of God. Baptism is merely a ritual that the Lord commanded to be done by those who believe in Him. It is only a sign like circumcision that one has believed.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY LI, page 183-184**, he says, “As in another place He saith, “A well of water springing up unto eternal life” (c. iv. 14), that is to say, “he shall possess much grace”; and elsewhere He calleth it, “eternal life,” but here, “living water.” He calleth that “living” which ever worketh; for the grace of the Spirit, when it hath entered into the mind and hath been established, springeth up more than any fountain, faileth not, becometh not empty, stayeth not.”

He refers to **John 4 (KJV):14** But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

The “water” Jesus is speaking of is the water of His words, which are “Spirit and life”, as we read in **John 6 (KJV):63** It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

Chrysostom did not understand what happens to our spirits when we are regenerated, or born again. It is not just the receiving of the grace of the Spirit, which thinking leads one to believe that they could lose it if they did not walk rightly. Rather, it is an actual birth in our spirits by the Spirit of God whereby we who were dead in trespasses and sin are made alive in our spirit with eternal life. We now have fellowship with God, our maker. And it is a change in our nature. We are now partakers of the divine nature in our spirit that has been born from above.

All of this thinking on Baptism and Regeneration affected the Catechumens perception of what the word of God actually said. But the early Church did the best they could. Tradition began to be a stronghold in the early Church. This is why we ultimately needed a reformation, and why we continue to need to reform as we walk in the light of the word of God.

## The Church

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, Homily, TO THOSE WHO HAD NOT ATTENDED THE ASSEMBLY, page 224-225

### TO THOSE WHO HAD NOT ATTENDED THE ASSEMBLY

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To those who had not attended the assembly; on the apostolic saying, “If thy enemy hunger feed him,” and concerning resentment of injuries.

2. How am I distressed, think you, when I call to mind that on the festival days the multitudes assembled resemble the broad expanse of the sea, but now not even the smallest part of that multitude is gathered together here? Where are they now who oppress us with their presence on the feast days? I look for them, and am grieved on their account when I mark what a multitude are perishing of those who are in the way of salvation, (**Schaff Note:** τῶν σωζομένων, this signifies “members of the Church,” merely, who, as such, are heirs of salvation, or as the English catechism expresses it, are in a “state of salvation,” although they may forfeit their inheritance. Comp. Acts 2:47) how large a loss of brethren I sustain, how few are reached by the things which concern salvation, and how the greater part of the body of the Church is like a dead and motionless carcass. “And what concern is that to us?” you say. The greatest possible concern if you pay no attention to your brethren, if you do not exhort and advise, if you put no constraint on them, and do not forcibly drag them hither, and lead them away out of their deep indolence. For that one ought not to be useful to himself alone, but also to many others, Christ declared plainly, when He called us salt, (Matthew 5:13) and leaven, (Matthew 13:33) and light: (Matthew 5:14) for these things are useful and profitable to others. For a lamp does not shine for itself, but for those who are sitting in darkness: and thou art a lamp not that thou mayest enjoy the light by thyself, but that thou mayest bring back yonder man who has gone astray. For what profit is a lamp if it does not give light to him who sits in darkness? and what profit is a Christian when he benefits no one, neither leads any one back to virtue? Again salt is not an astringent to itself but braces up those parts of the body which have decayed, and prevents them from falling to pieces and perishing. Even so do thou, since God has appointed thee to be spiritual salt, bind and brace up the decayed members, that is the indolent and sordid brethren, and having rescued them from their indolence as from some form of corruption, unite them to the rest of the body of the Church. And this is the reason why He called you leaven: for leaven also does not leaven itself, but, little though it is, it affects the whole lump however big it may be. So also do ye: although ye are few in number, yet be ye many and powerful in faith, and in zeal towards God. As then the leaven is not weak on account of its littleness, but prevails owing to its inherent heat, and the force of its natural quality, so ye also will be able to bring back a far larger number than yourselves, if you will, to the same degree of zeal as your own. Now if they make the summer season their excuse: for I hear of their saying things of this kind, “the present stifling heat is excessive, the scorching sun is intolerable, we cannot bear being trampled and crushed in the crowd, and to be steaming all over with perspiration and oppressed by the heat and confined space:” I am ashamed of them, believe me: for such excuses are womanish: indeed even in their case who have softer bodies,

and a weaker nature, such pretexts do not suffice for justification. Nevertheless, even if it seems a disgrace to make a reply to a defense of this kind, yet is it necessary. For if they put forward such excuses as these and do not blush, much more does it behoove us not to be ashamed of replying to these things. What then am I to say to those who advance these pretexts? I would remind them of the three children in the furnace and the flame, who when they saw the fire encircling them on all sides, enveloping their mouth and their eyes and even their breath, did not cease singing that sacred and mystical hymn to God, in company with the universe, but standing in the midst of the pyre sent up their song of praise to the common Lord of all with greater cheerfulness than they who abide in some flowery field: (Song of the Three Children in the Apocryphal addition to Daniel 3) and together with these three children I should think it proper to remind them also of the lions which were in Babylon, and of Daniel and the den: (Daniel 6:24) and not of this one only but also of another den, and the prophet Jeremiah, and the mire in which he was smothered up to the neck. (Jeremiah 38:5) And emerging from these dens, I would conduct these persons who put forward heat as an excuse into the prison and exhibit Paul to them there, and Silas bound fast in the stocks, covered with bruises and wounds lacerated all over their body with a mass of stripes, yet singing praises to God at midnight and celebrating their holy vigil. For is it not a monstrous thing that those holy men, both in the furnace and the fire, and the den, and amongst wild beasts, and mire, and in a prison and the stocks, and amidst stripes and gaolers, and intolerable sufferings, never complained of any of these things, but were continually uttering prayers and sacred songs with much energy and fervent zeal, whilst we who have not undergone any of their innumerable sufferings small or great, neglect our own salvation on account of a scorching sun and a little short lived heat and toil, and forsaking the assembly wander away, depraving ourselves by going to meetings which are thoroughly unwholesome? When the dew of the divine oracles is so abundant dost thou make heat thy excuse? “The water which I will give him,” saith Christ “shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life;” (John 4:14) and again; “He that believeth on me as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:38) Tell me; when thou hast spiritual wells and rivers, art thou afraid of material heat? Now in the market place where there is so much turmoil and crowding, and scorching wind, how is it that you do not make suffocation and heat an excuse for absenting yourself? For it is impossible for you to say that there you can enjoy a cooler temperature, and that all the heat is concentrated here with us:—the truth is exactly the reverse; here indeed owing to the pavement floor, and to the construction of the building in other respects (for it is carried up to a vast height), the air is lighter and cooler: whereas there the sun is strong in every direction, and there is much crowding, and vapour and dust, and other things which add to discomfort far more than these. Whence it is plain that these senseless excuses are the offspring of indolence and of a supine disposition, destitute of the fire of the Holy Spirit.

**Commentary:** “To those who had not attended the assembly; on the apostolic saying, “If thy enemy hunger feed him,” and concerning resentment of injuries.”

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):20** Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

He continues, “2. How am I distressed, think you, when I call to mind that on the festival days the multitudes assembled resemble the broad expanse of the sea, but now not even the

smallest part of that multitude is gathered together here? Where are they now who oppress us with their presence on the feast days? I look for them, and am grieved on their account when I mark what a multitude are perishing of those who are in the way of salvation, (**Schaff Note:** τῶν σωζομένων, this signifies “members of the Church,” merely, who, as such, are heirs of salvation, or as the English catechism expresses it, are in a “state of salvation,” although they may forfeit their inheritance. Comp. Acts 2:47) how large a loss of brethren I sustain, how few are reached by the things which concern salvation, and how the greater part of the body of the Church is like a dead and motionless carcass.”

This was Chrysostom’s description of the Church in his time. He continues, ““And what concern is that to us?” you say. The greatest possible concern if you pay no attention to your brethren, if you do not exhort and advise, if you put no constraint on them, and do not forcibly drag them hither, and lead them away out of their deep indolence. For that one ought not to be useful to himself alone, but also to many others, Christ declared plainly, when He called us salt, (Matthew 5:13) and leaven, (Matthew 13:33) and light: (Matthew 5:14) for these things are useful and profitable to others.”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):13** Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

And to **Matthew 13 (KJV):33** Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

However, Dr. Albert Grimes writes, speaking of leaven, “In regards to the Passover in Exodus 12:15, “...for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.”

It must not come in contact with any sacrifice as in Exodus 34:25, “Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven...” Jesus used the word leaven, three times, in an evil sense, Matthew 16:6-12, “Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees...12 Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.”

Mark 8:15, “And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.” In all these scriptures, leaven is related to false doctrine.

Paul used it as a principle of sin in 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, “Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”” **Dr. Albert Grimes, Book 18, Parables, <http://www.theriskofchrist.com/grimes/book18.pdf>**

Chrysostom continues, “For a lamp does not shine for itself, but for those who are sitting in darkness: and thou art a lamp not that thou mayest enjoy the light by thyself, but that thou mayest bring back yonder man who has gone astray. For what profit is a lamp if it does not give light to him who sits in darkness? and what profit is a Christian when he benefits no one, neither leads any one back to virtue? Again salt is not an astringent to itself but braces up those parts of the body which have decayed, and prevents them from falling to pieces and perishing.

Even so do thou, since God has appointed thee to be spiritual salt, bind and brace up the decayed members, that is the indolent and sordid brethren, and having rescued them from their indolence as from some form of corruption, unite them to the rest of the body of the Church. And this is the reason why He called you leaven: for leaven also does not leaven itself, but, little though it is, it affects the whole lump however big it may be. So also do ye: although ye are few in number, yet be ye many and powerful in faith, and in zeal towards God. As then the leaven is not weak on account of its littleness, but prevails owing to its inherent heat, and the force of its natural quality, so ye also will be able to bring back a far larger number than yourselves, if you will, to the same degree of zeal as your own. Now if they make the summer season their excuse: for I hear of their saying things of this kind, “the present stifling heat is excessive, the scorching sun is intolerable, we cannot bear being trampled and crushed in the crowd, and to be steaming all over with perspiration and oppressed by the heat and confined space:” I am ashamed of them, believe me: for such excuses are womanish: indeed even in their case who have softer bodies, and a weaker nature, such pretexts do not suffice for justification. Nevertheless, even if it seems a disgrace to make a reply to a defense of this kind, yet is it necessary. For if they put forward such excuses as these and do not blush, much more does it behoove us not to be ashamed of replying to these things. What then am I to say to those who advance these pretexts? I would remind them of the three children in the furnace and the flame, who when they saw the fire encircling them on all sides, enveloping their mouth and their eyes and even their breath, did not cease singing that sacred and mystical hymn to God, in company with the universe, but standing in the midst of the pyre sent up their song of praise to the common Lord of all with greater cheerfulness than they who abide in some flowery field: (Song of the Three Children in the Apocryphal addition to Daniel 3) and together with these three children I should think it proper to remind them also of the lions which were in Babylon, and of Daniel and the den: (Daniel 6:24) and not of this one only but also of another den, and the prophet Jeremiah, and the mire in which he was smothered up to the neck. (Jeremiah 38:5)”

He refers to **Daniel 3 (KJV)**: 16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. 17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. 19 Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. 20 And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. 21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flames of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. 25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son

of God. 26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. 27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. 28 Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. 29 Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. 30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.

And he refers to **Daniel 6 (KJV):**24 And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

And to **Jeremiah 38 (KJV):**5 Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he is in your hand: for the king is not he that can do any thing against you. 6 Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.

He continues, "And emerging from these dens, I would conduct these persons who put forward heat as an excuse into the prison and exhibit Paul to them there, and Silas bound fast in the stocks, covered with bruises and wounds lacerated all over their body with a mass of stripes, yet singing praises to God at midnight and celebrating their holy vigil. For is it not a monstrous thing that those holy men, both in the furnace and the fire, and the den, and amongst wild beasts, and mire, and in a prison and the stocks, and amidst stripes and gaolers, and intolerable sufferings, never complained of any of these things, but were continually uttering prayers and sacred songs with much energy and fervent zeal, whilst we who have not undergone any of their innumerable sufferings small or great, neglect our own salvation on account of a scorching sun and a little short lived heat and toil, and forsaking the assembly wander away, depraving ourselves by going to meetings which are thoroughly unwholesome? When the dew of the divine oracles is so abundant dost thou make heat thy excuse? "The water which I will give him," saith Christ "shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life;" (John 4:14) and again; "He that believeth on me as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:38)"

He refers to **John 4 (KJV):**14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

And to **John 7 (KJV):**38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

He continues, "Tell me; when thou hast spiritual wells and rivers, art thou afraid of



material heat? Now in the market place where there is so much turmoil and crowding, and scorching wind, how is it that you do not make suffocation and heat an excuse for absenting yourself? For it is impossible for you to say that there you can enjoy a cooler temperature, and that all the heat is concentrated here with us:—the truth is exactly the reverse; here indeed owing to the pavement floor, and to the construction of the building in other respects (for it is carried up to a vast height), the air is lighter and cooler: whereas there the sun is strong in every direction, and there is much crowding, and vapour and dust, and other things which add to discomfort far more than these. Whence it is plain that these senseless excuses are the offspring of indolence and of a supine disposition, destitute of the fire of the Holy Spirit.”

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, EUTROPIUS, PATRICIAN AND CONSUL, Homily II, After Eutropius having been found outside the Church had been taken captive, page 255-256**

6. I say these things, and shall not cease saying them, causing continual pain, and dressing the wounds; and this not for the sake of the fallen, but of those who are still standing. For they have departed, and their career is ended, but those who are yet standing have gained a more secure position through their calamities. “What then,” you say, “shall we do?” Do one thing only, hate riches, and love thy life—cast away thy goods; I do not say all of them, but cut off the superfluities. Be not covetous of other men’s goods, strip not the widow, plunder not the orphan, seize not his house: I do not address myself to persons but to facts. But if any one’s conscience attacks him, he himself is responsible for it, not my words. Why art thou grasping where thou bringest ill will upon thyself? Grasp where there is a crown to be gained. Strive to lay hold not of earth but of heaven. “The kingdom of Heaven belongs to violent men and men of violence take it by force.” (Matthew 11:12) Why dost thou lay hold of the poor man who reproaches thee? Lay hold of Christ who praises thee for it. Dost thou see thy senselessness and madness? Dost thou lay hold of the poor man who has little? Christ says “lay hold of me; I thank thee for it, lay hold of my kingdom and take it by violence.” If thou art minded to lay hold of an earthly kingdom, or rather if thou art minded to have designs upon it thou art punished; but in the case of the heavenly kingdom thou art punished if thou dost not lay hold of it. Where worldly things are concerned there is ill will, but where spiritual there is love. Meditate daily on these things, and if two days hence thou seest another riding in a chariot, arrayed in raiment of silk, and elated with pride, be not again dismayed and troubled. Praise not a rich man, but only him who lives in righteousness. Revile not a poor man, but learn to have an upright and accurate judgment in all things.

Do not hold aloof from the Church; for nothing is stronger than the Church. The Church is thy hope, thy salvation, thy refuge. It is higher than the heaven, it is wider than the earth. It never waxes old, but is always in full vigour. Wherefore as significant of its solidity and stability Holy Scripture calls it a mountain: or of its purity a virgin, or of its magnificence a queen; or of its relationship to God a daughter; and to express its productiveness it calls her barren who has borne seven: in fact it employs countless names to represent its nobleness. For as the master of the Church has many names: being called the Father, and the way, and the life, (John 14:6) and the light, (John 1:8-9, 8:12) and the arm, (Psalm 98:1, Isaiah 33:2, 51:9) and the propitiation, (1 John 2:2) and the foundation, (1 Corinthians 3:11) and the door, (John 10:7) and



the sinless one, (1 John 3:5, 1 Peter 2:22) and the treasure, (Matthew 6:21, 13:44) and Lord, and God, and Son, and the only begotten, and the form of God, (Philippians 2:6) and the image (Colossians 1:15) of God so is it with the Church itself: does one name suffice to present the whole truth? by no means. But for this reason there are countless names, that we may learn something concerning God, though it be but a small part. Even so the Church also is called by many names. She is called a virgin, albeit formerly she was an harlot: for this is the miracle wrought by the Bridegroom, that He took her who was an harlot and hath made her a virgin. Oh! what a new and strange event! With us marriage destroys virginity, but with God marriage hath restored it. With us she who is a virgin, when married, is a virgin no longer: with Christ she who is an harlot, when married, becomes a virgin.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “6. I say these things, and shall not cease saying them, causing continual pain, and dressing the wounds; and this not for the sake of the fallen, but of those who are still standing. For they have departed, and their career is ended, but those who are yet standing have gained a more secure position through their calamities. “What then,” you say, “shall we do?” Do one thing only, hate riches, and love thy life—cast away thy goods; I do not say all of them, but cut off the superfluities. Be not covetous of other men’s goods, strip not the widow, plunder not the orphan, seize not his house: I do not address myself to persons but to facts. But if any one’s conscience attacks him, he himself is responsible for it, not my words. Why art thou grasping where thou bringest ill will upon thyself? Grasp where there is a crown to be gained. Strive to lay hold not of earth but of heaven. “The kingdom of Heaven belongs to violent men and men of violence take it by force.” (Matthew 11:12)”

He refers to **Matthew 11 (KJV):12** And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

He continues, “Why dost thou lay hold of the poor man who reproaches thee? Lay hold of Christ who praises thee for it. Dost thou see thy senselessness and madness? Dost thou lay hold of the poor man who has little? Christ says “lay hold of me; I thank thee for it, lay hold of my kingdom and take it by violence.” If thou art minded to lay hold of an earthly kingdom, or rather if thou art minded to have designs upon it thou art punished; but in the case of the heavenly kingdom thou art punished if thou dost not lay hold of it. Where worldly things are concerned there is ill will, but where spiritual there is love. Meditate daily on these things, and if two days hence thou seest another riding in a chariot, arrayed in raiment of silk, and elated with pride, be not again dismayed and troubled. Praise not a rich man, but only him who lives in righteousness. Revile not a poor man, but learn to have an upright and accurate judgment in all things.

Do not hold aloof from the Church; for nothing is stronger than the Church. The Church is thy hope, thy salvation, thy refuge.”

Chrysostom here makes quite a description of the Church. But the Scripture says in **Acts 4 (KJV):10** Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. 11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

And in **Psalms 46 (KJV):1** God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

We are not saved by the Church.

He continues, "It is higher than the heaven, it is wider than the earth. It never waxes old, but is always in full vigour. Wherefore as significant of its solidity and stability Holy Scripture calls it a mountain: or of its purity a virgin, or of its magnificence a queen; or of its relationship to God a daughter; and to express its productiveness it calls her barren who has borne seven: in fact it employs countless names to represent its nobleness. For as the master of the Church has many names: being called the Father, and the way, and the life, (John 14:6) and the light, (John 1:8-9, 8:12) and the arm, (Psalm 98:1, Isaiah 33:2, 51:9) and the propitiation, (1 John 2:2) and the foundation, (1 Corinthians 3:11) and the door, (John 10:7) and the sinless one, (1 John 3:5, 1 Peter 2:22) and the treasure, (Matthew 6:21, 13:44) and Lord, and God, and Son, and the only begotten, and the form of God, (Philippians 2:6) and the image (Colossians 1:15) of God so is it with the Church itself: does one name suffice to present the whole truth?"

He refers to **John 14 (KJV):6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

And to **John 1 (KJV):8** He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

And to **John 8 (KJV):12** Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

And to **Psalms 98 (KJV):1** O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

And to **Isaiah 33 (KJV):2** O Lord, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee: be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble.

And to **Isaiah 51 (KJV):9** Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?

And to **1 John 2 (KJV):2** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

And to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

And to **John 10 (KJV):7** Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

And to **1 John 3 (KJV):5** And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

And to **1 Peter 2 (KJV):22** Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

And to **Matthew 6 (KJV):21** For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

And to **Matthew 13 (KJV):44** Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

And to **Philippians 2 (KJV):6** Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

And to **Colossians 1 (KJV):15** Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

He continues, "by no means. But for this reason there are countless names, that we may learn something concerning God, though it be but a small part. Even so the Church also is called by many names. She is called a virgin, albeit formerly she was an harlot: for this is the

miracle wrought by the Bridegroom, that He took her who was an harlot and hath made her a virgin. Oh! what a new and strange event! With us marriage destroys virginity, but with God marriage hath restored it. With us she who is a virgin, when married, is a virgin no longer: with Christ she who is an harlot, when married, becomes a virgin.”

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY VI, page 381**

This Homily is intended to shew that the fear of Magistrates is beneficial. It also contains an account of what occurred, during their journey, to those who were conveying the tidings of the sedition to the Emperor. The case of Jonah is further cited in illustration. The exhortation on the fear of death is here continued; and it is shewn, that he who suffers unjustly, and yet gives thanks to God, by whose permission it happens, is as one suffering for God’s sake. Examples are again adduced from the history of the Three Children, and the Babylonian furnace. The Homily concludes with an address on the necessity of abstaining from oaths.

1. We have spent many days addressing words of comfort to your Charity. We would not, however, on that account lay the subject aside; but as long as the sore of despondency remains, we will apply to it the medicine of consolation. For if in the case of bodily wounds, physicians do not give over their fomentations, until they perceive that the pain has subsided; much less ought this to be done in regard to the soul. Despondency is a sore of the soul; and we must therefore foment it continually with soothing words. For not so naturally is warm water efficacious to soften a hard tumour of the flesh, as words of comfort are powerful to allay the swelling passions of the soul. Here, there is no need of the sponge as with physician, but instead of this we employ the tongue. No need of fire here, that we may warm the water; but instead of fire, we make use of the grace of the Spirit. Suffer us then to do so today. For if we were not to comfort you, where else could ye obtain consolation? The judges affright; the priests therefore must console! The rulers threaten; therefore must the Church give comfort! Thus it happens with respect to little children. The teachers frighten them, and send them away weeping to their mothers; but the mothers receiving them back to their own bosoms, keep them there, embrace them, and kiss them, while they wipe away their tears, and relieve their sorrowing spirits; persuading them by what they say, that it is profitable for them to fear their teachers. Since therefore the rulers also make you afraid, and render you anxious, the Church, which is the common mother of us all, opening her bosom, and cradling us in her arms, administers daily consolation; telling us that the fear of rulers is profitable, and profitable too the consolation that comes from hence. **(Schaff Note: i.e., from the Church)** For the fear of the former does not permit us to be relaxed by listlessness, but the consolation of the latter does not allow us to sink under the weight of sadness; and by both these means God provides for our safety. He Himself hath armed magistrates with power; that they may strike terror into the licentious; and hath ordained His priests that they may administer consolation to those that are in sorrow.

**Commentary:** Skipping the introduction, we begin, as he says, “1. We have spent many days addressing words of comfort to your Charity. We would not, however, on that account lay the subject aside; but as long as the sore of despondency remains, we will apply to it the

medicine of consolation. For if in the case of bodily wounds, physicians do not give over their fomentations, until they perceive that the pain has subsided; much less ought this to be done in regard to the soul. Despondency is a sore of the soul; and we must therefore foment it continually with soothing words. For not so naturally is warm water efficacious to soften a hard tumour of the flesh, as words of comfort are powerful to allay the swelling passions of the soul. Here, there is no need of the sponge as with physician, but instead of this we employ the tongue. No need of fire here, that we may warm the water; but instead of fire, we make use of the grace of the Spirit. Suffer us then to do so today. For if we were not to comfort you, where else could ye obtain consolation? The judges affright; the priests therefore must console! The rulers threaten; therefore must the Church give comfort! Thus it happens with respect to little children. The teachers frighten them, and send them away weeping to their mothers; but the mothers receiving them back to their own bosoms, keep them there, embrace them, and kiss them, while they wipe away their tears, and relieve their sorrowing spirits; persuading them by what they say, that it is profitable for them to fear their teachers. Since therefore the rulers also make you afraid, and render you anxious, the Church, which is the common mother of us all, opening her bosom, and cradling us in her arms, administers daily consolation; telling us that the fear of rulers is profitable, and profitable too the consolation that comes from hence. (**Schaff Note:** *i.e.*, from the Church)”

Because the Church administered Baptism by which it was believed one was born again, and entered the Church, it was thought that the Church was our mother.

He continues, “For the fear of the former does not permit us to be relaxed by listlessness, but the consolation of the latter does not allow us to sink under the weight of sadness; and by both these means God provides for our safety. He Himself hath armed magistrates with power; that they may strike terror into the licentious; and hath ordained His priests that they may administer consolation to those that are in sorrow.”

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, HOMILY III, page 20**

Again, consider the moderation of James. He it was who received the Bishopric of Jerusalem, and here he says nothing. Mark also the great moderation of the other Apostles, how they concede the throne to him, and no longer dispute with each other. For that Church was as it were in heaven: having nothing to do with this world’s affairs: and resplendent not with wails, no, nor with numbers, but with the zeal of them that formed the assembly. They were “about an hundred and twenty,” it says. The seventy perhaps whom Christ Himself had chosen, and other of the more earnest-minded disciples, as Joseph and Matthias. (v. 14) There were women, he says, many, who followed Him. (Mark xv. 41) [“The number of the names together.] Together they were on all occasions.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “Again, consider the moderation of James. He it was who received the Bishopric of Jerusalem, and here he says nothing.”

A “Bishopric” was what a bishop ruled over in Chrysostom’s time. James was an apostle. A bishop in the New Testament sense was an overseer in a local church.

He continues, “Mark also the great moderation of the other Apostles, how they concede

the throne to him, and no longer dispute with each other. For that Church was as it were in heaven: having nothing to do with this world's affairs: and resplendent not with wails, no, nor with numbers, but with the zeal of them that formed the assembly. They were "about an hundred and twenty," it says."

Chrysostom also refers to **Acts 1 (KJV):15** And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

Notice how Chrysostom places James on a "throne". A bishop presided on a throne in the time of Chrysostom. Chrysostom seems to think James had a throne because of his judgment in Acts 15 when Barnabas and Paul came to Jerusalem about the need to circumcise Gentiles, as we read in Acts 15 (KJV):19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: 20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.

But James was simply speaking in concord with the "apostles and elders and brethren", as we read in **Acts 15 (KJV):22** Then pleased it the apostles and elders with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 23 And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia. 24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: 25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; 29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

He continues, "The seventy perhaps whom Christ Himself had chosen, and other of the more earnest-minded disciples, as Joseph and Matthias. (v. 14)"

He refers to **Luke 10 (KJV):1** After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

And to **Acts 1 (KJV):23** And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

And to **Acts 1 (KJV):26** And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

He continues, "There were women, he says, many, who followed Him. (Mark xv. 41) ["The number of the names together.] Together they were on all occasions."

He refers in context to **Mark 15 (KJV):40** There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; 41 (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, HOMILY III,  
page 21-25**

“And they appointed two,” it is said. Why not many? That the feeling of disappointment might not reach further, extending to many. Again, it is not without reason that he puts Matthias last; he would show, that frequently he that is honourable among men, is inferior before God. And they all pray in common saying, “Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show. Thou,” not “We.” And very seasonably they use the epithet, “heart-knowing:” for by Him Who is this must the choice be made. So confident were they, that assuredly one of them must be appointed. They said not, Choose, but, “Show the chosen one;” knowing that all things were foreordained of God; “Whom Thou didst choose: one of these two,” say they, “to have his lot in this ministry and apostleship.” For there was besides another ministry (διακονία). “And they gave them their lots.” For they did not yet consider themselves to be worthy to be informed by some sign. And besides, if in a case where neither prayer was made, nor men of worth were the agents, the casting of lots so much availed, because it was done of a right intention, I mean in the case of Jonah (Jonah i. 7); much more did it here. Thus, did he, the designated, fill up the company, complete the order: but the other candidate was not annoyed; for the apostolic writers would not have concealed [that or any other] failings of their own, seeing they have told of the very chief Apostles, that on other occasions they *had indignation* (Matt. xx. 24; Matt. xxvi. 8), and this not once only, but again and again.

Let us then also imitate them. And now I address no longer every one, but those who aim at preferment. If thou believest that the election is with God, be not displeased. (Mark x. 14, 21; xiv. 4) For it is with Him thou art displeased, and with Him thou art exasperated: it is He who has made the choice; thou doest the very thing that Cain did; because, forsooth, his brother’s sacrifice was preferred, he was indignant, when he ought to have felt compunction. However, that is not what I mean here; but this, that God knows how to dispense things for the best. In many cases, thou art in point of disposition more estimable than the other but not the fit person. Besides, on the other hand, thy life is irreproachable, and thy habits those of a well nurtured man, but in the Church this is not all that is wanted. Moreover, one man is adapted for one thing, another for another. Do you not observe, how much discourse the holy Scripture has made on this matter? But let me say why it is that the thing has become a subject of competition: it is because we come to the Episcopate not as unto a work of governing and superintending the brethren, but as to a post of dignity and repose. Did you but know that a Bishop is bound to belong to all, to bear the burden of all; that others, if they are angry, are pardoned, but he never; that others, if they sin, have excuses made for them, he has none; you would not be eager for the dignity, would not run after it. So it is, the Bishop is exposed to the tongues of all, to the criticism of all, whether they be wise or fools. He is harassed with cares every day, nay, every night. He has many to hate him, many to envy him. Talk not to me of those who curry favor with all, of those who desire to sleep, of those who advance to this office as for repose. We have nothing to do with these; we speak of those who watch for your souls, who consider the safety and welfare of those under them before their own. Tell me now: suppose a man has ten children, always living with him, and constantly under his control; yet is he solicitous about them; and a bishop, who has such numbers, not living under the same roof with him, but owing obedience to his authority—what does he not need to be! But he is

honored, you will say. With what sort of honor, indeed! Why, the paupers and beggars abuse him openly in the marketplace. And why does he not stop their mouths then? Yes, very proper work, this, for a bishop, is it not? Then again, if he do not give to all, the idle and the industrious alike, lo! a thousand complaints on all sides. None is afraid to accuse him, and speak evil of him. In the case of civil governors, fear steps in; with bishops, nothing of the kind. As for the fear of God, it does not influence people, as regards them, in the least degree. Why speak of the anxiety connected with the word and doctrine? the painful work in Ordinations? Either, perhaps, I am a poor wretched incompetent creature, or else, the case is as I say. The soul of a Bishop is for all the world like a vessel in a storm: lashed from every side, by friends, by foes, by one's own people, by strangers. Does not the Emperor rule the whole world, the Bishop a single city? Yet a Bishop's anxieties are as much beyond those of the emperor, as the waters of a river simply moved, by the wind are surpassed in agitation by the swelling and raging sea. And why? because in the one case there are many to lend a hand, for all goes on by law and by rule; but in the other there is none of this, nor is there authority to command; but if one be greatly moved, then he is harsh; if the contrary, then he is cold! And in him these opposites must meet, that he may neither be despised, nor be hated. Besides, the very demands of business preoccupy him: how many is he obliged to offend, whether he will or not! How many to be severe with! I speak not otherwise than it is, but as I find it in my own actual experience. I do not think there are many among Bishops that will be saved, but many more that perish: and the reason is, that it is an affair that requires a great mind. Many are the exigencies which throw a man out of his natural temper; and he had need have a thousand eyes on all sides. Do you not see what a number of qualifications the Bishop must have? to be apt to teach, patient, holding fast the faithful word in doctrine (see 1 Tim. iii. 2-9; Tit. i. 7-9). What trouble and pains does this require! And then, others do wrong, and he bears all the blame. To pass over every thing else: if one soul depart unbaptized, does not this subvert all his own prospect of salvation? The loss of one soul carries with it a penalty which no language can represent. For if the salvation of that soul was of such value, that the Son of God became man, and suffered so much, think how sore a punishment must the losing of it bring! And if in this present life he who is cause of another's destruction is worthy of death, much more in the next world. Do not tell me, that the presbyter is in fault, or the deacon. The guilt of all these comes perforce upon the head of those who ordained them. Let me mention another instance. It chanced, that a bishop has inherited from his predecessor a set of persons of indifferent character. What measures is it proper to take in respect of bygone transgressions (for here are two precipices) so as not to let the offender go unpunished, and not to cause scandal to the rest? Must one's first step be to cut him off? There is no actual present ground for that. But is it right to let him go unmarked? Yes, say you; for the fault rests with the bishop who ordained him. Well then? must one refuse to ordain him again, and to raise him to a higher degree of the ministry? That would be to publish it to all men, that he is a person of indifferent character, and so again one would cause scandal in a different way. But is one to promote him to a higher degree? That is much worse.

If then there were only the responsibility of the office itself for people to run after in the episcopate, none would be so quick to accept it. But as things go, we run after this, just as we do after the dignities of the world. That we may have glory with men, we lose ourselves with God. What profit in such honor? How self-evident its nothingness is! When you covet the episcopal rank, put in the other scale, the account to be rendered after this life. Weigh against it, the

happiness of a life free from toil, take into account the different measure of the punishment. I mean, that even if you have sinned, but in your own person merely, you will have no such great punishment, nothing like it: but if you have sinned as bishop, you are lost. Remember what Moses endured, what wisdom he displayed, what good deeds he exhibited: but, for committing one sin only, he was bitterly punished; and with good reason; for this fault was attended with injury to the rest. Not in regard that the sin was public, but because it was the sin of a spiritual Ruler (ἱερέως) cf. S.); for in truth we do not pay the same penalty for public and for hidden faults. (Aug in Ps. xcix. 6) The sin may be the same, but not the (ζημία) harm of it; nay, not the sin itself; for it is not the same thing to sin in secret and unseen, and to sin openly. But the bishop cannot sin unobserved. Well for him if he escape reproach, though he sin not; much less can he think to escape notice, if he do sin. Let him be angry, let him laugh, or let him but dream of a moment's relaxation, many are they that scoff, many that are offended, many that lay down the law, many that bring to mind the former bishops, and abuse the present one; not that they wish to sound the praise of those; no, it is only to carp at him that they bring up the mention of fellow bishops, of presbyters. Sweet, says the proverb, is war to the inexperienced; but it may rather be said now, that even after one has come out of it, people in general have seen nothing of it: for in their eyes it is not war, but like those shepherds in Ezekiel, we slay and devour. (Ezek. xxxiv. 2) Which of us has it in his power to show that he has taken as much care for the flocks of Christ, as Jacob did for Laban's? (Gen. xxx. 40) Which of us can tell of the frost of the night? For talk not to me of vigils, and all that parade. (**Schaff Note:** Vigils were celebrated in C.'s time with much pomp. A grand ceremonial of this kind was held in the first year of his episcopate, at the translation of the relics.)

The contrary plainly is the fact. Prefects, and governors (ὑπαρχοὶ καὶ τοπάρχαι) of provinces, do not enjoy such honour as he that governs the Church. If he enter the palace, who but he is first? If he go to see ladies, or visit the houses of the great, none is preferred to him. The whole state of things is ruined and corrupt. I do not speak thus as wishing to put us bishops to shame, but to repress your hankering after the office. For with what conscience, (even should you succeed in becoming a bishop, having made interest for it either in person or by another), with what eyes will you look the man in the face who worked with you to that end? What will you have to plead for your excuse? For he that unwillingly, by compulsion and not with his own consent, was raised to the office, may have something to say for himself, though for the most part even such an one has no pardon to expect, and yet truly he so far has something to plead in excuse. Think how it fared with Simon Magus. What signifies it that you give not money, if, in place of money, you pay court, you lay many plans, you set engines to work? "Thy money perish with thee!" (Acts viii. 20) Thus was it said to him, and thus will it be said to these: your canvassing perish with you, because you have thought to purchase the gift of God by human intrigue! But there is none such here? And God forbid there should be! For it is not that I wish any thing of what I have been saying to be applicable to you: but just now the connexion has led us on to these topics. In like manner when we talk against covetousness, we are not preaching at you, no, nor against any one man personally. God grant it may be the case, that these remedies were prepared by us without necessity. The wish of the physician is, that after all his pains, his drugs may be thrown away because not wanted: and this is just what we desire, that our words may not have been needed, and so have been spoken to the wind, so as to be but words. I am ready to submit to anything, rather than be reduced to the necessity of using this language. But



if you like, we are ready to leave off; only let our silence be without bad effects. No one, I imagine, though he were ever so vainglorious, would wish to make a display of severity, when there is nothing to call for it. I will leave the teaching to you: for that is the best teaching, which teaches by actions. For indeed the best physicians, although the sickness of their patients brings them in fees, would rather their friends were well. And so we too wish all to be well. (2 Cor. xiii. 7) It is not that we desire to be approved, and you reproved. I would gladly manifest, if it were possible, with my very eyes, the love which I bear to you: for then no one would be able to reproach me, though my language were ever so rough. “For speech of friends, yea, were it insult, can be borne;” more “faithful are the wounds of a friend, rather than the ready kisses of an enemy. (Prov. xxvii. 6) There nothing I love more than you, no, not even light itself. I would gladly have my eyes put out ten thousand times over, if it were possible by this means to convert your souls; so much is your salvation dearer to me than light itself. For what profit to me in the rays of the sun, when despondency on your account makes it all thick darkness before my eyes? Light is good when it shines in cheerfulness, to a sorrowful heart it seems even to be a trouble. How true this is, may you never learn by experience! However, if it happen to any of you to fall into sin, just stand by my bedside, when I am laid down to rest and should be asleep; see whether I am not like a palsied man, like one beside himself, and, in the language of the prophet, “the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me. (Ps. xxxviii. 10) For where is our hope, if you do not make progress? where our despondency, if you do excellently? I seem to have wings, when I hear any thing good of you. “Fulfill ye my joy.” (Phil. ii. 2) This one thing is the burden of my prayers, that I long for your advancement. But that in which I strive with all is this, that I love you, that I am wrapped up in you, that you are my all, father, mother, brethren, children. Think not then that any thing that has been said was said in a hostile spirit, nay, it is for your amendment. It is written “A brother assisted by his brother is as a strong city.” (Prov. xviii. 19) Then do not take it in disdain: for neither do I undervalue what you have to say. I should wish even to be set right by you. For all (Edd. ‘all we’) ye are brethren, and One is our Master: yet even among brothers it is for one to direct, while the others obey. Then disdain it not, but let us do all to the glory of God, for to Him belongs glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, ““And they appointed two,” it is said. Why not many? That the feeling of disappointment might not reach further, extending to many. Again, it is not without reason that he puts Matthias last; he would show, that frequently he that is honourable among men, is inferior before God. And they all pray in common saying, “Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show. Thou,” not “We.” And very seasonably they use the epithet, “heart-knowing:” for by Him Who is this must the choice be made. So confident were they, that assuredly one of them must be appointed.”

He refers in context to **Acts 1 (KJV):**23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, 25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. 26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

He continues, “They said not, Choose, but, “Show the chosen one;” knowing that all things were foreordained of God; “Whom Thou didst choose: one of these two,” say they, “to

have his lot in this ministry and apostleship.” For there was besides another ministry (διακονία). “And they gave them their lots.” For they did not yet consider themselves to be worthy to be informed by some sign. And besides, if in a case where neither prayer was made, nor men of worth were the agents, the casting of lots so much availed, because it was done of a right intention, I mean in the case of Jonah (Jonah i. 7); much more did it here.”

He refers to **Jonah 1 (KJV):7** And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

He continues, “Thus, did he, the designated, fill up the company, complete the order: but the other candidate was not annoyed; for the apostolic writers would not have concealed [that or any other] failings of their own, seeing they have told of the very chief Apostles, that on other occasions they had indignation (Matt. xx. 24; Matt. xxvi. 8), and this not once only, but again and again.”

He refers in context to **Matthew 20 (KJV):20** Then came to him the mother of Zebedees children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. 21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. 22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. 23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. 24 And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

And in context to **Matthew 26 (KJV):7** There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. 8 But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? 9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. 10 When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. 11 For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. 12 For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. 13 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

He continues, “Let us then also imitate them. And now I address no longer every one, but those who aim at preferment. If thou believest that the election is with God, be not displeased. (Mark x. 14, 21; xiv. 4)”

He refers in context to **Mark 10 (KJV):14** And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. 14 But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

And in context to **Mark 10 (KJV):21** Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. 22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. 23 And Jesus looked

round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

And in context to **Mark 14 (KJV):**3 And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. 4 And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? 5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. 6 And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. 7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. 8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

He continues, “For it is with Him thou art displeased, and with Him thou art exasperated: it is He who has made the choice; thou doest the very thing that Cain did; because, forsooth, his brother’s sacrifice was preferred, he was indignant, when he ought to have felt compunction. However, that is not what I mean here; but this, that God knows how to dispense things for the best. In many cases, thou art in point of disposition more estimable than the other but not the fit person. Besides, on the other hand, thy life is irreproachable, and thy habits those of a well nurtured man, but in the Church this is not all that is wanted. Moreover, one man is adapted for one thing, another for another. Do you not observe, how much discourse the holy Scripture has made on this matter? But let me say why it is that the thing has become a subject of competition: it is because we come to the Episcopate not as unto a work of governing and superintending the brethren, but as to a post of dignity and repose. Did you but know that a Bishop is bound to belong to all, to bear the burden of all; that others, if they are angry, are pardoned, but he never; that others, if they sin, have excuses made for them, he has none; you would not be eager for the dignity, would not run after it. So it is, the Bishop is exposed to the tongues of all, to the criticism of all, whether they be wise or fools. He is harassed with cares every day, nay, every night. He has many to hate him, many to envy him. Talk not to me of those who curry favor with all, of those who desire to sleep, of those who advance to this office as for repose.”

So in the time of Chrysostom, he was aware of Bishops who had come “to the Episcopate not as unto a work of governing and superintending the brethren, but as to a post of dignity and repose”. He did not count himself in that number, as he continues, “We have nothing to do with these; we speak of those who watch for your souls, who consider the safety and welfare of those under them before their own. Tell me now: suppose a man has ten children, always living with him, and constantly under his control; yet is he solicitous about them; and a bishop, who has such numbers, not living under the same roof with him, but owing obedience to his authority—what does he not need to be! But he is honored, you will say. With what sort of honor, indeed! Why, the paupers and beggars abuse him openly in the marketplace. And why does he not stop their mouths then? Yes, very proper work, this, for a bishop, is it not? Then again, if he do not give to all, the idle and the industrious alike, lo! a thousand complaints on all sides. None is afraid to accuse him, and speak evil of him. In the case of civil governors, fear steps in; with bishops, nothing of the kind. As for the fear of God, it does not influence people, as regards them, in the least degree. Why speak of the anxiety connected with the word and doctrine? the painful work in Ordinations? Either, perhaps, I am a poor wretched incompetent creature, or

else, the case is as I say. The soul of a Bishop is for all the world like a vessel in a storm: lashed from every side, by friends, by foes, by one's own people, by strangers. Does not the Emperor rule the whole world, the Bishop a single city? Yet a Bishop's anxieties are as much beyond those of the emperor, as the waters of a river simply moved, by the wind are surpassed in agitation by the swelling and raging sea. And why? because in the one case there are many to lend a hand, for all goes on by law and by rule; but in the other there is none of this, nor is there authority to command; but if one be greatly moved, then he is harsh; if the contrary, then he is cold! And in him these opposites must meet, that he may neither be despised, nor be hated. Besides, the very demands of business preoccupy him: how many is he obliged to offend, whether he will or not! How many to be severe with! I speak not otherwise than it is, but as I find it in my own actual experience. I do not think there are many among Bishops that will be saved, but many more that perish: and the reason is, that it is an affair that requires a great mind. Many are the exigencies which throw a man out of his natural temper; and he had need have a thousand eyes on all sides. Do you not see what a number of qualifications the Bishop must have? to be apt to teach, patient, holding fast the faithful word in doctrine (see 1 Tim. iii. 2–9; Tit. i. 7–9).”

He refers in context to **1 Timothy 3 (KJV)**: 1 This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) 6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. 8 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.

And in context to **Titus 1 (KJV)**: 6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

He continues, “What trouble and pains does this require! And then, others do wrong, and he bears all the blame. To pass over every thing else: if one soul depart unbaptized, does not this subvert all his own prospect of salvation? The loss of one soul carries with it a penalty which no language can represent. For if the salvation of that soul was of such value, that the Son of God became man, and suffered so much, think how sore a punishment must the losing of it bring! And if in this present life he who is cause of another's destruction is worthy of death, much more in the next world. Do not tell me, that the presbyter is in fault, or the deacon. The guilt of all these comes perforce upon the head of those who ordained them.”

So according to Chrysostom, the Bishop is responsible for the souls under him. If one is lost, he is the “cause of another's destruction”, and “is worthy of death”, even “in the next world”. Now the existence of presbyters and deacons is evident, but the elevation of the bishop

is also evident. We read in **Acts 20 (KJV):16** For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost. 17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

Paul called for the elders of the church at Ephesus. These were the presbyters. Then we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):28** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

The word in the Greek translated “overseers” is **ἐπίσκοπος** (pronounced e-pe'-sko-pos), from G1909 and G4649 (in the sense of G1983); a superintendent, i.e. Christian officer in genitive case charge of a (or the) church (literally or figuratively):—bishop, overseer. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1985**

It is derived from **ἐπί** (pronounced e-pe'), a primary preposition; properly, meaning superimposition (of time, place, order, etc.), as a relation of distribution (with the genitive case), i.e. over, upon, etc.; of rest (with the dative case) at, on, etc.; of direction (with the accusative case) towards, upon, etc.:—about (the times), above, after, against, among, as long as (touching), at, beside, × have charge of, (be-, (where-))fore, in (a place, as much as, the time of, -to), (because) of, (up-)on (behalf of), over, (by, for) the space of, through(-out), (un-)to(-ward), with. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1909**

It is also derived from **σκοπός** (pronounced sko-po's), from **σκεπτομαι** sképtomai (to peer about ("skeptic")); perhaps akin to G4626 through the idea of concealment; compare G4629); a watch (sentry or scout), i.e. (by implication) a goal:—mark. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4649**

The Bishop was one who watched out for his flock, to protect them from wolves as we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):29** For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

This Greek word **ἐπίσκοπος** (pronounced e-pe'-sko-pos) is translated “bishop” 6 times in the King James Version, and only once as “overseer”. We are not to take the position lightly, for we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

No one is responsible for another’s salvation. This was something Chrysostom misunderstood because of the traditions that had built up in the Church in his time.

He continues, “Let me mention another instance. It chanced, that a bishop has inherited from his predecessor a set of persons of indifferent character. What measures is it proper to take in respect of bygone transgressions (for here are two precipices) so as not to let the offender go unpunished, and not to cause scandal to the rest? Must one’s first step be to cut him off? There is no actual present ground for that. But is it right to let him go unmarked? Yes, say you; for the fault rests with the bishop who ordained him. Well then? must one refuse to ordain him again, and to raise him to a higher degree of the ministry? That would be to publish it to all men, that he is a person of indifferent character, and so again one would cause scandal in a different way. But is one to promote him to a higher degree? That is much worse.”

The thinking that the laity funded the clergy, and the clergy did the ministry is still prevalent in the Church today. But the Church is pictured as a body with many members, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV)**:12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many.

And in fact, God has placed each one in a particular place, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV)**:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body.

We are all set in the body, with a specific function, or ministry, to perform. We all must do our part in order for the body to grow, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV)**:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

He continues, "If then there were only the responsibility of the office itself for people to run after in the episcopate, none would be so quick to accept it. But as things go, we run after this, just as we do after the dignities of the world. That we may have glory with men, we lose ourselves with God. What profit in such honor? How self-evident its nothingness is! When you covet the episcopal rank, put in the other scale, the account to be rendered after this life. Weigh against it, the happiness of a life free from toil, take into account the different measure of the punishment. I mean, that even if you have sinned, but in your own person merely, you will have no such great punishment, nothing like it: but if you have sinned as bishop, you are lost. Remember what Moses endured, what wisdom he displayed, what good deeds he exhibited: but, for committing one sin only, he was bitterly punished; and with good reason; for this fault was attended with injury to the rest."

He refers to **Deuteronomy 32 (KJV)**:48 And the Lord spake unto Moses that selfsame day, saying, 49 Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession: 50 And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people: 51 Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of MeribahKadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel. 52 Yet thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel.

He continues, "Not in regard that the sin was public, but because it was the sin of a spiritual Ruler (ἱερέως cf. S.); for in truth we do not pay the same penalty for public and for hidden faults. (Aug in Ps. xcix. 6.) The sin may be the same, but not the (ζημία) harm of it; nay, not the sin itself; for it is not the same thing to sin in secret and unseen, and to sin openly. But the bishop cannot sin unobserved. Well for him if he escape reproach, though he sin not; much less can he think to escape notice, if he do sin. Let him be angry, let him laugh, or let him but dream of a moment's relaxation, many are they that scoff, many that are offended, many that lay down the law, many that bring to mind the former bishops, and abuse the present one; not

that they wish to sound the praise of those; no, it is only to carp at him that they bring up the mention of fellow bishops, of presbyters. Sweet, says the proverb, is war to the inexperienced; but it may rather be said now, that even after one has come out of it, people in general have seen nothing of it: for in their eyes it is not war, but like those shepherds in Ezekiel, we slay and devour. (Ezek. xxxiv. 2)”

He refers to **Ezekiel 34 (KJV):2** Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?

He continues, “Which of us has it in his power to show that he has taken as much care for the flocks of Christ, as Jacob did for Laban’s? (Gen. xxx. 40)”

He refers to **Genesis 30 (KJV):40** And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ringstraked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban; and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle.

He continues, “Which of us can tell of the frost of the night? For talk not to me of vigils, and all that parade. (**Schaff Note:** Vigils were celebrated in C.’s time with much pomp. A grand ceremonial of this kind was held in the first year of his episcopate, at the translation of the relics.)

The contrary plainly is the fact. Prefects, and governors (ὑπαρχοὶ καὶ τοπάρχαι) of provinces, do not enjoy such honour as he that governs the Church. If he enter the palace, who but he is first? If he go to see ladies, or visit the houses of the great, none is preferred to him. The whole state of things is ruined and corrupt. I do not speak thus as wishing to put us bishops to shame, but to repress your hankering after the office. For with what conscience, (even should you succeed in becoming a bishop, having made interest for it either in person or by another), with what eyes will you look the man in the face who worked with you to that end? What will you have to plead for your excuse? For he that unwillingly, by compulsion and not with his own consent, was raised to the office, may have something to say for himself, though for the most part even such an one has no pardon to expect, and yet truly he so far has something to plead in excuse. Think how it fared with Simon Magus. What signifies it that you give not money, if, in place of money, you pay court, you lay many plans, you set engines to work? “Thy money perish with thee!” (Acts viii. 20)”

He refers in context to **Acts 8 (KJV):18** And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. 24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

He continues, “Thus was it said to him, and thus will it be said to these: your canvassing perish with you, because you have thought to purchase the gift of God by human intrigue! But there is none such here? And God forbid there should be! For it is not that I wish any thing of what I have been saying to be applicable to you: but just now the connexion has led us on to these topics. In like manner when we talk against covetousness, we are not preaching at you, no,

nor against any one man personally. God grant it may be the case, that these remedies were prepared by us without necessity. The wish of the physician is, that after all his pains, his drugs may be thrown away because not wanted: and this is just what we desire, that our words may not have been needed, and so have been spoken to the wind, so as to be but words. I am ready to submit to anything, rather than be reduced to the necessity of using this language. But if you like, we are ready to leave off; only let our silence be without bad effects. No one, I imagine, though he were ever so vainglorious, would wish to make a display of severity, when there is nothing to call for it. I will leave the teaching to you: for that is the best teaching, which teaches by actions. For indeed the best physicians, although the sickness of their patients brings them in fees, would rather their friends were well. And so we too wish all to be well. (2 Cor. xiii. 7)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):7** Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.

He continues, “It is not that we desire to be approved, and you reprov’d. I would gladly manifest, if it were possible, with my very eyes, the love which I bear to you: for then no one would be able to reproach me, though my language were ever so rough. “For speech of friends, yea, were it insult, can be borne;” more “faithful are the wounds of a friend, rather than the ready kisses of an enemy. (Prov. xxvii. 6)”

He refers to **Proverbs 27 (KJV):6** Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

He continues, “There nothing I love more than you, no, not even light itself. I would gladly have my eyes put out ten thousand times over, if it were possible by this means to convert your souls; so much is your salvation dearer to me than light itself. For what profit to me in the rays of the sun, when despondency on your account makes it all thick darkness before my eyes? Light is good when it shines in cheerfulness, to a sorrowful heart it seems even to be a trouble. How true this is, may you never learn by experience! However, if it happen to any of you to fall into sin, just stand by my bedside, when I am laid down to rest and should be asleep; see whether I am not like a palsied man, like one beside himself, and, in the language of the prophet, “the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me. (Ps. xxxviii. 10)”

He refers to **Psalms 38 (KJV):10** My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.

He continues, “For where is our hope, if you do not make progress? where our despondency, if you do excellently? I seem to have wings, when I hear any thing good of you. “Fulfill ye my joy.” (Phil. ii. 2)”

He refers to **Philippians 2 (KJV):2** Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

He continues, “This one thing is the burden of my prayers, that I long for your advancement. But that in which I strive with all is this, that I love you, that I am wrapped up in you, that you are my all, father, mother, brethren, children. Think not then that any thing that has been said was said in a hostile spirit, nay, it is for your amendment. It is written “A brother assisted by his brother is as a strong city.” (Prov. xviii. 19)”

He refers to **Proverbs 18 (Septuagint):19** A brother helped by a brother is as a strong and high city; and is *as* strong as a *well*-founded palace.

And to **Proverbs 18 (KJV):19** A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.



He continues, "Then do not take it in disdain: for neither do I undervalue what you have to say. I should wish even to be set right by you. For all (Edd. 'all we') ye are brethren, and One is our Master: yet even among brothers it is for one to direct, while the others obey. Then disdain it not, but let us do all to the glory of God, for to Him belongs glory for ever and ever. Amen."

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS,  
HOMILY XIV, page 441-442**

Ver. 15. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear."

Then not staying to mention that which stands in contradistinction to bondage, that is, the spirit of freedom, he has named what is far greater, that of adoption, through which he at the same time brings in the other, saying, "But ye have received the Spirit of adoption." But this is plain. But what the spirit of bondage may be, is not so plain, and there is need of making it clearer. Now what he says is so far from being clear, that it is in fact very perplexing. For the people of the Jews did not receive the Spirit. What then is his meaning here? It is the letter he giveth this name to, for spiritual it was, and so he called the Law spiritual also, and the water from the Rock, and the Manna. "For they did eat," he says, "of the same spiritual meat, and all drank of the same spiritual drink." (1 Cor. x. 3, 4) And to the Rock he gives this name, when he says, "For they drank of that spiritual Rock which followed them." Now it is because all the rites then wrought were above nature that he calls them spiritual, and not because those who then partook of them received the Spirit. And in what sense were those letters, letters of bondage? Set before yourself the whole dispensation, and then you will have a clear view of this also. For recompenses were with them close at hand, and the reward followed forthwith, being at once proportionate, and like a kind of daily ration given to domestic servants, and terrors in abundance came to their height before their eyes, and their purifications concerned their bodies, and their continency extended but to their actions. But with us it is not so, since the imagination even and the conscience getteth purged out. For He does not say, "Thou shalt do no murder," only, but even thou shalt not be angry: so too, it is not, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," but thou shalt not look unchastely. So that it is not to be from fear of present punishment, but out of desire towards Himself, that both our being habitually virtuous, and all our single good deeds are to come. Neither doth he promise a land flowing with milk and honey, but maketh us joint-heir with the Only Begotten, so making us by every means stand aloof from things present, and promising to give such things especially as are worth the acceptance of men made sons of God, nothing, that is, of a sensible kind or corporeal, but spiritual all of them. And so they, even if they had the name of sons, were but as slaves; but we as having been made free, have received the adoption, and are waiting for Heaven. And with them He discoursed through the intervention of others, with us by Himself. And all that they did was through the impulse of fear, but the spiritual act through a coveting and a vehement desire. And this they show by the fact of their overstepping the commandments. They, as hirelings and obstinate persons, so never left murmuring: but these do all for the pleasing of the Father. So too they blasphemed when they had benefits done them: but we are thankful at being jeoparded. And if there be need of punishing both of us upon our sinning, even in this case the difference is

great. For it is not on being stoned and branded and maimed by the priests, as they were, that we are brought round. But it is enough for us to be cast out from our Father's table, and to be out of sight for certain days. And with the Jews the honor of adoption was one of name only, but here the reality followed also, the cleansing of Baptism, the giving of the Spirit, the furnishing of the other blessings. And there are several other points besides, which go to show our high birth and their low condition. After intimating all these then by speaking of the Spirit, and fear, and the adoption, he gives a fresh proof again of having the Spirit of adoption. Now what is this? That "we cry, Abba, Father." And how great this is, the initiated know (**Schaff Note:** St. Cyr. Jer. Cat. 23, §11, p. 276, O.T.), being with good reason bidden to use this word first in the Prayer of the initiated. What then, it may be said, did not they also call God Father? Dost thou not hear Moses, when he says, "Thou desertedst the God that begot thee?" (Deut. xxxii. 15. LXX) Dost thou not hear Malachi reproaching them, and saying, that "one God formed you," and there is "one Father of you all?" (Mal. ii. 10. LXX) Still, if these words and others besides are used, we do not find them anywhere calling God by the name, or praying in this language. But we all, priests and laymen, rulers and ruled, are ordered to pray herein. And this is the first language we give utterance to, after those marvellous throes, and that strange and unusual mode of labor. If in any other instances they so called Him, that was only of their own mind. But those in the state of grace do it through being moved by the in-working of the Spirit. For as there is a Spirit of Wisdom, after which they that were unwise became wise, and this discloses itself in their teaching: and a Spirit of Power there is, whereby the feeble raised up the dead, and drove out devils; a Spirit also of the gift of healing, and a Spirit of prophecy, and a Spirit of tongues, so also a Spirit of adoption. And as we know the Spirit of prophecy, in that he who hath it foretelleth things to come, not speaking of his own mind, but moved by the Grace; so too is the Spirit of adoption, whereby he that is gifted with it calleth God, Father, as moved by the Spirit.

Wishing to express this as a most true descent, he used also the Hebrew tongue, for he does not say only, "Father," but "Abba, Father," which name is a special sign of true-born children to their fathers. After mentioning then the diversity resulting from their conversation, that resulting from the grace which had been given, and that from their freedom, he brings forward another demonstration of the superiority which goes with this adoption. Now of what kind is this?

Ver. 16. "The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, "Ver. 15. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear."

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):15** For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

He continues, "Then not staying to mention that which stands in contradistinction to bondage, that is, the spirit of freedom, he has named what is far greater, that of adoption, through which he at the same time brings in the other, saying, "But ye have received the Spirit of adoption." But this is plain. But what the spirit of bondage may be, is not so plain, and there is need of making it clearer. Now what he says is so far from being clear, that it is in fact very perplexing. For the people of the Jews did not receive the Spirit. What then is his meaning here? It is the letter he giveth this name to, for spiritual it was, and so he called the Law spiritual also,

and the water from the Rock, and the Manna. “For they did eat,” he says, “of the same spiritual meat, and all drank of the same spiritual drink.” (1 Cor. x. 3, 4)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):3** And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

He continues, “And to the Rock he gives this name, when he says, “For they drank of that spiritual Rock which followed them.” Now it is because all the rites then wrought were above nature that he calls them spiritual, and not because those who then partook of them received the Spirit. And in what sense were those letters, letters of bondage? Set before yourself the whole dispensation, and then you will have a clear view of this also. For recompenses were with them close at hand, and the reward followed forthwith, being at once proportionate, and like a kind of daily ration given to domestic servants, and terrors in abundance came to their height before their eyes, and their purifications concerned their bodies, and their continency extended but to their actions. But with us it is not so, since the imagination even and the conscience getteth purged out. For He does not say, “Thou shalt do no murder,” only, but even thou shalt not be angry:”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):21** Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

But Jesus did not say, “do not be angry”, but do not be angry without a cause.

Chrysostom continues, “so too, it is not, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” but thou shalt not look unchastely. So that it is not to be from fear of present punishment, but out of desire towards Himself, that both our being habitually virtuous, and all our single good deeds are to come. Neither doth he promise a land flowing with milk and honey, but maketh us joint-heir with the Only Begotten, so making us by every means stand aloof from things present, and promising to give such things especially as are worth the acceptance of men made sons of God, nothing, that is, of a sensible kind or corporeal, but spiritual all of them.”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):17** And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

He continues, “And so they, even if they had the name of sons, were but as slaves; but we as having been made free, have received the adoption, and are waiting for Heaven. And with them He discoursed through the intervention of others, with us by Himself. And all that they did was through the impulse of fear, but the spiritual act through a coveting and a vehement desire. And this they show by the fact of their overstepping the commandments. They, as hirelings and obstinate persons, so never left murmuring: but these do all for the pleasing of the Father. So too they blasphemed when they had benefits done them: but we are thankful at being jeoparded. And if there be need of punishing both of us upon our sinning, even in this case the difference is great. For it is not on being stoned and branded and maimed by the priests, as they were, that we are brought round. But it is enough for us to be cast out from our Father’s table, and to be out of sight for certain days. And with the Jews the honor of adoption was one of name only, but here the reality followed also, the cleansing of Baptism, the giving of the Spirit, the furnishing of the other blessings. And there are several other points besides, which go to show our high birth and

their low condition. After intimating all these then by speaking of the Spirit, and fear, and the adoption, he gives a fresh proof again of having the Spirit of adoption. Now what is this? That “we cry, Abba, Father.” And how great this is, the initiated know (**Schaff Note:** St. Cyr. Jer. Cat. 23, §11, p. 276, O.T.), being with good reason bidden to use this word first in the Prayer of the initiated. What then, it may be said, did not they also call God Father? Dost thou not hear Moses, when he says, “Thou desertedst the God that begot thee?” (Deut. xxxii. 15. LXX)”

He refers to **Deuteronomy 32 (Septuagint):15** So Jacob ate and was filled, and the beloved one kicked; he grew fat, he became thick and broad: then he forsook the God that made him, and departed from God his Saviour.

And to **Deuteronomy 32 (KJV):15** But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

He continues, “Dost thou not hear Malachi reproaching them, and saying, that “one God formed you,” and there is “one Father of you all?” (Mal. ii. 10. LXX)”

He refers to **Malachi 2 (Septuagint):10** Have ye not all one father? Did not one God create you? why have ye forsaken every man his brother, to profane the covenant of your fathers?

And to **Malachi 2 (KJV):10** Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?

He continues, “Still, if these words and others besides are used, we do not find them anywhere calling God by the name, or praying in this language. But we all, priests and laymen, rulers and ruled, are ordered to pray herein.”

This was the Church in the time of Chrysostom. That is, there were priests and laymen.

He continues, “And this is the first language we give utterance to, after those marvellous throes, and that strange and unusual mode of labor. If in any other instances they so called Him, that was only of their own mind. But those in the state of grace do it through being moved by the in-working of the Spirit. For as there is a Spirit of Wisdom, after which they that were unwise became wise, and this discloses itself in their teaching: and a Spirit of Power there is, whereby the feeble raised up the dead, and drove out devils; a Spirit also of the gift of healing, and a Spirit of prophecy, and a Spirit of tongues, so also a Spirit of adoption. And as we know the Spirit of prophecy, in that he who hath it foretelleth things to come, not speaking of his own mind, but moved by the Grace; so too is the Spirit of adoption, whereby he that is gifted with it calleth God, Father, as moved by the Spirit.”

He refers mostly to spiritual gifts here, but it is evident he had no experiential knowledge of them, for he says, “And as we know the Spirit of prophecy, in that he who hath it foretelleth things to come”. But prophecy in the New Testament is for edification, exhortation, and comfort, as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):3** But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

And the Spirit of adoption is not referring to a spiritual gift, but to the fact of our adoption as believers.

He continues, “Wishing to express this as a most true descent, he used also the Hebrew tongue, for he does not say only, “Father,” but “Abba, Father,” which name is a special sign of true-born children to their fathers. After mentioning then the diversity resulting from their

conversation, that resulting from the grace which had been given, and that from their freedom, he brings forward another demonstration of the superiority which goes with this adoption. Now of what kind is this?

Ver. 16. "The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.""

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, Homily, TO THOSE WHO HAD NOT ATTENDED THE ASSEMBLY, page 224-225**, he says that "the greater part of the body of the Church is like a dead and motionless carcass."

His solution is to call on the members who are salt, as he says, "For what profit is a lamp if it does not give light to him who sits in darkness? and what profit is a Christian when he benefits no one, neither leads any one back to virtue? Again salt is not an astringent to itself but braces up those parts of the body which have decayed, and prevents them from falling to pieces and perishing. Even so do thou, since God has appointed thee to be spiritual salt, bind and brace up the decayed members, that is the indolent and sordid brethren, and having rescued them from their indolence as from some form of corruption, unite them to the rest of the body of the Church. And this is the reason why He called you leaven: for leaven also does not leaven itself, but, little though it is, it affects the whole lump however big it may be. So also do ye: although ye are few in number, yet be ye many and powerful in faith, and in zeal towards God."

Many were complaining about the heat, and using it as an excuse to not come to Church. But Chrysostom points out that they do not let the heat keep them from the market place.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, EUTROPIUS, PATRICIAN AND CONSUL, Homily II, After Eutropius having been found outside the Church had been taken captive, page 255-256**, he says, "Do not hold aloof from the Church; for nothing is stronger than the Church. The Church is thy hope, thy salvation, thy refuge."

While he correctly states that "the master of the Church has many names: being called the Father, and the way, and the life, (John 14:6) and the light, (John 1:8-9, 8:12) and the arm, (Psalm 98:1, Isaiah 33:2, 51:9) and the propitiation, (1 John 2:2) and the foundation, (1 Corinthians 3:11) and the door, (John 10:7) and the sinless one, (1 John 3:5, 1 Peter 2:22) and the treasure, (Matthew 6:21, 13:44) and Lord, and God, and Son, and the only begotten, and the form of God, (Philippians 2:6) and the image (Colossians 1:15) of God..."

He then adds, "so is it with the Church itself: does one name suffice to present the whole truth?"

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY VI, page 381**, he says, "Since therefore the rulers also make you afraid, and render you anxious, the Church, which is the common mother of us all, opening her bosom, and cradling us in her arms, administers daily consolation; telling us that the fear of rulers is profitable, and profitable too the consolation that comes from hence. (**Schaff Note: i.e., from the Church**)"

Because the Church administered Baptism by which it was believed one was born again, and entered the Church, it was thought that the Church was our mother. This made the priest the spiritual father, because he administered baptism by which it was thought that one was born again. The Church did not understand at this time that one passed from death to life when one believed in Jesus Christ as in John 5:24.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, HOMILY III, page 20**, he says, “Again, consider the moderation of James. He it was who received the Bishopric of Jerusalem, and here he says nothing.”

A “Bishopric” was what a bishop ruled over in Chrysostom’s time. James was an apostle. A bishop in the New Testament sense is an overseer, that is, an elder in a local church.

He then says, “Mark also the great moderation of the other Apostles, how they concede the throne to him, and no longer dispute with each other. For that Church was as it were in heaven: having nothing to do with this world’s affairs: and resplendent not with wails, no, nor with numbers, but with the zeal of them that formed the assembly. They were “about an hundred and twenty,” it says.”

Chrysostom places James on a “throne”. A bishop presided on a throne in the time of Chrysostom. But James was not on a throne. He was an apostle exercising apostolic authority which was his ministry gift.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, HOMILY III, page 21-25**, he says, “Besides, on the other hand, thy life is irreproachable, and thy habits those of a well nurtured man, but in the Church this is not all that is wanted. Moreover, one man is adapted for one thing, another for another. Do you not observe, how much discourse the holy Scripture has made on this matter? But let me say why it is that the thing has become a subject of competition: it is because we come to the Episcopate not as unto a work of governing and superintending the brethren, but as to a post of dignity and repose. Did you but know that a Bishop is bound to belong to all, to bear the burden of all; that others, if they are angry, are pardoned, but he never; that others, if they sin, have excuses made for them, he has none; you would not be eager for the dignity, would not run after it. So it is, the Bishop is exposed to the tongues of all, to the criticism of all, whether they be wise or fools. He is harassed with cares every day, nay, every night. He has many to hate him, many to envy him. Talk not to me of those who curry favor with all, of those who desire to sleep, of those who advance to this office as for repose.”

Chrysostom did not count himself in that number, as he then says, “We have nothing to do with these; we speak of those who watch for your souls, who consider the safety and welfare of those under them before their own.”

And speaking of the work of a Bishop, he says, “Why speak of the anxiety connected with the word and doctrine? the painful work in Ordinations? Either, perhaps, I am a poor wretched incompetent creature, or else, the case is as I say. The soul of a Bishop is for all the world like a vessel in a storm: lashed from every side, by friends, by foes, by one’s own people, by strangers. Does not the Emperor rule the whole world, the Bishop a single city? Yet a Bishop’s anxieties are as much beyond those of the emperor, as the waters of a river simply moved, by the wind are surpassed in agitation by the swelling and raging sea.”

So a “Bishop” ruled over “a single city”.

And he adds, “I speak not otherwise than it is, but as I find it in my own actual experience. I do not think there are many among Bishops that will be saved, but many more that perish: and the reason is, that it is an affair that requires a great mind.”

And he says, “Do not tell me, that the presbyter is in fault, or the deacon. The guilt of all these comes perforce upon the head of those who ordained them,” meaning the Bishop.

And according to Chrysostom, the Bishop is responsible for the souls under him. If one is lost, he is the “cause of another’s destruction”, and “is worthy of death”, even “in the next world”.

So we notice by Chrysostom’s words that the existence of presbyters and deacons is evident during his time, but the elevation of the bishop is also evident because he ordained the presbyters and deacons. The bishop had taken the place of the apostle.

However, Paul called for the elders of the church at Ephesus, as we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):17** And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

The elders were the presbyters. Then we read that the elders were overseers, or bishops, in **Acts 20 (KJV):28** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

The word in the Greek translated “overseers” is ἐπίσκοπος (pronounced e-pe'-sko-pos), from G1909 and G4649 (in the sense of G1983); a superintendent, i.e. Christian officer in genitive case charge of a (or the) church (literally or figuratively):—bishop, overseer. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1985**

Chrysostom looked on this office as one of great responsibility, as he says, “I mean, that even if you have sinned, but in your own person merely, you will have no such great punishment, nothing like it: but if you have sinned as bishop, you are lost. Remember what Moses endured, what wisdom he displayed, what good deeds he exhibited: but, for committing one sin only, he was bitterly punished; and with good reason; for this fault was attended with injury to the rest.”

And he says, “The contrary plainly is the fact. Prefects, and governors (ὄπαρχοι καὶ τοπάρχαι) of provinces, do not enjoy such honour as he that governs the Church. If he enter the palace, who but he is first? If he go to see ladies, or visit the houses of the great, none is preferred to him. The whole state of things is ruined and corrupt.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIV, page 441-442**, he says, “After intimating all these then by speaking of the Spirit, and fear, and the adoption, he gives a fresh proof again of having the Spirit of adoption. Now what is this? That “we cry, Abba, Father.” And how great this is, the initiated know (**Schaff Note:** St. Cyr. Jer. Cat. 23, §11, p. 276, O.T.), being with good reason bidden to use this word first in the Prayer of the initiated. What then, it may be said, did not they also call God Father? Dost thou not hear Moses, when he says, “Thou desertedst the God that begot thee?” (Deut. xxxii. 15. LXX) Dost thou not hear Malachi reproaching them, and saying, that “one God formed you,” and there is “one Father of you all?” (Mal. ii. 10. LXX) Still, if these words and others besides are used, we do not find them anywhere calling God by the name, or praying in this language. But we all, priests and laymen, rulers and ruled, are ordered to pray herein. And this is the first language we give utterance to, after those marvellous throes, and that strange and unusual mode of labor. If in any other instances they so called Him, that was

only of their own mind. But those in the state of grace do it through being moved by the in-working of the Spirit.”

He is referring to **Romans 8 (KJV):15** For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

So there were priests and laymen in the Church in the time of Chrysostom.

## The Election of a Bishop

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, ON THE PRIESTHOOD, BOOK III, page 53-55**

Are you then for sending me forth into so great a warfare? and did you think that my soul would be equal to a contest so various in character and shape? Whence did you learn this, and from whom? If God certified this to you, show me the oracle, and I obey; but if you cannot, and form your judgment from human opinion only, please to set yourself free from this delusion. For in what concerns my own affairs it is fairer to trust me than others; inasmuch as “no man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him.” (1 Cor. ii. 11) That I should have made myself and my electors ridiculous, had I accepted this office, and should with great loss have returned to this condition of life in which I now am, I trust I have now convinced you by these remarks, if not before. For not malice only, but something much stronger—the lust after this dignity—is wont to arm many against one who possesses it. And just as avaricious children are oppressed by the old age of their parents, so some of these, when they see the priestly office held by any one for a protracted time—since it would be wickedness to destroy him—hasten to depose him from it, being all desirous to take his place, and each expecting that the dignity will be transferred to himself.

15. Would you like me to show you yet another phase of this strife, charged with innumerable dangers? Come, then, and take a peep at the public festivals when it is generally the custom for elections to be made to ecclesiastical dignities, and you will then see the priest assailed with accusations as numerous as the people whom he rules. For all who have the privilege of conferring the honor are then split into many parties; and one can never find the council of elders (**Schaff Note:** It is not possible to say precisely who the electors to bishoprics were at this time, but probably a mixed body of the clergy and leading laymen of the diocese. Chrysostom calls the electors “fathers,” i. ch. 6, and “great men,” ch. 7, and here he speaks of a “council of elders,” which may mean the whole body of clergy of the second order, or a select body of laymen, or possibly the two combined. In one way or other, during the first five centuries, the people certainly had a considerable voice in the election of bishops. Socrates, the historian, vi. c. 2, says that Chrysostom himself was chosen for the See of Constantinople “by the common vote of all, clergy and people.” Pope Leo (A.D. 440–461) lays down the rule that “when the election of a bishop is handled he is to be preferred who is demanded by the unanimous consent of clergy and people.” Epist. 84. A law of the Emperor Justinian restricted the right of election to the clergy and the “optimates” or people of chief rank.) of one mind with each other, or about the man who has won the prelacy; but each stands apart from the others, one preferring this man, another that. Now the reason is that they do not all look to one thing,



which ought to be the only object kept in view, the excellence of the character; but other qualifications are alleged as recommending to this honor; for instance, of one it is said, "let him be elected because he belongs to an illustrious family," of another "because he is possessed of great wealth, and would not need to be supported out of the revenues of the Church," of a third "because he has come over from the camp of the adversary;" one is eager to give the preference to a man who is on terms of intimacy with himself, another to the man who is related to him by birth, a third to the flatterer, but no one will look to the man who is really qualified, or make some test of his character. Now I am so far from thinking these things trustworthy criteria of a man's fitness for the priesthood, that even if any one manifested great piety, which is no small help in the discharge of that office, I should not venture to approve him on that account alone, unless he happened to combine good abilities with his piety. For I know many men who have exercised perpetual restraint upon themselves, and consumed themselves with fastings, who, as long as they were suffered to be alone, and attend to their own concerns, have been acceptable to God, and day by day have made no small addition to this kind of learning; but as soon as they entered public life, and were compelled to correct the ignorance of the multitude, have, some of them, proved from the outset incompetent for so great a task, and others when forced to persevere in it, have abandoned their former strict way of living, and thus inflicted great injury on themselves without profiting others at all. And if any one spent his whole time in the lowest rank of the ministry, and reached extreme old age, I would not, merely out of reverence for his years, promote him to the higher dignity; for what if, after arriving at that time of life, he should still remain unfit for the office? And I say this now, not as wishing to dishonor the grey head, nor as laying down a law absolutely to exclude from this authority those who come from the monastic circle (for there are instances of many who issued from that body, having shone conspicuously in this dignity); but the point which I am anxious to prove is, that if neither piety of itself, nor advanced age, would suffice to show that a man who had obtained the priesthood really deserved it, the reasons formerly alleged would scarcely effect this. There are also men who bring forward other pretexts yet more absurd; for some are enrolled in the ranks of the clergy, that they may not range themselves among opponents, and others on account of their evil disposition, lest they should do great mischief if they are overlooked. Could anything be more contrary to right rule than this? that bad men, laden with iniquity, should be courted on account of those things for which they ought to be punished, and ascend to the priestly dignity on account of things for which they ought to be debarred from the very threshold of the Church. Tell me, then, shall we seek any further the cause of God's wrath, when we expose things so holy and awful to be defiled by men who are either wicked or worthless? for when some men are entrusted with the administration of things which are not at all suitable to them, and others of things which exceed their natural power, they make the condition of the Church like that of Euripus. (**Schaff Note:** A narrow strait between the island of Eubœa and the mainland of Greece, in which the tide was very rapid. Hence the "condition of Euripus" became a proverbial expression indicative of agitation and fluctuation.)

Now formerly I used to deride secular rulers, because in the distribution of their honors they are not guided by considerations of moral excellence, but of wealth, and seniority, and human distinction; but when I heard that this kind of folly had forced its way into our affairs also, I no longer regarded their conduct as so atrocious. For what wonder is it that worldly men, who love the praise of the multitude, and do everything for the sake of gain, should commit

these sins, when those who affect at least to be free from all these influences are in no wise better disposed than they, but although engaged in a contest for heavenly things, act as if the question submitted for decision was one which concerned acres of land, or something else of that kind? for they take commonplace men offhand, and set them to preside over those things, for the sake of which the only begotten Son of God did not refuse to empty Himself of His glory and become man, and take the form of a servant, and be spat upon, and buffeted, and die a death of reproach in the flesh. Nor do they stop even here, but add to these offences others still more monstrous; for not only do they elect unworthy men, but actually expel those who are well qualified. As if it were necessary to ruin the safety of the Church on both sides, or as if the former provocation were not sufficient to kindle the wrath of God, they have contrived yet another not less pernicious. For I consider it as atrocious to expel the useful men as to force in the useless. And this in fact takes place, so that the flock of Christ is unable to find consolation in any direction, or draw its breath freely. Now do not such deeds deserve to be punished by ten thousand thunderbolts, and a hellfire hotter than that with which we are threatened [in Holy Scripture]? Yet these monstrous evils are borne with by Him who willeth not the death of a sinner, that he may be converted and live. And how can one sufficiently marvel at His lovingkindness, and be amazed at His mercy? They who belong to Christ destroy the property of Christ more than enemies and adversaries, yet the good Lord still deals gently with them, and calls them to repentance. Glory be to Thee, O Lord! Glory to Thee! How vast is the depth of Thy lovingkindness! how great the riches of Thy forbearance! Men who on account of Thy name have risen from insignificance and obscurity to positions of honor and distinction, use the honor they enjoy against Him who has bestowed it, do deeds of outrageous audacity, and insult holy things, rejecting and expelling men of zeal in order that the wicked may ruin everything at their pleasure in much security, and with the utmost fearlessness. And if you would know the causes of this dreadful evil, you will find that they are similar to those which were mentioned before; for they have one root and mother, so to say—namely, envy; but this is manifested in several different forms. For one we are told is to be struck out of the list of candidates, because he is young; another because he does not know how to flatter; a third because he has offended such and such a person; a fourth lest such and such a man should be pained at seeing one whom he has presented rejected, and this man elected; a fifth because he is kind and gentle; a sixth because he is formidable to the sinful; a seventh for some other like reason; for they are at no loss to find as many pretexts as they want, and can even make the abundance of a man's wealth an objection when they have no other. Indeed they would be capable of discovering other reasons, as many as they wish, why a man ought not to be brought suddenly to this honor, but gently and gradually. And here I should like to ask the question, "What, then, is the prelate to do, who has to contend with such blasts? How shall he hold his ground against such billows? How shall he repel all these assaults?"

For if he manages the business (**Schaff Note:** *i.e.*, the business of elections. Chrysostom seems to have passed on from the elections of bishops to the consideration of elections to clerical offices over which the bishop had to preside.) upon upright principles, all those who are enemies and adversaries both to him and to the candidates do everything with a view to contention, provoking daily strife, and heaping infinite scorn upon the candidates, until they have got them struck off the list, or have introduced their own favorites. In fact it is just as if some pilot had pirates sailing with him in his ship, perpetually plotting every hour against him,

and the sailors, and marines. And if he should prefer favor with such men to his own salvation, accepting unworthy candidates, he will have God for his enemy in their stead; and what could be more dreadful than that? And yet his relations with them will be more embarrassing than formerly, as they will all combine with each other, and thereby become more powerful than before. For as when fierce winds coming from opposite directions clash with one another, the ocean, hitherto calm, becomes suddenly furious and raises its crested waves, destroying those who are sailing over it, so also when the Church has admitted corrupt men, its once tranquil surface is covered with rough surf and strewn with shipwrecks.

16. Consider, then, what kind of man he ought to be who is to hold out against such a tempest, and to manage skillfully such great hindrances to the common welfare; for he ought to be dignified yet free from arrogance, formidable yet kind, apt to command yet sociable, impartial yet courteous, humble yet not servile, strong yet gentle, in order that he may contend successfully against all these difficulties. And he ought to bring forward with great authority the man who is properly qualified for the office, even if all should oppose him, and with the same authority to reject the man who is not so qualified, even if all should conspire in his favor, and to keep one aim only in view, the building up of the Church, in nothing actuated either by enmity or favor. Well, do you now think that I acted reasonably in declining the ministry of this office? But I have not even yet gone through all my reasons with you; for I have some others still to mention. And do not grow impatient of listening to a friendly and sincere man, who wishes to clear himself from your accusations; for these statements are not only serviceable for the defence which you have to make on my behalf, but they will also prove of no small help for the due administration of the office. For it is necessary for one who is going to enter upon this path of life to investigate all matters thoroughly well, before he sets his hand to the ministry. Do you ask why? Because one who knows all things clearly will have this advantage, if no other, that he will not feel strange when these things befall him. Would you like me then to approach the question of superintending widows, first of all, or of the care of virgins, or the difficulty of the judicial function. For in each of these cases there is a different kind of anxiety, and the fear is greater than the anxiety.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “Are you then for sending me forth into so great a warfare? and did you think that my soul would be equal to a contest so various in character and shape? Whence did you learn this, and from whom? If God certified this to you, show me the oracle, and I obey; but if you cannot, and form your judgment from human opinion only, please to set yourself free from this delusion. For in what concerns my own affairs it is fairer to trust me than others; inasmuch as “no man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him.” (1 Cor. ii. 11)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):11** For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

He continues, “That I should have made myself and my electors ridiculous, had I accepted this office, and should with great loss have returned to this condition of life in which I now am, I trust I have now convinced you by these remarks, if not before.”

He doesn't tell us who his “electors” were, but he is writing to his close friend, Basil. He continues, “For not malice only, but something much stronger—the lust after this dignity—is

wont to arm many against one who possesses it. And just as avaricious children are oppressed by the old age of their parents, so some of these, when they see the priestly office held by any one for a protracted time—since it would be wickedness to destroy him—hasten to depose him from it, being all desirous to take his place, and each expecting that the dignity will be transferred to himself.

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Thy lovingkindness! how great the riches of Thy forbearance! Men who on account of Thy name have risen from insignificance and obscurity to positions of honor and distinction, use the honor they enjoy against Him who has bestowed it, do deeds of outrageous audacity, and insult holy things, rejecting and expelling men of zeal in order that the wicked may ruin everything at their pleasure in much security, and with the utmost fearlessness. And if you would know the causes of this dreadful evil, you will find that they are similar to those which were mentioned before; for they have one root and mother, so to say—namely, envy; but this is manifested in several different forms. For one we are told is to be struck out of the list of candidates, because he is young; another because he does not know how to flatter; a third because he has offended such and such a person; a fourth lest such and such a man should be pained at seeing one whom he has presented rejected, and this man elected; a fifth because he is kind and gentle; a sixth because he is formidable to the sinful; a seventh for some other like reason; for they are at no loss to find as many pretexts as they want, and can even make the abundance of a man's wealth an objection when they have no other. Indeed they would be capable of discovering other reasons, as many as they wish, why a man ought not to be brought suddenly to this honor, but gently and gradually. And here I should like to ask the question, "What, then, is the prelate to do, who has to contend with such blasts? How shall he hold his ground against such billows? How shall he repel all these assaults?"

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Again we can commend Chrysostom's wisdom here. He continues, "Well, do you now think that I acted reasonably in declining the ministry of this office? But I have not even yet

gone through all my reasons with you; for I have some others still to mention. And do not grow impatient of listening to a friendly and sincere man, who wishes to clear himself from your accusations; for these statements are not only serviceable for the defence which you have to make on my behalf, but they will also prove of no small help for the due administration of the office. For it is necessary for one who is going to enter upon this path of life to investigate all matters thoroughly well, before he sets his hand to the ministry. Do you ask why? Because one who knows all things clearly will have this advantage, if no other, that he will not feel strange when these things befall him. Would you like me then to approach the question of superintending widows, first of all, or of the care of virgins, or the difficulty of the judicial function. For in each of these cases there is a different kind of anxiety, and the fear is greater than the anxiety.”

Chrysostom gives us insight into the Church in his time. It seems to have been strongly influenced by outside forces in many ways.

### **Commentary Summary**

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And Chrysostom says that many choose a bishop on the basis of his “illustrious family”, or his “great wealth”, or “because he has come over from the camp of the adversary”, or because of “intimacy with himself”, or one who is “related to him by birth”, or one who is a “flatterer”.

And he asks, “Could anything be more contrary to right rule than this? that bad men, laden with iniquity, should be courted on account of those things for which they ought to be punished, and ascend to the priestly dignity on account of things for which they ought to be debarred from the very threshold of the Church.”

And he testifies, “For I consider it as atrocious to expel the useful men as to force in the useless. And this in fact takes place, so that the flock of Christ is unable to find consolation in any direction, or draw its breath freely.”

Chrysostom gives us insight into the Church in his time. It seems to have been strongly influenced by outside forces in many ways. The focus of the Church must be on the word of God, rightly divided. Our intimacy with the Lord is what is most important.

## Bishops and Deacons

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILIPPIANS, HOMILY I, page 184-185**

Philippians i. 1, 2

“Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, fellow Bishops and Deacons: Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Here, as writing to those of equal honor, he does not set down his rank of Teacher, but another, and that a great one. And what is that? He calls himself a “servant,” and not an Apostle. For great truly is this rank too, and the sum of all good things, to be a servant of Christ, and not merely to be called so. “The servant of Christ,” this is truly a free man in respect to sin, and being a genuine servant, he is not a servant to any other, since he would not be Christ’s servant, but by halves. And in again writing to the Romans also, he says, “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ.” (Rom. i. 1) But writing to the Corinthians and to Timothy he calls himself an “Apostle.” On what account then is this? Not because they were superior to Timothy. Far from it. But rather he honors them, and shows them attention, beyond all others to whom he wrote. For he also bears witness to great virtue in them. For besides, there indeed he was about to order many things, and therefore assumed his rank as an Apostle. But here he gives them no injunctions but such as they could perceive of themselves.

“To the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi.” Since it was likely that the Jews too would call themselves “saints” from the first oracle, when they were called a “holy people, a people for God’s own possession” (Ex. xix. 6; Deut. vii. 6, etc.); for this reason he added, “to the saints in Christ Jesus.” For these alone are holy, and those hence-forward profane. “To the fellow Bishops and Deacons.” What is this? were there several Bishops of one city? Certainly not; but he called the Presbyters so. For then they still interchanged the titles, and the Bishop was called a Deacon. For this cause in writing to Timothy, he said, “Fulfill thy ministry,” when he was a Bishop. For that he was a Bishop appears by his saying to him, “Lay hands hastily on no man.” (1 Tim. v. 22) And again, “Which was given thee with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.” (1 Tim. iv. 14) Yet Presbyters would not have laid hands on a Bishop. And again, in writing to Titus, he says, “For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge. If any man is blameless, the husband of one wife” (Tit. i. 5, 6); which he says of the Bishop. (1 Timothy 3:2) And after saying this, he adds immediately, “For the Bishop must be blameless, as God’s steward, not self willed.” (Tit. i. 7) So then, as I said, both the Presbyters were of old called Bishops and Deacons of Christ, and the Bishops Presbyters; and hence even now many Bishops write, “To my fellow-Presbyter,” and, “To my fellow-Deacon.” But otherwise the specific name is distinctly appropriated to each, the Bishop and the Presbyter. “To the fellow Bishops,” he says, “and Deacons,

Ver. 2. “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

How is it that though he nowhere else writes to the Clergy, not in Rome, nor in Corinth, nor in Ephesus, nor anywhere, but in general, to “all the saints, the believers, the beloved,” yet here he writes to the Clergy? Because it was they that sent, and bare fruit, and it was they that dispatched Epaphroditus to him.



Ver. 3. "I thank my God," he says, "upon all my remembrance of you."

He said in another of his writings, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief." (Heb. xiii. 17) If then the "grief" be due to the wickedness of the disciples, the doing it "with joy" would be due to their advancement. As often as I remember you, I glorify God. But this he does from his being conscious of many good things in them. I both glorify, he says, and pray. I do not, because ye have advanced unto virtue, cease praying for you. But "I thank my God," he says, "upon all my remembrance of you,"

Ver. 4. "Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request also with joy."

"Always," not only while I am praying. "With joy." For it is possible to do this with grief too, as when he says elsewhere, "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears." (2 Cor. ii. 4)

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, "Philippians i. 1, 2

"Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, fellow Bishops and Deacons: Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

He refers to **Philippians 1 (KJV):1** Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

He continues, "Here, as writing to those of equal honor, he does not set down his rank of Teacher, but another, and that a great one. And what is that? He calls himself a "servant," and not an Apostle. For great truly is this rank too, and the sum of all good things, to be a servant of Christ, and not merely to be called so. "The servant of Christ," this is truly a free man in respect to sin, and being a genuine servant, he is not a servant to any other, since he would not be Christ's servant, but by halves. And in again writing to the Romans also, he says, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ." (Rom. i. 1)"

He refers to **Romans 1 (KJV):1** Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God

He continues, "But writing to the Corinthians and to Timothy he calls himself an "Apostle." On what account then is this? Not because they were superior to Timothy. Far from it. But rather he honors them, and shows them attention, beyond all others to whom he wrote. For he also bears witness to great virtue in them. For besides, there indeed he was about to order many things, and therefore assumed his rank as an Apostle. But here he gives them no injunctions but such as they could perceive of themselves.

"To the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi." Since it was likely that the Jews too would call themselves "saints" from the first oracle, when they were called a "holy people, a people for God's own possession" (Ex. xix. 6; Deut. vii. 6, etc.);"

He refers to **Exodus 19 (KJV):6** And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

And to **Deuteronomy 7 (KJV):6** For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

He continues, “for this reason he added, “to the saints in Christ Jesus.” For these alone are holy, and those henceforward profane. “To the fellow Bishops and Deacons.” What is this? were there several Bishops of one city? Certainly not; but he called the Presbyters so. For then they still interchanged the titles, and the Bishop was called a Deacon.”

In the Church in the time of Chrysostom, they “still interchanged the titles”. That is, a Bishop was also called a Presbyter. So evidently things were changing. Not only so, but also “the Bishop was called a Deacon”. We see that there was no real understanding of what a bishop or a deacon was according to Scripture.

He continues, “For this cause in writing to Timothy, he said, “Fulfill thy ministry,” when he was a Bishop. For that he was a Bishop appears by his saying to him, “Lay hands hastily on no man.” (1 Tim. v. 22) And again, “Which was given thee with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.” (1 Tim. iv. 14)”

Chrysostom was interpreting the Scripture from his own experience. He refers to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):22** Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

And to **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):14** Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

Timothy was not a bishop, but an apostle, as we read in **1 Thessalonians 1 (KJV):1** Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And in **1 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):6** Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

He continues, “Yet Presbyters would not have laid hands on a Bishop.”

Again we see a total lack of understanding of Presbyters and Bishops. When Paul called for the “elders” at the Church at Ephesus, he calls them overseers, as we read **Acts 20 (KJV):28** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Now we find the word “elders” in **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):17** Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

The Greek word translated “elders” is **πρεσβύτερος** (pronounced pres-bü'-te-ros), comparative of **πρέσβυς** présbys (elderly); older; as noun, a senior; specially, an Israelite Sanhedrist (also figuratively, member of the celestial council) or Christian "presbyter":—elder(-est), old. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4245**

This word is translated 64 times as “elder” in the King James Version. The “elders” were the “presbyters” in the New Testament. And the “elders”, or “presbyters”, were also the “overseers”, or “bishops”. The “deacons” were merely helpers in the Church.

He continues, “And again, in writing to Titus, he says, “For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge. If any man is blameless, the husband of one wife” (Tit. i. 5, 6);”

He refers in context to **Titus 1 (KJV):5** For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: 6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not

accused of riot or unruly. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

He continues, “which he says of the Bishop. (1 Timothy 3:2)”

He refers in context to **1 Timothy 3 (KJV):1** This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) 6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

He continues, “And after saying this, he adds immediately, “For the Bishop must be blameless, as God’s steward, not self willed.” (Tit. i. 7)”

Yes, the elders who were ordained by Titus were bishops. The Scripture is very clear.

But Chrysostom continues, “So then, as I said, both the Presbyters were of old called Bishops and Deacons of Christ, and the Bishops Presbyters; and hence even now many Bishops write, “To my fellow-Presbyter,” and, “To my fellow-Deacon.” But otherwise the specific name is distinctly appropriated to each, the Bishop and the Presbyter. “To the fellow Bishops,” he says, “and Deacons,

Ver. 2. “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.””

He refers to **Philippians 1 (KJV):2** Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

However, though the bishops are presbyters, they are not deacons. The Greek word translated “deacon” is **δῆκονος** (pronounced de-ä'-ko-nos), probably from an obsolete δῆκω diákō (to run on errands; compare G1377); an attendant, i.e. (genitive case) a waiter (at table or in other menial duties); specially, a Christian teacher and pastor (technically, a deacon or deaconess):—deacon, minister, servant. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1249**

He continues, “How is it that though he nowhere else writes to the Clergy, not in Rome, nor in Corinth, nor in Ephesus, nor anywhere, but in general, to “all the saints, the believers, the beloved,” yet here he writes to the Clergy? Because it was they that sent, and bare fruit, and it was they that dispatched Epaphroditus to him.”

He refers to **Philippians 2 (KJV):25** Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

But Paul was also writing here to “all the saints in Christ Jesus”, as we read again in **Philippians 1 (KJV):1** Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

He continues, “Ver. 3. “I thank my God,” he says, “upon all my remembrance of you.””

He refers to **Philippians 1 (KJV):3** I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

He continues, “He said in another of his writings, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account;

that they may do this with joy, and not with grief.” (Heb. xiii. 17)”

He refers to **Hebrews 13 (KJV):17** Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

The word “rule” in the Greek is ἡγέομαι (pronounced hayg-eh'-om-ahee); middle voice of a (presumed) strengthened form of G71; to lead, i.e. command (with official authority); figuratively, to deem, i.e. consider:—account, (be) chief, count, esteem, governor, judge, have the rule over, suppose, think. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2233**

And this Greek word is derived from ἄγω (pronounced ag'-o); a primary verb; properly, to lead; by implication, to bring, drive, (reflexively) go, (specially) pass (time), or (figuratively) induce:—be, bring (forth), carry, (let) go, keep, lead away, be open. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G71**

And the word “rule” in the actual Greek is ἡγουμένους (pronounced heg-oo-men-oys) which is a participle. Therefore, the verse could be translated as, “Obey them that are leading you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

He continues, “If then the “grief” be due to the wickedness of the disciples, the doing it “with joy” would be due to their advancement. As often as I remember you, I glorify God. But this he does from his being conscious of many good things in them. I both glorify, he says, and pray. I do not, because ye have advanced unto virtue, cease praying for you. But “I thank my God,” he says, “upon all my remembrance of you,”

Ver. 4. “Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request also with joy.””

He refers to **Philippians 1 (KJV):4** Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,

He concludes, ““Always,” not only while I am praying. “With joy.” For it is possible to do this with grief too, as when he says elsewhere, “For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears.” (2 Cor. ii. 4)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 2 (KJV):4** For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY III, page 387**

Tell me then, if any one should go to the shop of a physician, and not ask a favor of the physician, but think that he was doing him a favor, and declining to request a medicine for his wound, should concern himself about his garments; would he go away having received any benefit? I think not indeed. But, with your leave, I will tell you the cause of all these things. They think when they enter in here, that they enter into our presence, they think that what they hear they hear from us. They do not lay to heart, they do not consider, that they are entering into the presence of God, that it is He who addresses them. For when the Reader standing up says, “Thus saith the Lord,” and the Deacon stands and imposes silence on all, he does not say this as doing honor to the Reader, but to Him who speaks to all through him. If they knew that it was God who through His prophet speaks these things, they would cast away all their pride. For if

when rulers are addressing them, they do not allow their minds to wander, much less would they, when God is speaking. We are ministers, beloved. We speak not our own things, but the things of God, letters coming from heaven are every day read.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “Tell me then, if any one should go to the shop of a physician, and not ask a favor of the physician, but think that he was doing him a favor, and declining to request a medicine for his wound, should concern himself about his garments; would he go away having received any benefit? I think not indeed. But, with your leave, I will tell you the cause of all these things. They think when they enter in here, that they enter into our presence, they think that what they hear they hear from us. They do not lay to heart, they do not consider, that they are entering into the presence of God, that it is He who addresses them. For when the Reader standing up says, “Thus saith the Lord,” and the Deacon stands and imposes silence on all, he does not say this as doing honor to the Reader, but to Him who speaks to all through him. If they knew that it was God who through His prophet speaks these things, they would cast away all their pride.”

So Chrysostom is saying that everything that was done by the ministers, the Deacon, the Reader, was of God, and that one should just believe this. But even in the New Testament Church, we are told to judge prophecy, as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):29** Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

He continues, “For if when rulers are addressing them, they do not allow their minds to wander, much less would they, when God is speaking. We are ministers, beloved. We speak not our own things, but the things of God, letters coming from heaven are every day read.”

As ritual began to take over in the Church, it was assumed that everything that was heard by the ministers was of God.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY XI, page 441-442**

1 Timothy iii. 8–10

“Likewise must the Deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given much to wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved: then let them use the office of a Deacon, being found blameless.”

Discoursing of Bishops, and having described their character, and the qualities which they ought to possess, and having passed over the order of Presbyters, he proceeds to that of Deacons. The reason of this omission was, that between Presbyters and Bishops there was no great difference. Both had undertaken the office of Teachers and Presidents in the Church, and what he has said concerning Bishops is applicable to Presbyters. For they are only superior in having the power of ordination, and seem to have no other advantage over Presbyters.

“Likewise the Deacons.” That is, they should have the same qualities as Bishops. And what are these same? To be blameless, sober, hospitable, patient, not brawlers, not covetous. And that he means this when he says “likewise,” is evident from what he says in addition, “grave, not doubletongued”; that is, not hollow or deceitful. For nothing so debases a man as deceit, nothing is so pernicious in the Church as insincerity. “Not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.” Thus he explains

what he means by “blameless.” And here he requires, though in other words, that he be “not a novice,” where he says, “Let these also first be proved,” where the conjunction “also” is added, as connecting this with what had been said before of Bishops, for nothing intervenes between. And there is the same reason for the “not a novice” in that case. For would it not be absurd, that when a newly purchased slave is not entrusted with anything in a house, till he has by long trial given proofs of his character, yet that one should enter into the Church of God from a state of heathenism, and be at once placed in a station of preeminence?

Ver. 11. “Even so must the women be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.”

Some have thought that this is said of women generally, but it is not so, for why should he introduce anything about women to interfere with his subject? He is speaking of those who hold the rank of Deaconesses.

Ver. 12. “Let the Deacons be husbands of one wife.”

This must be understood therefore to relate to Deaconesses. For that order is necessary and useful and honorable in the Church. Observe how he requires the same virtue from the Deacons, as from the Bishops, for though they were not of equal rank, they must equally be blameless; equally pure.

“Ruling their children and their own houses well.”

Ver. 13. “For they that have used the office of a Deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and much boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

Everywhere they are required to rule their children well, that others may not be scandalized by their misconduct.

“They that use the office of a Deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree,” that is, advancement, “and much boldness in the faith of Jesus Christ”; as if he would say, that those who have been found vigilant in the lower degree (**Schaff Note:** Or, “in things below.” He may refer to the Deacon’s temporal ministry.) will soon ascend to the higher.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “1 Timothy iii. 8–10

“Likewise must the Deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given much to wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved: then let them use the office of a Deacon, being found blameless.””

He refers to **1 Timothy 3 (KJV):8** Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; **9** Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. **10** And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.

He continues, “Discoursing of Bishops, and having described their character, and the qualities which they ought to possess, and having passed over the order of Presbyters, he proceeds to that of Deacons. The reason of this omission was, that between Presbyters and Bishops there was no great difference. Both had undertaken the office of Teachers and Presidents in the Church, and what he has said concerning Bishops is applicable to Presbyters. For they are only superior in having the power of ordination, and seem to have no other advantage over Presbyters.”

The reason in 1 Timothy that Paul seems to have passed over Presbyters is because Presbyters were simply elders, who were also overseers, that is, bishops. So they were not

passed over because they were actually the same. The Church in the time of Chrysostom had elevated the Bishop to the place of an apostle. This was an invention of the early Church.

He continues, ““Likewise the Deacons.” That is, they should have the same qualities as Bishops. And what are these same? To be blameless, sober, hospitable, patient, not brawlers, not covetous. And that he means this when he says “likewise,” is evident from what he says in addition, “grave, not doubletongued”; that is, not hollow or deceitful. For nothing so debases a man as deceit, nothing is so pernicious in the Church as insincerity. “Not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.” Thus he explains what he means by “blameless.” And here he requires, though in other words, that he be “not a novice,” where he says, “Let these also first be proved,” where the conjunction “also” is added, as connecting this with what had been said before of Bishops, for nothing intervenes between. And there is the same reason for the “not a novice” in that case. For would it not be absurd, that when a newly purchased slave is not entrusted with anything in a house, till he has by long trial given proofs of his character, yet that one should enter into the Church of God from a state of heathenism, and be at once placed in a station of preeminence?

Ver. 11. “Even so must the women be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.””

He refers to **1 Timothy 3 (KJV):11** Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

He continues, “Some have thought that this is said of women generally, but it is not so, for why should he introduce anything about women to interfere with his subject? He is speaking of those who hold the rank of Deaconesses.”

Chrysostom has rightly interpreted the Scripture here.

He continues, “Ver. 12. “Let the Deacons be husbands of one wife.””

He refers to **1 Timothy 3 (KJV):12** Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

He continues, “This must be understood therefore to relate to Deaconesses. For that order is necessary and useful and honorable in the Church. Observe how he requires the same virtue from the Deacons, as from the Bishops, for though they were not of equal rank, they must equally be blameless; equally pure.

“Ruling their children and their own houses well.”

Ver. 13. “For they that have used the office of a Deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and much boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.””

He refers to **1 Timothy 3 (KJV):13** For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

So Chrysostom does not say that the Bishops and the Deacons are of “equal rank”, but that “they were not of equal rank”.

He continues, “Everywhere they are required to rule their children well, that others may not be scandalized by their misconduct.

“They that use the office of a Deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree,” that is, advancement, “and much boldness in the faith of Jesus Christ”; as if he would say, that those who have been found vigilant in the lower degree (**Schaff Note:** Or, “in things below.” He may refer to the Deacon’s temporal ministry.) will soon ascend to the higher.”

1 Timothy iv. 11–14

“These things command and teach. Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.”

In some cases it is necessary to command, in others to teach; if therefore you command in those cases where teaching is required, you will become ridiculous. Again, if you teach where you ought to command, you are exposed to the same reproach. For instance, it is not proper to teach a man not to be wicked, but to command; to forbid it with all authority. Not to profess Judaism, should be a command, but teaching is required, when you would lead men to part with their possessions, to profess virginity, or when you would discourse of faith. Therefore Paul mentions both: “Command and teach.” When a man uses amulets, or does anything of that kind, knowing it to be wrong, he requires only a command; but he who does it ignorantly, is to be taught his error. “Let no one despise thy youth.”

Observe that it becomes a priest to command and to speak authoritatively, and not always to teach. But because, from a common prejudice, youth is apt to be despised, therefore he says, “Let no man despise thy youth.” For a teacher ought not to be exposed to contempt. But if he is not to be despised, what room is there for meekness and moderation? Indeed the contempt that he falls into personally he ought to bear; for teaching is commended by longsuffering. But not so, where others are concerned; for this is not meekness, but coldness. If a man revenge insults, and ill language, and injuries offered to himself, you justly blame him. But where the salvation of others is concerned, command, and interpose with authority. This is not a case for moderation, but for authority, lest the public good suffer. He enjoins one or the other as the case may require. Let no one despise thee on account of thy youth. For as long as thy life is a counterpoise, thou wilt not be despised for thy youth, but even the more admired: therefore he proceeds to say,

“But be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity.” In all things showing thyself an example of good works: that is, be thyself a pattern of a Christian life, as a model set before others, as a living law, as a rule and standard of good living, for such ought a teacher to be. “In word,” that he may speak with facility, “in conversation, in charity, in faith, in” true “purity, in temperance.”

“Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”

Even Timothy is commanded to apply to reading. Let us then be instructed not to neglect the study of the sacred writings. Again, observe, he says, “Till I come.” Mark how he consoles him, for being as it were an orphan, when separated from him, it was natural that he should require such comfort. “Till I come,” he says, give attendance to reading the divine writings, to exhortation of one another, to teaching of all.

“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy.”

Here he calls teaching prophecy.

“With the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.” He speaks not here of Presbyters, but of Bishops. For Presbyters cannot be supposed to have ordained a Bishop.



Ver. 15. "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them."

Observe how often he gives him counsel concerning the same things, thus showing that a teacher ought above all things to be attentive to these points.

Ver. 16. "Take heed," he says, "unto thyself, and unto the doctrine: continue in them." That is, take heed to thyself, and teach others also.

"For in so doing thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."

It is well said, "Thou shalt save thyself." For he that is "nourished up in the words of sound doctrine," first receives the benefit of it himself. From admonishing others, he is touched with compunction himself. For these things are not said to Timothy only, but to all. And if such advice is addressed to him, who raised the dead, what shall be said to us? Christ also shows the duty of teachers, when He says, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto an householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." (Matt. xiii. 52) And the blessed Paul gives the same advice, that "we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." (Rom. xv. 4) This he practiced above all men, being brought up in the law of his fathers, at the feet of Gamaliel, whence he would afterwards naturally apply to reading: for he who exhorted others would himself first follow the advice he gave. Hence we find him continually appealing to the testimony of the prophets, and searching into their writings. Paul then applies to reading, for it is no slight advantage that is to be reaped from the Scriptures. But we are indolent, and we hear with carelessness and indifference. What punishment do we not deserve!

"That thy profiting may appear," he says, "to all."

Thus he would have him appear great and admirable in this respect also, showing that this was still necessary for him, for he wished that his "profiting should appear" not only in his life, but in the word of doctrine.

Chap. v. ver. 1. "Rebuke not an elder."

Is he now speaking of the order? I think not, but of any elderly man. What then if he should need correction? Do not rebuke him, but address him as you would a father offending.

Ver. 1. "The elder women as mothers, the younger men as brethren; the younger women as sisters, with all purity." Rebuke is in its own nature offensive, particularly when it is addressed to an old man,

and when it proceeds from a young man too, there is a threefold show of forwardness. By the manner and the mildness of it, therefore, he would soften it. For it is possible to reprove without offense, if one will only make a point of this: it requires great discretion, but it may be done.

"The younger men as brethren." Why does he recommend this too here? With a view to the high spirit natural to young men, whence it is proper to soften reproof to them also with moderation.

"The younger women as sisters"; he adds, "with all purity." Tell me not, he means, of merely avoiding sinful intercourse with them. There should not be even a suspicion. For since intimacy with young women is always suspicious, and yet a Bishop cannot always avoid it, he shows by adding these words, that "all purity" is required in such intimacy. But does Paul give this advice to Timothy? Yes, he says, for I am speaking to the world through him. But if Timothy was thus advised, let others consider what sort of conduct is required of them, that they should give no ground for suspicion, no shadow of pretext, to those who wish to calumniate.

Ver. 3. "Honor widows, that are widows indeed."

Why does he say nothing of virginity, nor command us to honor virgins? Perhaps there

were not yet any professing that state, or they might have fallen from it. “For some,” he says, “are already turned aside after Satan.” (1 Tim. v. 15) For a woman may have lost her husband, and yet not be truly a widow. As in order to be a virgin, it is not enough to be a stranger to marriage, but many other things are necessary, as blamelessness and perseverance; so the loss of a husband does not constitute a widow, but patience, with chastity and separation from all men. Such widows he justly bids us honor, or rather support. For they need support, being left desolate, and having no husband to stand up for them. Their state appears to the multitude despicable and inauspicious. Therefore he wishes them to receive the greater honor from the Priest, and the more so, because they are worthy of it.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “1 Timothy iv. 11–14

“These things command and teach. Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.”

He refers to **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):**11 These things command and teach. 12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. 14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

He continues, “In some cases it is necessary to command, in others to teach; if therefore you command in those cases where teaching is required, you will become ridiculous. Again, if you teach where you ought to command, you are exposed to the same reproach. For instance, it is not proper to teach a man not to be wicked, but to command; to forbid it with all authority. Not to profess Judaism, should be a command, but teaching is required, when you would lead men to part with their possessions, to profess virginity, or when you would discourse of faith. Therefore Paul mentions both: “Command and teach.” When a man uses amulets, or does anything of that kind, knowing it to be wrong, he requires only a command; but he who does it ignorantly, is to be taught his error. “Let no one despise thy youth.”

Observe that it becomes a priest to command and to speak authoritatively, and not always to teach.”

The Scripture he quotes does not mention “priest” anywhere. Paul is speaking to Timothy, who is an apostle trained by Paul, as we read in **1 Thessalonians 1 (KJV):**1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And in **1 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):**6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

He continues, “But because, from a common prejudice, youth is apt to be despised, therefore he says, “Let no man despise thy youth.” For a teacher ought not to be exposed to contempt. But if he is not to be despised, what room is there for meekness and moderation? Indeed the contempt that he falls into personally he ought to bear; for teaching is commended by longsuffering. But not so, where others are concerned; for this is not meekness, but coldness. If a man revenge insults, and ill language, and injuries offered to himself, you justly blame him.

But where the salvation of others is concerned, command, and interpose with authority. This is not a case for moderation, but for authority, lest the public good suffer. He enjoins one or the other as the case may require. Let no one despise thee on account of thy youth. For as long as thy life is a counterpoise, thou wilt not be despised for thy youth, but even the more admired: therefore he proceeds to say,

“But be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity.” In all things showing thyself an example of good works: that is, be thyself a pattern of a Christian life, as a model set before others, as a living law, as a rule and standard of good living, for such ought a teacher to be. “In word,” that he may speak with facility, “in conversation, in charity, in faith, in” true “purity, in temperance.”

“Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”

Even Timothy is commanded to apply to reading. Let us then be instructed not to neglect the study of the sacred writings. Again, observe, he says, “Till I come.” Mark how he consoles him, for being as it were an orphan, when separated from him, it was natural that he should require such comfort. “Till I come,” he says, give attendance to reading the divine writings, to exhortation of one another, to teaching of all.

“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy.”

Here he calls teaching prophecy.”

He is referring again to **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):14** Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

Chrysostom does not understand that Paul is speaking of the spiritual gift that was given to Timothy “by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery”. The spiritual gift given to Timothy was given by prophecy, which is also a spiritual gift. Paul is not saying that teaching is prophecy. Chrysostom completely misinterprets the Scripture here. Teaching is explaining themes in the Bible, such as the promise of the Messiah, what it means to be born again, justification, glorification, the second coming. On the other hand, prophecy is inspired speaking by the Holy Spirit as in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):3** But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

A teacher is one who waters, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):5** Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? **6** I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

Apollos helped them understand the Scriptures, as we read in **Acts 18 (KJV):24** And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. **25** This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. **26** And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. **27** And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: **28** For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

It is evident that spiritual gifts were not being exercised in the church in the time of Chrysostom, for they had no understanding of what they were.

He continues, ““With the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.” He speaks not here of Presbyters, but of Bishops. For Presbyters cannot be supposed to have ordained a Bishop.”

Chrysostom ignores the simplicity of the Scripture. He did not understand that Bishops were Presbyters. But the presbytery here were not ordaining a bishop, but confirming a ministry gift.

He continues, “Ver. 15. “Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them.””

He refers to **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):15** Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

He continues, “Observe how often he gives him counsel concerning the same things, thus showing that a teacher ought above all things to be attentive to these points.

Ver. 16. “Take heed,” he says, “unto thyself, and unto the doctrine: continue in them.” That is, take heed to thyself, and teach others also.

“For in so doing thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.””

He refers to **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):16** Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

He continues, “It is well said, “Thou shalt save thyself.” For he that is “nourished up in the words of sound doctrine,” first receives the benefit of it himself. From admonishing others, he is touched with compunction himself. For these things are not said to Timothy only, but to all. And if such advice is addressed to him, who raised the dead, what shall be said to us? Christ also shows the duty of teachers, when He says, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto an householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.” (Matt. xiii. 52)”

He refers to **Matthew 13 (KJV):52** Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

He continues, “And the blessed Paul gives the same advice, that “we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” (Rom. xv. 4)”

He refers to **Romans 15 (KJV):4** For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

He continues, “This he practiced above all men, being brought up in the law of his fathers, at the feet of Gamaliel, whence he would afterwards naturally apply to reading: for he who exhorted others would himself first follow the advice he gave. Hence we find him continually appealing to the testimony of the prophets, and searching into their writings. Paul then applies to reading, for it is no slight advantage that is to be reaped from the Scriptures. But we are indolent, and we hear with carelessness and indifference. What punishment do we not deserve!

“That thy profiting may appear,” he says, “to all.”

Thus he would have him appear great and admirable in this respect also, showing that this was still necessary for him, for he wished that his “profiting should appear” not only in his life, but in the word of doctrine.

Chap. v. ver. 1. “Rebuke not an elder.”

Is he now speaking of the order? I think not, but of any elderly man. What then if he should need correction? Do not rebuke him, but address him as you would a father offending.”

He refers to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):1** Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; 2 The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.

He continues, “Ver. 1. “The elder women as mothers, the younger men as brethren; the younger women as sisters, with all purity.” Rebuke is in its own nature offensive, particularly when it is addressed to an old man, and when it proceeds from a young man too, there is a threefold show of forwardness. By the manner and the mildness of it, therefore, he would soften it. For it is possible to reprove without offense, if one will only make a point of this: it requires great discretion, but it may be done.”

And we are to speak the truth in love, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):15** But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Chrysostom has rightly interpreted the Scripture here. He continues, ““The younger men as brethren.” Why does he recommend this too here? With a view to the high spirit natural to young men, whence it is proper to soften reproof to them also with moderation.

“The younger women as sisters”; he adds, “with all purity.” Tell me not, he means, of merely avoiding sinful intercourse with them. There should not be even a suspicion. For since intimacy with young women is always suspicious, and yet a Bishop cannot always avoid it, he shows by adding these words, that “all purity” is required in such intimacy. But does Paul give this advice to Timothy? Yes, he says, for I am speaking to the world through him. But if Timothy was thus advised, let others consider what sort of conduct is required of them, that they should give no ground for suspicion, no shadow of pretext, to those who wish to calumniate.

Ver. 3. “Honor widows, that are widows indeed.””

He refers to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):3** Honour widows that are widows indeed.

He continues, “Why does he say nothing of virginity, nor command us to honor virgins? Perhaps there were not yet any professing that state, or they might have fallen from it. “For some,” he says, “are already turned aside after Satan.” (1 Tim. v. 15)”

He refers in context to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):14** I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. 15 For some are already turned aside after Satan.

He continues, “For a woman may have lost her husband, and yet not be truly a widow. As in order to be a virgin, it is not enough to be a stranger to marriage, but many other things are necessary, as blamelessness and perseverance; so the loss of a husband does not constitute a widow, but patience, with chastity and separation from all men. Such widows he justly bids us honor, or rather support. For they need support, being left desolate, and having no husband to stand up for them. Their state appears to the multitude despicable and inauspicious. Therefore he wishes them to receive the greater honor from the Priest, and the more so, because they are worthy of it.”

Again he refers to “the Priest”, when there is no such reference in the Scripture.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILIPPIANS, HOMILY I, page 184-185**, he refers to **Philippians 1 (KJV):1** Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops

and deacons: 2 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chrysostom says, “To the fellow Bishops and Deacons.” What is this? were there several Bishops of one city? Certainly not; but he called the Presbyters so. For then they still interchanged the titles, and the Bishop was called a Deacon.”

In the Church in the time of Chrysostom, according to Chrysostom, they “still interchanged the titles”, but a Bishop was over a city, and Presbyters were just elders in a church.

Actually, according to Acts 20:17-28, a Bishop was a Presbyter, which was an elder. So evidently things were changing. Not only so, but apparently according to Chrysostom, “the Bishop was called a Deacon”. We see that Chrysostom and the Church in his time had no real understanding of what a bishop or a deacon was according to Scripture.

And he says, referring to Timothy, “For that he was a Bishop appears by his saying to him, “Lay hands hastily on no man.” (1 Tim. v. 22) And again, “Which was given thee with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.” (1 Tim. iv. 14)”

But Paul refers to himself, Timothy, and Silvanus as apostles in **1 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):6** Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

This fact is not recognized even in the Church today. When Paul called for the “elders” at the Church at Ephesus in Acts 20:17, he called them overseers, as we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):28** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

The Greek word translated “elders” in the New Testament is the Greek word **πρεσβύτερος** (pronounced pres-bü'-te-ros). The word translated “presbytery” in the New Testament is the Greek word **πρεσβυτέριον** (pronounced pres-bü-te'-re-on), and is a presumed derivative of **πρεσβύτερος** (pronounced pres-bü'-te-ros), which is translated “elders”.

Chrysostom also says, “And again, in writing to Titus, he says, “For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge. If any man is blameless, the husband of one wife” (Tit. i. 5, 6); which he says of the Bishop. (1 Timothy 3:2)”

Paul does give the same requirement for the elders as for the bishops. This is because the elders are bishops as we noted in Acts 20:16-29.

Chrysostom himself says that a Bishop is over one city. But Paul is commanding Titus to appoint elders in every city, which is the job of the apostle. Chrysostom says that this is “of the Bishop”. But 1 Timothy 3:2 says nothing about caring for all the churches. A bishop is simply an overseer, who is also a presbyter or elder of a local church.

He also says, “So then, as I said, both the Presbyters were of old called Bishops and Deacons of Christ, and the Bishops Presbyters; and hence even now many Bishops write, “To my fellow-Presbyter,” and, “To my fellow-Deacon.” But otherwise the specific name is distinctly appropriated to each, the Bishop and the Presbyter. “To the fellow Bishops,” he says, “and Deacons,

Ver. 2. “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.””

He refers to **Philippians 1 (KJV):2** Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no Scriptural support for Chrysostom’s assertion that the Presbyters were

called Deacons. A Deacon was a servant of the local church, and not a Bishop, or a Presbyter. The first Deacons were appointed in **Acts 6 (KJV):1** And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. 2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

The Deacons were not teachers, but servants who served tables. This did not mean that that was the totality of their ministry, as we see in the ministry of Stephen in **Acts 6 (KJV):8** And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

And Chrysostom says, “He said in another of his writings, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief.” (Heb. xiii. 17)”

He refers to **Hebrews 13 (KJV):17** Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

The word “rule” in the Greek is ἡγέομαι (pronounced hayg-eh'-om-ahee); middle voice of a (presumed) strengthened form of G71; to lead, i.e. command (with official authority); figuratively, to deem, i.e. consider:—account, (be) chief, count, esteem, governor, judge, have the rule over, suppose, think. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2233**

And this Greek word is derived from ἄγω (pronounced ag'-o); a primary verb; properly, to lead; by implication, to bring, drive, (reflexively) go, (specially) pass (time), or (figuratively) induce:—be, bring (forth), carry, (let) go, keep, lead away, be open. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G71**

And the word “rule” in Hebrews 13:17 in the actual Greek is ἡγουμένοις (pronounced heg-oo-men-oys) which is a participle. Therefore, the verse could be translated as, “Obey them that are leading you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY III, page 387**, he says, “For when the Reader standing up says, “Thus saith the Lord,” and the Deacon stands and imposes silence on all, he does not say this as doing honor to the Reader, but to Him who speaks to all through him. If they knew that it was God who through His prophet speaks these things, they would cast away all their pride.”

So Chrysostom is saying that everything that was done by the ministers, the Deacon, the Reader, was of God, and that one should just believe this.

As ritual began to take over in the Church, it was assumed that everything that was heard by the ministers was of God.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY XI, page 441-442**, he says, “Discoursing of Bishops, and having described their character, and the qualities which they ought to possess, and having passed over the order of Presbyters, he proceeds to that of Deacons. The reason of this omission was, that between Presbyters and Bishops there was no great difference. Both had undertaken the office of Teachers and Presidents in the Church, and what he has said concerning Bishops is applicable to Presbyters. For they are only superior in having the power of ordination, and seem to have no other advantage over Presbyters.”

But the reason in 1 Timothy that Paul seems to have passed over Presbyters is because Presbyters were simply elders, who were also overseers, that is, bishops. So they were not passed over because they were different but because they were actually the same. The Church in the time of Chrysostom had elevated the Bishop to the place of an apostle. This was an invention of the early Church.

And he quotes Ver. 11. “Even so must the women be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.””

He refers to **1 Timothy 3 (KJV):11** Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

He continues, “Some have thought that this is said of women generally, but it is not so, for why should he introduce anything about women to interfere with his subject? He is speaking of those who hold the rank of Deaconesses.”

Chrysostom has rightly interpreted the Scripture here. He also says, “This must be understood therefore to relate to Deaconesses. For that order is necessary and useful and honorable in the Church. Observe how he requires the same virtue from the Deacons, as from the Bishops, for though they were not of equal rank, they must equally be blameless; equally pure.”

And he has also rightly interpreted the Scripture here as well. The Deacons were helpers. So Chrysostom did not say that the Bishops and the Deacons are of “equal rank”, but that “they were not of equal rank”. But he misunderstood the title of Bishop as above an elder, or presbyter.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY XIII, page 449-450**, he refers to **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):14** Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

And he says, ““With the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.” He speaks not here of Presbyters, but of Bishops. For Presbyters cannot be supposed to have ordained a Bishop.”

The word “gift” in verse 14 above in the Greek is **χάρισμα** (pronounced khar'-is-mah); from G5483; a (divine) gratuity, i.e. deliverance (from danger or passion); (specially), a (spiritual) endowment, i.e. (subjectively) religious qualification, or (objectively) miraculous faculty:—(free) gift. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5486**

Chrysostom ignores the simplicity of the Scripture. He did not understand that Bishops were Presbyters. The presbytery in this verse were not ordaining a bishop, but confirming a spiritual gift. But we see that the ranking of the Bishops had grown above the rank of Presbyters in the church in the time of Chrysostom.



## Ordination

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY XVI, page 464**

1 Timothy v. 21–23

“I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands hastily on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure. Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.”

Having spoken of Bishops and Deacons, of men, and women, of widows and elders, and of all others, and having shown how great was the authority of a Bishop, now he was speaking of judgment, he has added, “I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.” Thus fearfully he charges him. For though Timothy was his beloved son, he did not therefore stand in awe of him. For as he was not ashamed to say of himself, “Lest by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor. ix. 27); much less would he be afraid or ashamed in the case of Timothy. He called the Father and the Son to witness. But wherefore the elect Angels? From great moderation, as Moses said, “I call heaven and earth to witness” (Deut. iv. 26); and again, “Hear ye, O mountains, and strong foundations of the earth.” (Mic. vi. 2) He calls the Father and the Son to witness what he has said, making his appeal to Them against that future Day, that if anything should be done that ought not to be done, he was clear from the guilt of it.

“That thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.” That is, that thou deal impartially and equally between those who are upon trial and are to be judged by thee, that no one may preoccupy thy mind, or gain thee over to his side beforehand.

But who are the elect Angels? It is because there are some not elect. As Jacob calls to witness God and the heap (Gen. xxxi. 45), so we often take at once superior and inferior persons to witness; so great a thing is testimony. As if he had said, I call to witness God and His Son and His servants, that I have charged thee: so before them I charge thee. He impresses Timothy with fear; after which he adds, what was most vital, and bears most on the maintenance of the Church, the matter of Ordinations. “Lay hands,” he says, “suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins.” What is “suddenly”? Not upon a first, nor a second, nor a third trial, but after frequent and strict examination and circumspection. For it is an affair of no common peril. For thou wilt be responsible for the sins committed by him, as well his past as his future sins, because thou hast delegated to him this power. For if thou overlook the past unduly, thou art answerable for the future also, as being the cause of them, by placing him in that station, and of the past too, for not leaving him to mourn over them, and to be in compunction. For as thou art a partaker of his good actions, so art thou of his sins.

“Keep thyself pure.” This he says with reference to chastity.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “1 Timothy v. 21–23

“I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels, that thou

observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands hastily on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure. Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.””

He refers to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):21** I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. 22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure. 23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

He continues, “Having spoken of Bishops and Deacons, of men, and women, of widows and elders, and of all others, and having shown how great was the authority of a Bishop, now he was speaking of judgment, he has added, “I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.” Thus fearfully he charges him. For though Timothy was his beloved son, he did not therefore stand in awe of him. For as he was not ashamed to say of himself, “Lest by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor. ix. 27);”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 9 (KJV):27** But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

He continues, “much less would he be afraid or ashamed in the case of Timothy. He called the Father and the Son to witness. But wherefore the elect Angels? From great moderation, as Moses said, “I call heaven and earth to witness” (Deut. iv. 26); and again, “Hear ye, O mountains, and strong foundations of the earth.” (Mic. vi. 2)”

He refers to **Deuteronomy 4 (KJV):26** I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed.

And to **Micah 6 (KJV):2** Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel.

And In 1 Timothy 5:21 above, Paul was acknowledging the presence of angels, for we read in **Matthew 18 (KJV):10** Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

He continues, “He calls the Father and the Son to witness what he has said, making his appeal to Them against that future Day, that if anything should be done that ought not to be done, he was clear from the guilt of it.

“That thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.” That is, that thou deal impartially and equally between those who are upon trial and are to be judged by thee, that no one may preoccupy thy mind, or gain thee over to his side beforehand.

But who are the elect Angels? It is because there are some not elect. As Jacob calls to witness God and the heap (Gen. xxxi. 45), so we often take at once superior and inferior persons to witness; so great a thing is testimony.”

He refers in context to **Genesis 31 (KJV):45** And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar. 46 And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an

heap: and they did eat there upon the heap. 47 And Laban called it Jegarsahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed. 48 And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed;

And Lucifer's fall is mentioned in **Isaiah 14 (KJV):12** How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. 15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

And in **Ezekiel 28 (KJV):14** Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. 16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. 18 Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. 19 All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

He continues, "As if he had said, I call to witness God and His Son and His servants, that I have charged thee: so before them I charge thee. He impresses Timothy with fear; after which he adds, what was most vital, and bears most on the maintenance of the Church, the matter of Ordinations. "Lay hands," he says, "suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins." What is "suddenly"? Not upon a first, nor a second, nor a third trial, but after frequent and strict examination and circumspection. For it is an affair of no common peril. For thou wilt be responsible for the sins committed by him, as well his past as his future sins, because thou hast delegated to him this power. For if thou overlook the past unduly, thou art answerable for the future also, as being the cause of them, by placing him in that station, and of the past too, for not leaving him to mourn over them, and to be in compunction. For as thou art a partaker of his good actions, so art thou of his sins.

"Keep thyself pure." This he says with reference to chastity."

He is referring to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):21** I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. 22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure. 23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

Chrysostom seems to feel that the laying on of hands was solely for ordination purposes. But the laying on of hands was also to heal the sick, as we read in **Mark 16 (KJV):17** And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Jesus healed in this way, as we read in **Mark 6 (KJV):5** And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

The reason Paul warned Timothy about laying hands suddenly on people is because sin can be the reason for a sickness or disease, as we read in **James 5 (KJV):14** Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. 16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

And in 1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

When we lay hands on someone, we must be discerning. If sin is the reason for their sickness, we must call it out. If we discern sin in someone whom we are confirming as elders, we must call that out as well. This is what Paul means to say in **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):22** Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TITUS, HOMILY II, page 524-526**

Titus i. 5, 6

“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly.”

The whole life of men in ancient times was one of action and contention; ours on the contrary is a life of indolence. They knew that they were brought into the world for this purpose, that they might labor according to the will of Him who brought them into it; but we, as if we had been placed here but to eat and drink, and lead a life of pleasure, we pay no regard to spiritual things. I speak not only of the Apostles, but of those that followed them. You see them accordingly traversing all places, and pursuing this as their only business, living altogether as in a foreign land, as those who had no city upon earth. Hear therefore what the blessed Apostle saith,

“For this cause left I thee in Crete.”

As if the whole world had been one house, they divided it among themselves, administering its affairs everywhere, each taking care of his several portion of it.

“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are [R.V. were] wanting.”

He does not command this in an imperious manner; “that thou shouldest set in order,” he says. Here we see a soul free from all envy, seeking everywhere the advantage of his disciples, not curiously solicitous, whether the good was done by himself or by another. For where there

was a case of danger and great difficulty, he in his own person set it in order. But those things which were rather attended with honor and praise he committed to his disciple, as the ordination of Bishops, and such other things as required some farther arrangement, or, so to speak, to be brought to greater perfection. What sayest thou? does he farther set in order thy work? and dost thou not think it a disgrace bringing shame upon thee? By no means; for I look only to the common good, and whether it be done by me, or by another, it makes no difference to me. Thus it becomes him to be affected who presides in the Church, not to seek his own honor, but the common good.

“And ordain elders in every city,” here he is speaking of Bishops, as we have before said, **(Schaff Note: See on 1 Tim. iii. 7, Hom. x.)** “as I had appointed thee. If any is blameless.” “In every city,” he says, for he did not wish the whole island to be intrusted to one, but that each should have his own charge and care, for thus he would have less labor himself, and those under his rule would receive greater attention, if the Teacher had not to go about to the presidency of many Churches, but was left to be occupied with one only, and to bring that into order.

Ver. 6. “If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly.”

Why does he bring forward such an one? To stop the mouths of those heretics, who condemned marriage, showing that it is not an unholy thing in itself, but so far honorable, that a married man might ascend the holy throne; and at the same reproving the wanton, and not permitting their admission into this high office who contracted a second marriage. For he who retains no kind regard for her who is departed, how shall he be a good president? and what accusation would he not incur? For you all know, that though it is not forbidden by the laws to enter into a second marriage, yet it is a thing liable to many ill constructions. Wishing therefore a ruler to give no handle for reproach to those under his rule, he on this account says, “If any be blameless,” that is, if his life be free from reproach, if he has given occasion to no one to assail his character. Hear what Christ says, “If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matt. vi. 23)

“Having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly.”

We should observe what care he bestows upon children. For he who cannot be the instructor of his own children, how should he be the Teacher of others? If he cannot keep in order those whom he has had with him from the beginning, whom he has brought up, and over whom he had power both by the laws, and by nature, how will he be able to benefit those without? For if the incompetency of the father had not been great, he would not have allowed those to become bad whom from the first he had under his power. For it is not possible, indeed it is not, that one should turn out ill who is brought up with much care, and has received great attention. Sins are not so prevalent by nature, as to overcome so much previous care. But if, occupied in the pursuit of wealth, he has made his children a secondary concern, and not bestowed much care upon them, even so he is unworthy. For if when nature prompted, he was so void of affection or so senseless, that he thought more of his wealth than of his children, how should he be raised to the Episcopal throne, and so great rule? For if he was unable to restrain them it is a great proof of his weakness; and if he was unconcerned, his want of affection is much to be blamed. He then that neglects his own children, how shall he take care of other men's? And he has not only said, “not riotous,” but not even “accused of riot.” There must not be an ill report, or such an opinion of them.

Ver. 7. "For a Bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker."

For a ruler without, as he rules by law and compulsion, perhaps does not consult the wishes of those under his rule. But he who ought to rule men with their own consent, and who will be thankful for his rule, if he so conduct himself as to do everything of his own will, and share counsels with no one, makes his presidency tyrannical rather than popular. For he must be "blameless, as the steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry." For how shall he instruct others to rule that passion, who has not taught himself? For power leads on to many temptations, it makes a man more harsh and difficult to please, even him that was very mild, surrounding him with so many occasions of anger. If he have not previously practiced himself in this virtue, he will grow harsh, and will injure and destroy much that is under his rule.

"Not given to wine, no striker." Here he is speaking of the insolent man. For he should do all things by admonition or rebuke, and not by insolence. What necessity, tell me, for insult? He ought to terrify, to alarm, to penetrate the soul with the threat of hell. But he that is insulted becomes more impudent, and rather despises him that insults him. Nothing produces contempt more than insult; it disgraces the insolent person, and prevents his being respected, as he ought to be. Their discourse ought to be delivered with much caution. In reproving sins they should bear in mind the future judgment, but keep clear of all insolence. Yet if any prevent them from doing their duty, they must prosecute the matter with all authority. "Not a striker," he says. The teacher is the physician of souls. But the physician does not strike, but heals and restores him that has stricken him. "Not given to filthy lucre."

Ver. 8. "But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate."

Ver. 9. "Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught."

You see what intensity of virtue he required. "Not given to filthy lucre," that is, showing great contempt for money. "A lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy"; he means, giving away all his substance to them that need. "Temperate"; he speaks not here of one who fasts, but of one who commands his passions, his tongue, his hands, his eyes. For this is temperance, to be drawn aside by no passion.

"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught." By "faithful" is here meant "true," or that which was delivered through faith, not requiring reasonings, or questionings. "Holding fast," that is, having care of it, making it his business. What then, if he be ignorant of the learning that is without? For this cause, he says, "the faithful word, according to teaching."

"That he may be able both to exhort, and to convince the gainsayers." So that there is need not of pomp of words, but of strong minds, of skill in the Scriptures and of powerful thoughts. Do you not see that Paul put to flight the whole world, that he was more powerful than Plato and all the rest? But it was by miracles, you say. Not by miracles only, for if you peruse the Acts of the Apostles, you will find him often prevailing by his teaching previously to his miracles.

"That he may be able by sound doctrine to exhort," that is, to retain his own people, and to overthrow the adversaries. "And to convince the gainsayers." For if this is not done, all is lost. He who knows not how to combat the adversaries, and to "bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ," and to beat down reasonings, he who knows not what he ought to teach with regard to right doctrine, far from him be the Teacher's throne. For the other

qualities may be found in those under his rule, such as to be “blameless, to have his children in subjection, to be hospitable, just, holy.” But that which characterizes the Teacher is this, to be able to instruct in the word, to which no regard is now paid.

Ver. 10. “For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision;”

Ver. 11. “Whose mouths must be stopped.”

Seest thou how he shows that they are such? From their not wishing to be ruled, but to rule. For he has glanced at this. When therefore thou canst not persuade them, do not give them charges, but stop their mouths, for the benefit of others. But of what advantage will this be, if they will not obey, or are unruly? Why then should he stop their mouths? In order that others may be benefited by it.

“Who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre’s sake.”

For if he has undertaken the office of a Teacher, and is not able to combat these enemies, and to stop their mouths who are so shameless, he will become in each case the cause of their destruction who perish. And if some one has thus advised, “Seek not to be a judge, unless thou canst take away iniquity” (Ecclus. vii. 6); much more may we say here, “Seek not to be a Teacher, if thou art unequal to the dignity of the office; but though dragged to it, decline it.” Dost thou see that the love of power, the love of filthy lucre, is the cause of these evils? “Teaching things which they ought not,” he says, “for filthy lucre’s sake.”

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Titus i. 5, 6

“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly.””

He refers to **Titus 1 (KJV):5** For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: 6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

He continues, “The whole life of men in ancient times was one of action and contention; ours on the contrary is a life of indolence. They knew that they were brought into the world for this purpose, that they might labor according to the will of Him who brought them into it; but we, as if we had been placed here but to eat and drink, and lead a life of pleasure, we pay no regard to spiritual things. I speak not only of the Apostles, but of those that followed them. You see them accordingly traversing all places, and pursuing this as their only business, living altogether as in a foreign land, as those who had no city upon earth. Hear therefore what the blessed Apostle saith,

“For this cause left I thee in Crete.”

As if the whole world had been one house, they divided it among themselves, administering its affairs everywhere, each taking care of his several portion of it.

“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are [R.V. were] wanting.”

He does not command this in an imperious manner; “that thou shouldest set in order,” he says. Here we see a soul free from all envy, seeking everywhere the advantage of his disciples,

not curiously solicitous, whether the good was done by himself or by another. For where there was a case of danger and great difficulty, he in his own person set it in order. But those things which were rather attended with honor and praise he committed to his disciple, as the ordination of Bishops, and such other things as required some farther arrangement, or, so to speak, to be brought to greater perfection. What sayest thou? does he farther set in order thy work? and dost thou not think it a disgrace bringing shame upon thee? By no means; for I look only to the common good, and whether it be done by me, or by another, it makes no difference to me. Thus it becomes him to be affected who presides in the Church, not to seek his own honor, but the common good.

“And ordain elders in every city,” here he is speaking of Bishops, as we have before said, (**Schaff Note:** See on 1 Tim. iii. 7, Hom. x.) “as I had appointed thee. If any is blameless.””

And bishops as overseers were elders. He continues, ““In every city,” he says, for he did not wish the whole island to be intrusted to one, but that each should have his own charge and care, for thus he would have less labor himself, and those under his rule would receive greater attention, if the Teacher had not to go about to the presidency of many Churches, but was left to be occupied with one only, and to bring that into order.

Ver. 6. “If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly.””

He refers to **Titus 1 (KJV):6** If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

He continues, “Why does he bring forward such an one? To stop the mouths of those heretics, who condemned marriage, showing that it is not an unholy thing in itself, but so far honorable, that a married man might ascend the holy throne; and at the same reproving the wanton, and not permitting their admission into this high office who contracted a second marriage. For he who retains no kind regard for her who is departed, how shall he be a good president? and what accusation would he not incur? For you all know, that though it is not forbidden by the laws to enter into a second marriage, yet it is a thing liable to many ill constructions. Wishing therefore a ruler to give no handle for reproach to those under his rule, he on this account says, “If any be blameless,” that is, if his life be free from reproach, if he has given occasion to no one to assail his character. Hear what Christ says, “If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matt. vi. 23)”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):23** But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

So Chrysostom would allow a married man to “ascend the holy throne”, for it was a “high office”. It was certainly not one to be taken lightly, but it is never described in Scripture as a “holy throne”.

He continues, ““Having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly.””

We should observe what care he bestows upon children. For he who cannot be the instructor of his own children, how should he be the Teacher of others? If he cannot keep in order those whom he has had with him from the beginning, whom he has brought up, and over whom he had power both by the laws, and by nature, how will he be able to benefit those without? For if the incompetency of the father had not been great, he would not have allowed those to become bad whom from the first he had under his power. For it is not possible, indeed it is not, that one should turn out ill who is brought up with much care, and has received great



attention. Sins are not so prevalent by nature, as to overcome so much previous care. But if, occupied in the pursuit of wealth, he has made his children a secondary concern, and not bestowed much care upon them, even so he is unworthy. For if when nature prompted, he was so void of affection or so senseless, that he thought more of his wealth than of his children, how should he be raised to the Episcopal throne, and so great rule? For if he was unable to restrain them it is a great proof of his weakness; and if he was unconcerned, his want of affection is much to be blamed. He then that neglects his own children, how shall he take care of other men's? And he has not only said, "not riotous," but not even "accused of riot." There must not be an ill report, or such an opinion of them."

Again, he characterizes the position of bishop as an "Episcopal throne". It is never described in this way in the Scriptures.

He continues, "Ver. 7. "For a Bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker.""

He refers to **Titus 1 (KJV):7** For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

He continues, "For a ruler without, as he rules by law and compulsion, perhaps does not consult the wishes of those under his rule. But he who ought to rule men with their own consent, and who will be thankful for his rule, if he so conduct himself as to do everything of his own will, and share counsels with no one, makes his presidency tyrannical rather than popular. For he must be "blameless, as the steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry." For how shall he instruct others to rule that passion, who has not taught himself? For power leads on to many temptations, it makes a man more harsh and difficult to please, even him that was very mild, surrounding him with so many occasions of anger. If he have not previously practiced himself in this virtue, he will grow harsh, and will injure and destroy much that is under his rule.

"Not given to wine, no striker." Here he is speaking of the insolent man. For he should do all things by admonition or rebuke, and not by insolence. What necessity, tell me, for insult? He ought to terrify, to alarm, to penetrate the soul with the threat of hell."

Chrysostom thought that it was possible for one to lose their salvation. We discuss this under the heading, **Losing Salvation**.

He continues, "But he that is insulted becomes more impudent, and rather despises him that insults him. Nothing produces contempt more than insult; it disgraces the insolent person, and prevents his being respected, as he ought to be. Their discourse ought to be delivered with much caution. In reproving sins they should bear in mind the future judgment, but keep clear of all insolence. Yet if any prevent them from doing their duty, they must prosecute the matter with all authority. "Not a striker," he says. The teacher is the physician of souls. But the physician does not strike, but heals and restores him that has stricken him. "Not given to filthy lucre.""

Chrysostom has rightly interpreted the Scripture here.

He continues, "Ver. 8. "But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate."

Ver. 9. "Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught.""

He refers to **Titus 1 (KJV):8** But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

He continues, “You see what intensity of virtue he required. “Not given to filthy lucre,” that is, showing great contempt for money. “A lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy”; he means, giving away all his substance to them that need. “Temperate”; he speaks not here of one who fasts, but of one who commands his passions, his tongue, his hands, his eyes. For this is temperance, to be drawn aside by no passion.”

Yes, the word “temperate” in the Greek is **ἐγκρατής** (pronounced en-krä-ta's), from G1722 and G2904; strong in a thing (masterful), i.e. (figuratively and reflexively) self-controlled (in appetite, etc.):—temperate. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1468**

He continues, ““Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught.” By “faithful” is here meant “true,” or that which was delivered through faith, not requiring reasonings, or questionings. “Holding fast,” that is, having care of it, making it his business. What then, if he be ignorant of the learning that is without? For this cause, he says, “the faithful word, according to teaching.”

“That he may be able both to exhort, and to convince the gainsayers.” So that there is need not of pomp of words, but of strong minds, of skill in the Scriptures and of powerful thoughts. Do you not see that Paul put to flight the whole world, that he was more powerful than Plato and all the rest? But it was by miracles, you say. Not by miracles only, for if you peruse the Acts of the Apostles, you will find him often prevailing by his teaching previously to his miracles.

“That he may be able by sound doctrine to exhort,” that is, to retain his own people, and to overthrow the adversaries. “And to convince the gainsayers.” For if this is not done, all is lost. He who knows not how to combat the adversaries, and to “bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,” and to beat down reasonings, he who knows not what he ought to teach with regard to right doctrine, far from him be the Teacher’s throne.”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 10 (KJV):5** Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

And the word “sound” in Titus 1:9 above, as in “sound doctrine”, in the Greek is **ὕγιαίνω** (pronounced hü-ge-i'-no), from G5199; to have sound health, i.e. be well (in body); figuratively, to be uncorrupt (true in doctrine):—be in health, (be safe and) sound, (be) whole(-some).

**Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5198**

He continues, “For the other qualities may be found in those under his rule, such as to be “blameless, to have his children in subjection, to be hospitable, just, holy.” But that which characterizes the Teacher is this, to be able to instruct in the word, to which no regard is now paid.”

Apparently, the ability to instruct in the word was not regarded in the time of Chrysostom.

He continues, “Ver. 10. “For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision;”

Ver. 11. “Whose mouths must be stopped.””

He refers to **Titus 1 (KJV):10** For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: 11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

He continues, “Seest thou how he shows that they are such? From their not wishing to be ruled, but to rule. For he has glanced at this. When therefore thou canst not persuade them, do not give them charges, but stop their mouths, for the benefit of others. But of what advantage will this be, if they will not obey, or are unruly? Why then should he stop their mouths? In order that others may be benefited by it.

“Who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre’s sake.”

For if he has undertaken the office of a Teacher, and is not able to combat these enemies, and to stop their mouths who are so shameless, he will become in each case the cause of their destination who perish. And if some one has thus advised, “Seek not to be a judge, unless thou canst take away iniquity” (Ecclus. vii. 6);”

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 7 (KJV):6** Seek not to be judge, being not able to take away iniquity; lest at any time thou fear the person of the mighty, an stumblingblock in the way of thy uprightness.

He concludes, “much more may we say here, “Seek not to be a Teacher, if thou art unequal to the dignity of the office; but though dragged to it, decline it.” Dost thou see that the love of power, the love of filthy lucre, is the cause of these evils? “Teaching things which they ought not,” he says, “for filthy lucre’s sake.””

And we read in **James 3 (NASB):1** Let not many *of you* become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY XVI, page 464**, he says, “Having spoken of Bishops and Deacons, of men, and women, of widows and elders, and of all others, and having shown how great was the authority of a Bishop, now he was speaking of judgment, he has added, “I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.”

He says, “As if he had said, I call to witness God and His Son and His servants, that I have charged thee: so before them I charge thee. He impresses Timothy with fear; after which he adds, what was most vital, and bears most on the maintenance of the Church, the matter of Ordinations. “Lay hands,” he says, “suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins.” What is “suddenly”? Not upon a first, nor a second, nor a third trial, but after frequent and strict examination and circumspection. For it is an affair of no common peril. For thou wilt be responsible for the sins committed by him, as well his past as his future sins, because thou hast delegated to him this power. For if thou overlook the past unduly, thou art answerable for the future also, as being the cause of them, by placing him in that station, and of the past too, for not leaving him to mourn over them, and to be in compunction. For as thou art a partaker of his good actions, so art thou of his sins.”

He is referring to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):21** I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. 22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure. 23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

Chrysostom seems to feel that the laying on of hands was solely for ordination purposes. But the laying on of hands was also to heal the sick, as we read in **Mark 16 (KJV):17** And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Jesus healed in this way, as we read in **Mark 6 (KJV):5** And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

When we lay hands on someone, we must be discerning. If sin is the reason for their sickness, we must call it out. If we discern sin in someone whom we are confirming as elders, we must call that out as well. To ignore sin is to leave the door open for us to fall into their sin. This is what Paul means to say in **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):22** Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TITUS, HOMILY II, page 524-526**, he says, “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly.””

He refers to **Titus 1 (KJV):5** For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: 6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

Speaking of Paul, he says, “For where there was a case of danger and great difficulty, he in his own person set it in order. But those things which were rather attended with honor and praise he committed to his disciple, as the ordination of Bishops, and such other things as required some farther arrangement, or, so to speak, to be brought to greater perfection.”

And he says, “And ordain elders in every city,” here he is speaking of Bishops, as we have before said, (**Schaff Note:** See on 1 Tim. iii. 7, Hom. x.) “as I had appointed thee. If any is blameless.”

And he says, “Why does he bring forward such an one? To stop the mouths of those heretics, who condemned marriage, showing that it is not an unholy thing in itself, but so far honorable, that a married man might ascend the holy throne; and at the same reproving the wanton, and not permitting their admission into this high office who contracted a second marriage.”

He refers to **Titus 1 (KJV):6** If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

So Chrysostom would allow a married man to “ascend the holy throne”, for it was a “high office”. It was certainly not one to be taken lightly, but it is never described in Scripture as a “holy throne”, or a “high office”.

He again mentions “throne” as he says, “For if when nature prompted, he was so void of affection or so senseless, that he thought more of his wealth than of his children, how should he

be raised to the Episcopal throne, and so great rule?"

We see the influence of the world on the thinking of the early Church. The "Episcopal throne, and so great rule" speaks of the throne of a bishop in the time of Chrysostom. But this is nothing like the place of a bishop in the church according to the word of God.

## A Sacrilegious Priest

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY II, page 480-483**

Ver. 11. "Whereunto I am appointed a preacher and an Apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles."

Why does he so constantly repeat this, and call himself a teacher of the Gentiles? Because he wishes to persuade them that they also ought to draw close to the Gentiles. Be not therefore dismayed at my sufferings. The sinews of death are unstrung. It is not as a malefactor that I suffer, but because I am "a teacher of the Gentiles." At the same time he makes his discourse worthy of credit.

Ver. 12. "For the which cause I also suffer these things, nevertheless I am not ashamed. For I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

"I am not ashamed," he says. For are chains, are sufferings, a matter for shame? Be not then ashamed! Thou seest how he illustrates his teaching by his works. "These things," he says, "I suffer": I am cast into prison, I am banished; "For I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him (**Schaff Note:** Lit. "my deposit.") against That Day." What is "that which is committed"? The faith, the preaching of the Gospel. He, who committed this to him, he says, will preserve it unimpaired. I suffer everything, that I may not be despoiled of this treasure, and I am not ashamed at these things, so long as it is preserved uninjured. Or he calls the Faithful the charge which God committed to him, or which he committed to God. For he says, "Now I commit you to the Lord." (Acts xx. 32) That is, these things will not be unprofitable to me. And in Timothy is seen the fruit of the charge thus "committed." You see that he is insensible to sufferings, from the hope that he entertains of his disciples.

Moral. Such ought a Teacher to be, so to regard his disciples, to think them everything. "Now we live," he says, "if ye stand fast in the Lord." And again, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ?" (1 Thess. iii. 8, and ii. 19) You see his anxiety in this matter, his regard for the good of his disciples, not less than for his own. For teachers ought to surpass natural parents, to be more zealous than they. And it becomes their children to be kindly affectioned towards them. For he says, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that must give account." (Heb. xiii. 17) For say, is he subject to so dangerous a responsibility, and art thou not willing to obey him, and that too, for thy own benefit? For though his own state should be good, yet as long as thou art in a bad condition his anxiety continues, he has a double account to render. And consider what it is to be responsible and anxious for each of those who

are under his rule. What honor wouldest thou have reckoned equal, what service, in requital of such dangers? Thou canst not offer an equivalent. For thou hast not yet devoted thy soul for him, but he lays down his life for thee, and if he lays it not down here, when the occasion requires it, he loses it There. But thou art not willing to submit even in words. This is the prime cause of all these evils, that the authority of rulers is neglected, that there is no reverence, no fear. He says, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves." But now all is turned upside down and confounded. And this I say not for the sake of the rulers; (for what benefit will they have of the honor they receive from us, (**Schaff Note:** This expression shows that he was not yet Bishop.) except so far as we are rendered obedient;) but I say it for your advantage. For with respect to the future, they will not be benefited by the honor done them, but receive the greater condemnation, neither will they be injured as to the future by ill treatment, but will have the more excuse. But all this I desire to be done for your own sakes. For when rulers are honored by their people, this too is reckoned against them; as in the case of Eli it is said, "Did I not choose him out of his father's house?" (1 Sam. ii. 27) But when they are insulted, as in the instance of Samuel, God said, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me." (1 Sam. viii. 7) Therefore insult is their gain, honor their burden. What I say, therefore, is for your sakes, not for theirs. He that honors the Priest, will honor God also; and he who has learnt to despise the Priest, will in process of time insult God. "He that receiveth you," He saith, "receiveth Me." (Matt. x. 40) "Hold my priests in honor" (Ecclus. vii. 31?), He says. The Jews learned to despise God, because they despised Moses, and would have stoned him. For when a man is piously disposed towards the Priest, he is much more so towards God. And even if the Priest be wicked, God seeing that thou respectest him, though unworthy of honor, through reverence to Him, will Himself reward thee. For if "he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward" (Matt. x. 41); then he who honoreth and submitteth and giveth way to the Priest shall certainly be rewarded. For if in the case of hospitality, when thou knowest not the guest, thou receivest so high a recompense, much more wilt thou be requited, if thou obeyest him whom He requires thee to obey. "The Scribes and Pharisees," He says, "sit in Moses' seat; all therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not ye after their works." (Matt. xxiii. 2, 3) Knowest thou not what the Priest is? He is an Angel (**Schaff Note:** Or, "a messenger.") of the Lord. Are they his own words that he speaks? If thou despisest him, thou despisest not him, but God that ordained him. But how does it appear, thou askest, that he is ordained of God? Nay, if thou suppose it otherwise, thy hope is rendered vain. For if God worketh nothing through his means, thou neither hast any Laver, nor art partaker of the Mysteries, nor of the benefit of Blessings; thou art therefore not a Christian. What then, you say, does God ordain all, even the unworthy? God indeed doth not ordain all, but He worketh through all, though they be themselves unworthy, that the people may be saved. For if He spoke, for the sake of the people, by an ass, and by Balaam, a most wicked man, much more will He speak by the mouth of the Priest. What indeed will not God do or say for our salvation? By whom doth He not act? For if He wrought through Judas and those other that "prophesied," to whom He will say, "I never knew you; depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity" (Matt. vii. 22, 23); and if others "cast out devils" (Ps. vi. 8); will He not much more work through the Priests? Since if we were to make inquisition into the lives of our rulers, we should then become the ordainers of our own teachers, and all would be confusion; the feet would be uppermost, the head below. Hear Paul saying, "But with me it is a

very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment." (1 Cor. iv. 3) And again, "Why dost thou judge thy brother?" (Rom. xiv. 10) For if we may not judge our brother, much less our teacher. If God commands this indeed, thou doest well, and sinnest if thou do it not; but if the contrary, dare not do it, nor attempt to go beyond the lines that are marked out. After Aaron had made the golden calf, Corah, Dathan, and Abiram raised an insurrection against him. And did they not perish? Let each attend to his own department. For if he teach perverted doctrine, though he be an Angel, obey him not; but if he teach the truth, take heed not to his life, but to his words. Thou hast Paul to instruct thee in what is right both by words and works. But thou sayest, "He gives not to the poor, he does not govern well." Whence knowest thou this? Blame not, before thou art informed. Be afraid of the great account. Many judgments are formed upon mere opinion. Imitate thy Lord, who said, "I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, and if not, I will know." (Gen. xviii. 21) But if thou hast enquired, and informed thyself, and seen; yet await the Judge, and usurp not the office of Christ. To Him it belongs, and not to thee, to make this inquisition. Thou art an inferior servant, not a master. Thou art a sheep, be not curious concerning the shepherd, lest thou have to give account of thy accusations against him. But you say, How does he teach me that which he does not practice himself? It is not he that speaks to thee. If it be he whom thou obeyest, thou hast no reward. It is Christ that thus admonishes thee. And what do I say? Thou oughtest not to obey even Paul, if he speaks of himself, or anything human, but the Apostle, that has Christ speaking in him. Let not us judge one another's conduct, but each his own. Examine thine own life.

But thou sayest, "He ought to be better than I." Wherefore? "Because he is a Priest." And is he not superior to thee in his labors, his dangers, his anxious conflicts and troubles? But if he is not better, oughtest thou therefore to destroy thyself? These are the words of arrogance. For how is he not better than thyself? He steals, thou sayest, and commits sacrilege! How knowest thou this? Why dost thou cast thyself down a precipice? If thou shouldst hear it said that such an one hath a purple robe, (**Schaff Note:** This was treason in a subject. See Gibbon, c. xl.) though thou knewest it to be true, and couldest convict him, thou declinest to do it, and pretendest ignorance, not being willing to run into unnecessary danger. But in this case thou art so far from being backward, that even without cause thou exposest thyself to the danger. Nor think thou art not responsible for these words. Hear what Christ says, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." (Matt. xii. 36) And dost thou think thyself better than another, and dost thou not groan, and beat thy breast, and bow down thy head, and imitate the Publican?

And then thou destroyest thyself, though thou be better. Be silent, that thou cease not to be better. If thou speak of it, thou hast done away the merit; if thou thinkest it, I do not say so; if thou dost not think it, thou hast added much. For if a notorious sinner, when he confessed, "went home justified," he who is a sinner in a less degree, and is conscious of it, how will he not be rewarded? Examine thy own life. Thou dost not steal; but thou art rapacious, and overbearing, and guilty of many other such things. I say not this to defend theft; God forbid! deeply lament if there is any one really guilty of it, but I do not believe it. How great an evil is sacrilege, it is impossible to say. But I spare you. For I would not that our virtue should be rendered vain by accusing others. What was worse than the Publican? For it is true that he was a publican, and guilty of many offenses, yet because the Pharisee only said, "I am not as this

publican,” he destroyed all his merit. I am not, thou sayest, like this sacrilegious Priest. And dost not thou make all in vain?

This I am compelled to say, and to enlarge upon in my discourse, not so much because I am concerned for them, but because I fear for you, lest you should render your virtue vain by this boasting of yourselves, and condemnation of others. For hear the exhortation of Paul, “Let every one prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.” (Gal. vi. 4)

If you had a wound, tell me, and should go to a physician, would you stay him from salving and dressing your own wound, and be curious to enquire whether the physician had a wound, or not? and if he had, would you mind it? Or because he had it, would you forbear dressing your own, and say, A physician ought to be in sound health, and since he is not so, I shall let my wound go uncured? For will it be any palliation for him that is under rule, that his Priest is wicked? By no means. He will suffer the destined punishment, and you too will meet with that which is your due. For the Teacher now only fills a place. For “it is written, They shall all be taught of God.” (John vi. 45; Isa. liv. 13) “Neither shall they say, Know the Lord. For all shall know Me from the least to the greatest.” (Jer. xxxi. 34) Why then, you will say, does he preside? Why is he set over us? I beseech you, let us not speak ill of our teachers, nor call them to so strict an account, lest we bring evil upon ourselves. Let us examine ourselves, and we shall not speak ill of others. Let us reverence that day, on which he enlightened us. He who has a father, whatever faults he has, conceals them all. For it is said, “Glory not in the dishonor of thy father; for thy father’s dishonor is no glory unto thee. And if his understanding fail, have patience with him.” (Ecclus. iii. 10–12) And if this be said of our natural fathers, much more of our spiritual fathers. Reverence him, in that he every day ministers to thee, causes the Scriptures to be read, sets the house in order for thee, watches for thee, prays for thee, stands imploring God on thy behalf, offers supplications for thee, for thee is all his worship. Reverence all this, think of this, and approach him with pious respect. Say not, he is wicked. What of that? He that is not wicked, doth he of himself bestow upon thee these great benefits? By no means. Everything worketh according to thy faith. Not even the righteous man can benefit thee, if thou art unfaithful, nor the unrighteous harm thee, if thou art faithful. God, when He would save His people, wrought for the ark by Oxen. (1 Samuel 6:12) Is it the good life or the virtue of the Priest that confers so much on thee? The gifts which God bestows are not such as to be effects of the virtue of the Priest. All is of grace. His part is but to open his mouth, while God worketh all: the Priest only performs a symbol. Consider how wide was the distance between John and Jesus. Hear John saying, “I have need to be baptized of Thee” (Matt. iii. 14), and, “Whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.” (John i. 27) Yet notwithstanding this difference, the Spirit descended. Which John had not. For “of His fullness,” it is said, “we all have received.” (John i. 16) Yet nevertheless, It descended not till He was baptized. But neither was it John who caused It to descend. Why then is this done? That thou mayest learn that the Priest performs a symbol. No man differs so widely from another man, as John from Jesus, and yet with him the Spirit descended, that we may learn, that it is God who worketh all, that all is God’s doing. I am about to say what may appear strange, but be not astonished nor startled at it. The Offering is the same, whether a common man, or Paul or Peter offer it. It is the same which Christ gave to His disciples, and which the Priests now minister. This is nowise inferior to that, because it is not men that sanctify even this, but the Same who sanctified the one sanctifies the other also.



For as the words which God spake are the same which the Priest now utters, so is the Offering the same, and the Baptism, that which He gave. Thus the whole is of faith. The Spirit immediately fell upon Cornelius, because he had previously fulfilled his part, and contributed his faith. And this is His Body, as well as that. And he who thinks the one inferior to the other, knows not that Christ even now is present, even now operates. Knowing therefore these things, which we have not said without reason, but that we may conform your minds in what is right, and render you more secure for the future, keep carefully in mind what has been spoken. For if we are always hearers, and never doers, we shall reap no advantage from what is said. Let us therefore attend diligently to the things spoken. Let us imprint them upon our minds. Let us have them ever engraved upon our consciences, and let us continually ascribe glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 11. “Whereunto I am appointed a preacher and an Apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”

He refers to **2 Timothy 1 (KJV):11** Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

He continues, “Why does he so constantly repeat this, and call himself a teacher of the Gentiles? Because he wishes to persuade them that they also ought to draw close to the Gentiles. Be not therefore dismayed at my sufferings. The sinews of death are unstrung. It is not as a malefactor that I suffer, but because I am “a teacher of the Gentiles.” At the same time he makes his discourse worthy of credit.

Ver. 12. “For the which cause I also suffer these things, nevertheless I am not ashamed. For I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.””

He refers to **2 Timothy 1 (KJV):12** For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

He continues, ““I am not ashamed,” he says. For are chains, are sufferings, a matter for shame? Be not then ashamed! Thou seest how he illustrates his teaching by his works. “These things,” he says, “I suffer”: I am cast into prison, I am banished; “For I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him (**Schaff Note:** Lit. “my deposit.”) against That Day.” What is “that which is committed”? The faith, the preaching of the Gospel. He, who committed this to him, he says, will preserve it unimpaired. I suffer everything, that I may not be despoiled of this treasure, and I am not ashamed at these things, so long as it is preserved uninjured. Or he calls the Faithful the charge which God committed to him, or which he committed to God. For he says, “Now I commit you to the Lord.” (Acts xx. 32)”

He refers to **Acts 20 (KJV):32** And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

He continues, “That is, these things will not be unprofitable to me. And in Timothy is seen the fruit of the charge thus “committed.” You see that he is insensible to sufferings, from the hope that he entertains of his disciples.

Moral. Such ought a Teacher to be, so to regard his disciples, to think them everything.

“Now we live,” he says, “if ye stand fast in the Lord.” And again, “What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ?” (1 Thess. iii. 8, and ii. 19)”

He refers to **1 Thessalonians 3 (KJV):8** For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

And to **1 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):19** For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

He continues, “You see his anxiety in this matter, his regard for the good of his disciples, not less than for his own. For teachers ought to surpass natural parents, to be more zealous than they. And it becomes their children to be kindly affectioned towards them. For he says, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that must give account.” (Heb. xiii. 17)”

He refers to **Hebrews 13 (KJV):17** Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

He continues, “For say, is he subject to so dangerous a responsibility, and art thou not willing to obey him, and that too, for thy own benefit? For though his own state should be good, yet as long as thou art in a bad condition his anxiety continues, he has a double account to render. And consider what it is to be responsible and anxious for each of those who are under his rule. What honor wouldest thou have reckoned equal, what service, in requital of such dangers? Thou canst not offer an equivalent. For thou hast not yet devoted thy soul for him, but he lays down his life for thee, and if he lays it not down here, when the occasion requires it, he loses it There.”

So the priest could lose salvation if “he lays it not down here”.

Chrysostom continues, “But thou art not willing to submit even in words. This is the prime cause of all these evils, that the authority of rulers is neglected, that there is no reverence, no fear. He says, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves.” But now all is turned upside down and confounded. And this I say not for the sake of the rulers; (for what benefit will they have of the honor they receive from us, (**Schaff Note:** This expression shows that he was not yet Bishop.) except so far as we are rendered obedient;) but I say it for your advantage. For with respect to the future, they will not be benefited by the honor done them, but receive the greater condemnation, neither will they be injured as to the future by ill treatment, but will have the more excuse. But all this I desire to be done for your own sakes. For when rulers are honored by their people, this too is reckoned against them; as in the case of Eli it is said, “Did I not choose him out of his father’s house?” (1 Sam. ii. 27)”

He refers in context to **1 Samuel 2 (KJV):27** And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? 28 And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? 29 Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? 30 Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it

far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

He continues, “But when they are insulted, as in the instance of Samuel, God said, “They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me.” (1 Sam. viii. 7)”

He refers to **1 Samuel 8 (KJV):7** And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

He continues, “Therefore insult is their gain, honor their burden. What I say, therefore, is for your sakes, not for theirs. He that honors the Priest, will honor God also; and he who has learnt to despise the Priest, will in process of time insult God. “He that receiveth you,” He saith, “receiveth Me.” (Matt. x. 40) “Hold my priests in honor” (Ecclus. vii. 31?), He says.”

He refers to **Matthew 10 (KJV):40** He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

Nothing is said of priests in this Scripture.

And to **Ecclesiasticus 7 (KJV):31** Fear the Lord, and honor the priest; and give him his portion, as it is commanded thee; the firstfruits, and the trespass offering, and the gift of the shoulders, and the sacrifice of sanctification, and the firstfruits of the holy things.

Chrysostom writes as if the priesthood referred to in Ecclesiasticus 7:31 was still valid in his day, for he applies this to the priests in his time.

He continues, “The Jews learned to despise God, because they despised Moses, and would have stoned him. For when a man is piously disposed towards the Priest, he is much more so towards God. And even if the Priest be wicked, God seeing that thou respectest him, though unworthy of honor, through reverence to Him, will Himself reward thee. For if “he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward” (Matt. x. 41);

He refers to **Matthew 10 (KJV):41** He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

But again, nothing is mentioned of a priest here.

He continues, “then he who honoreth and submitteth and giveth way to the Priest shall certainly be rewarded. For if in the case of hospitality, when thou knowest not the guest, thou receivest so high a recompense, much more wilt thou be requited, if thou obeyest him whom He requires thee to obey. “The Scribes and Pharisees,” He says, “sit in Moses’ seat; all therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not ye after their works.” (Matt. xxiii. 2, 3)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 23 (KJV):1** Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, 2 Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: 3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

He continues, “Knowest thou not what the Priest is? He is an Angel (**Schaff Note:** Or, “a messenger.”) of the Lord. Are they his own words that he speaks? If thou despisest him, thou despisest not him, but God that ordained him. But how does it appear, thou askest, that he is ordained of God? Nay, if thou suppose it otherwise, thy hope is rendered vain. For if God worketh nothing through his means, thou neither hast any Laver, nor art partaker of the Mysteries, nor of the benefit of Blessings; thou art therefore not a Christian.”

The esteem of ritual by Chrysostom and the Church in time is quite evident here. We are not saved through priests, nor any of His servants. We are saved by God alone, through faith alone.

He continues, “What then, you say, does God ordain all, even the unworthy? God indeed doth not ordain all, but He worketh through all, though they be themselves unworthy, that the people may be saved. For if He spoke, for the sake of the people, by an ass, and by Balaam, a most wicked man, much more will He speak by the mouth of the Priest. What indeed will not God do or say for our salvation? By whom doth He not act? For if He wrought through Judas and those other that “prophesied,” to whom He will say, “I never knew you; depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity” (Matt. vii. 22, 23); and if others “cast out devils” (Ps. vi. 8);

He refers to **Matthew 7 (KJV):22** Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

And to **Psalms 6 (KJV):8** Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.

He continues, “will He not much more work through the Priests? Since if we were to make inquisition into the lives of our rulers, we should then become the ordainers of our own teachers, and all would be confusion; the feet would be uppermost, the head below. Hear Paul saying, “But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment.” (1 Cor. iv. 3)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 4 (KJV):3** But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. 4 For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

He continues, “And again, “Why dost thou judge thy brother?” (Rom. xiv. 10)”

He refers to **Romans 14 (KJV):10** But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

He continues, “For if we may not judge our brother, much less our teacher. If God commands this indeed, thou doest well, and sinnest if thou do it not; but if the contrary, dare not do it, nor attempt to go beyond the lines that are marked out. After Aaron had made the golden calf, Corah, Dathan, and Abiram raised an insurrection against him. And did they not perish? Let each attend to his own department. For if he teach perverted doctrine, though he be an Angel, obey him not; but if he teach the truth, take heed not to his life, but to his words. Thou hast Paul to instruct thee in what is right both by words and works. But thou sayest, “He gives not to the poor, he does not govern well.” Whence knowest thou this? Blame not, before thou art informed. Be afraid of the great account. Many judgments are formed upon mere opinion. Imitate thy Lord, who said, “I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, and if not, I will know.” (Gen. xviii. 21)”

He refers in context to **Genesis 18 (KJV):20** And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; 21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.

He continues, “But if thou hast enquired, and informed thyself, and seen; yet await the Judge, and usurp not the office of Christ. To Him it belongs, and not to thee, to make this inquisition. Thou art an inferior servant, not a master. Thou art a sheep, be not curious

concerning the shepherd, lest thou have to give account of thy accusations against him. But you say, How does he teach me that which he does not practice himself? It is not he that speaks to thee. If it be he whom thou obeyest, thou hast no reward. It is Christ that thus admonishes thee. And what do I say? Thou oughtest not to obey even Paul, if he speaks of himself, or anything human, but the Apostle, that has Christ speaking in him. Let not us judge one another's conduct, but each his own. Examine thine own life."

Chrysostom holds the office of the priest to be the "office of Christ". He did not realize that the priesthood had changed, as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):11** If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Jesus is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. The Levitical priesthood has been discontinued because of Jesus, who is "a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec".

He continues, "But thou sayest, "He ought to be better than I." Wherefore? "Because he is a Priest." And is he not superior to thee in his labors, his dangers, his anxious conflicts and troubles? But if he is not better, oughtest thou therefore to destroy thyself? These are the words of arrogance. For how is he not better than thyself? He steals, thou sayest, and commits sacrilege! How knowest thou this? Why dost thou cast thyself down a precipice? If thou shouldst hear it said that such an one hath a purple robe, (**Schaff Note:** This was treason in a subject. See Gibbon, c. xl.) though thou knewest it to be true, and couldest convict him, thou declinest to do it, and pretendest ignorance, not being willing to run into unnecessary danger. But in this case thou art so far from being backward, that even without cause thou exposest thyself to the danger. Nor think thou art not responsible for these words. Hear what Christ says, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." (Matt. xii. 36)"

He refers in context to **Matthew 12 (KJV):36** But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

We must speak the truth in love, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):15** But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

We are not justified by another's words, but by our words.

He continues, "And dost thou think thyself better than another, and dost thou not groan, and beat thy breast, and bow down thy head, and imitate the Publican?"

He refers to **Luke 18 (KJV):9** And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13 And

the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

He continues, “And then thou destroyest thyself, though thou be better. Be silent, that thou cease not to be better. If thou speak of it, thou hast done away the merit; if thou thinkest it, I do not say so; if thou dost not think it, thou hast added much. For if a notorious sinner, when he confessed, “went home justified,” he who is a sinner in a less degree, and is conscious of it, how will he not be rewarded? Examine thy own life. Thou dost not steal; but thou art rapacious, and overbearing, and guilty of many other such things. I say not this to defend theft; God forbid! deeply lament if there is any one really guilty of it, but I do not believe it. How great an evil is sacrilege, it is impossible to say. But I spare you. For I would not that our virtue should be rendered vain by accusing others. What was worse than the Publican? For it is true that he was a publican, and guilty of many offenses, yet because the Pharisee only said, “I am not as this publican,” he destroyed all his merit. I am not, thou sayest, like this sacrilegious Priest. And dost not thou make all in vain?”

This I am compelled to say, and to enlarge upon in my discourse, not so much because I am concerned for them, but because I fear for you, lest you should render your virtue vain by this boasting of yourselves, and condemnation of others. For hear the exhortation of Paul, “Let every one prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.” (Gal. vi. 4)”

He refers to **Galatians 6 (KJV):4** But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

He continues, “If you had a wound, tell me, and should go to a physician, would you stay him from salving and dressing your own wound, and be curious to enquire whether the physician had a wound, or not? and if he had, would you mind it? Or because he had it, would you forbear dressing your own, and say, A physician ought to be in sound health, and since he is not so, I shall let my wound go uncured? For will it be any palliation for him that is under rule, that his Priest is wicked? By no means. He will suffer the destined punishment, and you too will meet with that which is your due. For the Teacher now only fills a place. For “it is written, They shall all be taught of God.” (John vi. 45; Isa. liv. 13) “Neither shall they say, Know the Lord. For all shall know Me from the least to the greatest.” (Jer. xxxi. 34)”

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):45** It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

And to **Isaiah 54 (KJV):13** And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

And to **Jeremiah 31 (KJV):34** And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

He continues “Why then, you will say, does he preside? Why is he set over us? I beseech you, let us not speak ill of our teachers, nor call them to so strict an account, lest we bring evil upon ourselves. Let us examine ourselves, and we shall not speak ill of others. Let us reverence that day, on which he enlightened us. He who has a father, whatever faults he has, conceals

them all. For it is said, “Glory not in the dishonor of thy father; for thy father’s dishonor is no glory unto thee. And if his understanding fail, have patience with him.” (Ecclus. iii. 10–12)”

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 3 (KJV):10** Glory not in the dishonour of thy father; for thy father's dishonour is no glory unto thee. 11 For the glory of a man is from the honour of his father; and a mother in dishonour is a reproach to the children. 12 My son, help thy father in his age, and grieve him not as long as he liveth.

He continues, “And if this be said of our natural fathers, much more of our spiritual fathers. Reverence him, in that he every day ministers to thee, causes the Scriptures to be read, sets the house in order for thee, watches for thee, prays for thee, stands imploring God on thy behalf, offers supplications for thee, for thee is all his worship. Reverence all this, think of this, and approach him with pious respect. Say not, he is wicked. What of that? He that is not wicked, doth he of himself bestow upon thee these great benefits? By no means. Everything worketh according to thy faith. Not even the righteous man can benefit thee, if thou art unfaithful, nor the unrighteous harm thee, if thou art faithful. God, when He would save His people, wrought for the ark by Oxen. (1 Samuel 6:12)”

He refers to **1 Samuel 6 (NASB):12** And the cows took the straight way in the direction of Beth-shemesh; they went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right or to the left. And the lords of the Philistines followed them to the border of Beth-shemesh.

He continues, “Is it the good life or the virtue of the Priest that confers so much on thee? The gifts which God bestows are not such as to be effects of the virtue of the Priest. All is of grace. His part is but to open his mouth, while God worketh all: the Priest only performs a symbol. Consider how wide was the distance between John and Jesus. Hear John saying, “I have need to be baptized of Thee” (Matt. iii. 14), and, “Whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.” (John i. 27) Yet notwithstanding this difference, the Spirit descended. Which John had not. For “of His fullness,” it is said, “we all have received.” (John i. 16)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 3 (KJV):14** But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. 16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

And to **John 1 (KJV):27** He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

And to **John 1 (KJV):16** And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

He continues, “Yet nevertheless, It descended not till He was baptized. But neither was it John who caused It to descend. Why then is this done? That thou mayest learn that the Priest performs a symbol. No man differs so widely from another man, as John from Jesus, and yet with him the Spirit descended, that we may learn, that it is God who worketh all, that all is God’s doing. I am about to say what may appear strange, but be not astonished nor startled at it. The Offering is the same, whether a common man, or Paul or Peter offer it. It is the same which Christ gave to His disciples, and which the Priests now minister. This is nowise inferior to that, because it is not men that sanctify even this, but the Same who sanctified the one sanctifies the other also. For as the words which God spake are the same which the Priest now utters, so is the

Offering the same, and the Baptism, that which He gave. Thus the whole is of faith. The Spirit immediately fell upon Cornelius, because he had previously fulfilled his part, and contributed his faith. And this is His Body, as well as that. And he who thinks the one inferior to the other, knows not that Christ even now is present, even now operates. Knowing therefore these things, which we have not said without reason, but that we may conform your minds in what is right, and render you more secure for the future, keep carefully in mind what has been spoken. For if we are always hearers, and never doers, we shall reap no advantage from what is said. Let us therefore attend diligently to the things spoken. Let us imprint them upon our minds. Let us have them ever engraved upon our consciences, and let us continually ascribe glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.”

There is no excuse for a “sacrilegious Priest” before God. We are not bound to obey wicked ministers, as we read in **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):19** Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. **20** Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

Not only was Chrysostom, and the Church in his time, upholding an invalid ministry of priests over the people, he was treating the priests as rulers over the people, to be obeyed simply because of their office. This is known as the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which we read of in **Revelation 2 (KJV):15** So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

The word “Nicolaitanes” in Greek is **Νικολαΐτης** (pronounced ne-ko-lä-e'-tas), from G3532; a Nicolaite, i.e. adherent of Nicolaus:—Nicolaitane. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1097**

And this Greek word derives from **Νικόλαος** (pronounced) ne-ko'-lä-os), from G3534 and G2994; victorious over the people; Nicolaus, a heretic:—Nicolaus.

Nicolaus is derived from two Greek words. The first is **νίκος** (pronounced ne'-kos), from G3529; a conquest (concretely), i.e. (by implication) triumph:—victory. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3534**

The second is **Λαοδικεύς** (pronounced lä-o-de-kyü's), from G2993; a Laodicean, i.e. inhabitant of Laodicia:—Laodicean. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2994**

And this Greek word comes from **Λαοδίκεια** (pronounced ä-o-de'-ka-ä), from a compound of G2992 and G1349; Laodicia, a place in Asia Minor:—Laodicea. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2993**

This Greek word is derived from **λαός** (pronounced lä-o's), apparently a primary word; a people (in general; thus differing from G1218, which denotes one's own populace):—people. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2992**

And from **δίκη** (pronounced de'-ka), probably from G1166; right (as self-evident), i.e. justice (the principle, a decision, or its execution):—judgment, punish, vengeance. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1349**

So the Nicolaitanes were those who held the doctrine that conquered the people.

## Commentary Summary

In Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY,



**HOMILY II, page 480-483**, he says, “You see his anxiety in this matter, his regard for the good of his disciples, not less than for his own. For teachers ought to surpass natural parents, to be more zealous than they. And it becomes their children to be kindly affectioned towards them. For he says, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that must give account.” (Heb. xiii. 17)”

He refers to **Hebrews 13 (KJV):17** Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

And he warns, “And consider what it is to be responsible and anxious for each of those who are under his rule. What honor wouldest thou have reckoned equal, what service, in requital of such dangers? Thou canst not offer an equivalent. For thou hast not yet devoted thy soul for him, but he lays down his life for thee, and if he lays it not down here, when the occasion requires it, he loses it There.”

So in Chrysostom’s thinking, the priest could lose salvation if “he lays it not down here, when the occasion requires it”.

And he says, “And even if the Priest be wicked, God seeing that thou respectest him, though unworthy of honor, through reverence to Him, will Himself reward thee.”

And he adds, “Knowest thou not what the Priest is? He is an Angel (**Schaff Note:** Or, “a messenger.”) of the Lord. Are they his own words that he speaks? If thou despisest him, thou despisest not him, but God that ordained him. But how does it appear, thou askest, that he is ordained of God? Nay, if thou suppose it otherwise, thy hope is rendered vain. For if God worketh nothing through his means, thou neither hast any Laver, nor art partaker of the Mysteries, nor of the benefit of Blessings; thou art therefore not a Christian.”

The esteem of ritual by Chrysostom and the Church in his time is quite evident here. We are not saved through priests, nor any of His servants, nor through any of the rituals they performed. We are saved by God alone, through faith alone. All believers have an anointing of the Holy Spirit, and they are not dependent on a man, a priest, or a deacon, as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):27** But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

Chrysostom holds the office of the priest to be the “office of Christ”. He did not realize that the priesthood had changed, as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):11** If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Jesus is a “priest forever after the order of Melchisedec”, and “after the power of an endless life”. The Levitical priesthood has been discontinued because of Jesus.

Chrysostom also says, “How great an evil is sacrilege, it is impossible to say. But I spare

you. For I would not that our virtue should be rendered vain by accusing others. What was worse than the Publican? For it is true that he was a publican, and guilty of many offenses, yet because the Pharisee only said, "I am not as this publican," he destroyed all his merit. I am not, thou sayest, like this sacrilegious Priest. And dost not thou make all in vain?"

There is no excuse for a "sacrilegious Priest" before God. We are not bound to obey wicked ministers, as we read in **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):**19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. 20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

Not only was Chrysostom, and the Church in his time, upholding an invalid ministry of priests over the people, he was treating the priests as rulers over the people, to be obeyed simply because of their office, even if they were "wicked", as we read before when he said, "And even if the Priest be wicked, God seeing that thou respectest him, though unworthy of honor, through reverence to Him, will Himself reward thee."

This is known as the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which we read of in **Revelation 2 (KJV):**15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

The Nicolaitanes were those who held the doctrine that they ruled over the people.

## Peter

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, Homily X, Matt. III. 1, 2, page 64-65

8. Let us beware therefore of saying anything about ourselves, for this renders us both odious with men and abominable to God. For this reason, the greater the good works we do, the less let us say of ourselves; this being the way to reap the greatest glory both with men and with God. Or rather, not only glory from God, but a reward, yea, a great recompense. Demand not therefore a reward that thou mayest receive a reward. Confess thyself to be saved by grace, that He may profess Himself a debtor to thee; and not for thy good works only, but also for such rightness of mind. For when we do good works, we have Him debtor for our good works only; but when we do not so much as think we have done any good work, then also for this disposition itself; and more for this, than for the other things: so that this is equivalent to our good works. For should this be absent, neither will they appear great. For in the same way, we too, when we have servants, (Luke xvii. 10) do then most approve them when, after having performed all their service with good will, they do not think they have done anything great. Wherefore, if thou wouldest make thy good deeds great, do not think them to be great, and then they will be great.

It was in this way that the centurion also said, "I am not fit that thou shouldest enter under my roof;" because of this, he became worthy, and was "marvelled at" (Matt. viii. 8) above all Jews. On this wise again Paul saith, "I am not meet to be called an apostle;" (1 Cor. xv. 9) because of this he became even first of all. So likewise John: "I am not meet to loose the latchet of His shoe;" (Mark i. 7; Luke iii. 16; John i. 27, iii. 29) because of this he was the "friend of the Bridegroom," and the hand which he affirmed to be unworthy to touch His shoes, this did Christ draw unto His own head. (**Schaff Note:** Alluding to Matthew iii. 14, 15; and to

the custom of the ancient Church of adding imposition of hands for the gift of the strengthening Spirit immediately on baptism, if the bishop were present. See Bingham, xii. 1, 1, and the writers quoted by him, especially Tertullian, de Bapt. 7. "As soon as we are come out of the water, we are anointed with the consecrated oil...Then we receive imposition of hands, summoning and inviting the Holy Spirit in the way of solemn benediction." [*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. iii. p. 672. The second sentence is the beginning of chap. 8 in Tertullian's treatise.—R.] So Peter too said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man;" (Luke v. 8) because of this he became a foundation of the Church.

For nothing is so acceptable to God as to number one's self with the last. This is a first principle of all practical wisdom. ([φιλοσοφία.]) For he that is humbled, and bruised in heart, will not be vainglorious, will not be wrathful, will not envy his neighbor, will not harbor any other passion. For neither when a hand is bruised, though we strive ten thousand times, shall we be able to lift it up on high. If therefore we were thus to bruise our heart ([ψυχῆ.]) likewise, though it were stirred by ten thousand swelling passions, it could not be lifted up, no, not ever so little. For if a man, by mourning for things pertaining to this life, drives out all the diseases of his soul, much more will he, who mourns for sins, enjoy the blessing of self-restraint. ([τ φιλοσοφία.])

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, "8. Let us beware therefore of saying anything about ourselves, for this renders us both odious with men and abominable to God. For this reason, the greater the good works we do, the less let us say of ourselves; this being the way to reap the greatest glory both with men and with God. Or rather, not only glory from God, but a reward, yea, a great recompense. Demand not therefore a reward that thou mayest receive a reward. Confess thyself to be saved by grace, that He may profess Himself a debtor to thee; and not for thy good works only, but also for such rightness of mind."

And this agrees with **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

He continues, "For when we do good works, we have Him debtor for our good works only; but when we do not so much as think we have done any good work, then also for this disposition itself; and more for this, than for the other things: so that this is equivalent to our good works. For should this be absent, neither will they appear great. For in the same way, we too, when we have servants, (Luke xvii. 10) do then most approve them when, after having performed all their service with good will, they do not think they have done anything great."

He refers to **Luke 17 (KJV):10** So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

He continues, "Wherefore, if thou wouldest make thy good deeds great, do not think them to be great, and then they will be great.

It was in this way that the centurion also said, "I am not fit that thou shouldest enter under my roof;" because of this, he became worthy, and was "marvelled at" (Matt. viii. 8) above all Jews."

He refers in context to **Matthew 8 (KJV):8** The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. 9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and

he doeth it. 10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

He continues, “On this wise again Paul saith, “I am not meet to be called an apostle;” (1 Cor. xv. 9) because of this he became even first of all.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):9** For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

He continues, “So likewise John: “I am not meet to loose the latchet of His shoe;” (Mark i. 7; Luke iii. 16; John i. 27, iii. 29)”

He refers to **Mark 1 (KJV):7** And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

And to **Luke 3 (KJV):16** John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

And to **John 1 (KJV):27** He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

And to **John 3 (KJV):29** He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

He continues, “because of this he was the “friend of the Bridegroom,” and the hand which he affirmed to be unworthy to touch His shoes, this did Christ draw unto His own head. (**Schaff Note:** Alluding to Matthew iii. 14, 15; and to the custom of the ancient Church of adding imposition of hands for the gift of the strengthening Spirit immediately on baptism, if the bishop were present. See Bingham, xii. 1, 1, and the writers quoted by him, especially Tertullian, de Bapt. 7. “As soon as we are come out of the water, we are anointed with the consecrated oil...Then we receive imposition of hands, summoning and inviting the Holy Spirit in the way of solemn benediction.” [*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. iii. p. 672. The second sentence is the beginning of chap. 8 in Tertullian's treatise.—R.]”

Chrysostom continues, “So Peter too said, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man;” (Luke v. 8) because of this he became a foundation of the Church.”

He refers to **Luke 5 (KJV):8** When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

He continues, “For nothing is so acceptable to God as to number one's self with the last. This is a first principle of all practical wisdom. ([φιλοσοφία]) For he that is humbled, and bruised in heart, will not be vainglorious, will not be wrathful, will not envy his neighbor, will not harbor any other passion. For neither when a hand is bruised, though we strive ten thousand times, shall we be able to lift it up on high. If therefore we were thus to bruise our heart ([ψυχῆ]) likewise, though it were stirred by ten thousand swelling passions, it could not be lifted up, no, not ever so little. For if a man, by mourning for things pertaining to this life, drives out all the diseases of his soul, much more will he, who mourns for sins, enjoy the blessing of self-restraint. ([τ φιλοσοφία.]”

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XXIX, page 547**

...And let not the shepherds only, but the sheep also hear this; that they may make the shepherds the more active minded, that they may the more encourage their good-will: I do not mean by anything else but by yielding all compliance and obedience. Thus Paul also bade them, saying, "Obey them which have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that must give account." (Heb. xiii. 17) And when he says, "watch," he means thousands of labors, cares and dangers. For the good Shepherd, who is such as Christ wisheth for, is contending, before countless witnesses. For He died once for him; but this man ten thousand times for the flock, if, that is, he be such a shepherd as he ought to be; for such an one can die every day. (See on Rom. viii. 36. p. 456) And therefore do ye, as being acquainted with what the labor is, coöperate with them, with prayers, with zeal, with readiness, with affection, that both we may have to boast of you, and you of us. For on this ground He entrusted this to the chief of the Apostles, who also loved Him more than the rest; after first asking him if He was loved by him, that thou mayest learn that this before other things, is held as a proof of love to Him. For this requireth a vigorous soul. This I have said of the best shepherds; not of myself and those of our days, but of any one that may be such as Paul was, such as Peter, such as Moses. These then let us imitate, both the rulers of us and the ruled. For the ruled may be in the place of a shepherd to his family, to his friends, to his servants, to his wife, to his children: and if we so order our affairs we shall attain to all manner of good things. Which God grant that we may all attain unto, by the grace and love toward man, etc.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, "...And let not the shepherds only, but the sheep also hear this; that they may make the shepherds the more active minded, that they may the more encourage their good-will: I do not mean by anything else but by yielding all compliance and obedience. Thus Paul also bade them, saying, "Obey them which have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that must give account." (Heb. xiii. 17)"

He refers to **Hebrews 13 (KJV):17** Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

He continues, "And when he says, "watch," he means thousands of labors, cares and dangers. For the good Shepherd, who is such as Christ wisheth for, is contending, before countless witnesses. For He died once for him; but this man ten thousand times for the flock, if, that is, he be such a shepherd as he ought to be; for such an one can die every day. (See on Rom. viii. 36. p. 456)"

He refers in context to **Romans 8 (KJV):36** As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

He continues, "And therefore do ye, as being acquainted with what the labor is, coöperate with them, with prayers, with zeal, with readiness, with affection, that both we may have to boast of you, and you of us. For on this ground He entrusted this to the chief of the Apostles, who also loved Him more than the rest; after first asking him if He was loved by him, that thou mayest learn that this before other things, is held as a proof of love to Him."

He refers to **John 21 (KJV):15** So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou

knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

He continues, "For this requireth a vigorous soul. This I have said of the best shepherds; not of myself and those of our days, but of any one that may be such as Paul was, such as Peter, such as Moses. These then let us imitate, both the rulers of us and the ruled. For the ruled may be in the place of a shepherd to his family, to his friends, to his servants, to his wife, to his children: and if we so order our affairs we shall attain to all manner of good things. Which God grant that we may all attain unto, by the grace and love toward man, etc."

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XXXVIII, page 229**

[5.] Ver. 5. "And that He appeared to Cephas:" he names immediately the most credible of all. "Then to the twelve."

Ver. 6. "Then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep."

Ver. 7. "Then he appeared to James; then to all the Apostles." Ver. 8. "And last of all, as unto one born out of due time, he appeared to me also." Thus, since he had mentioned the proof from the Scriptures, he adds also that by the events, producing as witnesses of the resurrection, after the prophets, the apostles and other faithful men. Whereas if he meant that other resurrection, the deliverance from sin, it were idle for him to say, He appeared to such and such an one; for this is the argument of one who is establishing the resurrection of the body, not of one obscurely teaching deliverance from sins. Wherefore neither said he once for all, "He appeared," although it were sufficient for him to do so, setting down the expression in common: but now both twice and thrice, and almost in each several case of them that had seen Him he employs it. For "He appeared," saith he, "to Cephas, He appeared to above five hundred brethren, He appeared to me also."

Yet surely the Gospel saith the contrary, that He was seen of Mary first. (Mark xvi. 9) But among men He was seen of him first who did most of all long to see Him.

But of what twelve apostles doth he here speak? For after He was received up, Matthias was taken into the number, not after the resurrection immediately. But it is likely that He appeared even after He was received up. At any rate, this our apostle himself after His ascension was both called, and saw Him. Therefore neither doth he set down the time, but simply and without defining recounts the appearance. For indeed it is probable that many took place; wherefore also John said, "This third time He was manifested." (John xxi. 14)

"Then He appeared to above five hundred brethren." Some say that "above," is above from heaven; that is, "not walking upon earth, but above and overhead He appeared to them:" adding, that it was Paul's purpose to confirm, not the resurrection only, but also the ascension. Others say that the expression, "above five hundred," means, "more than five hundred."

"Of whom the greater part remain until now." Thus, "though I relate events of old," saith

he, “yet have I living witnesses.” “But some are fallen asleep.” He said not, “are dead,” but, “are fallen asleep,” by this expression also again confirming the resurrection. “After that, He was seen of James.” I suppose, His brother. For the Lord is said to have Himself ordained him and made him Bishop in Jerusalem first. “Then to all the apostles.” For there were also other apostles, as the seventy.

“And last of all he appeared unto me also, as unto one born out of due time.” This is rather an expression of modesty than any thing else. For not because he was the least, therefore did he appear to him after the rest. Since even if He did call him last, yet he appeared more illustrious than many which were before him, yea rather than all. And the five hundred brethren too were not surely better than James, because He appeared to them before him.

Why did He not appear to all at the same time? That He might first sow the seeds of faith. For he that saw Him first and was exactly and fully assured, told it unto the residue: then their report coming first placed the hearer in expectation of this great wonder, and made way before for the faith of sight. Therefore neither did He appear to all together, nor in the beginning to many, but to one alone first, and him the leader of the whole company and the most faithful: since indeed there was great need of a most faithful soul to be first to receive this sight. For those who saw him after others had seen him, and heard it from them, had in their testimony what contributed in no small degree to their own faith and tended to prepare their mind beforehand; but he who was first counted worthy to see Him, had need, as I have said, of great faith, not to be confounded by a sight so contrary to expectation. Therefore he appears to Peter first. For he that first confessed Him to be Christ was justly also counted worthy first to behold His resurrection. And not on this account alone doth He appear to him first, but also because he had denied Him, more abundantly to comfort him and to signify that he is not despaired of, before the rest He vouchsafed him even this sight and to him first entrusted His sheep. Therefore also He appeared to the women first. Because this sex was made inferior, therefore both in His birth and in His resurrection this first tastes of His grace.

But after Peter, He appears also to each at intervals, and at one time to fewer, at another to more, hereby making them witnesses and teachers of each other, and rendering His apostles trustworthy in all that they said.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “[5.] Ver. 5. “And that He appeared to Cephas:” he names immediately the most credible of all. “Then to the twelve.”

Ver. 6. “Then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep.”

Ver. 7. “Then he appeared to James; then to all the Apostles.” Ver. 8. “And last of all, as unto one born out of due time, he appeared to me also.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):5** And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

So he considered Cephas, or Peter, “the most credible of all”.

He continues, “Thus, since he had mentioned the proof from the Scriptures, he adds also that by the events, producing as witnesses of the resurrection, after the prophets, the apostles and other faithful men. Whereas if he meant that other resurrection, the deliverance from sin, it

were idle for him to say, He appeared to such and such an one; for this is the argument of one who is establishing the resurrection of the body, not of one obscurely teaching deliverance from sins. Wherefore neither said he once for all, “He appeared,” although it were sufficient for him to do so, setting down the expression in common: but now both twice and thrice, and almost in each several case of them that had seen Him he employs it. For “He appeared,” saith he, “to Cephas, He appeared to above five hundred brethren, He appeared to me also.”

Yet surely the Gospel saith the contrary, that He was seen of Mary first. (Mark xvi. 9)”

He refers to **Mark 16 (KJV):9** Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

He continues, “But among men He was seen of him first who did most of all long to see Him.”

This is not clearly stated in the Scriptures. We read in context in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):3** For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: 5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

Paul is not recording an exact succession of appearances of the Lord after His resurrection.

Chrysostom continues, “But of what twelve apostles doth he here speak? For after He was received up, Matthias was taken into the number, not after the resurrection immediately. But it is likely that He appeared even after He was received up. At any rate, this our apostle himself after His ascension was both called, and saw Him. Therefore neither doth he set down the time, but simply and without defining recounts the appearance. For indeed it is probable that many took place; wherefore also John said, “This third time He was manifested.” (John xxi. 14)”

He refers in context to **John 21 (KJV):13** Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. 14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

He continues, ““Then He appeared to above five hundred brethren.” Some say that “above,” is above from heaven; that is, “not walking upon earth, but above and overhead He appeared to them:” adding, that it was Paul’s purpose to confirm, not the resurrection only, but also the ascension. Others say that the expression, “above five hundred,” means, “more than five hundred.””

The most obvious interpretation is by the context, and that would mean that He appeared to “more than five hundred brethren”.

He continues, ““Of whom the greater part remain until now.” Thus, “though I relate events of old,” saith he, “yet have I living witnesses.” “But some are fallen asleep.” He said not, “are dead,” but, “are fallen asleep,” by this expression also again confirming the resurrection. “After that, He was seen of James.” I suppose, His brother. For the Lord is said to have Himself ordained him and made him Bishop in Jerusalem first.”

That James, the Lord’s brother, was ordained Bishop in Jerusalem, is not recorded in the Scriptures, and is a tradition of the Church in his time.



He continues, ““Then to all the apostles.” For there were also other apostles, as the seventy.”

He refers to **Luke 10 (KJV):1** After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

And we read of Barnabas in **Acts 14 (KJV):14** Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, 15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

He continues, ““And last of all he appeared unto me also, as unto one born out of due time.” This is rather an expression of modesty than any thing else. For not because he was the least, therefore did he appear to him after the rest. Since even if He did call him last, yet he appeared more illustrious than many which were before him, yea rather than all. And the five hundred brethren too were not surely better than James, because He appeared to them before him.

Why did He not appear to all at the same time? That He might first sow the seeds of faith. For he that saw Him first and was exactly and fully assured, told it unto the residue: then their report coming first placed the hearer in expectation of this great wonder, and made way before for the faith of sight. Therefore neither did He appear to all together, nor in the beginning to many, but to one alone first, and him the leader of the whole company and the most faithful: since indeed there was great need of a most faithful soul to be first to receive this sight. For those who saw him after others had seen him, and heard it from them, had in their testimony what contributed in no small degree to their own faith and tended to prepare their mind beforehand; but he who was first counted worthy to see Him, had need, as I have said, of great faith, not to be confounded by a sight so contrary to expectation. Therefore he appears to Peter first. For he that first confessed Him to be Christ was justly also counted worthy first to behold His resurrection. And not on this account alone doth He appear to him first, but also because he had denied Him, more abundantly to comfort him and to signify that he is not despaired of, before the rest He vouchsafed him even this sight and to him first entrusted His sheep. Therefore also He appeared to the women first. Because this sex was made inferior, therefore both in His birth and in His resurrection this first tastes of His grace.

But after Peter, He appears also to each at intervals, and at one time to fewer, at another to more, hereby making them witnesses and teachers of each other, and rendering His apostles trustworthy in all that they said.”

We see the esteem in which Peter was held by Chrysostom, and the Church in his time.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY IX, page 360**

1 Thessalonians v. 1, 2

“But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that aught be written unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.”

Nothing, as it seems, is so curious, and so fondly prone to pry into things obscure and concealed, as the nature of men. And this is wont to happen to it, when the mind is unsettled and in an imperfect state. For the simpler sort of children never cease teasing their nurses, and tutors, and parents, with their frequent questions, in which there is nothing else but “when will this be?” and “when that?” And this comes to pass also from living in indulgence, and having nothing to do. Many things therefore our mind is in haste to learn already and to comprehend, but especially concerning the period of the consummation; and what wonder if we are thus affected, for those holy men, themselves, were most of all affected in the same way? And before the Passion, the Apostles come and say to Christ, “Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matt. xxiv. 23) And after the Passion and the Resurrection from the dead, they said to Him, Tell us, “dost Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (From Acts i. 6) And they asked Him nothing sooner than this.

But it was not so afterwards, when they had been vouchsafed the Holy Ghost. Not only do they not themselves inquire, nor complain of this ignorance, but they repress those who labor under this unseasonable curiosity. Hear for instance what the blessed Paul now says, “But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that aught be written unto you.” Why has he not said that no one knows? why has he not said, that it is not revealed, instead of saying, “Ye have no need that aught be written unto you”? Because in that case he would have grieved them more, but by speaking thus he comforted them. For by the expression, “Ye have no need,” as if it were both superfluous, and inexpedient, he suffers them not to enquire.

For tell me, what would be the advantage? Let us suppose that the end would be after twenty or thirty or a hundred years, what is this to us? Is not the end of his own life the consummation to every individual? Why art thou curious, and travailest about the general end? But the case is the same with us in this, as in other things. For as in other things, leaving our own private concerns, we are anxious about things in general, saying, Such an one is a fornicator, such an one an adulterer, that man has robbed, another has been injurious; but no one takes account of what is his own, but each thinks of anything rather than his own private concerns; so here also, each omitting to take thought about his own end, we are anxious to hear about the general dissolution. Now what concern is that of yours? for if you make your own a good end, you will suffer no harm from the other; be it far off, or be it near. This is nothing to us.

For this reason Christ did not tell it, because it was not expedient. How, you say, was it not expedient? He who also concealed it knows wherefore it was not expedient. For hear Him saying to His Apostles, “It is not for you to know times, or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority.” (Acts i. 7) Why are you curious? Peter, the chief of the Apostles, and his fellows, heard this said, as if they were seeking things too great for them to know. True, you say; but it were possible to stop the mouths of the Greeks in this way. How? tell me. Because they say, that this world is a god; if we knew the period of its dissolution, we should have stopped their mouths. Why, is this what will stop their mouths, to know when it will be destroyed, or to know that it will be destroyed? Tell them this, that it will have an end. If they do not believe this, neither will they believe the other.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “1 Thessalonians v. 1, 2

“But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that aught be written unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.”

He refers to **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):1** But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

He continues, “Nothing, as it seems, is so curious, and so fondly prone to pry into things obscure and concealed, as the nature of men. And this is wont to happen to it, when the mind is unsettled and in an imperfect state. For the simpler sort of children never cease teasing their nurses, and tutors, and parents, with their frequent questions, in which there is nothing else but “when will this be?” and “when that?” And this comes to pass also from living in indulgence, and having nothing to do. Many things therefore our mind is in haste to learn already and to comprehend, but especially concerning the period of the consummation; and what wonder if we are thus affected, for those holy men, themselves, were most of all affected in the same way? And before the Passion, the Apostles come and say to Christ, “Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matt. xxiv. 3)”

He refers to **Matthew 24 (KJV):3** And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

He continues, “And after the Passion and the Resurrection from the dead, they said to Him, Tell us, “dost Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (From Acts i. 6)”

He refers to **Acts 1 (KJV):6** When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

He continues, “And they asked Him nothing sooner than this.

But it was not so afterwards, when they had been vouchsafed the Holy Ghost. Not only do they not themselves inquire, nor complain of this ignorance, but they repress those who labor under this unseasonable curiosity. Hear for instance what the blessed Paul now says, “But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that aught be written unto you.” Why has he not said that no one knows? why has he not said, that it is not revealed, instead of saying, “Ye have no need that aught be written unto you”? Because in that case he would have grieved them more, but by speaking thus he comforted them. For by the expression, “Ye have no need,” as if it were both superfluous, and inexpedient, he suffers them not to enquire.

For tell me, what would be the advantage? Let us suppose that the end would be after twenty or thirty or a hundred years, what is this to us? Is not the end of his own life the consummation to every individual? Why art thou curious, and travailest about the general end? But the case is the same with us in this, as in other things. For as in other things, leaving our own private concerns, we are anxious about things in general, saying, Such an one is a fornicator, such an one an adulterer, that man has robbed, another has been injurious; but no one takes account of what is his own, but each thinks of anything rather than his own private concerns; so here also, each omitting to take thought about his own end, we are anxious to hear about the general dissolution. Now what concern is that of yours? for if you make your own a good end, you will suffer no harm from the other; be it far off, or be it near. This is nothing to us.

For this reason Christ did not tell it, because it was not expedient. How, you say, was it

not expedient? He who also concealed it knows wherefore it was not expedient. For hear Him saying to His Apostles, “It is not for you to know times, or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority.” (Acts i. 7)”

He refers to **Acts 1 (KJV):7** And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

He continues, “Why are you curious? Peter, the chief of the Apostles, and his fellows, heard this said, as if they were seeking things too great for them to know. True, you say; but it were possible to stop the mouths of the Greeks in this way. How? tell me. Because they say, that this world is a god; if we knew the period of its dissolution, we should have stopped their mouths. Why, is this what will stop their mouths, to know when it will be destroyed, or to know that it will be destroyed? Tell them this, that it will have an end. If they do not believe this, neither will they believe the other.”

Chrysostom again refers to Peter as “the chief of the Apostles”.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY V, page 493**

Ver. 15. “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Everywhere this “not being ashamed”! And why is he ever so careful to guard him against shame? Because it was natural for many to be ashamed both of Paul himself, as being a tentmaker, and of the preaching, since its teachers perished. For Christ had been crucified, himself was about to be beheaded, Peter was crucified with his head downwards, and these things they suffered from audacious and despicable men. Because such men were in power, he says, “Be not ashamed”; that is, fear not to do anything tending to godliness, though it be necessary to submit to slavery or any other suffering. For how does any one become approved? By being “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.” As the workman is not ashamed of any work, so neither should he be ashamed who labors in the Gospel. He should submit to anything. “Rightly dividing the word of truth.”

This he hath well said. For many distort it, and pervert it in every way, and many additions are made to it. He has not said directing it, but “rightly dividing,” that is, cut away what is spurious, with much vehemence assail it, and extirpate it. With the sword of the Spirit cut off from your preaching, as from a thong, whatever is superfluous and foreign to it.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 15. “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

He refers to **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):15** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

He continues, “Everywhere this “not being ashamed”! And why is he ever so careful to guard him against shame? Because it was natural for many to be ashamed both of Paul himself, as being a tentmaker, and of the preaching, since its teachers perished. For Christ had been crucified, himself was about to be beheaded, Peter was crucified with his head downwards, and these things they suffered from audacious and despicable men.”

This was an early tradition in the Church that Peter was crucified upside down. Tradition

says that it was because he would not allow himself to die like his Lord. However, this is an unsubstantiated tradition. It is difficult enough to imagine someone being crucified, let alone being crucified upside down without the muscles tearing.

Chrysostom continues, “Because such men were in power, he says, “Be not ashamed”; that is, fear not to do anything tending to godliness, though it be necessary to submit to slavery or any other suffering. For how does any one become approved? By being “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.” As the workman is not ashamed of any work, so neither should he be ashamed who labors in the Gospel. He should submit to anything.

“Rightly dividing the word of truth.”

This he hath well said. For many distort it, and pervert it in every way, and many additions are made to it. He has not said directing it, but “rightly dividing,” that is, cut away what is spurious, with much vehemence assail it, and extirpate it. With the sword of the Spirit cut off from your preaching, as from a thong, whatever is superfluous and foreign to it.”

And we are reminded in **1 Corinthians 4 (KJV):6** And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

Rightly dividing means to cut straight. We must not take one Scripture out of context. There are themes in the Scriptures. As we read Scriptures in context, we can discern them. The theme of Christ for example runs through the entire Bible.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY VI, page 516**

Ver. 21. “Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens and Linus, and Claudia.”

This Linus, some say, was second (Schaff Note: i.e. the next. See Euseb. iii. 2, and note in Reading’s Ed.; also Cave Hist. Lit. Linus is thought not to have survived the persecution of Nero, and probably to have been bishop in St. Peter’s lifetime, and supplied his place when absent.) Bishop of the Church of Rome after Peter. “And Claudia.” You see how zealous for the faith the women were, how ardent! Such was Priscilla and this Claudia, already crucified, already prepared for the battle! But why, when there were so many faithful, does he mention only these women? Manifestly because they in purpose had already withdrawn from worldly affairs, and were illustrious above other. For a woman, as such, meets not with any impediments. It is the work of divine grace, that this sex should be impeded only in the affairs of this life, or rather not even in them. For a woman undertakes no small share of the whole administration, being the keeper of the house. And without her not even political affairs could be properly conducted. For if their domestic concerns were in a state of confusion and disorder, those who are engaged in public affairs would be kept at home, and political business would be ill managed. So that neither in those matters, as neither in spiritual, is she inferior. For she is able, if so inclined, to endure a thousand deaths. Accordingly many women have suffered martyrdom. She is able to practice chastity even more than men, no such strong flame disturbing her; and to show forth modesty and gravity, and “holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord” (Heb. xii. 14); and contempt of wealth, if she will, and in short all other virtues.

“Do thy diligence to come before winter.” See how he urges him, yet he does not say anything to grieve him. He does not say, “Before I die,” lest he should afflict him; but, “Before winter,” that thou be not detained.

“Eubulus,” he says, “greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.” He does not mention the rest by name. Seest thou that those were the most zealous?

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 21. “Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens and Linus, and Claudia.””

He refers to **2 Timothy 4 (KJV):21** Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

He continues, “This Linus, some say, was second (**Schaff Note:** i.e. the next. See Euseb. iii. 2, and note in Reading’s Ed.; also Cave Hist. Lit. Linus is thought not to have survived the persecution of Nero, and probably to have been bishop in St. Peter’s lifetime, and supplied his place when absent.) Bishop of the Church of Rome after Peter.”

There is no historical evidence that Peter was ever in Rome. We know that Peter was in Babylon, as we read in **1 Peter 5 (KJV):13** The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.

And this was by an agreement with Paul, as we read in **Galatians 2 (KJV):7** But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

Peter was in Babylon, because that is where there were many Jews left from the Babylonian conquest and deportation of the Jews to Babylon in approximately 586 B.C.

He continues, ““And Claudia.” You see how zealous for the faith the women were, how ardent! Such was Priscilla and this Claudia, already crucified, already prepared for the battle! But why, when there were so many faithful, does he mention only these women? Manifestly because they in purpose had already withdrawn from worldly affairs, and were illustrious above other. For a woman, as such, meets not with any impediments. It is the work of divine grace, that this sex should be impeded only in the affairs of this life, or rather not even in them. For a woman undertakes no small share of the whole administration, being the keeper of the house. And without her not even political affairs could be properly conducted. For if their domestic concerns were in a state of confusion and disorder, those who are engaged in public affairs would be kept at home, and political business would be ill managed. So that neither in those matters, as neither in spiritual, is she inferior. For she is able, if so inclined, to endure a thousand deaths. Accordingly many women have suffered martyrdom. She is able to practice chastity even more than men, no such strong flame disturbing her; and to show forth modesty and gravity, and “holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord” (Heb. xii. 14);”

He refers to **Hebrews 12 (KJV):14** Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

He continues, “and contempt of wealth, if she will, and in short all other virtues.

“Do thy diligence to come before winter.” See how he urges him, yet he does not say

anything to grieve him. He does not say, "Before I die," lest he should afflict him; but, "Before winter," that thou be not detained.

"Eubulus," he says, "greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren." He does not mention the rest by name. Seest thou that those were the most zealous?"

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, Homily X, Matt. III. 1, 2, page 64-65**, he says, "On this wise again Paul saith, "I am not meet to be called an apostle;" (1 Cor. xv. 9) because of this he became even first of all."

And he says, "So Peter too said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man;" (Luke v. 8) because of this he became a foundation of the Church."

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XXIX, page 547**, he says, speaking to the flock of shepherds, "And therefore do ye, as being acquainted with what the labor is, coöperate with them, with prayers, with zeal, with readiness, with affection, that both we may have to boast of you, and you of us. For on this ground He entrusted this to the chief of the Apostles, who also loved Him more than the rest; after first asking him if He was loved by him, that thou mayest learn that this before other things, is held as a proof of love to Him.

Chrysostom recognized Peter as the "chief of the Apostles".

And he says, "For this requireth a vigorous soul. This I have said of the best shepherds; not of myself and those of our days, but of any one that may be such as Paul was, such as Peter, such as Moses."

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XXXVIII, page 229**, he says, "[5.] Ver. 5. "And that He appeared to Cephas:" he names immediately the most credible of all. "Then to the twelve.""

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):5** And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

And he says, "Yet surely the Gospel saith the contrary, that He was seen of Mary first. (Mark xvi. 9)"

He refers to **Mark 16 (KJV):9** Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

But Paul is not recording an exact succession of appearances of the Lord after His resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15.

He continues, "But among men He was seen of him first who did most of all long to see Him."

And he says, "Therefore neither did He appear to all together, nor in the beginning to many, but to one alone first, and him the leader of the whole company and the most faithful: since indeed there was great need of a most faithful soul to be first to receive this sight. For those who saw him after others had seen him, and heard it from them, had in their testimony what contributed in no small degree to their own faith and tended to prepare their mind beforehand; but he who was first counted worthy to see Him, had need, as I have said, of great faith, not to be confounded by a sight so contrary to expectation. Therefore he appears to Peter

first. For he that first confessed Him to be Christ was justly also counted worthy first to behold His resurrection.”

And he adds, “Therefore also He appeared to the women first. Because this sex was made inferior, therefore both in His birth and in His resurrection this first tastes of His grace.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY IX, page 360**, he mentions Peter again, as he says, “Why are you curious? Peter, the chief of the Apostles, and his fellows, heard this said, as if they were seeking things too great for them to know.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY V, page 493**, he says, “And why is he ever so careful to guard him against shame? Because it was natural for many to be ashamed both of Paul himself, as being a tentmaker, and of the preaching, since its teachers perished. For Christ had been crucified, himself was about to be beheaded, Peter was crucified with his head downwards, and these things they suffered from audacious and despicable men.”

This was an early tradition in the Church that Peter was crucified upside down. Tradition says that it was because he would not allow himself to die like his Lord. However, this is an unsubstantiated tradition. It is difficult enough to imagine someone being crucified, let alone being crucified upside down without the muscles tearing.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY VI, page 516**, he refers to **2 Timothy 4 (KJV):21** Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

And then he says, “This Linus, some say, was second (**Schaff Note:** i.e. the next. See Euseb. iii. 2, and note in Reading’s Ed.; also Cave Hist. Lit. Linus is thought not to have survived the persecution of Nero, and probably to have been bishop in St. Peter’s lifetime, and supplied his place when absent.) Bishop of the Church of Rome after Peter.”

But there is no historical evidence that Peter was ever in Rome. We know that Peter was in Babylon, as we read in **1 Peter 5 (KJV):13** The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.

To Paul was committed the Gospel to the uncircumcision, but to Peter the Gospel to the circumcision. So Peter was in Babylon, because that is where there were many Jews left from the Babylonian conquest and deportation of the Jews to Babylon in approximately 586 B.C.

## **The Church in Chrysostom’s Day (His Testimony)**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XXXVI, page 219-222**

Ver. 32. “And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.”

Seest thou how he put him to shame earnestly and fearfully? For that the man might not strive nor be factious, he signifies that the gift itself was under subjection. For by “spirit” here, he means its actual working. But if the spirit be subject, much more thou its possessor canst not justly be contentious.

[7.] Then he signifies that this is pleasing also to God, subjoining and saying,



Ver. 33. "For God is not a God of confusion, but of peace, as [I teach] in all the Churches of the saints." (**Schaff Note:** [Chrysostom connects this clause with what precedes as do Alford, Tregelles, Edwards and the Rev. Ver.

He is doubtless right here, but not in his addition of διδάσκω, for which there is no adequate support. C.]

Seest thou by how many reasons he leads him to silence and soothes him, in the act of giving way to the other? By one thing and that the chief, that he was not shut up by such a proceeding; "for ye all can prophesy," saith he, "one by one." By a second, that this seems good to the Spirit Himself; "for the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." Besides these, that this is according to the mind of God; "for God," saith he, "is not a God of confusion, but of peace:" and by a fourth, that in every part of the world this custom prevails, and no strange thing is enjoined upon them. For thus, saith he, "I teach in all the Churches of the saints."

What now can be more awful than these things? For in truth the Church was a heaven then, the Spirit governing all things, and moving each one of the rulers and making him inspired. But now we retain only the symbols of those gifts. For now also we speak two or three, and in turn, and when one is silent, another begins. But these are only signs and memorials of those things. Wherefore when we begin to speak, the people respond, "with thy Spirit," (**Schaff Note:** The "Anaphora," or more solemn part of the Liturgy begins with the Versicle and Response here alluded to, in the Clementine Liturgy, and in those of St. Mark, St. Chrysostom, St. Basil, and the Roman Missal.) indicating that of old they thus used to speak, not of their own wisdom, but moved by the Spirit. But not so now: (I speak of mine own case so far.) But the present Church is like a woman who hath fallen from her former prosperous days, and in many respects retains the symbols only of that ancient prosperity; displaying indeed the repositories and caskets of her golden ornaments, but bereft of her wealth: such an one doth the present Church resemble. And I say not this in respect of gifts: for it were nothing marvelous if it were this only: but in respect also of life and virtue. Thus the list of her widows, and the choir of her virgins, then gave great ornament to the churches: but now she is made desolate and void, and the tokens only remain. There are indeed widows now, there are also virgins; but they retain not that adornment which women should have who prepare themselves for such wrestlings. For the special distinction of the virgin is the caring for the things of God alone, and the waiting on Him without distraction: and the widow's mark too should be not so much the not engaging in a second marriage, as the other things, charity to the poor, hospitality, continuing instant in prayers, all those other things, which Paul writing to Timothy requires with great exactness. One may see also the married women exhibiting among us great seemliness. But this is not the only thing required, but rather that sedulous attention to the needy, through which those women of old shone out most brightly. Not as the generality now-a-days. For then instead of gold they were clothed with the fair array of almsgiving: but now, having left off this, they are decked out on every side with cords of gold woven of the chain of their sins.

Shall I speak of another repository too emptied of its hereditary splendor? They all met together in old time and sang psalms in common. This we do also now: but then among all was there one soul and one heart: but now not in one single soul can one see that unanimity, rather great is the warfare every where. "Peace," even now, "to all," he that presides in the Church prays for, entering as it were into his Father's house: but of this peace the name is frequent, but the reality no where.

[8.] Then the very houses were churches: but now the church itself is a house, or rather worse than any house. For in a house one may see much good order: since both the mistress of the house is seated on her chair with all seemliness, and the maidens weave in silence, and each of the domestics hath his appointed task in hand. But here great is the tumult, great the confusion, and our assemblies differ in nothing from a vintner's shop, so loud is the laughter, so great the disturbance; as in baths, as in markets, the cry and tumult is universal. And these things are here only: since elsewhere it is not permitted even to address one's neighbor in the church, not even if one have received back a long absent friend, but these things are done without, and very properly. For the church is no barber's or perfumer's shop, nor any other merchant's warehouse in the marketplace, but a place of angels, a place of archangels, a palace of God, heaven itself. As therefore if one had parted the heaven and had brought thee in thither, though thou shouldst see thy father or thy brother, thou wouldest not venture to speak; so neither here ought one to utter any other sound but these which are spiritual. For, in truth, the things in this place are also a heaven. And if thou believest not, look to this table, call to mind for Whose sake it is set, and why: consider Who it is that is coming forth here; tremble with awe even before the time. For so, when one sees the throne only of a king, in heart he rises up, expecting the king's coming forth. And do thou accordingly thrill with awe even before that thrilling moment: raise up thyself, and before thou seest the veils drawn aside and the choir of angels marching forth, ascend thou to the very heaven. But the uninitiated knows not these things. Well then, it is necessary with a view to him also to introduce other topics. For neither towards him shall we want reasons able to stir him up thoroughly and cause him to soar. Thou then who knowest not these things, when thou shalt hear the prophet (**Schaff Note:** Because the Catechumens and others, as it seems, were allowed to hear the Lessons read, though not to be present at what was strictly called the Communion Service. See Bingham, xiv. iii. 1) saying, "Thus saith the Lord," quit the earth, ascend thou also unto heaven, consider who it is that by him discourses with thee.

But as things are, for a buffoon who is moving laughter or for a whorish and abandoned woman, so vast an assemblage of spectators is set, listening in entire quietness to what is spoken, and this when none commands silence; (**Schaff Note:** An allusion to the injunctions for silence used by the Deacon occasionally in the Church: see Bingham, ii.20.14: and the Apost. Constit. ii. 57. As quoted by him; "Let the Deacon oversee the people, that none whisper, or doze, or laugh, or nod;" and afterwards in the time of the offering, "Let some of the Deacons observe the people, and make silence among them." Chrys. Hom. 24. on Acts, says, "Prayer is going on, and here are young persons talking and jesting with one another even while on their knees. Do thou who standest by, young or old, rebuke them, if thou seest it; reprimand them more sharply; if he take it not well, call the Deacon.") and there is neither tumult, nor cry, nor any the least noise: but when God is speaking from heaven on subjects so awful, we behave ourselves more impudently than dogs, and even to the harlot women we pay greater respect than to God.

Doth it make your flesh creep to be told of these things? Nay then, much rather let it creep when ye do them.

[9.] That which Paul said of them that despised the poor and feasted alone, "What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the Church of God, and shame them that have not?" (1 Cor. xi. 22)—the same allow me also to say of those who make a disturbance and hold

conversations in this place. “What? have ye not houses to trifle in? or despise ye the Church of God, and corrupt those even who would be modest and quiet?” “But it is sweet and pleasant for you to converse with your friends.” I do not forbid this, but let it be done in the house, in the market, in the baths. For the church is not a place of conversation, but of teaching. But now it differs not from the market; nay, if it be not too bold a word, haply, not even from the stage; in such sort do the women who assemble here adorn themselves more wantonly than the unchaste who are to be found there. Accordingly we see that even hither many profligates are enticed by them; and if any one is trying or intending to corrupt a woman, there is no place, I suppose, that seems to him more suitable than the church. And if anything be to be sold or bought, the church appears more convenient than the market. For on such subjects also there is more talk here than in the shops themselves. Or if any wish to say or to hear any scandal, you will find that this too is to be had here more than in the forum without. And if you wish to hear any thing of political matters, or the affairs of private families, or the camp, go not to the judgment-hall, nor sit in the apothecary’s shop; for here, here I say are those who report all these things more accurately; and our assemblies are any thing rather than a church.

Can it be that I have touched you to the quick? I for my part think not. For while ye continue in the same practices, how am I to know that you are touched by what hath been said? Therefore I must needs handle the same topics again.

Are these things then to be endured? Are these things to be borne? We weary and distract ourselves every day that ye may not depart without having learned something useful: and none of you go away at all the better, but rather injured the more. Yea, and “ye come together unto judgment,” having no longer any cloak for your sin, and ye thrust out the more modest, disturbing them with your fooleries on every side.

But what do the multitude say? “I do not hear what is read,” saith one, “nor do I know what the words are which are spoken.” Because thou makest a tumult and confusion, because thou comest not with a reverent soul. What sayest thou? “I know not what things are said.”

Well then, for this very reason oughtest thou to give heed. But if not even the obscurity stir up thy soul, much more if things were clear wouldest thou hurry them by. Yea, this is the reason why neither all things are clear, lest thou shouldest indulge indolence; nor obscure, lest thou shouldest be in despair.

And whereas that eunuch and barbarian (Acts viii. 26) said none of these things, but surrounded as he was with a crowd of so important affairs and on his journey, had a book in his hands and was reading: dost thou, both abounding in teachers, and having others to read to thee privately, (**Schaff Note:** ὑπαναγινώσκοντας, perhaps, ‘repeating what is read in a lower tone.’) allege to me thine excuses and pretexts? Knowest thou not what is said? Why then pray that thou mayest learn: but sure it is impossible to be ignorant of all things. For many things are of themselves evident and clear. And further, even if thou be ignorant of all, even so oughtest thou to be quiet, not to put out them that are attentive; that God, accepting thy quietness and thy reverence, may make the obscure things also plain. But canst thou not be silent? Well then, go out, not to become a mischief to others also.

For in truth there ought to be but one voice in the church always, even as there is but one body. Therefore both he that reads utters his voice alone, and the Bishop himself is content to sit in silence; and he who chants chants alone; and though all utter the response, the voice is wafted as from one mouth. And he that pronounces a homily pronounces it alone. But when

there are many conversing on many and diverse subjects, why do we disturb you for no good? since surely unless ye thought that we are but disturbing you for no good, ye would not in the midst of our speech on such high matters, discourse on things of no consequence.

[10.] Therefore not in your conduct only, but in your very estimation of things, there is great perversion. And ye gape after superfluities, and leaving the truth pursue all sorts of shadows and dreams. Are not all present things a shadow and dreams, and worse than a shadow? For both before they appear, they fly away; and before they are flown, the trouble they give is much, and more than the pleasure. Let one acquire in this world and bury in the earth ever such abundance of wealth, yet when the night is past, naked he shall depart hence, and no wonder. Since they too who are rich but in a dream, on rising from their couch have nothing of what they seemed to have while sleeping. So also are the greedy of gain: or rather not so, but in a much worse condition. For he that dreams of being rich, neither hath the money which he fancied he had, nor is any other mischief found to have accrued to him from this phantasy when he arises, but this man is both deprived of his riches, and hath also to depart, filled with the sins which arise out of them; and in his wealth having but enjoyed a phantasy, the evils resulting from his wealth he sees not in fancy any more, but in the very truth of things; and his pleasure was in dreams, but the punishment ensuing on his pleasure turns out no more a dream, but is matter of actual experience. Yea rather, even before that punishment, even here he pays the heaviest penalty, in the very collecting of his wealth wearing into himself innumerable sadnesses, anxieties, accusations, calumnies, tumults, perturbations.

In order therefore that we may be delivered both from the dreams and from the evils that are not in dreams, instead of covetousness let us choose almsgiving, instead of rapine, mercy to mankind. For thus we shall obtain the good things both present and to come, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom, to the Father, with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 32. “And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):32** And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

He continues, “Seest thou how he put him to shame earnestly and fearfully? For that the man might not strive nor be factious, he signifies that the gift itself was under subjection. For by “spirit” here, he means its actual working. But if the spirit be subject, much more thou its possessor canst not justly be contentious.

[7.] Then he signifies that this is pleasing also to God, subjoining and saying,

Ver. 33. “For God is not a God of confusion, but of peace, as [I teach] in all the Churches of the saints.” (**Schaff Note:** [Chrysostom connects this clause with what precedes as do Alford, Tregelles, Edwards and the Rev. Ver. He is doubtless right here, but not in his addition of διδάσκω, for which there is no adequate support. C.]”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):33** For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

He continues, “Seest thou by how many reasons he leads him to silence and soothes him, in the act of giving way to the other? By one thing and that the chief, that he was not shut up by such a proceeding; “for ye all can prophesy,” saith he, “one by one.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):31** For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

He continues, “By a second, that this seems good to the Spirit Himself; “for the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.” Besides these, that this is according to the mind of God; “for God,” saith he, “is not a God of confusion, but of peace:” and by a fourth, that in every part of the world this custom prevails, and no strange thing is enjoined upon them. For thus, saith he, “I teach in all the Churches of the saints.””

And we read in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):17** But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.

He continues, “What now can be more awful than these things? For in truth the Church was a heaven then, the Spirit governing all things, and moving each one of the rulers and making him inspired. But now we retain only the symbols of those gifts. For now also we speak two or three, and in turn, and when one is silent, another begins. But these are only signs and memorials of those things. Wherefore when we begin to speak, the people respond, “with thy Spirit,” (**Schaff Note:** The “Anaphora,” or more solemn part of the Liturgy begins with the Versicle and Response here alluded to, in the Clementine Liturgy, and in those of St. Mark, St. Chrysostom, St. Basil, and the Roman Missal.)”

Ritual took over in the Church during the time of Chrysostom. The manifestations of the Spirit are to continue in the Church because of the presence of the Holy Spirit. But their tradition in the time of Chrysostom, and their faith, limited their understanding of spiritual things.

He continues, “indicating that of old they thus used to speak, not of their own wisdom, but moved by the Spirit. But not so now: (I speak of mine own case so far.) But the present Church is like a woman who hath fallen from her former prosperous days, and in many respects retains the symbols only of that ancient prosperity; displaying indeed the repositories and caskets of her golden ornaments, but bereft of her wealth: such an one doth the present Church resemble. And I say not this in respect of gifts: for it were nothing marvelous if it were this only: but in respect also of life and virtue. Thus the list of her widows, and the choir of her virgins, then gave great ornament to the churches: but now she is made desolate and void, and the tokens only remain. There are indeed widows now, there are also virgins; but they retain not that adornment which women should have who prepare themselves for such wrestlings. For the special distinction of the virgin is the caring for the things of God alone, and the waiting on Him without distraction: and the widow’s mark too should be not so much the not engaging in a second marriage, as the other things, charity to the poor, hospitality, continuing instant in prayers, all those other things, which Paul writing to Timothy requires with great exactness. One may see also the married women exhibiting among us great seemliness. But this is not the only thing required, but rather that sedulous attention to the needy, through which those women of old shone out most brightly. Not as the generality now-a-days. For then instead of gold they were clothed with the fair array of almsgiving: but now, having left off this, they are decked out on every side with cords of gold woven of the chain of their sins.”

Chrysostom is not commending the spirituality of the Church in his time.

He continues, “Shall I speak of another repository too emptied of its hereditary splendor? They all met together in old time and sang psalms in common. This we do also now: but then among all was there one soul and one heart: but now not in one single soul can one see that

unanimity, rather great is the warfare every where. "Peace," even now, "to all," he that presides in the Church prays for, entering as it were into his Father's house: but of this peace the name is frequent, but the reality no where.

[8.] Then the very houses were churches: but now the church itself is a house, or rather worse than any house. For in a house one may see much good order: since both the mistress of the house is seated on her chair with all seemliness, and the maidens weave in silence, and each of the domestics hath his appointed task in hand. But here great is the tumult, great the confusion, and our assemblies differ in nothing from a vintner's shop, so loud is the laughter, so great the disturbance; as in baths, as in markets, the cry and tumult is universal. And these things are here only: since elsewhere it is not permitted even to address one's neighbor in the church, not even if one have received back a long absent friend, but these things are done without, and very properly. For the church is no barber's or perfumer's shop, nor any other merchant's warehouse in the marketplace, but a place of angels, a place of archangels, a palace of God, heaven itself. As therefore if one had parted the heaven and had brought thee in thither, though thou shouldst see thy father or thy brother, thou wouldest not venture to speak; so neither here ought one to utter any other sound but these which are spiritual. For, in truth, the things in this place are also a heaven. And if thou believest not, look to this table, call to mind for Whose sake it is set, and why: consider Who it is that is coming forth here; tremble with awe even before the time. For so, when one sees the throne only of a king, in heart he rises up, expecting the king's coming forth. And do thou accordingly thrill with awe even before that thrilling moment: raise up thyself, and before thou seest the veils drawn aside and the choir of angels marching forth, ascend thou to the very heaven. But the uninitiated knows not these things. Well then, it is necessary with a view to him also to introduce other topics. For neither towards him shall we want reasons able to stir him up thoroughly and cause him to soar. Thou then who knowest not these things, when thou shalt hear the prophet (**Schaff Note:** Because the Catechumens and others, as it seems, were allowed to hear the Lessons read, though not to be present at what was strictly called the Communion Service. See Bingham, xiv. iii. 1) saying, "Thus saith the Lord," quit the earth, ascend thou also unto heaven, consider who it is that by him discourses with thee.

But as things are, for a buffoon who is moving laughter or for a whorish and abandoned woman, so vast an assemblage of spectators is set, listening in entire quietness to what is spoken, and this when none commands silence; (**Schaff Note:** An allusion to the injunctions for silence used by the Deacon occasionally in the Church: see Bingham, ii.20.14: and the Apost. Constit. ii. 57. As quoted by him; "Let the Deacon oversee the people, that none whisper, or doze, or laugh, or nod;" and afterwards in the time of the offering, "Let some of the Deacons observe the people, and make silence among them." Chrys. Hom. 24. on Acts, says, "Prayer is going on, and here are young persons talking and jesting with one another even while on their knees. Do thou who standest by, young or old, rebuke them, if thou seest it; reprimand them more sharply; if he take it not well, call the Deacon.") and there is neither tumult, nor cry, nor any the least noise: but when God is speaking from heaven on subjects so awful, we behave ourselves more impudently than dogs, and even to the harlot women we pay greater respect than to God.

Doth it make your flesh creep to be told of these things? Nay then, much rather let it creep when ye do them."

The lack of spirituality in the Church in the time of Chrysostom is quite evident. This is a natural result of the emphasis on ritual that existed in the Church at that time.

He continues, “[9.] That which Paul said of them that despised the poor and feasted alone, “What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the Church of God, and shame them that have not?” (1 Cor. xi. 22)—the same allow me also to say of those who make a disturbance and hold conversations in this place.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):22** What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? what shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

He continues, ““What? have ye not houses to trifle in? or despise ye the Church of God, and corrupt those even who would be modest and quiet?” “But it is sweet and pleasant for you to converse with your friends.” I do not forbid this, but let it be done in the house, in the market, in the baths. For the church is not a place of conversation, but of teaching. But now it differs not from the market; nay, if it be not too bold a word, haply, not even from the stage; in such sort do the women who assemble here adorn themselves more wantonly than the unchaste who are to be found there. Accordingly we see that even hither many profligates are enticed by them; and if any one is trying or intending to corrupt a woman, there is no place, I suppose, that seems to him more suitable than the church. And if anything be to be sold or bought, the church appears more convenient than the market. For on such subjects also there is more talk here than in the shops themselves. Or if any wish to say or to hear any scandal, you will find that this too is to be had here more than in the forum without. And if you wish to hear any thing of political matters, or the affairs of private families, or the camp, go not to the judgment-hall, nor sit in the apothecary’s shop; for here, here I say are those who report all these things more accurately; and our assemblies are any thing rather than a church.”

Again Jesus taught as in **Matthew 18 (KJV):20** For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Church is about relationship with Him. When we meet in His name, let us acknowledge His presence with us.

Chrysostom continues, “Can it be that I have touched you to the quick? I for my part think not. For while ye continue in the same practices, how am I to know that you are touched by what hath been said? Therefore I must needs handle the same topics again.

Are these things then to be endured? Are these things to be borne? We weary and distract ourselves every day that ye may not depart without having learned something useful: and none of you go away at all the better, but rather injured the more. Yea, and “ye come together unto judgment,” having no longer any cloak for your sin, and ye thrust out the more modest, disturbing them with your fooleries on every side.

But what do the multitude say? “I do not hear what is read,” saith one, “nor do I know what the words are which are spoken.” Because thou makest a tumult and confusion, because thou comest not with a reverent soul. What sayest thou? “I know not what things are said.”

Well then, for this very reason oughtest thou to give heed. But if not even the obscurity stir up thy soul, much more if things were clear wouldest thou hurry them by. Yea, this is the reason why neither all things are clear, lest thou shouldest indulge indolence; nor obscure, lest thou shouldest be in despair.

And whereas that eunuch and barbarian (Acts viii. 26) said none of these things, but

surrounded as he was with a crowd of so important affairs and on his journey, had a book in his hands and was reading: dost thou, both abounding in teachers, and having others to read to thee privately, (**Schaff Note:** ὑπαναγινώσκοντας, perhaps, ‘repeating what is read in a lower tone.’) allege to me thine excuses and pretexts?”

He refers in context to **Acts 8 (KJV):**26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. 27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, 28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. 29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? 31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. 32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: 33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. 34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

Chrysostom continues, “Knowest thou not what is said? Why then pray that thou mayest learn: but sure it is impossible to be ignorant of all things. For many things are of themselves evident and clear. And further, even if thou be ignorant of all, even so oughtest thou to be quiet, not to put out them that are attentive; that God, accepting thy quietness and thy reverence, may make the obscure things also plain. But canst thou not be silent? Well then, go out, not to become a mischief to others also.

For in truth there ought to be but one voice in the church always, even as there is but one body. Therefore both he that reads utters his voice alone, and the Bishop himself is content to sit in silence; and he who chants chants alone; and though all utter the response, the voice is wafted as from one mouth. And he that pronounces a homily pronounces it alone. But when there are many conversing on many and diverse subjects, why do we disturb you for no good? since surely unless ye thought that we are but disturbing you for no good, ye would not in the midst of our speech on such high matters, discourse on things of no consequence.”

We see the emphasis on ritual in the Church. The reader reads, the one who chants “chants alone”, and all “utter the response”. And Chrysostom was experiencing a lot of disturbances in the meetings in church.

He continues, “[10.] Therefore not in your conduct only, but in your very estimation of things, there is great perversion. And ye gape after superfluities, and leaving the truth pursue all sorts of shadows and dreams. Are not all present things a shadow and dreams, and worse than a shadow? For both before they appear, they fly away; and before they are flown, the trouble they give is much, and more than the pleasure. Let one acquire in this world and bury in the earth ever such abundance of wealth, yet when the night is past, naked he shall depart hence, and no wonder. Since they too who are rich but in a dream, on rising from their couch have nothing of what they seemed to have while sleeping. So also are the greedy of gain: or rather not so, but in a much worse condition. For he that dreams of being rich, neither hath the money which he



fancied he had, nor is any other mischief found to have accrued to him from this phantasy when he arises, but this man is both deprived of his riches, and hath also to depart, filled with the sins which arise out of them; and in his wealth having but enjoyed a phantasy, the evils resulting from his wealth he sees not in fancy any more, but in the very truth of things; and his pleasure was in dreams, but the punishment ensuing on his pleasure turns out no more a dream, but is matter of actual experience. Yea rather, even before that punishment, even here he pays the heaviest penalty, in the very collecting of his wealth wearing into himself innumerable sadnesses, anxieties, accusations, calumnies, tumults, perturbations.

In order therefore that we may be delivered both from the dreams and from the evils that are not in dreams, instead of covetousness let us choose almsgiving, instead of rapine, mercy to mankind. For thus we shall obtain the good things both present and to come, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom, to the Father, with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.”

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILEMON, HOMILY I, page 547**

Philemon i. 1–3

“Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow laborer, And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the Church in thy house: Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

These things are said to a master in behalf of a servant. Immediately at the outset, he has pulled down his spirit, and not suffered him to be ashamed, he has quenched his anger; calling himself a prisoner, he strikes him with compunction, and makes him collect himself, and makes it appear that present things are nothing. For if a chain for Christ’s sake is not a shame but a boast, much more is slavery not to be considered a reproach. And this he says, not exalting himself, but for a good purpose doing this, showing thence that he was worthy of credit; and this he does not for his own sake, but that he may more readily obtain the favor. As if he had said, “It is on your account that I am invested with this chain.” As he also has said elsewhere, there indeed showing his concern, but here his trustworthiness.

Nothing is greater than this boast, to be called “the stigmatized (**Schaff Note:** στιγματίας. Literally, “branded slave.”) of Christ.” “For I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.” (Gal. vi. 17)

“The prisoner of the Lord.” For he had been bound on His account. Who would not be struck with awe, who would not be humbled when he hears of the chains of Christ? Who would not be ready to give up even his own life, much less one domestic?

“And Timothy our brother.”

He joins another also with himself, that he, being entreated by many, may the more readily yield and grant the favor.

“Unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow laborer.”

If “beloved,” then his confidence is not boldness nor forwardness, but a proof of much affection. If a “fellow laborer,” then not only may he be instructed in such a matter, but he ought to acknowledge it as a favor. For he is gratifying himself, he is building up the same

work. So that apart from any request, he says, thou hast another necessity for granting the favor. For if he is profitable to the Gospel, and thou art anxious to promote the Gospel, then oughtest thou not to be entreated, but to entreat.

Ver. 2. “And to our beloved Apphia.”

It seems to me that she was his partner in life. Observe the humility of Paul; he both joins Timothy with him in his request, and asks not only the husband, but the wife also, and some one else, perhaps a friend.

Not wishing to effect such things by command, and not taking it ill, if he did not immediately comply with his request; but he begs them to do what a stranger might have done to aid his request. For not only the being requested by many, but the petition being urged to many, contributes to its being granted. And on this account he says, “And Archippus our fellow-soldier.” If thou art a fellow soldier, thou oughtest also to take a concern in these things. But this is the Archippus, about whom he says in his Epistle to the Colossians, “Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it.” (Col. iv. 17) It seems to me too, that he, whom he joins with him in this request, was also one of the Clergy. And he calls him his fellow soldier, that he may by all means cooperate with him.

“And to the Church in thy house.”

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Philemon i. 1–3

“Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow laborer, And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the Church in thy house: Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.””

He refers to **Philemon 1 (KJV):** 1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow labourer, 2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house: 3 Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

He continues, “These things are said to a master in behalf of a servant. Immediately at the outset, he has pulled down his spirit, and not suffered him to be ashamed, he has quenched his anger; calling himself a prisoner, he strikes him with compunction, and makes him collect himself, and makes it appear that present things are nothing. For if a chain for Christ’s sake is not a shame but a boast, much more is slavery not to be considered a reproach. And this he says, not exalting himself, but for a good purpose doing this, showing thence that he was worthy of credit; and this he does not for his own sake, but that he may more readily obtain the favor. As if he had said, “It is on your account that I am invested with this chain.” As he also has said elsewhere, there indeed showing his concern, but here his trustworthiness.

Nothing is greater than this boast, to be called “the stigmatized (**Schaff Note:** στιγματίας. Literally, “branded slave.”) of Christ.” “For I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.” (Gal. vi. 17)”

He refers to **Galatians 6 (KJV):** 17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

He continues, ““The prisoner of the Lord.” For he had been bound on His account. Who would not be struck with awe, who would not be humbled when he hears of the chains of Christ? Who would not be ready to give up even his own life, much less one domestic?

“And Timothy our brother.”

He joins another also with himself, that he, being entreated by many, may the more readily yield and grant the favor.

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If “beloved,” then his confidence is not boldness nor forwardness, but a proof of much affection. If a “fellow laborer,” then not only may he be instructed in such a matter, but he ought to acknowledge it as a favor. For he is gratifying himself, he is building up the same work. So that apart from any request, he says, thou hast another necessity for granting the favor. For if he is profitable to the Gospel, and thou art anxious to promote the Gospel, then oughtest thou not to be entreated, but to entreat.

Ver. 2. “And to our beloved Apphia.”

It seems to me that she was his partner in life. Observe the humility of Paul; he both joins Timothy with him in his request, and asks not only the husband, but the wife also, and some one else, perhaps a friend.”

Chrysostom believed Philemon to be the husband of Apphia.

He continues, “Not wishing to effect such things by command, and not taking it ill, if he did not immediately comply with his request; but he begs them to do what a stranger might have done to aid his request. For not only the being requested by many, but the petition being urged to many, contributes to its being granted. And on this account he says, “And Archippus our fellow-soldier.” If thou art a fellow soldier, thou oughtest also to take a concern in these things. But this is the Archippus, about whom he says in his Epistle to the Colossians, “Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it.” (Col. iv. 17)”

He refers to **Colossians 4 (KJV):17** And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

He continues, “It seems to me too, that he, whom he joins with him in this request, was also one of the Clergy. And he calls him his fellow soldier, that he may by all means cooperate with him.”

Chrysostom did not understand that all believers have a ministry, being a member of the body of Christ, and placed in the body as it pleased the Lord, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

He concludes, ““And to the Church in thy house.””

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XXXVI, page 219-222**, he says, “What now can be more awful than these things? For in truth the Church was a heaven then, the Spirit governing all things, and moving each one of the rulers and making him inspired. But now we retain only the symbols of those gifts. For now also we speak two or three, and in turn, and when one is silent, another begins. But these are only signs and memorials of those things. Wherefore when we begin to speak, the people respond, “with thy Spirit,” (**Schaff Note:** The “Anaphora,” or more

solemn part of the Liturgy begins with the Versicle and Response here alluded to, in the Clementine Liturgy, and in those of St. Mark, St. Chrysostom, St. Basil, and the Roman Missal.) indicating that of old they thus used to speak, not of their own wisdom, but moved by the Spirit. But not so now: (I speak of mine own case so far.) But the present Church is like a woman who hath fallen from her former prosperous days, and in many respects retains the symbols only of that ancient prosperity; displaying indeed the repositories and caskets of her golden ornaments, but bereft of her wealth: such an one doth the present Church resemble. And I say not this in respect of gifts: for it were nothing marvelous if it were this only: but in respect also of life and virtue.”

Ritual took over in the Church during the time of Chrysostom. The manifestations of the Spirit were supposed to continue in the Church because of the presence of the Holy Spirit. But their tradition and their faith limited their exercise. Chrysostom gives us a telescopic view into the early Church here. Chrysostom is not commending the spirituality of the Church in his time.

The lack of spirituality in the Church in the time of Chrysostom is quite evident. This is a natural result of the emphasis on ritual that existed in the Church at that time.

And he says, “For in truth there ought to be but one voice in the church always, even as there is but one body. Therefore both he that reads utters his voice alone, and the Bishop himself is content to sit in silence; and he who chants chants alone; and though all utter the response, the voice is wafted as from one mouth. And he that pronounces a homily pronounces it alone. But when there are many conversing on many and diverse subjects, why do we disturb you for no good? since surely unless ye thought that we are but disturbing you for no good, ye would not in the midst of our speech on such high matters, discourse on things of no consequence.”

We see again the emphasis on ritual in the Church. The reader reads, the one who chants “chants alone”, and all “utter the response”. And Chrysostom was experiencing a lot of disturbances in the meetings in church.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILEMON, HOMILY I, page 547**, he refers to **Philemon 1 (KJV)**:1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow labourer, 2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house: 3 Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chrysostom says, “It seems to me too, that he, whom he joins with him in this request, was also one of the Clergy. And he calls him his fellow soldier, that he may by all means cooperate with him.”

Chrysostom did not understand that all believers have a ministry, being a member of the body of Christ, and placed in the body as it pleased the Lord, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV)**:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Chrysostom saw Paul as “one of the Clergy”.

## Man's Makeup

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, EUTROPIUS, PATRICIAN AND CONSUL, Homily II, After Eutropius having been found outside the Church had been taken captive, page 264-265**

17. Attend, and let us learn what corporeal, and what spiritual beauty are. There is soul and body: they are two substances: there is a beauty of body, and there is a beauty of soul. What is beauty of body? an extended eyebrow, a merry glance, a blushing cheek, ruddy lips, a straight neck, long wavy hair, tapering fingers, upright stature, a fair blooming complexion. Does this bodily beauty come from nature, or from choice? Confessedly it comes from nature. Attend that thou mayest learn the conception of philosophers. This beauty whether of the countenance, of the eye, of the hair, of the brow, does it come from nature, or from choice? It is obvious that it comes from nature. For the ungraceful woman, even if she cultivate beauty in countless ways, cannot become graceful in body: for natural conditions are fixed, and confined by limits which they cannot pass over. Therefore the beautiful woman is always beautiful, even if she has no taste for beauty: and the ungraceful cannot make herself graceful, nor the graceful ungraceful. Wherefore? because these things come from nature. Well! thou hast seen corporeal beauty. Now let us turn inwards to the soul: let the handmaid approach the mistress! let us turn I say to the soul. Look upon that beauty, or rather listen to it: for thou canst not see it since it is invisible—Listen to that beauty. What then is beauty of soul? Temperance, mildness, almsgiving, love, brotherly kindness, tender affection, obedience to God, the fulfillment of the law, righteousness, contrition of heart. These things are the beauty of the soul. These things then are not the results of nature, but of moral disposition. And he who does not possess these things is able to receive them, and he who has them, if he becomes careless, loses them. For as in the case of the body I was saying that she who is ungraceful cannot become graceful; so in the case of the soul I say the contrary that the graceless soul can become full of grace. For what was more graceless than the soul of Paul when he was a blasphemer and insulter: what more full of grace when he said “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.” (2 Timothy 4:7) What was more graceless than the soul of the robber? what more full of grace when he heard the words “Verily I say unto thee today shalt thou be with me in paradise?” (Luke 23:43) What was more graceless than the publican when he practiced extortion? but what more full of grace when he declared his resolution. (Luke 19:8) Seest thou that thou canst not alter grace of body, for it is the result not of moral disposition, but of nature. But grace of soul is supplied out of our own moral choice. Thou hast now received the definition. Of what kind are they? that the beauty of the soul proceeds from obedience to God. For if the graceless soul obeys God it puts off its ungracefulness, and becomes full of grace. “Saul! Saul!” it was said, “why persecutest thou me?” and he replied “and who art Thou Lord?” “I am Jesus.” (Acts 9:4-5) And he obeyed, and his obedience made the graceless soul full of grace. Again, He saith to the publican “come follow me” (Matthew 9:9) and the publican rose up and became an apostle: and the graceless soul became full of grace. Whence? by obedience. Again He saith to the fishermen “Come ye after me and I will make you to become fishers of men:” (Matthew 4:19) and by their obedience their minds became full of grace. Let us see then what kind of beauty He is speaking of here.

“Hearken O daughter and behold, and forget thy own people and thy father’s house, and the king shall desire thy beauty.” What kind of beauty will he desire? the spiritual kind. How so? because she is to “*forget*” He saith “hearken and forget.” These are acts of moral choice. “Hearken!” he said: an ungraceful one hears and her ungracefulness being that of the body is not removed. To the sinful woman He has said “Hearken,” and if she will obey she sees what manner of beauty is bestowed upon her. Since then the ungracefulness of the bride was not physical, but moral (for she did not obey God but transgressed) therefore he leads her to another remedy. Thou didst become ungraceful then, not by nature, but by moral choice: and thou didst become full of grace by obedience. “Hearken O daughter and behold and forget thy own people, and thy father’s house, and the king shall desire thy beauty.” Then that thou mayest learn that he does not mean anything visible to sense, when thou hearest the word beauty, think not of eye, or nose, or mouth, or neck, but of piety, faith, love, things which are within—“for all the glory of the king’s daughter is from within.” Now for all these things let us offer thanks to God, the giver, for to Him alone belongeth glory, honour, might, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “17. Attend, and let us learn what corporeal, and what spiritual beauty are. There is soul and body: they are two substances: there is a beauty of body, and there is a beauty of soul.”

But we read of three parts to man in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He continues, “What is beauty of body? an extended eyebrow, a merry glance, a blushing cheek, ruddy lips, a straight neck, long wavy hair, tapering fingers, upright stature, a fair blooming complexion. Does this bodily beauty come from nature, or from choice? Confessedly it comes from nature. Attend that thou mayest learn the conception of philosophers. This beauty whether of the countenance, of the eye, of the hair, of the brow, does it come from nature, or from choice? It is obvious that it comes from nature. For the ungraceful woman, even if she cultivate beauty in countless ways, cannot become graceful in body: for natural conditions are fixed, and confined by limits which they cannot pass over. Therefore the beautiful woman is always beautiful, even if she has no taste for beauty: and the ungraceful cannot make herself graceful, nor the graceful ungraceful. Wherefore? because these things come from nature. Well! thou hast seen corporeal beauty. Now let us turn inwards to the soul: let the handmaid approach the mistress! let us turn I say to the soul. Look upon that beauty, or rather listen to it: for thou canst not see it since it is invisible—Listen to that beauty. What then is beauty of soul? Temperance, mildness, almsgiving, love, brotherly kindness, tender affection, obedience to God, the fulfillment of the law, righteousness, contrition of heart. These things are the beauty of the soul. These things then are not the results of nature, but of moral disposition.”

But one wonders why he did not mention the fruit of the Spirit, as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

He continues, “And he who does not possess these things is able to receive them, and he who has them, if he becomes careless, loses them. For as in the case of the body I was saying that she who is ungraceful cannot become graceful; so in the case of the soul I say the contrary that the graceless soul can become full of grace.”

We get the impression that, in the mind of Chrysostom, the soul is like a tank, as it were, that can be full of grace if it makes godly choices, but it loses grace if it makes ungodly choices.

Chrysostom continues, “For what was more graceless than the soul of Paul when he was a blasphemer and insulter: what more full of grace when he said “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.” (2 Timothy 4:7)”

He refers to **2 Timothy 4 (KJV):7** I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

He continues, “What was more graceless than the soul of the robber? what more full of grace when he heard the words “Verily I say unto thee today shalt thou be with me in paradise?” (Luke 23:43)”

He refers in context to **Luke 23 (KJV):39** And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

He continues, “What was more graceless than the publican when he practiced extortion? but what more full of grace when he declared his resolution. (Luke 19:8)”

He refers to **Luke 23 (KJV):2** And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

And to **Luke 19 (KJV):8** And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. 9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

He continues, “Seest thou that thou canst not alter grace of body, for it is the result not of moral disposition, but of nature. But grace of soul is supplied out of our own moral choice. Thou hast now received the definition. Of what kind are they? that the beauty of the soul proceeds from obedience to God. For if the graceless soul obeys God it puts off its ungracefulness, and becomes full of grace.”

We get the impression that, in the mind of Chrysostom, the soul is like a tank, as it were, that can be full of grace if it makes godly choices, but it loses grace if it makes ungodly choices. However, this makes our standing before God dependent on our works, that is, on our own righteousness. When God justifies us, He puts His righteousness down to our account, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

We are “justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”. It is not grace that is put down to our account, but the “righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe”. It is not about our own righteousness, but

the righteousness of God, as we read also in **Philippians 3 (KJV):8** Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

If we sin after we have been justified by God, our standing is not affected. Our fellowship with God will be affected, and we will feel distant from God. We have only to confess our sins to recover, and maintain our fellowship with the Lord. If we do not confess our sins, God will discipline us but we will still be saved, only through the fire of our own bad choices, as Paul taught the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):31** For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Chrysostom continues, ““Saul! Saul!” it was said, “why persecutest thou me?” and he replied “and who art Thou Lord?” “I am Jesus.” (Acts 9:4-5)”

He refers to **Acts 9 (KJV):4** And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

He continues, “And he obeyed, and his obedience made the graceless soul full of grace. Again, He saith to the publican “come follow me” (Matthew 9:9) and the publican rose up and became an apostle: and the graceless soul became full of grace. Whence? by obedience.”

He refers to **Matthew 9 (KJV):9** And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

And to **Matthew 10 (KJV):2** Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; 3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

He continues, “Again He saith to the fishermen “Come ye after me and I will make you to become fishers of men:” (Matthew 4:19) and by their obedience their minds became full of grace.”

He refers in context to **Matthew 4 (KJV):18** And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. 19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. 20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

He continues, “Let us see then what kind of beauty He is speaking of here. “Hearken O daughter and behold, and forget thy own people and thy father’s house, and the king shall desire thy beauty.””

He refers to **Psalms 45 (KJV):10** Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house; 11 So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.

He continues, “What kind of beauty will he desire? the spiritual kind. How so? because she is to “*forget*” He saith “hearken and forget.” These are acts of moral choice. “Hearken!” he said: an ungraceful one hears and her ungracefulness being that of the body is not removed. To



the sinful woman He has said “Hearken,” and if she will obey she sees what manner of beauty is bestowed upon her. Since then the ungracefulness of the bride was not physical, but moral (for she did not obey God but transgressed) therefore he leads her to another remedy. Thou didst become ungraceful then, not by nature, but by moral choice: and thou didst become full of grace by obedience. “Hearken O daughter and behold and forget thy own people, and thy father’s house, and the king shall desire thy beauty.” Then that thou mayest learn that he does not mean anything visible to sense, when thou hearest the word beauty, think not of eye, or nose, or mouth, or neck, but of piety, faith, love, things which are within—“for all the glory of the king’s daughter is from within.” Now for all these things let us offer thanks to God, the giver, for to Him alone belongeth glory, honour, might, for ever and ever. Amen.”

Chrysostom’s thinking of the graceful and ungraceful soul began to be the basis for salvation in the Church during the time of Chrysostom. We must understand that when one is born again by faith in Jesus Christ, his or her spirit is made alive to God, and given a new divine nature by being born again by the Spirit of God. This does not erase the sin nature in our flesh. But we now have the victory over our flesh by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus in our spirit. And since we have been justified by God, our standing is not affected by sin. We are saved by grace through faith. But our fellowship with the Lord must be maintained by confession of any subsequent sin, or God will chasten us in order that we should not be condemned with the world, as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):32** But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

And in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):6** For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. **7** If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? **8** But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. **9** Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? **10** For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. **11** Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, EUTROPIUS, PATRICIAN AND CONSUL, Homily II, After Eutropius having been found outside the Church had been taken captive, page 264-265**, he says, “17. Attend, and let us learn what corporeal, and what spiritual beauty are. There is soul and body: they are two substances: there is a beauty of body, and there is a beauty of soul.”

But we read of the three parts of man in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He then asks, “What then is beauty of soul? Temperance, mildness, almsgiving, love, brotherly kindness, tender affection, obedience to God, the fulfillment of the law, righteousness, contrition of heart. These things are the beauty of the soul. These things then are not the results

of nature, but of moral disposition.”

But one wonders why he did not mention the fruit of the Spirit, as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

He then says, “For as in the case of the body I was saying that she who is ungraceful cannot become graceful; so in the case of the soul I say the contrary that the graceless soul can become full of grace.”

He then explains, “Seest thou that thou canst not alter grace of body, for it is the result not of moral disposition, but of nature. But grace of soul is supplied out of our own moral choice. Thou hast now received the definition. Of what kind are they? that the beauty of the soul proceeds from obedience to God. For if the graceless soul obeys God it puts off its ungracefulness, and becomes full of grace.”

We get the impression that, in the mind of Chrysostom, the soul is like a tank, as it were, that can be full of grace if it makes godly choices, but it loses grace if it makes ungodly choices.

And he says, “Seest thou that thou canst not alter grace of body, for it is the result not of moral disposition, but of nature. But grace of soul is supplied out of our own moral choice. Thou hast now received the definition.”

Chrysostom’s thinking of the graceful and ungraceful soul began to be the basis for salvation in the Church during the time of Chrysostom. When one was baptized, they became full of grace. If one made good moral choices, they would keep their grace, so to speak. If one made bad moral choices, they would lose their grace. He did not seem to understand what happens when one is born again.

We must understand that when one is born again by faith in Jesus Christ, his or her spirit is made alive to God, and given a new divine nature by being born again by the Spirit of God. This does not erase the sin nature in our flesh, but births a new nature in our spirit. Now we have the victory over our flesh by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus in the new nature in our spirit. And since we have been justified by God because of our faith, our standing is not affected by sin because the righteousness of God has been imputed to us, as we read in **Romans 4 (KJV):5** But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

The word translated “counted” in verse 5 is the same Greek word translated “imputeth” in verse 6, that is, **λογίζομαι** (pronounced lo-ge'-zo-my), middle voice from **G3056**; to take an inventory, i.e. estimate (literally or figuratively):—conclude, (ac-)count (of), + despise, esteem, impute, lay, number, reason, reckon, suppose, think (on). **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3049**

We are saved by grace through faith. But our fellowship with the Lord must be maintained by confession of any subsequent sin, or God will chasten us that we should not be condemned with the world, as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):32** But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

## The Nature of the Flesh

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XII, page 419-427

Ver. 5. “For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the Law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.”

You see then the gain to be got from the former husband! And he does not say when we were in the Law, so in every passage shrinking from giving a handle to heretics; but “when we were in the flesh,” that is, in evil deeds, in a carnal life. What he says then is, not that they were in the flesh before, but now they went about without any bodies; but by saying what he does, he neither says that the Law is the cause of sins, nor yet frees it from odium. For it held the rank of a bitter accuser, by making their sins bare: since that, which enjoins more to him who is not minded to obey at all, makes the offence greater. And this is why he does not say, the “motions of sins” which were produced by the Law, but which “were through the Law”, without adding any “produced,” but simply “through the Law,” that is to say, which through the Law were made apparent, were made known. Next that he might not accuse the flesh either; he does not say which the members wrought, but “which did work (or were wrought) in our members,” to show that the origin of the mischief was elsewhere, from the thoughts which wrought in us, not from the members which had them working in them. For the soul ranks as a performer, and the fabric of the flesh as a lyre, sounding as the performer obliges it. So the discordant tune is to be ascribed not to the latter, but to the former sooner than to the latter.

Ver. 6. “But now,” he says, “we are delivered from the Law.” (κατηργήθημεν, “made of no effect.”)

See how he again in this place spares the flesh and the Law. For he does not say that the Law was made of no effect, or that the flesh was made of no effect, but that we were made of no effect (i.e., were delivered). And how were we delivered? Why by the old man, who was held down by sin, being dead and buried. For this is what he sets forth in the words, “being dead to that, wherein we were held.” As if he had said, the chain by which we were held down was deadened and broken through, so that that which held down, namely sin, held down no more. But do not fall back or grow listless. For you have been freed with a view to being servants again, though not in the same way, but “in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” Now what does he mean here? for it is necessary to disclose it here, that when we come upon the passage, we may not be perplexed with it. When then Adam sinned (he means), and his body became liable to death and sufferings, it received also many physical losses, and the horse became less active and less obedient. But Christ, when He came, made it more nimble for us through baptism, rousing it with the wing of the Spirit. And for this reason the marks for the race, which they of old time had to run, are not the same as ours. Since then the race was not so easy as it is now. For this reason, He desires them to be clear not from murder only, as He did them of old time, but from anger also; nor is it adultery only that He bids them keep clear of, but even the unchaste look; and to be

exempt not from false swearing only, but even from true. (Matt. v. 21, 27, 33) And with their friends He orders them to love their enemies also. And in all other duties, He gives us a longer ground to run over, and if we do but obey, threatens us with hell, so showing that the things in question are not matters of freewill offering for the combatants, as celibacy and poverty are, but are binding upon us absolutely to fulfil. For they belong to necessary and urgent requisites, and the man who does not do them is to be punished to the utmost. This is why He said, "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. v. 20)

But he that does not see the kingdom, shall certainly fall into hell. For this cause Paul too says, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the Law, but under grace." And here again, "that ye should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." For it is not the letter that condemneth, that is the old Law, but the Spirit that helpeth. And for this reason among the ancients, if any were found practicing virginity, it was quite astonishing. But now the thing is scattered over every part of the world. And death in those times some few men did with difficulty despise, but now in villages and cities there are hosts of martyrs without number, consisting not of men only, but even of women. And next having done with this, he again meets an objection which is rising, and as he meets it, gives confirmation to his own object. And so he does not introduce the solution of it as main argument, but by way of opposing this; that by the exigency of meeting it, he may get a plea for saying what he wishes, and make his accusation not so unpalatable. Having then said, "in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter," he proceeds.

Ver. 7. "What then? is the Law sin? God forbid."

Even before this he had been saying, that "the motions of sins, which were by the Law did work in our members" (ver. 5): and, "sin shall have no dominion over you, for ye are not under the Law." (vi. 14) And that "where no law is, there is no transgression." (iv. 15) And, "but the Law came in, that the offence might abound" (v. 20); and, "the Law worketh wrath." (iv. 15) Now as all these things seem to bring the Law into disrepute, in order to correct the suspicion arising from them, he supposes also an objection, and says, "What then, is the Law sin? God forbid." Before the proof he uses this adjuration to conciliate the hearer, and by way of soothing any who was troubled at it. For so, when he had heard this, and felt assured of the speaker's disposition, he would join with him in investigating the seeming perplexity, and feel no suspicions of him. Wherefore he has put the objection, associating the other with him. Hence, he does not say, What am I to say? but "What shall we say then?" As though a deliberation and a judgment were before them, and a general meeting called together, and the objection came forward not of himself, but in the course of discussion, and from real circumstances of the case. For that the letter killeth, he means, no one will deny, or that the Spirit giveth life (2 Cor. iii. 6); this is plain too, and nobody will dispute it. If then these are confessedly truths, what are we to say about the Law? that "it is sin? God forbid." Explain the difficulty then. Do you see how he supposes the opponent to be present, and having assumed the dignity of the teacher, he comes to the explaining of it. Now what is this? Sin, he says, the Law is not. "Nay, I had not known sin, but by the Law."

Notice the reach of his wisdom! What the Law is not, he has set down by way of objection, so that by removing this, and thereby doing the Jew a pleasure, he may persuade him to accept the less alternative. And what is this? Why that “I had not known sin, but by the Law. For I had not known lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”

Do you observe, how by degrees he shows it to be not an accuser of sin only, but in a measure its producer? Yet not from any fault of its own, but from that of the froward Jews, he proves it was, that this happened. For he has taken good heed to stop the mouths of the Manichees, that accuse the Law; and so after saying, “Nay, I had not known sin, but by the Law;” and, “I had not known lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet;” he adds,

Ver. 8. “But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.”

Do you see how he has cleared it of all blame? For “sin,” he says, “taking occasion by the commandment,” it was, and not the Law, that increased the concupiscence, and the reverse of the Law’s intent was brought about. This came of weakness, and not of any badness. For when we desire a thing, and then are hindered of it, the flame of the desire is but increased. Now this came not of the Law; for it hindered us (**Schaff Note:** 3 mss. endeavored) of itself to keep us off from it; but sin, that is, thy own listlessness and bad disposition, used what was good for the reverse. But this is no fault in the physician, but in the patient who applies the medicine wrongly. For the reason of the Law being given was, not to inflame concupiscence, but to extinguish it, though the reverse came of it. Yet the blame attaches not to it, but to us. Since if a person had a fever, and wanted to take cold drink when it was not good for him, and one were not to let him take his fill of it, and so increase his lust after this ruinous pleasure, one could not deservedly be found fault with. For the physician’s business is simply prohibiting it, but the restraining himself is the patient’s. And what if sin did take occasion from it? Surely there are many bad men who by good precepts grow in their own wickedness. For this was the way in which the devil ruined Judas, by plunging him into avarice, and making him steal what belonged to the poor. However it was not the being entrusted with the bag that brought this to pass, but the wickedness of his own spirit. And Eve, by bringing Adam to eat from the tree, threw him out of Paradise. But neither in that case was the tree the cause, even if it was through it that the occasion took place. But if he treats the discussion about the Law with somewhat of vehemence, do not feel surprise. For Paul is making a stand against the present exigency, and suffers not his language to give a handle even to those that suspected otherwise, but takes great pains to make the present statement correct. Do not then sift what he is now going on to say (**Schaff Note:** 4 mss. “here saying”) by itself, but put beside it the purpose by which he is led on to speak of these things, and reckon for the madness of the Jews, and their vigorous spirit of contention, which as he desires earnestly to do away with, he seems to bear violently (πολύς πνεῖν) against the Law, not to find fault with it, but to unnerve their vigor. For if it is any reproach to the Law that sin taketh occasion by it, this will be found to be the case in the New Testament also. For in the New Testament there are thousands of laws, and about many more (“far more,” Field) important matters. And one may see the same come to pass there also, not with regard to covetousness (lust, as v. 7) only, but to all

wickedness generally. For He says, “if I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin,” (John xv. 22) Here then sin finds a footing in this fact, and so the greater punishment. And again when Paul discourseth about grace, he says, “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be counted worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God.” (Heb. x. 29) Has not then the worse punishment its origin from hence, from the greater benefit? And the reason why he says the Greeks were without excuse was, because being honored with the gift of reason, and having gotten a knowledge of the beauty of the creation, and having been placed in a fair way for being led by it to the Creator, they did not so use the wisdom of God, as it was their duty. Seest thou that to the wicked in all cases occasions of greater punishment result from good things? But we shall not in this accuse the benefits of God, but rather upon this even admire them the more: but we shall throw the blame on the spirit of those who abuse the blessings to contrary purpose. Let this then be our line with regard to the Law also. But this is easy and feasible—the other is what is a difficulty. How is it that he says “I had not known lust except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet?” Now if man had not known lust, before he received the Law, what was the reason for the flood, or the burning of Sodom? What does he mean then? He means vehement lust: and this is why he did not say, lust, but “all manner of concupiscence,” intimating, in that, its vehemency. And what, it will be said, is the good of the Law, if it adds to the disorder? None; but much mischief even. Yet the charge is not against the Law, but the listlessness of those who received it. For sin wrought it, though by the Law. But this was not the purpose of the Law, nay, the very opposite, Sin then became stronger, he says, and violent. But this again is no charge against the Law but against their obstinacy. “For without the Law sin is dead.” That is, was not so ascertainable. For even those before the Law knew that they had sinned, but they came to a more exact knowledge of it after the giving of the Law. And for this reason they were liable to a greater accusation: since it was not the same thing to have nature to accuse them, and besides nature the Law, which told them distinctly every charge.

Ver. 9. “For I was alive without the Law once.”

When, pray, was that? Before Moses. See how he sets himself to show that it, both by the things it did, and the things it did not do, weighed down human nature. For when “I was alive without the Law,” he means, I was not so much condemned.

“But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.”

This seems indeed to be an accusing of the Law. But if any one will look closely at it, it will be seen to be even an encomium of it. For it did not give existence to sin that before was not, but only pointed out what had escaped notice. And this is even a praise of the Law, if at least before it they had been sinning without perceiving it. But when this came, if they gained nothing besides from it, at all events this they were distinctly made acquainted with, the fact that they had been sinning. And this is no small point, with a view to getting free from wickedness. Now if they did not get free, this has nothing to do with the Law; which framed everything with a view to this end, but the accusation lies wholly against their spirit, which was perverse beyond all supposition. For what took place was not the natural thing,—their being injured by things profitable. And this is why he says “And the commandment,

which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.” He does not say, “it was made,” or “it brought forth” death, but “was found,” so explaining the novel and unusual kind of discrepancy, and making the whole fall upon their own pate. For if, he says, you would know the aim of it, it led to life, and was given with this view. But if death was the issue of this, the fault is with them that received the commandment, and not of this, which was leading them to life. And this is a point on which he has thrown fresh light by what follows.

Ver. 11. “For sin taking occasion by the commandment deceived me, and by it slew me.”

You observe how he everywhere keeps to sin, and entirely clears the Law of accusation. And so he proceeds as follows.

Ver. 12. “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.”

But, if ye be so minded, we will bring before you the language of those who wrest these declarations. For this will make our own statements clearer. For there are some that say, that he is not here saying what he does of the Law of Moses, but some take it of the law of nature; some, of the commandment given in Paradise. Yet surely Paul’s object everywhere is to annul this Law, but he has not any question with those. And with much reason; for it was through a fear and a horror of this that the Jews obstinately opposed grace. But it does not appear that he has ever called the commandment in Paradise “Law” at all; no, nor yet any other writer. Now to make this plainer from what he has really said, let us follow out his words, retracing the argument a little. Having then spoken to them about strictness of conversation, he goes on to say, “Know ye not, brethren, how that the Law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? Wherefore ye are become dead to the Law.” Therefore if these things are said about the natural law, we are found to be without the natural law. And if this be true, we are more senseless than the creatures which are without reason. Yet this is not so, certainly. For with regard to the law in Paradise, there is no need to be contentious, lest we should be taking up a superfluous trouble, by entering the lists against things men have made up their minds upon. In what sense then does he say, “I should not have known sin but by the Law?” He is speaking, not of absolute want of knowledge, but of the more accurate knowledge. For if this were said of the law of nature, how would what follows suit? “For I was alive,” he says, “without the Law once.” Now neither Adam, nor any body else, can be shown ever to have lived without the law of nature. For as soon as God formed him, He put into him that law of nature, making it to dwell by him as a security to the whole kind (**Schaff Note:** Gr. Nature, see p. 365). And besides this, it does not appear that he has anywhere called the law of nature a commandment. But this he calls as well a commandment, and that “just and holy,” as a “spiritual law.” But the law of nature was not given to us by the Spirit. For barbarians, as well as Greeks and other men, have this law. Hence it is plain, that it is the Mosaic Law that he is speaking of above, as well as afterwards, and in all the passages. For this cause also he calls it holy, saying, “Wherefore the Law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” For even though the Jews have been unclean since the Law, and unjust and covetous, this does not destroy the virtue of the Law, even as their unbelief doth not make the faith of God of none effect. So from all these things it is plain, that it is of the Law of Moses that he here speaks.

Ver. 13. “Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin that it might appear sin.” (**Schaff Note:** 4 mss. om. ῥ.)

That is, that it might be shown what great evil sin is, namely, a listless will, an inclinableness to the worse side, the actual doing (**Schaff Note:** 3 mss. om. this clause), and the perverted judgment. For this is the cause of all the evils; but he amplifies it by pointing out the exceeding grace of Christ, and teaching them what an evil He freed the human race from, which, by the medicines used to cure it, had become worse, and was increased by the preventives. Wherefore he goes on to say: “That sin, by the commandment, might become exceeding sinful.” Do you see how these things are woven together everywhere? By the very means he uses to accuse sin, he again shows the excellency of the Law. Neither is it a small point which he has gained by showing what an evil sin is, and unfolding the whole of its poison, and bringing it to view. For this is what he shows, by saying, “that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.” That is, that it may be made clear what an evil sin is, what a ruinous thing. And this is what was shown by the commandment. Hereby he also shows the preeminence of grace above the Law, the preeminence above, not the conflict with, the Law. For do not look to this fact, that those who received it were the worse for it; but consider the other, that the Law had not only no design of drawing wickedness out to greater lengths, but even seriously aimed at hewing down what already existed. But if it had no strength, give to it indeed a crown for its intention, but adore more highly the power of Christ, which abolished, cut away: and plucked up the very roots an evil so manifold and so hard to be overthrown. But when you hear me speak of sin, do not think of it as a substantial power, but evil doing, as it comes upon men and goes from them continually, and which, before it takes place, has no being, and when it has taken place, vanishes again. This then was why the Law was given. Now no law is ever given to put an end to things natural, but in order to correct a way of acting purposely wicked. And this the lawgivers that are without too are aware of, and all mankind in general. For it is the evils from viciousness alone that they are for setting right, and they do not undertake to extirpate those allotted us along with our nature; since this they cannot do. For things natural remain unalterable (**Schaff Note:** Arist. *Eth.* b. 2, c. 1), as we have told you frequently in other discourses also.

And so let us leave these contests, and again practice ourselves in exhortation. Or rather, this last part belongs to those contests. For if we cast out wickedness, we should bring virtue in also: and by these means we shall clearly teach that wickedness is no natural evil, and shall be able easily to stop the mouths of them that enquire for the origin of evil, not by means of words only, but of actions also, since we share the same nature with them, but are freed from their wickedness. For let us not be looking at the laboriousness of virtue, but at the possibility of succeeding in it. But if we be in earnest, it will be at once light and palatable to us. But if you tell me of the pleasure of vice, tell out its end too. For it issueth in death, even as virtue leadeth us to life. Or if you think fit let us rather scrutinize them both even before their end; for we shall see that vice has a great deal of pain attached to it, and virtue great pleasure. For what pray is so painful as a bad conscience? or what more pleasing than a good hope? For there is nothing, assuredly there is nothing, which is used to cut us so deep, and press so hard on us, as the expectation of evil: nothing that so keeps us up, and all



but gives us wings, as a good conscience. And this we may get a knowledge of even by what takes place before our eyes. For they that dwell in a prison, and are in expectation of sentence against them, let them have the enjoyment of luxury repeated beyond count, live a more afflicting life than those that go a begging by the by-roads, yet with nothing upon their consciences to trouble them. For the expectation of a dreadful end will not let them perceive those pleasures which they have in their hands. And why do I speak of prisoners? Why, as for those that are living out of prison, and have a good fortune, yet have a bad conscience about them, handicraftsmen that work for their bread, and spend the whole day amid their labor, are in a far better plight than they. And for this reason too we say, How miserable the gladiators are (though seeing them as we do in taverns, drunken, luxurious, gormandizing), and call them the most miserable of men, because the calamity of the end which they must expect is too great to admit of comparison with that pleasure. Now if to them a life of this sort seems to be pleasing, remember what I am continually telling you, that it is no such marvel that a man who lives in vice should not flee from the misery and pain of vice. For see how a thing so detestable as that, yet seems to be delectable to those who practice it. Yet we do not on this account say, how happy they are, for this is just the very reason why we think them pitiable, because they have no notion of the evils they are amongst. And what would you say of adulterers, who for a little pleasure undergo at once a disgraceful slavery, and a loss of money, and a perpetual fear (**Schaff Note:** Hor. Sat. II. vii. 58–67), and in fact the very life of a Cain, or rather one that is even much worse than his; filled with fears for the present, and trembling for the future, and suspecting alike friend and foe, and those that know about it, and those that know nothing? Neither when they go to sleep are they quit of this struggle, their bad conscience shaping out for them dreams that abound with sundry terrors, and in this way horrifying them. Far otherwise is the chaste man, seeing he passes the present life unshackled and at full liberty. Weigh then against the little pleasure, the sundry fluctuations of these terrors, and with the short labor of continency, the calm of an entire life; and you will find the latter hath more of pleasantness than the former. But as for the man that is set upon plundering and laying hands upon other men's goods, tell me if he has not to undergo countless pains in the way of running about, fawning upon slaves, freemen, doorkeepers; alarming and threatening, acting shamelessly, watching, trembling, in agony, suspecting everything. Far otherwise is the man that holds riches in contempt, for he too enjoys pleasure in abundance, and lives with no fear, and in perfect security. And if any one were to go through the other instances of vice, he would find much trouble, and many rocks. But what is of greater importance is, that in the case of virtue the difficulties come first, and the pleasant part afterwards, so the trouble is even thus alleviated. But in the case of vice, the reverse. After the pleasure, the pains and the punishments, so that by these besides the pleasure is done away. For as he who waits for the crown, perceives nothing of present annoyance, so he that has to expect the punishments after the pleasures has no power of gathering in a gladness that is unalloyed, since the fear puts everything in confusion. Or rather if any one were to scrutinize the thing with care, even before the punishment which follows upon these things, he would find that even at the very moment when vice is boldly entered upon, a great deal of pain is felt. And, if you think fit, let us just examine this in the

case of those who plunder other men's goods. Or those who in any way get together money, and setting aside the fears, and dangers, and trembling, and agony, and care, and all these things, let us suppose the case of a man, who has got rich without any annoyance, and feels sure about maintaining his present fortune (which he has no means of doing, still for all that let it be assumed for argument's sake). What sort of pleasure then is he to gather in from having so much about him? On the contrary, it is just this very thing that will not let him be glad hearted. For as long as ever he desires other things besides, he is still upon the rack. Because desire gives pleasure at the time it has come to a stand. If thirsty, for instance, we feel refreshed, when we have drunk as much as we wish; but so long as we keep thirsty, even if we were to have exhausted all the fountains in the world, our torment were but growing greater; even if we were to drink up ten thousand rivers, our state of punishment were more distressing. And thou also, if thou wert to receive the goods of the whole world, and still to covet, wouldest make thy punishment the greater, the more things thou hadst tasted of. Fancy not then, that from having gathered a great sum together thou shalt have aught of pleasure, but rather by declining to be rich. But if thou covetest to be rich thou wilt be always under the scourge. For this is a kind of love that does not reach its aim; and the longer journey thou hast gone, the further off thou keepest from the end.

Is not this a paradox then, a derangement, a madness in the extreme? Let us then forsake this first of evils, or rather let us not even touch this covetousness at all. Yet, if we have touched it, let us spring away from its first motions (προοιμίωv). For this is the advice the writer of the Proverbs gives us, when he speaks about the harlot: "Spring away," he says, "tarry not, neither go thou near to the door of her house" (Prov. v. 8): this same thing I would say to you about the love of money. For if by entering gradually you fall into this ocean of madness, you will not be able to get up out of it with ease, and as if you were in whirlpools, struggle as often as ever you may, it will not be easy for you to get clear; so after falling into this far worse abyss of covetousness, you will destroy your own self, with all that belongs to you. (Acts viii. 20) And so my advice is that we be on our watch against the beginning, and avoid little evils, for the great ones are gendered by these. For he who gets into a way of saying at every sin, This matters nothing! will by little and little ruin himself entirely. At all events it is this which has introduced vice; which has opened the doors to the robber (5 mss. devil), which has thrown down the walls of cities, this saying at each sin, "This matters nothing!" Thus in the case of the body too, the greatest of diseases grow up, when trifling ones are made light of. If Esau had not first been a traitor to his birthright, he would not have become unworthy of the blessings. If he had not rendered himself unworthy of the blessings, he would not have had the desire of going on to fratricide. If Cain had not fallen in love with the first place, but had left that to God, he would not have had the second place. Again, when he had the second place, if he had listened to the advice, he would not have travailed with the murder. Again, if after doing the murder he had come to repentance, when God called him, and had not answered in an irreverent way, he would not have had to suffer the subsequent evils. But if those before the Law did owing to this listlessness come to the very bottom of misery, only consider what is to become of us, who are called to a greater contest, unless we take strict heed unto ourselves, and make speed to quench the

sparks of evil deeds before the whole pile is kindled. Take an instance of my meaning. Are you in the habit of false swearing? do not stop at this only, but away with all swearing, and you will have no further need of trouble. For it is far harder for a man that swears to keep from false swearing, than to abstain from swearing altogether. Are you an insulting and abusive person? a striker too? Lay down as a law for yourself not to be angry or brawl in the least, and with the root the fruit also will be gotten rid of. Are you lustful and dissipated? Make it your rule again not even to look at a woman (Job xxxi. 1), or to go up into the theatre, or to trouble yourself with the beauty of other people whom you see about. For it is far easier not even to look at a woman of good figure, than after looking and taking in the lust, to thrust out the perturbation that comes thereof, the struggle being easier in the preliminaries (προοιμίως). Or rather we have no need of a struggle at all if we do not throw the gates open to the enemy, or take in the seeds of mischief (κακίας). And this is why Christ chastised the man who looks unchastely upon a woman (Matt. v. 28), that He might free us from greater labor, before the adversary became strong, bidding us cast him out of the house while he may be cast out even with ease. For what need to have superfluous trouble, and to get entangled with the enemies, when without entanglement we may erect the trophy, and before the wrestling seize upon the prize? For it is not so great a trouble not to look upon beautiful women, as it is while looking to restrain one's self. Or rather the first would be no trouble at all, but immense toil and labor comes on after looking. Since then this trouble is less (most mss. add, "to the incontinent"), or rather there is no labor at all, nor trouble, but the greater gain, why do we take pains to plunge into an ocean of countless evils? And farther, he who does not look upon a woman, will overcome such lust not only with greater ease, but with a higher purity, as he on the other hand who does look, getteth free with more trouble, and not without a kind of stain, that is, if he does get free at all. For he that does not take a view of the beautiful figure, is pure also from the lust that might result. But he who lusteth to look, after first laying his reason low, and polluting it in countless ways, has then to cast out the stain that came of the lust, that is, if he do cast it out. This then is why Christ, to prevent our suffering in this way, did not prohibit murder only, but wrath; not adultery only, but an unchaste look even: not perjury only, but all swearing whatsoever. Nor does he make the measure of virtue stop here, but after having given these laws, He proceeds to a still greater degree. For after keeping us far away from murder, and bidding us to be clear of wrath, He bids us be ready even to suffer ill, and not to be prepared to suffer no more than what he who attacks us pleases, but even to go further, and to get the better of his utmost madness by the overflowingness of our own Christian spirit (τῆς οικείας φιγυσοφίας). For what He says is not, "If a man smite thee on thy right cheek, bear it nobly and hold thy peace;" but He adds to this the yielding to him the other too. For He says, "Turn to him the other also." (Matt. v. 39) This then is the brilliant victory, to yield him even more than what he wishes, and to go beyond the bounds of his evil desire by the profuseness of one's own patient endurance. For in this way you will put a stop to his madness, and also receive from the second act again the reward of the first, besides putting a stop to wrath against him. See you, how in all cases it is we that have it in our power not to suffer ill, and not they that inflict it? Or rather it is not the not suffering ill alone, but even the having

benefits (**Schaff Note:** Sav. conj. παθεῖν εὖ, so 2 mss.) done us that we have in our own power. And this is the truest wonder, that we are so far from being injured, if we be right-minded, that we are even benefited, and that too by the very things that we suffer unjustly at the hands of others. Reflect then; has such an one done you an affront? You have the power of making this affront redound to your honor. For if you do an affront in return, you only increase the disgrace. But if you bless him that did you the affront, you will see that all men give you victory, and proclaim your praise. Do you see how by the things wherein we are wronged, we get good done unto us if we be so minded? This one may see happening in the case of money matters, of blows, and the same in everything else. For if we requite them with the opposite, we are but twining a double crown about us, one for the ills we have suffered, as well as one for the good we are doing. Whenever then a person comes and tells you that “such an one has done you an affront, and keeps continually speaking ill of you to everybody,” praise the man to those who tell you of him. For thus even if you wish to avenge yourself, you will have the power of inflicting punishment. For those who hear you, be they ever so foolish, will praise you, and hate him as fiercer than any brute beast, because he, without being at all wronged, caused you pain, but you, even when suffering wrong, requited him with the opposite. And so you will have it in your power to prove that all that he said was to no purpose. For he who feels the tooth of slander, gives by his vexation a proof that he is conscious of the truth of what is said. But he who smiles at it, by this very thing acquits himself of all suspicion with those who are present. Consider then how many good things you cull together from the affair. First, you rid yourself of all vexation and trouble. Secondly (rather this should come first), even if you have sins, you put them off, as the Publican did by bearing the Pharisee’s accusation meekly. Besides, you will by this practice make your soul heroic (**Schaff Note:** Gr. philosophic), and will enjoy endless praises from all men, and will divest yourself of any suspicion arising from what is said. But even if you are desirous of taking revenge upon the man, this too will follow in full measure, both by God’s punishing him for what he has said, and before that punishment by thy heroic conduct standing to him in the place of a mortal blow. For there is nothing that cuts those who affront us so much to the heart, as for us who are affronted to smile at the affront. As then from behaving with Christian heroism so many honors will accrue to us, so from being little minded just the opposite will befall us in everything. For we disgrace ourselves, and also seem to those present to be guilty of the things mentioned, and fill our soul with perturbation, and give our enemy pleasure, and provoke God, and add to our former sins. Taking then all this into consideration, let us flee from the abyss of a little mind (μικροψυχίας), and take refuge in the port of patient endurance (μακροθυμίας), that here we may at once “find rest unto our souls” (Matt. xi. 29), as Christ also set forth, and may attain to the good things to come, by the grace and love toward man, etc.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 5. “For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the Law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.””

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):5** For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

And also in **Romans 7 (NASB):5** For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were *aroused* by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.

He continues, “You see then the gain to be got from the former husband! And he does not say when we were in the Law, so in every passage shrinking from giving a handle to heretics; but “when we were in the flesh,” that is, in evil deeds, in a carnal life. What he says then is, not that they were in the flesh before, but now they went about without any bodies; but by saying what he does, he neither says that the Law is the cause of sins, nor yet frees it from odium. For it held the rank of a bitter accuser, by making their sins bare: since that, which enjoins more to him who is not minded to obey at all, makes the offence greater. And this is why he does not say, the “motions of sins” which were produced by the Law, but which “were through the Law” without adding any “produced,” but simply “through the Law,” that is to say, which through the Law were made apparent, were made known.”

And we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

And in **Romans 7 (KJV):7** What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

He continues, “Next that he might not accuse the flesh either; he does not say which the members wrought, but “which did work (or were wrought) in our members,” to show that the origin of the mischief was elsewhere, from the thoughts which wrought in us, not from the members which had them working in them. For the soul ranks as a performer, and the fabric of the flesh as a lyre, sounding as the performer obliges it. So the discordant tune is to be ascribed not to the latter, but to the former sooner than to the latter.”

Chrysostom’s analogy of “the flesh as a lyre” falls short of the Scripture, as we shall see.

He continues, “Ver. 6. “But now,” he says, “we are delivered from the Law.” (κατηργήθημεν, “made of no effect.”)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):6** But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

He continues, “See how he again in this place spares the flesh and the Law. For he does not say that the Law was made of no effect, or that the flesh was made of no effect, but that we were made of no effect (i.e., were delivered). And how were we delivered? Why by the old man, who was held down by sin, being dead and buried. For this is what he sets forth in the words, “being dead to that, wherein we were held.” As if he had said, the chain by which we were held down was deadened and broken through, so that that which held down, namely sin, held down no more. But do not fall back or grow listless. For you have been freed with a view to being servants again, though not in the same way, but “in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” Now what does he mean here? for it is necessary to disclose it here, that when we come upon the passage, we may not be perplexed with it. When then Adam sinned (he means), and his body became liable to death and sufferings, it received also many physical losses, and the horse became less active and less obedient. But Christ, when He came, made it

more nimble for us through baptism, rousing it with the wing of the Spirit. And for this reason the marks for the race, which they of old time had to run, are not the same as ours. Since then the race was not so easy as it is now. For this reason, He desires them to be clear not from murder only, as He did them of old time, but from anger also; nor is it adultery only that He bids them keep clear of, but even the unchaste look; and to be exempt not from false swearing only, but even from true. (Matt. v. 21, 27, 33)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 5 (KJV):21** Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

And in context to **Matthew 5 (KJV):27** Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

And in context to **Matthew 5 (KJV):33** Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: 34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: 35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. 36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. 37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

He continues, “And with their friends He orders them to love their enemies also. And in all other duties, He gives us a longer ground to run over, and if we do but obey, threatens us with hell, so showing that the things in question are not matters of freewill offering for the combatants, as celibacy and poverty are, but are binding upon us absolutely to fulfil. For they belong to necessary and urgent requisites, and the man who does not do them is to be punished to the utmost. This is why He said, “Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. v. 20)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):20** For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Chrysostom misunderstands this Scripture. Jesus was pointing to the scribes and Pharisees as unbelievers who had no righteousness. So our righteousness must exceed that of unbelievers, and this is accomplished when we have faith in Jesus Christ, and we become born again believers, and God justifies us, and puts His righteousness down to our account.

He continues, “But he that does not see the kingdom, shall certainly fall into hell. For this cause Paul too says, “Sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the Law, but under grace.””

He refers to **Romans 6 (KJV):14** For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

He continues, “And here again, “that ye should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.””

He refers again to **Romans 7 (KJV):6** But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

He continues, “For it is not the letter that condemneth, that is the old Law, but the Spirit that helpeth. And for this reason among the ancients, if any were found practicing virginity, it was quite astonishing. But now the thing is scattered over every part of the world. And death in those times some few men did with difficulty despise, but now in villages and cities there are hosts of martyrs without number, consisting not of men only, but even of women. And next having done with this, he again meets an objection which is rising, and as he meets it, gives confirmation to his own object. And so he does not introduce the solution of it as main argument, but by way of opposing this; that by the exigency of meeting it, he may get a plea for saying what he wishes, and make his accusation not so unpalatable. Having then said, “in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter,” he proceeds.

Ver. 7. “What then? is the Law sin? God forbid.””

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):7** What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

He continues, “Even before this he had been saying, that “the motions of sins, which were by the Law did work in our members” (ver. 5): and, “sin shall have no dominion over you, for ye are not under the Law.” (vi. 14) And that “where no law is, there is no transgression.” (iv. 15) And, “but the Law came in, that the offence might abound” (v. 20); and, “the Law worketh wrath.” (iv. 15)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):5** For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

And to **Romans 6 (KJV):14** For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

And to **Romans 4 (KJV):15** Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

And to **Romans 5 (KJV):20** Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

He continues, “Now as all these things seem to bring the Law into disrepute, in order to correct the suspicion arising from them, he supposes also an objection, and says, “What then, is the Law sin? God forbid.” Before the proof he uses this adjuration to conciliate the hearer, and by way of soothing any who was troubled at it. For so, when he had heard this, and felt assured of the speaker’s disposition, he would join with him in investigating the seeming perplexity, and feel no suspicions of him. Wherefore he has put the objection, associating the other with him. Hence, he does not say, What am I to say? but “What shall we say then?” As though a deliberation and a judgment were before them, and a general meeting called together, and the objection came forward not of himself, but in the course of discussion, and from real circumstances of the case. For that the letter killeth, he means, no one will deny, or that the Spirit giveth life (2 Cor. iii. 6);”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 3 (KJV):6** Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

He continues, “this is plain too, and nobody will dispute it. If then these are confessedly truths, what are we to say about the Law? that “it is sin? God forbid.” Explain the difficulty then. Do you see how he supposes the opponent to be present, and having assumed the dignity of the teacher, he comes to the explaining of it. Now what is this? Sin, he says, the Law is not.

“Nay, I had not known sin, but by the Law.” Notice the reach of his wisdom! What the Law is not, he has set down by way of objection, so that by removing this, and thereby doing the Jew a pleasure, he may persuade him to accept the less alternative. And what is this? Why that “I had not known sin, but by the Law. For I had not known lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”

Do you observe, how by degrees he shows it to be not an accuser of sin only, but in a measure its producer? Yet not from any fault of its own, but from that of the froward Jews, he proves it was, that this happened. For he has taken good heed to stop the mouths of the Manichees, that accuse the Law; and so after saying, “Nay, I had not known sin, but by the Law;” and, “I had not known lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet;” he adds,

Ver. 8. “But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.””

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):8** But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

He continues, “Do you see how he has cleared it of all blame? For “sin,” he says, “taking occasion by the commandment,” it was, and not the Law, that increased the concupiscence, and the reverse of the Law’s intent was brought about. This came of weakness, and not of any badness. For when we desire a thing, and then are hindered of it, the flame of the desire is but increased. Now this came not of the Law; for it hindered us (**Schaff Note:** 3 mss. endeavored) of itself to keep us off from it; but sin, that is, thy own listlessness and bad disposition, used what was good for the reverse.”

By “listlessness” he means the bad choices of our free will.

He continues, “But this is no fault in the physician, but in the patient who applies the medicine wrongly. For the reason of the Law being given was, not to inflame concupiscence, but to extinguish it, though the reverse came of it. Yet the blame attaches not to it, but to us. Since if a person had a fever, and wanted to take cold drink when it was not good for him, and one were not to let him take his fill of it, and so increase his lust after this ruinous pleasure, one could not deservedly be found fault with. For the physician’s business is simply prohibiting it, but the restraining himself is the patient’s. And what if sin did take occasion from it? Surely there are many bad men who by good precepts grow in their own wickedness. For this was the way in which the devil ruined Judas, by plunging him into avarice, and making him steal what belonged to the poor. However it was not the being entrusted with the bag that brought this to pass, but the wickedness of his own spirit. And Eve, by bringing Adam to eat from the tree, threw him out of Paradise. But neither in that case was the tree the cause, even if it was through it that the occasion took place. But if he treats the discussion about the Law with somewhat of vehemence, do not feel surprise. For Paul is making a stand against the present exigency, and suffers not his language to give a handle even to those that suspected otherwise, but takes great pains to make the present statement correct. Do not then sift what he is now going on to say (**Schaff Note:** 4 mss. “here saying”) by itself, but put beside it the purpose by which he is led on to speak of these things, and reckon for the madness of the Jews, and their vigorous spirit of contention, which as he desires earnestly to do away with, he seems to bear violently (πολὺς πνεῖν) against the Law, not to find fault with it, but to unnerve their vigor. For if it is any reproach to the Law that sin taketh occasion by it, this will be found to be the case in the New Testament also. For in the New Testament there are thousands of laws, and about many more



(Schaff Note: “far more,” Field) important matters. And one may see the same come to pass there also, not with regard to covetousness (lust, as v. 7) only, but to all wickedness generally. For He says, “if I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin,” (John xv. 22)”

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):22** If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.

It is interesting that Chrysostom thought that “in the New Testament there are thousands of laws”. Jesus did give us a new commandment in **John 13 (KJV):34** A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

But in the New Testament, we are not under the law but under grace, as we read in **Romans 6 (KJV):14** For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

Chrysostom continues, “Here then sin finds a footing in this fact, and so the greater punishment. And again when Paul discourseth about grace, he says, “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be counted worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God.” (Heb. x. 29)”

He refers in context to **Hebrews 10 (KJV):26** For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

The Lord shall judge His people, but let us remember what we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):31** For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Chrysostom continues, “Has not then the worse punishment its origin from hence, from the greater benefit? And the reason why he says the Greeks were without excuse was, because being honored with the gift of reason, and having gotten a knowledge of the beauty of the creation, and having been placed in a fair way for being led by it to the Creator, they did not so use the wisdom of God, as it was their duty. Seest thou that to the wicked in all cases occasions of greater punishment result from good things? But we shall not in this accuse the benefits of God, but rather upon this even admire them the more: but we shall throw the blame on the spirit of those who abuse the blessings to contrary purpose. Let this then be our line with regard to the Law also. But this is easy and feasible—the other is what is a difficulty. How is it that he says “I had not known lust except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet?” Now if man had not known lust, before he received the Law, what was the reason for the flood, or the burning of Sodom? What does he mean then? He means vehement lust: and this is why he did not say, lust, but “all manner of concupiscence,” intimating, in that, its vehemency. And what, it will be said, is the good of the Law, if it adds to the disorder? None; but much mischief even. Yet the charge is not against the Law, but the listlessness of those who received it.”

But the law gives us knowledge of sin, which leads us to Christ, as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV):24** Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

The law shows us our need for Christ. When we become aware of our sin, we become aware of our need of a Savior.

He continues, “For sin wrought it, though by the Law. But this was not the purpose of the Law, nay, the very opposite, Sin then became stronger, he says, and violent. But this again is no charge against the Law but against their obstinacy. “For without the Law sin is dead.” That is, was not so ascertainable. For even those before the Law knew that they had sinned, but they came to a more exact knowledge of it after the giving of the Law. And for this reason they were liable to a greater accusation: since it was not the same thing to have nature to accuse them, and besides nature the Law, which told them distinctly every charge.”

And we read in **Romans 2 (KJV):12** For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; 13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. 14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: 15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) 16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

Ver. 9. “For I was alive without the Law once.””

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):9** For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

He continues, “When, pray, was that? Before Moses. See how he sets himself to show that it, both by the things it did, and the things it did not do, weighed down human nature. For when “I was alive without the Law,” he means, I was not so much condemned.

“But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.””

The commandment came when Paul had faith in Jesus Christ. The commandment slew him, but faith saved him.

Chrysostom continues, “This seems indeed to be an accusing of the Law. But if any one will look closely at it, it will be seen to be even an encomium of it.”

An “encomium” is “glowing and warmly enthusiastic praise”.

**(Merriam Webster)**

Chrysostom continues, “For it did not give existence to sin that before was not, but only pointed out what had escaped notice. And this is even a praise of the Law, if at least before it they had been sinning without perceiving it. But when this came, if they gained nothing besides from it, at all events this they were distinctly made acquainted with, the fact that they had been sinning. And this is no small point, with a view to getting free from wickedness. Now if they did not get free, this has nothing to do with the Law; which framed everything with a view to this end, but the accusation lies wholly against their spirit, which was perverse beyond all supposition. For what took place was not the natural thing,—their being injured by things profitable. And this is why he says “And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.””

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):10** And the commandment, which was ordained to life,

I found to be unto death.

And Chrysostom has well spoken here, as he says above that before the law, “they had been sinning without perceiving it”.

He continues, “He does not say, “it was made,” or “it brought forth” death, but “was found,” so explaining the novel and unusual kind of discrepancy, and making the whole fall upon their own pate. For if, he says, you would know the aim of it, it led to life, and was given with this view. But if death was the issue of this, the fault is with them that received the commandment, and not of this, which was leading them to life. And this is a point on which he has thrown fresh light by what follows.”

Chrysostom has explained the law well here. He continues, “Ver. 11. “For sin taking occasion by the commandment deceived me, and by it slew me.””

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):11** For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

He continues, “You observe how he everywhere keeps to sin, and entirely clears the Law of accusation. And so he proceeds as follows.

Ver. 12. “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.””

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):12** Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

He continues, “But, if ye be so minded, we will bring before you the language of those who wrest these declarations. For this will make our own statements clearer. For there are some that say, that he is not here saying what he does of the Law of Moses, but some take it of the law of nature; some, of the commandment given in Paradise. Yet surely Paul’s object everywhere is to annul this Law, but he has not any question with those. And with much reason; for it was through a fear and a horror of this that the Jews obstinately opposed grace. But it does not appear that he has ever called the commandment in Paradise “Law” at all; no, nor yet any other writer. Now to make this plainer from what he has really said, let us follow out his words, retracing the argument a little. Having then spoken to them about strictness of conversation, he goes on to say, “Know ye not, brethren, how that the Law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? Wherefore ye are become dead to the Law.””

He refers in context to **Romans 7 (KJV):1** Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? **2** For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. **3** So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. **4** Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

He continues, “Therefore if these things are said about the natural law, we are found to be without the natural law. And if this be true, we are more senseless than the creatures which are without reason. Yet this is not so, certainly. For with regard to the law in Paradise, there is no need to be contentious, lest we should be taking up a superfluous trouble, by entering the lists against things men have made up their minds upon. In what sense then does he say, “I should not have known sin but by the Law?” He is speaking, not of absolute want of knowledge, but of

the more accurate knowledge. For if this were said of the law of nature, how would what follows suit? “For I was alive,” he says, “without the Law once.” Now neither Adam, nor any body else, can be shown ever to have lived without the law of nature. For as soon as God formed him, He put into him that law of nature, making it to dwell by him as a security to the whole kind (Gr. Nature, see p. 365). And besides this, it does not appear that he has anywhere called the law of nature a commandment. But this he calls as well a commandment, and that “just and holy,” as a “spiritual law.” But the law of nature was not given to us by the Spirit. For barbarians, as well as Greeks and other men, have this law. Hence it is plain, that it is the Mosaic Law that he is speaking of above, as well as afterwards, and in all the passages. For this cause also he calls it holy, saying, “Wherefore the Law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” For even though the Jews have been unclean since the Law, and unjust and covetous, this does not destroy the virtue of the Law, even as their unbelief doth not make the faith of God of none effect. So from all these things it is plain, that it is of the Law of Moses that he here speaks.”

Again, he is referring to **Romans 7 (KJV):12** Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

And we can agree with Chrysostom here. Paul is referring to the “Mosaic law”.

Ver. 13. “Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin that it might appear sin.” (**Schaff Note:** 4 mss. om. ἦ.)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):13** Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

He continues, “That is, that it might be shown what great evil sin is, namely, a listless will, an inclinableness to the worse side, the actual doing (**Schaff Note:** 3 mss. om. this clause), and the perverted judgment. For this is the cause of all the evils; but he amplifies it by pointing out the exceeding grace of Christ, and teaching them what an evil He freed the human race from, which, by the medicines used to cure it, had become worse, and was increased by the preventives. Wherefore he goes on to say: “That sin, by the commandment, might become exceeding sinful.” Do you see how these things are woven together everywhere? By the very means he uses to accuse sin, he again shows the excellency of the Law. Neither is it a small point which he has gained by showing what an evil sin is, and unfolding the whole of its poison, and bringing it to view. For this is what he shows, by saying, “that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.” That is, that it may be made clear what an evil sin is, what a ruinous thing. And this is what was shown by the commandment. Hereby he also shows the preeminence of grace above the Law, the preeminence above, not the conflict with, the Law. For do not look to this fact, that those who received it were the worse for it; but consider the other, that the Law had not only no design of drawing wickedness out to greater lengths, but even seriously aimed at hewing down what already existed. But if it had no strength, give to it indeed a crown for its intention, but adore more highly the power of Christ, which abolished, cut away: and plucked up the very roots an evil so manifold and so hard to be overthrown. But when you hear me speak of sin, do not think of it as a substantial power, but evil doing, as it comes upon men and goes from them continually, and which, before it takes place, has no being, and when it has taken place, vanishes again. This then was why the Law was given. Now no law is ever given to put an end to things natural, but in order to correct a way of acting

purposely wicked. And this the lawgivers that are without too are aware of, and all mankind in general. For it is the evils from viciousness alone that they are for setting right, and they do not undertake to extirpate those allotted us along with our nature; since this they cannot do. For things natural remain unalterable (**Schaff Note:** Arist. *Eth.* b. 2, c. 1), as we have told you frequently in other discourses also.”

We can agree with Chrysostom that our bodies are good as the creation of God. But sin brought death upon the human race. Without sin, there would be no death. Sin brought a change in our nature. Our flesh now has a nature to sin. This is overcome by faith in Jesus Christ and being born again. Chrysostom did not understand the new birth. To him it was simply grace received at baptism. He did not understand that our spirit is made alive to God when we are born again, and it now has a new divine nature as a result of being born of the Spirit of God. As we yield to this new nature, we do not sin. If we yield to the sin nature in our flesh, we sin, but God has made provision for us, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

He continues, “And so let us leave these contests, and again practice ourselves in exhortation. Or rather, this last part belongs to those contests. For if we cast out wickedness, we should bring virtue in also: and by these means we shall clearly teach that wickedness is no natural evil, and shall be able easily to stop the mouths of them that enquire for the origin of evil, not by means of words only, but of actions also, since we share the same nature with them, but are freed from their wickedness.”

It is true that we share the same nature in our flesh with unbelievers, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NKJV):1** And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

But as believers, in our spirit we have been raised from the dead, as we continue in **Ephesians 2 (NKJV):4** But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Chrysostom continues, “For let us not be looking at the laboriousness of virtue, but at the possibility of succeeding in it. But if we be in earnest, it will be at once light and palatable to us. But if you tell me of the pleasure of vice, tell out its end too. For it issueth in death, even as virtue leadeth us to life. Or if you think fit let us rather scrutinize them both even before their end; for we shall see that vice has a great deal of pain attached to it, and virtue great pleasure. For what pray is so painful as a bad conscience? or what more pleasing than a good hope? For there is nothing, assuredly there is nothing, which is used to cut us so deep, and press so hard on us, as the expectation of evil: nothing that so keeps us up, and all but gives us wings, as a good conscience. And this we may get a knowledge of even by what takes place before our eyes. For they that dwell in a prison, and are in expectation of sentence against them, let them have the enjoyment of luxury repeated beyond count, live a more afflicting life than those that go a begging by the by-roads, yet with nothing upon their consciences to trouble them. For the

expectation of a dreadful end will not let them perceive those pleasures which they have in their hands. And why do I speak of prisoners? Why, as for those that are living out of prison, and have a good fortune, yet have a bad conscience about them, handicraftsmen that work for their bread, and spend the whole day amid their labor, are in a far better plight than they. And for this reason too we say, How miserable the gladiators are (though seeing them as we do in taverns, drunken, luxurious, gormandizing), and call them the most miserable of men, because the calamity of the end which they must expect is too great to admit of comparison with that pleasure. Now if to them a life of this sort seems to be pleasing, remember what I am continually telling you, that it is no such marvel that a man who lives in vice should not flee from the misery and pain of vice. For see how a thing so detestable as that, yet seems to be delectable to those who practice it. Yet we do not on this account say, how happy they are, for this is just the very reason why we think them pitiable, because they have no notion of the evils they are amongst. And what would you say of adulterers, who for a little pleasure undergo at once a disgraceful slavery, and a loss of money, and a perpetual fear (**Schaff Note:** Hor. Sat. II. vii. 58–67), and in fact the very life of a Cain, or rather one that is even much worse than his; filled with fears for the present, and trembling for the future, and suspecting alike friend and foe, and those that know about it, and those that know nothing? Neither when they go to sleep are they quit of this struggle, their bad conscience shaping out for them dreams that abound with sundry terrors, and in this way horrifying them. Far otherwise is the chaste man, seeing he passes the present life unshackled and at full liberty. Weigh then against the little pleasure, the sundry fluctuations of these terrors, and with the short labor of continency, the calm of an entire life; and you will find the latter hath more of pleasantness than the former. But as for the man that is set upon plundering and laying hands upon other men's goods, tell me if he has not to undergo countless pains in the way of running about, fawning upon slaves, freemen, doorkeepers; alarming and threatening, acting shamelessly, watching, trembling, in agony, suspecting everything. Far otherwise is the man that holds riches in contempt, for he too enjoys pleasure in abundance, and lives with no fear, and in perfect security. And if any one were to go through the other instances of vice, he would find much trouble, and many rocks. But what is of greater importance is, that in the case of virtue the difficulties come first, and the pleasant part afterwards, so the trouble is even thus alleviated. But in the case of vice, the reverse. After the pleasure, the pains and the punishments, so that by these besides the pleasure is done away. For as he who waits for the crown, perceives nothing of present annoyance, so he that has to expect the punishments after the pleasures has no power of gathering in a gladness that is unalloyed, since the fear puts everything in confusion. Or rather if any one were to scrutinize the thing with care, even before the punishment which follows upon these things, he would find that even at the very moment when vice is boldly entered upon, a great deal of pain is felt. And, if you think fit, let us just examine this in the case of those who plunder other men's goods. Or those who in any way get together money, and setting aside the fears, and dangers, and trembling, and agony, and care, and all these things, let us suppose the case of a man, who has got rich without any annoyance, and feels sure about maintaining his present fortune (which he has no means of doing, still for all that let it be assumed for argument's sake). What sort of pleasure then is he to gather in from having so much about him? On the contrary, it is just this very thing that will not let him be glad hearted. For as long as ever he desires other things besides, he is still upon the rack. Because desire gives pleasure at the time it has come to a stand. If thirsty, for instance, we

feel refreshed, when we have drunk as much as we wish; but so long as we keep thirsty, even if we were to have exhausted all the fountains in the world, our torment were but growing greater; even if we were to drink up ten thousand rivers, our state of punishment were more distressing. And thou also, if thou wert to receive the goods of the whole world, and still to covet, wouldest make thy punishment the greater, the more things thou hadst tasted of. Fancy not then, that from having gathered a great sum together thou shalt have aught of pleasure, but rather by declining to be rich. But if thou covetest to be rich thou wilt be always under the scourge. For this is a kind of love that does not reach its aim; and the longer journey thou hast gone, the further off thou keepest from the end.”

All in all, this is a good exhortation to live righteously. We can agree with Chrysostom here.

He continues, “Is not this a paradox then, a derangement, a madness in the extreme? Let us then forsake this first of evils, or rather let us not even touch this covetousness at all. Yet, if we have touched it, let us spring away from its first motions (προοιμιών). For this is the advice the writer of the Proverbs gives us, when he speaks about the harlot: “Spring away,” he says, “tarry not, neither go thou near to the door of her house” (Prov. v. 8):”

He refers to **Proverbs 5 (KJV):8** Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house:

He continues, “this same thing I would say to you about the love of money. For if by entering gradually you fall into this ocean of madness, you will not be able to get up out of it with ease, and as if you were in whirlpools, struggle as often as ever you may, it will not be easy for you to get clear; so after falling into this far worse abyss of covetousness, you will destroy your own self, with all that belongs to you. (Acts viii. 20)”

He refers to **Acts 8 (KJV):20** But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

He continues, “And so my advice is that we be on our watch against the beginning, and avoid little evils, for the great ones are gendered by these. For he who gets into a way of saying at every sin, This matters nothing! will by little and little ruin himself entirely. At all events it is this which has introduced vice; which has opened the doors to the robber (**Schaff Note:** 5 mss. devil), which has thrown down the walls of cities, this saying at each sin, “This matters nothing!” Thus in the case of the body too, the greatest of diseases grow up, when trifling ones are made light of. If Esau had not first been a traitor to his birthright, he would not have become unworthy of the blessings. If he had not rendered himself unworthy of the blessings, he would not have had the desire of going on to fratricide. If Cain had not fallen in love with the first place, but had left that to God, he would not have had the second place. Again, when he had the second place, if he had listened to the advice, he would not have travailed with the murder. Again, if after doing the murder he had come to repentance, when God called him, and had not answered in an irreverent way, he would not have had to suffer the subsequent evils. But if those before the Law did owing to this listlessness come to the very bottom of misery, only consider what is to become of us, who are called to a greater contest, unless we take strict heed unto ourselves, and make speed to quench the sparks of evil deeds before the whole pile is kindled. Take an instance of my meaning. Are you in the habit of false swearing? do not stop at this only, but away with all swearing, and you will have no further need of trouble. For it is far harder for a man that swears to keep from false swearing, than to abstain from swearing

altogether. Are you an insulting and abusive person? a striker too? Lay down as a law for yourself not to be angry or brawl in the least, and with the root the fruit also will be gotten rid of. Are you lustful and dissipated? Make it your rule again not even to look at a woman (Job xxxi. 1), or to go up into the theatre, or to trouble yourself with the beauty of other people whom you see about.”

He refers to **Job 31 (KJV):1** I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

He continues, “For it is far easier not even to look at a woman of good figure, than after looking and taking in the lust, to thrust out the perturbation that comes thereof, the struggle being easier in the preliminaries (προουμίως). Or rather we have no need of a struggle at all if we do not throw the gates open to the enemy, or take in the seeds of mischief (κακίας). And this is why Christ chastised the man who looks unchastely upon a woman (Matt. v. 28), that He might free us from greater labor, before the adversary became strong, bidding us cast him out of the house while he may be cast out even with ease.”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):28** But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

He continues, “For what need to have superfluous trouble, and to get entangled with the enemies, when without entanglement we may erect the trophy, and before the wrestling seize upon the prize? For it is not so great a trouble not to look upon beautiful women, as it is while looking to restrain one’s self. Or rather the first would be no trouble at all, but immense toil and labor comes on after looking. Since then this trouble is less (**Schaff Note:** most mss. add, “to the incontinent”), or rather there is no labor at all, nor trouble, but the greater gain, why do we take pains to plunge into an ocean of countless evils? And farther, he who does not look upon a woman, will overcome such lust not only with greater ease, but with a higher purity, as he on the other hand who does look, getteth free with more trouble, and not without a kind of stain, that is, if he does get free at all. For he that does not take a view of the beautiful figure, is pure also from the lust that might result. But he who lusteth to look, after first laying his reason low, and polluting it in countless ways, has then to cast out the stain that came of the lust, that is, if he do cast it out. This then is why Christ, to prevent our suffering in this way, did not prohibit murder only, but wrath; not adultery only, but an unchaste look even: not perjury only, but all swearing whatsoever. Nor does he make the measure of virtue stop here, but after having given these laws, He proceeds to a still greater degree. For after keeping us far away from murder, and bidding us to be clear of wrath, He bids us be ready even to suffer ill, and not to be prepared to suffer no more than what he who attacks us pleases, but even to go further, and to get the better of his utmost madness by the overflowingness of our own Christian spirit (τῆς οικείας φιλοσοφίας). For what He says is not, “If a man smite thee on thy right cheek, bear it nobly and hold thy peace;” but He adds to this the yielding to him the other too. For He says, “Turn to him the other also.” (Matt. v. 39)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):39** But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

He continues, “This then is the brilliant victory, to yield him even more than what he wishes, and to go beyond the bounds of his evil desire by the profuseness of one’s own patient endurance. For in this way you will put a stop to his madness, and also receive from the second act again the reward of the first, besides putting a stop to wrath against him. See you, how in all



cases it is we that have it in our power not to suffer ill, and not they that inflict it? Or rather it is not the not suffering ill alone, but even the having benefits (**Schaff Note:** Sav. conj. παθεῖν εὖ, so 2 mss.) done us that we have in our own power. And this is the truest wonder, that we are so far from being injured, if we be right-minded, that we are even benefited, and that too by the very things that we suffer unjustly at the hands of others. Reflect then; has such an one done you an affront? You have the power of making this affront redound to your honor. For if you do an affront in return, you only increase the disgrace. But if you bless him that did you the affront, you will see that all men give you victory, and proclaim your praise. Do you see how by the things wherein we are wronged, we get good done unto us if we be so minded? This one may see happening in the case of money matters, of blows, and the same in everything else. For if we requite them with the opposite, we are but twining a double crown about us, one for the ills we have suffered, as well as one for the good we are doing. Whenever then a person comes and tells you that “such an one has done you an affront, and keeps continually speaking ill of you to everybody,” praise the man to those who tell you of him. For thus even if you wish to avenge yourself, you will have the power of inflicting punishment. For those who hear you, be they ever so foolish, will praise you, and hate him as fiercer than any brute beast, because he, without being at all wronged, caused you pain, but you, even when suffering wrong, requited him with the opposite. And so you will have it in your power to prove that all that he said was to no purpose. For he who feels the tooth of slander, gives by his vexation a proof that he is conscious of the truth of what is said. But he who smiles at it, by this very thing acquits himself of all suspicion with those who are present. Consider then how many good things you cull together from the affair. First, you rid yourself of all vexation and trouble. Secondly (rather this should come first), even if you have sins, you put them off, as the Publican did by bearing the Pharisee’s accusation meekly. Besides, you will by this practice make your soul heroic (**Schaff Note:** Gr. philosophic), and will enjoy endless praises from all men, and will divest yourself of any suspicion arising from what is said. But even if you are desirous of taking revenge upon the man, this too will follow in full measure, both by God’s punishing him for what he has said, and before that punishment by thy heroic conduct standing to him in the place of a mortal blow. For there is nothing that cuts those who affront us so much to the heart, as for us who are affronted to smile at the affront. As then from behaving with Christian heroism so many honors will accrue to us, so from being little minded just the opposite will befall us in everything. For we disgrace ourselves, and also seem to those present to be guilty of the things mentioned, and fill our soul with perturbation, and give our enemy pleasure, and provoke God, and add to our former sins. Taking then all this into consideration, let us flee from the abyss of a little mind (μικροψυχίας), and take refuge in the port of patient endurance (μακροθυμίας), that here we may at once “find rest unto our souls” (Matt. xi. 29), as Christ also set forth, and may attain to the good things to come, by the grace and love toward man, etc.”

He refers in context to **Matthew 11 (KJV):**28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Again, all in all, this is a good exhortation by Chrysostom to live righteously.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS,  
HOMILY XIII, page 427-439**

Rom. VII. 14

“For we know that the Law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.”

After having said that great evils had taken place, and that sin, taking occasion by the commandment, had grown stronger, and the opposite of what the Law mainly aimed at had been the result, and after having thrown the hearer into a great deal of perplexity, he goes on next to give the rationale of these events, after first clearing the Law of any ill suspicion. For lest—upon hearing that it was through the commandment that sin took that occasion, and that it was when it came that sin revived, and through it deceived and killed—any one should suppose the Law to be the source of these evils, he first sets forth its defense with considerable advantage, not clearing it from accusation only, but encircling it also with the utmost praise. And this he lays down, not as granting it for his own part, but as declaring a universal judgment. “For we know,” he says, “that the Law is spiritual.” As if he had said, This is an allowed thing, and self-evident, that it “is spiritual,” so far is it from being the cause of sin, or to blame for the evils that have happened. And observe, that he not only clears it of accusation, but bestows exceeding great praise upon it. For by calling it spiritual, he shows it to be a teacher of virtue and hostile to vice; for this is what being spiritual means, leading off from sin of every kind. And this the Law did do, by frightening, admonishing, chastening, correcting, recommending every kind of virtue. Whence then, was sin produced, if the teacher was so admirable? It was from the listlessness of its disciples. Wherefore he went on to say, “but I am carnal;” giving us a sketch now of man, as comporting himself in the Law, and before the Law. **(Schaff Note:** Chrys. gives no hint of any controversy as to the interpretation of the passage vii. 14–25. In modern times the question has been greatly disputed: Whom does the apostle represent by the “I” who is waging such an unsuccessful combat with sin? Passing by the views that he refers to himself personally (Hofmann) and that he refers to the Jewish people under the old dispensation (Grotius, Reiche), two opinions have prevailed among interpreters (1) that he is representing the *regenerate* man. (For the arguments by which this view is supported see Hodge on Romans *in loco*). (2) That he is here personating the *unregenerate* man who, however, has become awakened under the law to a sense of his sinful condition. This view is preferred on the following grounds. (1) The connection of 14–25 with the argument of 7–13, which shows the power of the law to awaken the consciousness of sin and can therefore apply only to the Jew aroused by the law. (2) The relation of the passage to chap. viii. In vii. 25 the apostle mounts to the Christian plane and in ch. viii. exults in the liberation from the conflict just described which Christ brings to the soul. (3) Much of the language of vii. 14–25 is inconsistent with the consciousness of a regenerate man and especially with Paul’s joyous and triumphant view of the Christian life. (4) The language throughout is appropriate, not, indeed, to the morally indifferent man, but to the unconverted Jew whom the law has awakened to a knowledge of his sin and need, and this is precisely the subject under consideration in the earlier verses of the Chap. So Tholuck, De Wette, Alford, Olshausen, Lange, Meyer, Weiss, Godet). Chrys. rather takes for granted, than states the same view, in saying that it is “a sketch of *man* as comporting himself in the law and before the law.”—G.B.S. 1391 The words of the Fathers on this subject become more definite after the Pelagian Controversy. St. Aug. *contr. Julianum*, i. 2, §32. (Ben. t. 10),

speak thus of concupiscence, (not in act, but as an inherited habit). “It is not however called sin in the sense of making one guilty, but in that it is caused by the guilt of the first man, and in that it rebels, and strives to draw us into guilt except grace aid us.”) “Sold under sin.” Because with death (he means) the throng of passions also came in. For when the body had become mortal, it was henceforth a necessary thing for it to receive concupiscence, and anger, and pain, and all the other passions, which required a great deal of wisdom (φιλοσοφίας) to prevent their flooding us, and sinking reason in the depth of sin. For in themselves they were not sin, but, when their extravagancy was unbridled, it wrought this effect. Thus (that I may take one of them and examine it as a specimen) desire is not sin: but when it has run into extravagance, being not minded to keep within the laws of marriage, but springing even upon other men’s wives; then the thing henceforward becomes adultery, yet not by reason of the desire, but by reason of its exorbitancy. And observe the wisdom of Paul. For after praising the Law, he hastens immediately to the earlier period, that he may show the state of our race, both then and at the time it received the Law, and make it plain how necessary the presence of grace was, a thing he labored on every occasion to prove. For when he says, “sold under sin,” he means it not of those who were under the Law only, but of those who had lived before the Law also, and of men from the very first. Next he mentions the way in which they were sold and made over.

Ver. 15. “For that which I do, I know not.”

What does the “I know not” mean?—I am ignorant. And when could this ever happen? For nobody ever sinned in ignorance. Seest thou, that if we do not receive his words with the proper caution, and keep looking to the object of the Apostle, countless incongruities will follow? For if they sinned through ignorance, then they did not deserve to be punished. As then he said above, “for without the Law sin is dead,” not meaning that they did not know they were sinning, but that they knew indeed, but not so distinctly; wherefore they were punished, but not so severely: and again; “I should not have known lust;” not meaning an entire ignorance of it, but referring to the most distinct knowledge of it; and said, that it also “wrought in me all manner of concupiscence,” not meaning to say that the commandment made the concupiscence, but that sin through the commandment introduces an intense degree of concupiscence; so here it is not absolute ignorance that he means by saying, “For what I do, I know not;” since how then would he have pleasure in the law of God in his inner man? What then is this, “I know not?” I get dizzy, he means, I feel carried away, I find a violence done to me, I get tripped up without knowing how. Just as we often say, Such an one came and carried me away with him, without my knowing how; when it is not ignorance we mean as an excuse, but to show a sort of deceit, and circumvention, and plot. “For what I would, that I do not: but what I hate, that I do.” How then canst thou be said not to know what thou art doing? For if thou willest the good, and hatest the evil, this requires a perfect knowledge. Whence it appears that he says, “that I would not,” not as denying free will, or as adducing any constrained necessity. For if it was not willingly, but by compulsion, that we sinned, then the punishments that took place before would not be justifiable. But as in saying “I know not,” it was not ignorance he set before us, but what we have said; so in adding the “that I would not,” it is no necessity he signifies, but the disapproval he felt of what was done. (**Schaff Note:** This seems to have been Plato’s view of freewill. See Tenneman, *Plat. Philos.* iv. p. 34, οὐδεις ἔκων πονηρὸς, etc.) Since if this was not his meaning in saying, “That which I would not, that I do:” he would else have gone on, “But I do what I am compelled and enforced to.” For this is what is opposed to willing and power (ἐξουσί& 139·).

But now he does not say this, but in the place of it he has put the word, “that I hate,” that you might learn how when he says, “that I would not,” he does not deny the power. Now, what does the “that I would not” mean? It means, what I praise not, what I do not approve, what I love not. And in contradistinction to this, he adds what follows; “But what I hate, that I do.”

Ver. 16. “If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the Law, that it is good.”

You see here, that the understanding is not yet perverted, but keeps up its own noble character even during the action. For even if it does pursue vice, still it hates it the while, which would be great commendation, whether of the natural or the written Law. For that the Law is good, is (he says) plain, from the fact of my accusing myself, when I disobey the Law, and hate what has been done. And yet if the Law was to blame for the sin, how comes it that he felt a delight in it, yet hated what it orders to be done? For, “I consent,” he says, “unto the Law, that it is good.”

Ver 17, 18. “Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.”

On this text, those who find fault with the flesh, and contend it was no part of God’s creation, attack us. What are we to say then? Just what we did before, when discussing the Law: that as there he makes sin answerable for everything so here also. For he does not say, that the flesh worketh it, but just the contrary, “it is not I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” But if he does say that “there dwelleth no good thing in it,” still this is no charge against the flesh. For the fact that “no good thing dwelleth in it,” does not show that it is evil itself. Now we admit, that the flesh is not so great as the soul, and is inferior to it, yet not contrary, or opposed to it, or evil; but that it is beneath the soul, as a harp beneath a harper, and as a ship under the pilot. And these are not contrary to those who guide and use them, but go with them entirely, yet are not of the same honor with the artist. As then a person who says, that the art resides not in the harp or the ship, but in the pilot or harper, is not finding fault with the instruments, but pointing out the great difference between them and the artist; so Paul in saying, that “in my flesh dwelleth no good thing,” is not finding fault with the body, but pointing out the soul’s superiority. For this it is that has the whole duty or pilotage put into its hands, and that of playing. And this Paul here points out, giving the governing power to the soul, and after dividing man into these two things, the soul and the body, he says, that the flesh has less of reason, and is destitute of discretion, and ranks among things to be led, not among things that lead. But the soul has more wisdom, and can see what is to be done and what not, yet is not equal to pulling in the horse as it wishes. And this would be a charge not against the flesh only, but against the soul also, which knows indeed what it ought to do, but still does not carry out in practice what seems best to it. “For to will,” he says, “is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not.” Here again in the words, “I find not,” he does not speak of any ignorance or perplexity, but a kind of thwarting and crafty assault made by sin, which he therefore points more clearly out in the next words.

Ver. 19, 20. “For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me.”

Do you see, how he acquits the essence of the soul, as well as the essence of the flesh, from accusation, and removes it entirely to sinful actions? For if the soul willeth not the evil, it is cleared: and if he does not work it himself, the body too is set free, and the whole may be charged upon the evil moral choice. Now the essence of the soul and body and of that choice are

not the same, for the two first are God's works, and the other is a motion from ourselves towards whatever we please to direct it. For willing is indeed natural (ἐμφυτον), and is from God: but willing on this wise is our own, and from our own mind.

Ver. 21. "I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me."

What he says is not very clear. What then is it that is said? I praise the law, he says, in my conscience, and I find it pleads on my side so far as I am desirous of doing what is right, and that it invigorates this wish. For as I feel a pleasure in it, so does it yield praise to my decision. Do you see how he shows, that the knowledge of what is good and what is not such is an original and fundamental part of our nature, and that the Law of Moses praises it, and getteth praise from it? For above he did not say so much as I get taught by the Law, but "I consent to the Law;" nor further on that I get instructed by it, but "I delight in" it. Now what is "I delight?" It is, I agree with it as right, as it does with me when wishing to do what is good. And so the willing what is good and the not willing what is evil was made a fundamental part of us from the first. But the Law, when it came, was made at once a stronger accuser in what was bad, and a greater praiser in what was good. Do you observe that in every place he bears witness to its having a kind of intensitiveness and additional advantage, yet nothing further? For though it praises and I delight in it, and wish what is good the "evil is" still "present with me," and the agency of it has not been abolished. And thus the Law, with a man who determines upon doing anything good, only acts so far as auxiliary to him, as that it has the same wish as himself. Then since he had stated it indistinctly, as he goes on he gives a yet more distinct interpretation, by showing how the evil is present, how too the Law is a law to such a person only who has a mind to do what is good.

Ver. 22. "For I delight," he says, "in the law of God after the inward man."

He means, for I knew even before this what was good, but when I find it set down in writing, I praise it.

Ver. 23. "But I see another law warring against the law of my mind."

Here again he calls sin a law warring against the other, not in respect of good order, but from the strict obedience yielded to it by those who comply with it. As then it gives the name of master (κύριον Matt. vi. 24; Luke xvi. 13) to Mammon, and of god (Phil. iii. 19) to the belly, not because of their intrinsically deserving it, but because of the extreme obsequiousness of their subjects; so here he calls sin a law, owing to those who are so obsequious to it, and are afraid to leave it, just as those who have received the Law dread leaving the Law. This then, he means, is opposed to the law of nature; for this is what is meant by "the law of my mind." And he next represents an array and battle, and refers the whole struggle to the law of nature. For that of Moses was subsequently added over and above: yet still both the one and the other, the one as teaching, the other as praising what was right, wrought no great effects in this battle; so great was the thralldom of sin, overcoming and getting the upper hand as it did. And this Paul setting forth, and showing the decided (κατὰ κράτος) victory it had, says, "I see another law warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity." He does not use the word conquering only, but "bringing me into captivity to the law of sin." He does not say the bent of the flesh, or the nature of the flesh, but "the law of sin." That is, the thrall, the power. In what sense then does he say, "Which is in my members?" Now what is this? Surely it does not make the members to be sin, but makes them as distinct from sin as possible. For that which is in a thing is diverse from that wherein it is. As then the commandment also is not evil, because by it

sin took occasion, so neither is the nature of the flesh, even if sin subdues us by means of it. For in this way the soul will be evil, and much more so too, since it has authority in matters of action. But these things are not so, certainly they are not. Since neither if a tyrant and a robber were to take possession of a splendid mansion and a king's court, would the circumstance be any discredit to the house, inasmuch as the entire blame would come on those who contrived such an act. But the enemies of the truth, along with their impiety, fall unawares also into great unreasonableness. For they do not accuse the flesh only, but they also disparage the Law. And yet if the flesh were evil, the Law would be good. For it wars against the Law, and opposes it. If, however, the Law be not good, then the flesh is good. **(Schaff Note:** It is peculiarly interesting to see how vigorously Chrys. combats the idea that the flesh is essentially evil, as if it were a current notion of his time. This view—derived from heathen sources—exerted a powerful influence in the Church from early times and became the fruitful source of ascetic rigors.—G.B.S.) For it wars and fights against it even by their own account. How come they then to assert that both belong to the devil, putting things opposed to each other before us? Do you see, along with their impiety, how great is their unreasonableness also? But such doctrines as these are not the Church's, for it is the sin only that she condemns; and both the Laws which God has given, both that of nature and that of Moses, she says are hostile to this, and not to the flesh; for the flesh she denies to be sin, for it is a work of God's, and one very useful too in order to virtue, if we live soberly.

Ver. 24. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Do you notice what a great thralldom that of vice is, in that it overcomes even a mind that delighted in the Law? For no one can rejoin, he means, that I hate the Law and abhor it, and so sin overcomes me. For "I delight in it, and consent to it," and flee for refuge to it, yet still it had not the power of saving one who had fled to it. But Christ saved even one that fled from Him. See what a vast advantage grace has! Yet the Apostle has not stated it thus; but with a sigh only, and a great lamentation, as if devoid of any to help him, he points out by his perplexity the might of Christ, and says, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The Law has not been able: conscience has proved unequal to it, though it praised what was good, and did not praise it only, but even fought against the contrary of it. For by the very words "warreth against" he shows that he was marshaled against it for his part. From what quarter then is one to hope for salvation?

Ver. 25. "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Observe how he shows the necessity of having grace present with us, and that the well doings herein belong alike to the Father and the Son. For if it is the Father Whom he thanketh, still the Son is the cause of this thanksgiving. But when you hear him say, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" do not suppose him to be accusing the flesh. For he does not say "body of sin," but "body of death:" that is, the mortal body—that which hath been overcome by death, not that which gendered death. And this is no proof of the evil of the flesh, but of the marring (*ἐπιπείρας*, thwarting) it has undergone. As if any one who was taken captive by the savages were to be said to belong to the savages, not as being a savage, but as being detained by them: so the body is said to be of death, as being held down thereby, not as producing it. Wherefore also it is not the body that he himself wishes to be delivered from, but the mortal body, hinting, as I have often said, that from its becoming subject to suffering, it also became an easy prey to sin. Why then, it may be said, the thralldom of sin being so great before

the times of grace, were men punished for sinning? Because they had such commands given them as might even under sin's dominion be accomplished. For he did not draw them to the highest kind of conversation, but allowed them to enjoy wealth, and did not forbid having several wives, and to gratify anger in a just cause, and to make use of luxury within bounds. (Matt. v. 38) And so great was this condescension, that the written Law even required less than the law of nature. For the law of nature ordered one man to associate with one woman throughout. And this Christ shows in the words, "He which made them at the beginning, made them male and female." (ib. xix. 4) But the Law of Moses neither forbade the putting away of one and the taking in of another, nor prohibited the having of two at once! (ib. v. 31) And besides this there are also many other ordinances of the Law, that one might see those who were before its day fully performing, being instructed by the law of nature. They therefore who lived under the old dispensation had no hardship done them by so moderate a system of laws being imposed upon them. But if they were not, on these terms, able to get the upper hand, the charge is against their own listlessness. Wherefore Paul gives thanks, because Christ, without any rigorousness about these things, not only demanded no account of this moderate amount, but even made us able to have a greater race set before us. And therefore he says, "I thank my God through Jesus Christ." And letting the salvation which all agreed about pass, he goes from the points he had already made good, to another further point, in which he states that it was not our former sins only that we were freed from, but we were also made invincible for the future. For "there is," he says, "now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh." Yet he did not say it before he had first recalled to mind our former condition again in the words, "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

Chap. viii. ver. 1. "There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

Then as the fact that many fall into sin even after baptism presented a difficulty (*ἀντέπιπτεν*), he consequently hastened to meet it, and says not merely "to them that are in Christ Jesus," but adds, "who walk not after the flesh;" so showing that all afterward comes of our listlessness. For now we have the power of walking not after the flesh, but then it was a difficult task. Then he gives another proof of it by the sequel, in the words,

Ver. 2. "For the law of the Spirit of life hath made me free."

It is the Spirit he is here calling the law of the Spirit. For as he calls sin the law of sin, so he here calls the Spirit the law of the Spirit. And yet he named that of Moses as such, where he says, "For we know that the Law is spiritual." What then is the difference? A great and unbounded one. For that was spiritual, but this is a law of the Spirit. Now what is the distinction between this and that? The other was merely given by the Spirit, but this even furnisheth those that receive it with the Spirit in large measure. Wherefore also he called it the law of life in contradistinction to that of sin, not that of Moses. For when he says, It freed me from the law of sin and death, it is not the law of Moses that he is here speaking of, since in no case does he style it the law of sin: for how could he one that he had called "just and holy" so often, and destructive of sin too? but it is that which warreth against the law of the mind. For this grievous war did the grace of the Spirit put a stop to, by slaying sin, and making the contest light to us and crowning us at the outstart, and then drawing us to the struggle with abundant help. Next as it is ever his wont to turn from the Spirit to the Son and the Father, and to reckon all our estate

to lean upon the Trinity, so doth he here also. For after saying, “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death,” he pointed at the Father as doing this by the Son, then again at the Holy Spirit along with the Son. “For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free, he says. Then again, at the Father and the Son;

Ver. 3. “For what the Law could not do,” he saith, “in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”

Again, he seems indeed to be disparaging the Law. But if any one attends strictly, he even highly praises it, by showing that it harmonizes with Christ, and gives preference to the same things. For he does not speak of the badness of the Law, but of “what it could not do;” and so again, “in that it was weak,” not, “in that it was mischievous, or designing.” And even weakness he does not ascribe to it, but to the flesh, as he says, “in that it was weak through the flesh,” using the word “flesh” here again not for the essence and subsistency itself, but giving its name to the more carnal sort of mind. In which way he acquits both the body and the Law of any accusation. Yet not in this way only, but by what comes next also. For supposing the Law to be of the contrary part, how was it Christ came to its assistance, and fulfilled its requisitions, and lent it a helping hand by condemning sin in the flesh? For this was what was lacking, since in the soul the Lord had condemned it long ago. What then? is it the greater thing that the Law accomplished, but the less that the Only Begotten did? Surely not. For it was God that was the principal doer of that also, in that He gave us the law of nature, and added the written one to it. Again, there were no use of the greater, if the lesser had not been supplied. For what good is it to know what things ought to be done, if a man does not follow it out? None, for it were but a greater condemnation. And so He that hath saved the soul it is, Who hath made the flesh also easy to bridle. For to teach is easy, but to show besides a way in which these things were easily done, this is the marvel. Now it was for this that the Only Begotten came, and did not depart before He had set us free from this difficulty. But what is greater, is the method of the victory; for He took none other flesh, but this very one which was beset with troubles. So it is as if any one were to see in the street a vile woman of the baser sort being beaten, and were to say he was her son, when he was the king’s, and so to get her free from those who ill treated her. And this He really did, in that He confessed that He was the Son of Man, and stood by it (i.e. the flesh), and condemned the sin. However, He did not endure to smite it besides; or rather, He smote it with the blow of His death, but in this very act it was not the smitten flesh which was condemned and perished, but the sin which had been smiting. And this is the greatest possible marvel. For if it were not in the flesh that the victory took place, it would not be so astonishing, since this the Law also wrought. But the wonder is, that it was with the flesh (μετὰ σαρκοῦς) that His trophy was raised, and that what had been overthrown numberless times by sin, did itself get a glorious victory over it. For behold what strange things there were that took place! One was, that sin did not conquer the flesh; another, that sin was conquered, and conquered by it too. For it is not the same thing not to get conquered, and to conquer that which was continually overthrowing us. A third is, that it not only conquered it, but even chastised it. For by not sinning it kept from being conquered, but by dying also, He overcame and condemned it, having made the flesh, that before was so readily made a mock of by it, a plain object of fear to it. In this way then, He at once unnerved its power, and abolished the death by it introduced. For so long as it took hold of sinners, it with justice kept pressing to its end. But after finding a



sinless body, when it had given it up to death, it was condemned as having acted unjustly. Do you observe, how many proofs of victory there are? The flesh not being conquered by sin, Its even conquering and condemning it, Its not condemning it barely, but condemning it as having sinned. For after having convicted it of injustice, he proceeds to condemn it, and that not by power and might barely, but even by the rules of justice. For this is what he means by saying, “for sin condemned sin in the flesh.” As if he had said that he had convicted it of great sin, and then condemned it. So you see it is sin that getteth condemned everywhere, and not the flesh, for this is even crowned with honor, and has to give sentence against the other. But if he does say that it was “in the likeness” of flesh that he sent the Son, do not therefore suppose that His flesh was of a different kind. For as he called it “sinful,” this was why he put the word “likeness.” (**Schaff Note:** The Fathers lay great stress upon this phrase of the Apostles. August. *contr. Faust.* xiv. 5, argues, that this likeness consisted in our Lord’s flesh being mortal; death being the penalty of sin: vid. also *de Nuptiis et Concupisc.* 1. 12. vid. also Basil, Ep. 261, where writing against the Apollinarians, he interprets this text to mean, that whereas Christ had all affections of human nature, which implied the reality of His assumption of it, He had not those which infringe our nature, i.e. which arise from sin. Athanasius, writing against the same heretics, observes, that Christ’s sinlessness was like Adam’s before the fall (In Apoll. ii. 6): or as St. Cyril observes, greater than before the fall because He has a physical inability to sin, arising from His personality being Divine, vid. Cyr. Alex. *in Esai. l. i. Orat.* 4, *fin.* At the same time He took the flesh, not of Adam unfallen, but fallen, such as ours. Vid. *Leont. contra Nest. et Eutyech. lib. 2 apud Canis.* vol. i. p. 568. Gall. xii. 681. Fulgent. *Ep. ad. Regin. Tertull. de Carn. Christi.* xvi.) For sinful flesh it was not that Christ had, but like indeed to our sinful flesh, yet sinless, and in nature the same with us. And so even from this it is plain that by nature the flesh was not evil. For it was not by taking a different one instead of the former, nor by changing this same one in substance, that Christ caused it to regain the victory: but He let it abide in its own nature, and yet made it bind on the crown of victory over sin, and then after the victory raised it up, and made it immortal. What then, it may be said, is this to me, whether it was this flesh that these things happened in? Nay, it concerns thee very much. Wherefore also he proceeds:

Ver. 4. “That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh.”

What meaneth this word, righteousness? Why, the end, the scope, the well doing. For what was its design, and what did it enjoin? To be without sin. This then is made good to us (κατώρθωται ἡμῖν) now through Christ. And the making a stand against it, and the getting the better of it, came from Him. But it is for us to enjoy the victory. Then shall we never sin henceforth? We never shall unless we have become exceedingly relaxed and supine. And this is why he added, “to them that walk not after the flesh.” For lest, after hearing that Christ hath delivered thee from the war of sin, and that the requisition (δικαίωμα) of the Law is fulfilled in thee, by sin having been “condemned in the flesh,” thou shouldest break up all thy defenses; therefore, in that place also, after saying, “there is therefore no condemnation,” he added, “to them that walk not after the flesh;” and here also, “that the requisition of the Law might be fulfilled in us,” he proceeds with the very same thing; or rather, not with it only, but even with a much stronger thing. For after saying, “that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us that walk not after the flesh,” he proceeds, “but after the Spirit.”

So showing, that it is not only binding upon us to keep ourselves from evil deeds, but also to be adorned (κομῶν) with good. For to give thee the crown is His; but it is thine to hold it fast when given. For the righteousness of the Law, that one should not become liable to its curse, Christ has accomplished for thee. Be not a traitor then to so great a gift, but keep guarding this goodly treasure. For in this passage he shows that the Font will not suffice to save us, unless, after coming from it, we display a life worthy of the Gift. And so he again advocates the Law in saying what he does. For when we have once become obedient to Christ, we must use all ways and plans so that its righteousness, which Christ fulfilled, may abide in us, and not come to naught.

Ver. 5. “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.”

Yet even this is no disparaging of the flesh. For so long as it keeps its own place, nothing amiss cometh to pass. But when we let it have its own will in everything, and it passes over its proper bounds, and rises up against the soul, then it destroys and corrupts everything, yet not owing to its own nature, but to its being out of proportion, and the disorder thereupon ensuing. “But they that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit.”

Ver. 6. “For to be carnally minded is death.” He does not speak of the nature of the flesh, or the essence of the body, but of being carnally “minded,” which may be set right again, and abolished. And in saying thus, he does not ascribe to the flesh any reasoning power of its own. Far from it. But to set forth the grosser motion of the mind, and giving this a name from the inferior part, and in the same way as he often is in the habit of calling man in his entireness, and viewed as possessed of a soul, flesh. “But to be spiritually minded.” Here again he speaks of the spiritual mind, in the same way as he says further on, “But He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the spirit” (ver. 27); and he points out many blessings resulting from this, both in the present life, and in that which is to come. For as the evils which being carnally minded introduces, are far outnumbered by those blessings which a spiritual mind affords. And this he points out in the words “life and peace.” The one is in contraposition to the first—for death is what he says to be carnally minded is. And the other in contraposition to the following. For after mentioning peace, he goes on,

Ver. 7. “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God:” and this is worse than death.

Then to show how it is at once death and enmity; “for it is not subject to the Law of God,” he says, “neither indeed can be.” But be not troubled at hearing the “neither indeed can be.” For this difficulty admits of an easy solution. For what he here names “carnal mindedness” is the reasoning (or “way of thinking,” λογισμὸν) that is earthly, gross, and eager-hearted after the things of this life and its wicked doings. It is of this he says “neither yet can” it “be subject” to God. And what hope of salvation is there left, if it be impossible for one who is bad to become good? This is not what he says. Else how would Paul have become such as he was? how would the (penitent) thief, or Manasses, or the Ninevites, or how would David after falling have recovered himself? How would Peter after the denial have raised himself up? (1 Cor. v. 5) How could he that had lived in fornication have been enlisted among Christ’s fold? (2 Cor. ii. 6–11) How could the Galatians who had “fallen from grace” (Gal. v. 4), have attained their former dignity again? What he says then is not that it is impossible for a man that is wicked to become good, but that it is impossible for one who continues wicked to be subject to God. Yet for a man to be changed, and so become good, and subject to Him, is easy. For he does not say that man cannot be subject to God, but, wicked doing cannot be good. As if he had said,

fornication cannot be chastity, nor vice virtue. And this it says in the Gospel also, “A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit” (Matt. vii. 18), not to bar the change from virtue to vice, but to say how incapable continuance in vice is of bringing forth good fruits. For He does not say that an evil tree cannot become a good one, but that bring forth good fruit it cannot, while it continues evil. For that it can be changed, He shows from this passage, and from another parable, when He introduces the tares as becoming wheat, on which score also He forbids their being rooted up; “Lest,” He says, “ye root up also the wheat with them” (ib. xiii. 29); that is, that which will spring (γίνεσθαι, 4 mss. τίκτεσθαι) from them. It is vice then he means by carnal mindedness, and by spiritual mindedness the grace given, and the working of it discernible in the right determination of mind, not discussing in any part of this passage, a substance and an entity, but virtue and vice. For that which thou hadst no power to do under the Law, now, he means, thou wilt be able to do, to go on uprightly, and with no intervening fall, if thou layest hold of the Spirit’s aid. For it is not enough not to walk after the flesh, but we must also go after the Spirit, since turning away from what is evil will not secure our salvation, but we must also do what is good. And this will come about, if we give our souls up to the Spirit, and persuade our flesh to get acquainted with its proper position, for in this way we shall make it also spiritual; as also if we be listless we shall make our soul carnal. For since it was no natural necessity which put the gift into us, but the freedom of choice placed it in our hands, it rests with thee henceforward whether this shall be or the other. For He, on His part, has performed everything. For sin no longer warreth against the law of our mind, neither doth it lead us away captive as heretofore, for all that state has been ended and broken up, and the affections cower in fear and trembling at the grace of the Spirit. But if thou wilt quench the light, and cast out the holder of the reins, and chase the helmsman away, then charge the tossing thenceforth upon thyself. For since virtue hath been now made an easier thing (for which cause also we are under far stricter obligations of religious living), consider how men’s condition lay when the Law prevailed, and how at present, since grace hath shone forth. The things which aforetime seemed not possible to any one, virginity, and contempt of death, and of other stronger sufferings, are now in full vigor through every part of the world, and it is not with us alone, but with the Scythians, and Thracians, and Indians, and Persians, and several other barbarous nations, that there are companies of virgins, and clans of martyrs, and congregations of monks, and these now grown even more numerous than the married, and strictness of fasting, and the utmost renunciation of property. Now these are things which, with one or two exceptions, persons who lived under the Law never conceived even in a dream. Since thou seest then the real state of things voiced with a shriller note than any trumpet, let not thyself grow soft and treacherous to so great a grace. Since not even after the faith is it possible for a listless man to be saved! For the wrestlings are made easy that thou mayest strive and conquer, nor that thou shouldest sleep, or abuse the greatness of the grace by making it a reason for listlessness, so wallowing again in the former mire. And so he goes on to say,

Ver. 8. “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

What then? Are we, it will be said, to cut our bodies in pieces to please God, and to make our escape from the flesh? and would you have us be homicides, and so lead us to virtue? You see what inconsistencies are gendered by taking the words literally. For by “the flesh” in this passage, he does not mean the body, or the essence of the body, but that life which is fleshly and worldly, and uses self-indulgence and extravagance to the full, so making the entire man

flesh. For as they that have the wings of the Spirit, make the body also spiritual, so do they who bound off from this, and are the slaves of the belly, and of pleasure, make the soul also flesh, not that they change the essence of it, but that they mar its noble birth. And this mode of speaking is to be met with in many parts of the Old Testament also, to signify by flesh the gross and earthly life, which is entangled in pleasures that are not convenient. For to Noah He says, "My Spirit shall not always make its abode in these men, because they are flesh." (Gen. vi. 3 as the LXX give it.) And yet Noah was himself also compassed about with flesh. But this is not the complaint, the being compassed about with the flesh, for this is so by nature, but the having chosen a carnal life. Wherefore also Paul saith, "But they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Then he proceeds:

Ver. 9. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit."

Here again, he does not mean flesh absolutely, but such sort of flesh, that which was in a whirl and thralldom of passions. Why then, it may be said, does he not say so, nor state any difference? It is to rouse the hearer, and to show that he that liveth aright is not even in the body. For inasmuch as it was in a manner clear to every one that the spiritual man was not in sin, he states the greater truth that it was not in sin alone, that the spiritual man was not, but not even in the flesh was he henceforward, having become from that very moment an Angel, and ascended into heaven, and henceforward barely carrying the body about. Now if this be thy reason for disparaging the flesh, because it is by its name that he calls the fleshly life, at this rate you are also for disparaging the world, because wickedness is often called after it, as Christ also said to His disciples, "Ye are not of this world;" and again to His brethren, He says, "The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth." (John xv. 19. ib. vii. 7) And the soul too Paul must afterwards be calling estranged from God, since to those that live in error, he gives the name of men of the soul (1 Cor. ii. 14, ψυχικὸς A.V. natural). But this is not so, indeed it is not so. For we are not to look to the bare words, but always to the sentiment of the speaker, and so come to a perfectly distinct knowledge of what is said. For some things are good, some bad, and some indifferent. Thus the soul and the flesh belong to things indifferent, since each may become either the one or the other. But the spirit belongs to things good, and at no time becometh any other thing. Again, the mind of the flesh, that is, ill-doing, belongs to things always bad. "For it is not subject to the law of God." If then thou yieldest thy soul and body to the better, thou wilt have become of its part. If on the other hand thou yield to the worse, then art thou made a partaker of the ruin therein, not owing to the nature of the soul and the flesh, but owing to that judgment which has the power of choosing either. And to show that these things are so, and that the words do not disparage the flesh, let us take up the phrase itself again, and sift it more thoroughly. "But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit," he says. What then? were they not in the flesh, and did they go about without any bodies? What sense would this be? You see that it is the carnal life that he intimates. And why did he not say, But ye are not in sin? It is that you may come to know that Christ hath not extinguished the tyranny of sin only, but hath even made the flesh to weigh us down less, and to be more spiritual, not by changing its nature, but rather by giving it wings. For as when fire cometh in company with iron, the iron also becomes fire, though abiding in its own nature still; thus with them that believe, and have the Spirit, the flesh henceforth goeth over into that manner of working, and becometh wholly spiritual, crucified in all parts, and flying with the same wings as the soul, such as was the body of him who here speaks. Wherefore all self-indulgence and pleasure he made scorn of, and found his self-

indulgence in hunger, and stripes, and prisons, and did not even feel pain in undergoing them. (2 Cor. Xi) And it was to show this that he said, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment," etc. (ib. iv. 17) So well had he tutored even the flesh to be in harmony with the spirit. "If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (εἴπερ.) He often uses this "if so be," not to express any doubt, but even when he is quite persuaded of the thing, and instead of "since," as when he says, "If it is a righteous thing," for "seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you." (2 Thess. i. 6) Again, "Have ye suffered so many things in vain, if it be yet in vain?" (Gal. iii. 4)

"Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ." He does not say, if ye have not, but he brings forward the distressing word, as applied to other persons. "He is none of His," he says. Ver. 10. "And if Christ be in you."

Again, what is good he applies to them, and the distressing part was short and parenthetic. And that which is an object of desire, is on either side of it, and put at length too, so as to throw the other into shade. Now this he says, not as affirming that the Spirit is Christ, far from it, but to show that he who hath the Spirit not only is called Christ's, but even hath Christ Himself. For it cannot but be that where the Spirit is, there Christ is also. For wheresoever one Person of the Trinity is, there the whole Trinity is present. For It is undivided in Itself, and hath a most entire Oneness. What then, it may be said, will happen, if Christ be in us? "The body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." You see the great evils that come of not having the Holy Spirit; death, enmity against God, inability to satisfy His laws, not being Christ's as we should be, the want of His indwelling. Consider now also what great blessings come of having the Spirit. Being Christ's, having Christ himself, vying with the Angels (for this is what mortifying the flesh is), and living an immortal life, holding henceforward the earnest of the Resurrection, running with ease the race of virtue. For he does not say so little as that the body is henceforward inactive for sin, but that it is even dead, so magnifying the ease of the race. For such an one without troubles and labors gains the crown. Then afterward for this reason he adds also, "to sin," that you may see that it is the viciousness, not the essence of the body, that He hath abolished at once. For if the latter had been done, many things even of a kind to be beneficial to the soul would have been abolished also. This however is not what he says, but while it is yet alive and abiding, he contends, it is dead. For this is the sign of our having the Son, of the Spirit being in us, that our bodies should be in no respect different from those that lie on the bier with respect to the working of sin (**Schaff Note:** so the mss. Sav. "of the body." The preceding words are slightly corrupt.) But be not affrighted at hearing of mortifying. For in it you have what is really life, with no death to succeed it: and such is that of the Spirit. It yieldeth not to death any more, but weareth out death and consumeth it, and that which it receiveth, it keepeth it immortal. And this is why after saying "the body is dead," he does not say, "but the Spirit 'liveth,'" but, "is life," to point out that He (the Spirit) had the power of giving this to others also. Then again to brace up his hearer, he tells him the cause of the Life, and the proof of it. Now this is righteousness; for where there is no sin, death is not to be seen either; but where death is not to be seen, life is indissoluble.

Ver. 11. "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up our Lord shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Again, he touches the point of the Resurrection, since this was the most encouraging hope to the hearer, and gave him a security from what had happened unto Christ. Now be not thou

afraid because thou art compassed about with a dead body. Let it have the Spirit, and it shall assuredly rise again. What then, shall the bodies which have not the Spirit not rise? How then must “all stand before the judgment seat of Christ?” (Rom. xiv. 10) or how will the account of hell be trustworthy? For if they that have not the Spirit rise not, there will not be a hell at all. What then is it which is said? All shall rise, yet not all to life, but some to punishment and some to life. (John v. 29) This is why he did not say, shall raise up, but shall quicken. (Dan. xii. 2) And this is a greater thing than resurrection, and is given to the just only. And the cause of this honor he adds in the words, “By His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” And so if while here thou drive away the grace of the Spirit, and do not depart with it still safe, thou wilt assuredly perish, though thou dost rise again. For as He will not endure them, if He see His Spirit shining in thee, to give thee up to punishment, so neither will He allow them, if He see It quenched, to bring thee into the Bride-chamber, even as He admitted not those virgins. (Matt. xxv. 12)

Suffer not thy body then to live in this world, that it may live then! Make it die, that it die not. For if it keep living, it will not live: but if it die, then shall it live. And this is the case with resurrection in general. For it must die first and be buried, and then become immortal. But this has been done in the Font. It has therefore had first its crucifixion and burial, and then been raised. This has also happened with the Lord’s Body. For that also was crucified and buried (7 mss. died) and rose again. This then let us too be doing: let us keep continually mortifying it in its works. I do not mean in its substance—far be it from me—but in its inclinations towards evil doings. For this is a life too, or rather this only is life, undergoing nothing that is common to man, nor being a slave to pleasures. For he who has set himself under the rule of these, has no power even to live through the low spirits, the fears, and the dangers, and the countless throng of ills, that rise from them. For if death must be expected, he hath died, before death, of fear. And if it be disease he dreads, or affront, or poverty, or any of the other ills one cannot anticipate, he is ruined and hath perished. What then can be more miserable than a life of this sort? But far otherwise is he that liveth to the Spirit, for he stands at once above fears and grief and dangers and every kind of change: and that not by undergoing no such thing, but, what is much greater, by thinking scorn of them when they assail him. And how is this to be? It will be if the Spirit dwell in us continually. For he does not speak of any short stay made thereby, but of a continual indwelling. Hence he does not say “the Spirit which” dwelt, but “which dwelleth in us,” so pointing to a continual abiding. He then is most truly alive, who is dead to this life. Hence he says, “The Spirit is life because of righteousness.” And to make the thing clearer, let me bring before you two men, one who is given up to extravagances and pleasures, and the deceitfulness of this life; and the other made dead to all these; and let us see which is more really the living one. For let one of these two be very rich and much looked up to, keeping parasites and flatterers, and let us suppose him to spend the whole day upon this, in reveling and drunkenness: and let the other live in poverty, and fasting, and hard fare, and strict rules (φιλοσοφία & 139·), and at evening partake of necessary food only; or if you will let him even pass two or three days without food. Which then of these two think we (3 mss. you) is most really alive? Men in general will, I know, reckon the former so, the man that takes his pleasure (Sav. σκιρτώντα, mss. τρυφώντα) and squanders his goods. But we reckon the man that enjoys the moderate fare. Now then since it is still a subject of contest and opposition let us go into the houses of them both, and just at the very time too when in your judgment the rich man is living in truest sense, in the very season of self-indulgence, and when we have got in, let us look and

see the real condition of each of these men. For it is from the actions that it appears which is alive and which dead. Shall we not find the one among his books, or in prayer and fasting, or some other necessary duty, awake and sober, and conversing with God? but the other we shall see stupid in drunkenness, and in no better condition than a dead man. And if we wait till the evening, we shall see this death coming upon him more and more, and then sleep again succeeding to that: but the other we shall see even in the night keeping from wine and sleep. Which then shall we pronounce to be most alive, the man that lies in a state of insensibility, and is an open laughing-stock to everybody? or the man that is active, and conversing with God? For if you go up to the one, and tell him something he ought to know, you will not hear him say a word, any more than a dead man. But the latter, whether you choose to be in his company at night or by day, you will see to be an angel rather than a man, and will hear him speak wisdom about things in Heaven. Do you see how one of them is alive above all men living, and the other in a more pitiable plight even than the dead? And even if he have a mind to stir he sees one thing instead of another, and is like people that are mad, or rather is in a worse plight even than they. For if any one were to do them any harm, we should at once feel pity for the sufferer, and rebuke the doer of the wrong. But this man, if we were to see a person trample on him, we should not only be disinclined to pity, but should even give judgment against him, now that he was fallen. And will you tell me this is life, and not a harder lot than deaths unnumbered? So you see the self-indulgent man is not only dead, but worse than dead, and more miserable than a man possessed. For the one is the object of pity, the other of hatred. And the one has allowance made him, the other suffers punishment for his madness. But if externally he is so ridiculous, as having his saliva tainted, and his breath stinking of wine, just consider what case his wretched soul, inhumed as it were in a grave, in such a body as this, is probably in. For one may look upon this as much the same as if one were to permit a damsel, comely, chaste, free-born, of good family, and handsome, to be trampled on, and every way insulted by a serving woman, that was savage, and disgusting, and impure; drunkenness being something of this sort. And who, being in his senses, would not choose to die a thousand deaths, rather than live a single day in this way? For even if at daylight he were to get up, and seem to be sober from that reveling (or absurd show, κωμωδίας, 1 ms. κώμου) of his, still even then it is not the clear brightness of temperance which he enjoys, since the cloud from the storm of drunkenness still is hanging before his eyes. And even if we were to grant him the clearness of sobriety, what were he the better? For this soberness would be of no service to him, except to let him see his accusers. For when he is in the midst of his unseemly deeds, he is so far a gainer in not perceiving those that laugh at him. But when it is day he loses this comfort even, and while his servants are murmuring, and his wife is ashamed, and his friends accuse him, and his enemies make sport of him, he knows it too. What can be more miserable than a life like this, to be laughed at all day by everybody, and when it is evening to do the same unseemly things afresh. But what if you would let me put the covetous before you? For this is another, and even a worse intoxication. But if it be an intoxication, then it must be a worse death by far than the former, since the intoxication is more grievous. And indeed it is not so sad to be drunk with wine as with covetousness. For in the former case, the penalty ends with the sufferings (several ms. “sufferer,”) and results in insensibility, and the drunkard’s own ruin. But in this case the mischief passes on to thousands of souls, and kindles wars of sundry kinds upon all sides. Come then and let us put this beside the other, and let us see what are the points they have in common,

and in what again this is worse than it, and let us make a comparison of drunkards today. For with that blissful man, who liveth to the Spirit, let them not be put at all in comparison, but only tried by one another. And again, let us bring the money-table before you, laden as it is with blood. What then have they in common, and in what are they like each other? It is in the very nature of the disease. For the species of drunkenness is different, as one comes of wine, the other of money, but its way of affecting them is similar, both being alike possessed with an exorbitant desire. For he who is drunken with wine, the more glasses he has drunk off, the more he longs for; and he that is in love with money, the more he compasses, the more he kindles the flame of desire, and the more importunate he renders his thirst. In this point then they resemble each other. But in another the covetous man has the advantage (in a bad sense). Now what is this? Why that the other's affection is a natural one. For the wine is hot, and adds to one's natural drought, and so makes drunkards thirsty. But what is there to make the other man always keep desiring more? how comes it that when he is increased in riches, then he is in the veriest poverty? This complaint then is a perplexing one, and has more of paradox about it. But if you please, we will take a view of them after the drunkenness also. Or rather, there is no such thing as ever seeing the covetous man after his drunkenness, so continual a state of intoxication is he in! Let us then view them both in the state of drunkenness, and let us get a distinct notion which is the most ridiculous, and let us again figure to ourselves a correct sketch of them. We shall see then the man who dotes with his wine at eventide with his eyes open, seeing no one, but moving about at mere haphazard, and stumbling against such as fall in his way, and spewing, and convulsed, and exposing his nakedness in an unseemly manner. (See Habak. ii. 16) And if his wife be there, or his daughter, or his maid-servant, or anybody else, they will laugh at him heartily. And now let us bring before you the covetous man. Here what happens is not deserving of laughter only, but even of a curse, and exceeding wrath, and thunderbolts without number. At present however let us look at the ridiculous part, for this man as well as the other has an ignorance of all, whether friend or foe. And like him too, though his eyes are open, he is blinded. And as the former takes all he sees for wine, so does this man take all for money. And his spewing is even more disgusting. For it is not food that he vomits, but words of abuse, of insolence, of war, of death, that draws upon his own head lightnings without number from above. And as the body of the drunkard is livid and dissolving, so also is the other's soul. Or rather, even his body is not free from this disorder, but it is taken even worse, care eating it away worse than wine does (as do anger too and want of sleep), and by degrees exhausting it entirely. And he that is seized with illness from wine, after the night is over may get sober. But this person is always drunken day and night, watching or sleeping, so paying a severer penalty for it than any prisoner, or person at work in the mines, or suffering any punishment more grievous than this, if such there be. Is it then life pray, and not death? or rather, is it not a fate more wretched than any death? For death gives the body rest, and sets it free from ridicule, as well as disgrace and sins: but these drunken fits plunge it into all these, stopping up the ears, dulling the eyesight, keeping down the understanding in great darkness. For it will not bear the mention of anything but interest, and interest upon interest, and shameful gains, and odious traffickings, and ungentlemanly and slave like transactions, barking like a dog at everybody, and hating everybody, averse to everybody, at war with everybody, without any reason for it, rising up against the poor, grudging at the rich, and civil to nobody. And if he have a wife, or children, or friends, if he may not use them all towards getting gain, these are to him more his



enemies than natural enemies. What then can be worse than madness of this sort, and what more wretched? when a man is preparing rocks for his own self on every side, and shoals, and precipices, and gulfs, and pits without number, while he has but one body, and is the slave of one belly. And if any thrust thee into a state office, thou wilt be a runaway, through fear of expense. Yet to thyself thou art laying up countless charges far more distressing than those, enlisting thyself for services not only more expensive, but also more dangerous, to be done for mammon, and not paying this tyrant a money contribution only, nor of bodily labor, torture to the soul, and grief, but even of thy blood itself, that thou mayest have some addition to thy property (miserable and sorrow-stricken man!) out of this barbarous slavery. Do you not see those who are taken day by day to the grave, how they are carried to tombs naked and destitute of all things, unable to take with them aught that is in the house, but bearing what clothes they have about them to the worm? Consider these day by day, and perchance the malady will abate, unless you mean even by such an occasion to be still more mad at the expensiveness of the funeral rites—for the malady is importunate, the disease terrible! This then is why we address you upon this subject at every meeting, and constantly foment your hearing, that at all events by your growing accustomed to such thoughts, some good many come. But be not contentious, for it is not only at the Day to come, but even before it, that this manifold malady brings with it sundry punishments. For if I were to tell you of those who pass their days in chains, or of one nailed to a lingering disease, or of one struggling with famine, or of any other thing whatsoever, I could point out no one who suffers so much as they do who love money. For what severer evil can befall one, than being hated by all men, than hating all men, than not having kindly feeling towards any, than being never satisfied, than being in a continual thirst, than struggling with a perpetual hunger, and that a more distressing one than what all men esteem such? than having pains day by day, than being never sober, than being continually in worries and harasses? For all these things, and more than these, are what the covetous set their shoulder to; in the midst of their gaining having no perception of pleasure, though scraping to themselves from all men, because of their desiring more. But in the case of their incurring a loss, if it be but of a farthing, they think they have suffered most grievously, and have been cast out of life itself. What language then can put these evils before you? And if their fate here be such, consider also what comes after this life, the being cast out of the kingdom, the pain that comes from hell, the perpetual chains, the outer darkness, the venomous worm, the gnashing of teeth, the affliction, the sore straitening, the rivers of fire, the furnaces that never get quenched. And gathering all these together, and weighing them against the pleasure of money, tear up now this disease root and branch, that so receiving the true riches, and being set free from this grievous poverty, thou mayest obtain the present blessings, and those to come, by the grace and love toward man, etc.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Rom. VII. 14  
“For we know that the Law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.””

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):14** For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

He continues, “After having said that great evils had taken place, and that sin, taking occasion by the commandment, had grown stronger, and the opposite of what the Law mainly aimed at had been the result, and after having thrown the hearer into a great deal of perplexity, he goes on next to give the rationale of these events, after first clearing the Law of any ill

suspicion. For lest—upon hearing that it was through the commandment that sin took that occasion, and that it was when it came that sin revived, and through it deceived and killed—any one should suppose the Law to be the source of these evils, he first sets forth its defense with considerable advantage, not clearing it from accusation only, but encircling it also with the utmost praise.”

He refers in context to **Romans 7 (KJV):**7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. 8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. 9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. 10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

What Paul is saying here is that “when the commandment came”, he then had knowledge of his sin, for by the law is the knowledge of sin, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):**20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Paul then realized that the law condemned him. This is what had lead him to have faith in Jesus Christ.

Chrysostom continues, “And this he lays down, not as granting it for his own part, but as declaring a universal judgment. “For we know,” he says, “that the Law is spiritual.” As if he had said, This is an allowed thing, and self-evident, that it “is spiritual,” so far is it from being the cause of sin, or to blame for the evils that have happened. And observe, that he not only clears it of accusation, but bestows exceeding great praise upon it. For by calling it spiritual, he shows it to be a teacher of virtue and hostile to vice; for this is what being spiritual means, leading off from sin of every kind. And this the Law did do, by frightening, admonishing, chastening, correcting, recommending every kind of virtue. Whence then, was sin produced, if the teacher was so admirable? It was from the listlessness of its disciples. Wherefore he went on to say, “but I am carnal;” giving us a sketch now of man, as comporting himself in the Law, and before the Law. (**Schaff Note:** Chrys. gives no hint of any controversy as to the interpretation of the passage vii. 14–25. In modern times the question has been greatly disputed: Whom does the apostle represent by the “I” who is waging such an unsuccessful combat with sin? Passing by the views that he refers to himself personally (Hofmann) and that he refers to the Jewish people under the old dispensation (Grotius, Reiche), two opinions have prevailed among interpreters (1) that he is representing the *regenerate* man. (For the arguments by which this view is supported see Hodge on Romans *in loco*). (2) That he is here personating the *unregenerate* man who, however, has become awakened under the law to a sense of his sinful condition. This view is preferred on the following grounds. (1) The connection of 14–25 with the argument of 7–13, which shows the power of the law to awaken the consciousness of sin and can therefore apply only to the Jew aroused by the law. (2) The relation of the passage to chap. viii. In vii. 25 the apostle mounts to the Christian plane and in ch. viii. exults in the liberation from the conflict just described which Christ brings to the soul. (3) Much of the language of vii. 14–25 is inconsistent with the consciousness of a regenerate man and especially with Paul’s joyous and triumphant view of the Christian life. (4) The language throughout is appropriate, not, indeed, to the morally indifferent man, but to the unconverted Jew whom the law has awakened to a knowledge of his sin and need, and this is precisely the subject under consideration in the

earlier verses of the Chap. So Tholuck, De Wette, Alford, Olshausen, Lange, Meyer, Weiss, Godet). Chrys. rather takes for granted, than states the same view, in saying that it is “a sketch of *man* as comporting himself in the law and before the law.”—G.B.S. 1391 The words of the Fathers on this subject become more definite after the Pelagian Controversy. St. Aug. *contr. Julianum*, i. 2, §32. (Ben. t. 10), speak thus of concupiscence, (not in act, but as an inherited habit). “It is not however called sin in the sense of making one guilty, but in that it is caused by the guilt of the first man, and in that it rebels, and strives to draw us into guilt except grace aid us.”)

This note by G.B.S. (George B. Stevens) says that he (G.B.S) prefers the view, “That he is here personating the *unregenerate* man who, however, has become awakened under the law to a sense of his sinful condition.”

However, as we shall see, Paul is describing his past condition as an unbeliever, from his present condition as a believer, for Paul uses “I” statements throughout this chapter 7 of Romans. Paul was already born again when he wrote this, and now had a new nature in his spirit, that is, his inner man. The old sin nature in his flesh was not erased, and still existed, because his flesh was still mortal. As a born again believer, he then realized he now had a choice to yield to the new nature in his inner man, or continue to live according to the sin nature in his flesh. This is what he is explaining in this chapter of Romans.

Chrysostom continues, ““Sold under sin.” Because with death (he means) the throng of passions also came in. For when the body had become mortal, it was henceforth a necessary thing for it to receive concupiscence, and anger, and pain, and all the other passions, which required a great deal of wisdom (φιλοσοφίας) to prevent their flooding us, and sinking reason in the depth of sin. For in themselves they were not sin, but, when their extravagancy was unbridled, it wrought this effect. Thus (that I may take one of them and examine it as a specimen) desire is not sin: but when it has run into extravagance, being not minded to keep within the laws of marriage, but springing even upon other men’s wives; then the thing henceforward becomes adultery, yet not by reason of the desire, but by reason of its exorbitancy.”

And Chrysostom is correct. Desire is not sin, but when desire crosses the line, it can become sinful.

He continues, “And observe the wisdom of Paul. For after praising the Law, he hastens immediately to the earlier period, that he may show the state of our race, both then and at the time it received the Law, and make it plain how necessary the presence of grace was, a thing he labored on every occasion to prove. For when he says, “sold under sin,” he means it not of those who were under the Law only, but of those who had lived before the Law also, and of men from the very first. Next he mentions the way in which they were sold and made over.

Ver. 15. “For that which I do, I know not.””

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):15** For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

The word translated “allow” in the Greek is γινώσκω (pronounced ge-no'-sko), a prolonged form of a primary verb; to "know" (absolutely) in a great variety of applications and with many implications (as follow, with others not thus clearly expressed):—allow, be aware (of), feel, (have) know(-ledge), perceived, be resolved, can speak, be sure, understand. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1097**

So a better translation is as we read in **Romans 7 (NASB):15** For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do*, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

He continues, “What does the “I know not” mean?—I am ignorant. And when could this ever happen? For nobody ever sinned in ignorance. Seest thou, that if we do not receive his words with the proper caution, and keep looking to the object of the Apostle, countless incongruities will follow? For if they sinned through ignorance, then they did not deserve to be punished. As then he said above, “for without the Law sin is dead,” not meaning that they did not know they were sinning, but that they knew indeed, but not so distinctly; wherefore they were punished, but not so severely: and again; “I should not have known lust;” not meaning an entire ignorance of it, but referring to the most distinct knowledge of it; and said, that it also “wrought in me all manner of concupiscence,” not meaning to say that the commandment made the concupiscence, but that sin through the commandment introduces an intense degree of concupiscence; so here it is not absolute ignorance that he means by saying, “For what I do, I know not;” since how then would he have pleasure in the law of God in his inner man?””

Sin is still sin, whether we know it as such, or whether we are ignorant. But the reason Paul had “pleasure in the law of God in his inner man” is because he was born again. Chrysostom did not understand that when one is born again, their spirit is made new, being born of the Spirit of God, and this is why we delight in the law of God after the inward man.

Chrysostom continues, “What then is this, “I know not?” I get dizzy, he means, I feel carried away, I find a violence done to me, I get tripped up without knowing how. Just as we often say, Such an one came and carried me away with him, without my knowing how; when it is not ignorance we mean as an excuse, but to show a sort of deceit, and circumvention, and plot. “For what I would, that I do not: but what I hate, that I do.” How then canst thou be said not to know what thou art doing? For if thou willest the good, and hatest the evil, this requires a perfect knowledge. Whence it appears that he says, “that I would not,” not as denying free will, or as adducing any constrained necessity. For if it was not willingly, but by compulsion, that we sinned, then the punishments that took place before would not be justifiable. But as in saying “I know not,” it was not ignorance he set before us, but what we have said; so in adding the “that I would not,” it is no necessity he signifies, but the disapproval he felt of what was done. (**Schaff Nort**: This seems to have been Plato’s view of freewill. See Tenneman, *Plat. Philos.* iv. p. 34, οὐδεὶς ἔκων πονηρὸς, etc.) Since if this was not his meaning in saying, “That which I would not, that I do:” he would else have gone on, “But I do what I am compelled and enforced to.” For this is what is opposed to willing and power (ἐξουσία 139·). But now he does not say this, but in the place of it he has put the word, “that I hate,” that you might learn how when he says, “that I would not,” he does not deny the power. Now, what does the “that I would not” mean? It means, what I praise not, what I do not approve, what I love not. And in contradistinction to this, he adds what follows; “But what I hate, that I do.”

Chrysostom did not understand that Paul was describing his flesh, which is controlled by the sinful nature, and does not have free will, as we shall see.

He continues, “Ver. 16. “If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the Law, that it is good.””

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):16** If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the

the law that it is good.

Paul is speaking as a believer, but the unbeliever does as we read in **Romans 2 (NASB):14** For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, 15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, 16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

The unbeliever is ignorant because he or she is dead in trespasses and sins. This was our condition before Christ, as we read in **Colossians 2 (KJV):13** And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

And in context in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):18** Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

He continues, “You see here, that the understanding is not yet perverted, but keeps up its own noble character even during the action.”

However, as we just read, the unbeliever is darkened in his understanding.

Chrysostom continues, “For even if it does pursue vice, still it hates it the while, which would be great commendation, whether of the natural or the written Law. For that the Law is good, is (he says) plain, from the fact of my accusing myself, when I disobey the Law, and hate what has been done. And yet if the Law was to blame for the sin, how comes it that he felt a delight in it, yet hated what it orders to be done? For, “I consent,” he says, “unto the Law, that it is good.””

But Paul did not hate “what it orders to be done”, referring to the Law. He hated what he did do in spite of what he would not do, as we read again in **Romans 7 (KJV):15** For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

Chrysostom continues, “Ver 17, 18. “Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.””

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):17** Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Paul understood that he had a sin nature in his flesh, and that he also had a new divine nature in his spirit because he had been born again.

Chrysostom continues “On this text, those who find fault with the flesh, and contend it was no part of God’s creation, attack us. What are we to say then? Just what we did before, when discussing the Law: that as there he makes sin answerable for everything so here also. For he does not say, that the flesh worketh it, but just the contrary, “it is not I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” But if he does say that “there dwelleth no good thing in it,” still this is no charge against the flesh. For the fact that “no good thing dwelleth in it,” does not show that it is evil itself.”

Chrysostom “makes sin answerable for everything so here also”. So even thought our

flesh is where sin dwells, he does not hold our flesh in any way responsible for our actions. To Chrysostom, it is just sin. It doesn't matter where it dwells.

He continues, "Now we admit, that the flesh is not so great as the soul, and is inferior to it, yet not contrary, or opposed to it, or evil; but that it is beneath the soul, as a harp beneath a harper, and as a ship under the pilot. And these are not contrary to those who guide and use them, but go with them entirely, yet are not of the same honor with the artist. As then a person who says, that the art resides not in the harp or the ship, but in the pilot or harper, is not finding fault with the instruments, but pointing out the great difference between them and the artist; so Paul in saying, that "in my flesh dwelleth no good thing," is not finding fault with the body, but pointing out the soul's superiority. For this it is that has the whole duty or pilotage put into its hands, and that of playing. And this Paul here points out, giving the governing power to the soul, and after dividing man into these two things, the soul and the body, he says, that the flesh has less of reason, and is destitute of discretion, and ranks among things to be led, not among things that lead."

The reason Chrysostom says that Paul divides man into "these two things, the soul and the body", is because of Paul's mention of the flesh and of the mind. But Paul also mentions the "inward man" in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

Paul also mentions three parts of man in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The reason we delight in the law of God after the inward man is because our spirit is that part of us that is born again, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Being born again of the Spirit of God, we have a new nature in our spirit, as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Our flesh still has a sinful nature. This is why before we accept Christ, we were by nature children of wrath, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

It is not that our flesh is evil. And we don't hate our flesh, as we read in **Ephesians 5 (KJV):29** For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

But the works of the flesh are listed in **Galatians 5 (KJV):19** Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

This is why we must crucify our flesh, as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):24** And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Chrysostom continues, "But the soul has more wisdom, and can see what is to be done and what not, yet is not equal to pulling in the horse as it wishes."

And this sounds very logical, but we must understand that, before Christ, our mind and conscience are defiled, as we read in **Titus 1 (KJV):15** Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

The unbelieving mind and conscience is defiled, and cannot discern what is truth, and what is error, what is right, and what is wrong.

This is why after we have come to Christ our minds must be renewed, as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. **2** And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Our minds are renewed as we present our bodies a living sacrifice, and walk in the light of the word of God. In this way we will go through a progressive sanctification, as we read in **Psalms 119 (KJV):9** Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

As we progress in sanctification, we will grow in grace and knowledge, as we read in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

This knowledge will give our conscience right standards by which to judge by. As we surrender to the Holy Spirit, in this way we will have victory over our flesh where sin dwells.

Chrysostom continues, "And this would be a charge not against the flesh only, but against the soul also, which knows indeed what it ought to do, but still does not carry out in practice what seems best to it. "For to will," he says, "is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not." Here again in the words, "I find not," he does not speak of any ignorance or perplexity, but a kind of thwarting and crafty assault made by sin, which he therefore points more clearly out in the next words."

Ver. 19, 20. "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me."

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):19** For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. **20** Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

He continues, "Do you see, how he acquits the essence of the soul, as well as the essence of the flesh, from accusation, and removes it entirely to sinful actions? For if the soul willeth not the evil, it is cleared: and if he does not work it himself, the body too is set free, and the whole may be charged upon the evil moral choice. Now the essence of the soul and body and of that choice are not the same, for the two first are God's works, and the other is a motion from ourselves towards whatever we please to direct it. For willing is indeed natural (ἐμφυτον), and is from God: but willing on this wise is our own, and from our own mind."

So to Chrysostom, sin is not a nature in our flesh, but a choice of our mind. He seems to ignore the fact that Paul said sin was in him, that is, in his flesh, as we read in **Romans 7**

**(KJV):**17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Chrysostom considers sin an outward force working on our will to make “the evil moral choice”. But Paul says that “in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing”. And he is very specific where sin resides, as he says, “(that is, in my flesh)”. Did Paul think that he didn’t have a will, or a moral choice? Then why did he not simply say that sin affected his will, or that sin was in his soul, or in his mind? Instead, he says that “in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing”, and that “it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me”.

And Paul says that we were by nature children of wrath, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):**3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

But that is not all, as Chrysostom continues, “Ver. 21. “I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me.””

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):**21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

He continues, “What he says is not very clear. What then is it that is said? I praise the law, he says, in my conscience, and I find it pleads on my side so far as I am desirous of doing what is right, and that it invigorates this wish. For as I feel a pleasure in it, so does it yield praise to my decision.”

Chrysostom did not realize that it was the new divine nature in Paul that agreed with the law, and felt “a pleasure in it”. The unregenerate are carnally minded, and cannot please God, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):**7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Before Christ, we were enemies of God, as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):**10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

And in **Colossians 1 (KJV):**21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

Our conscience, which is part of our soul as we read in Titus 1:15, is defiled before we accept Christ. After we accept Christ, it needs to be cleansed, and given right standards by which to judge by. And this happens when we grow in grace and knowledge.

Chrysostom continues, “Do you see how he shows, that the knowledge of what is good and what is not such is an original and fundamental part of our nature, and that the Law of Moses praises it, and getteth praise from it?”

But we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):**3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

And in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.



Not only were we “by nature the children of wrath, even as others”, but we were also “alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that” was in us, “because of the blindness of” our “heart”.

But when we were born again, we started our walk with the Lord, and began to grow in grace and knowledge. We were not perfect, but we began a journey with the Lord. As we grow in grace and knowledge, we are changed, as we read in **2 Corinthians 3 (KJV):17** Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

That is, we are transformed, as we read again in **Romans 12 (KJV):2** And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Chrysostom seems to believe that all humanity has free will, even before they are saved. But freedom is why Christ set us free, as we read in **Galatians 5 (NASB):1** It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

We don't know what true freedom is until we come to Christ.

Chrysostom continues, “For above he did not say so much as I get taught by the Law, but “I consent to the Law;” nor further on that I get instructed by it, but “I delight in” it. Now what is “I delight?” It is, I agree with it as right, as it does with me when wishing to do what is good. And so the willing what is good and the not willing what is evil was made a fundamental part of us from the first.”

It was so until Adam and Eve fell in sin. This threw the whole human race into sin, and death by sin, as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

The condition of the human race is as in **Romans 3 (KJV):9** What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

The reason that Paul could say that he delighted in the law is because he was born again. His spirit now had a new divine nature, being born of the Spirit of God. Chrysostom did not understand this aspect of regeneration.

He continues, “But the Law, when it came, was made at once a stronger accuser in what was bad, and a greater praiser in what was good. Do you observe that in every place he bears witness to its having a kind of insensitiveness and additional advantage, yet nothing further? For though it praises and I delight in it, and wish what is good the “evil is” still “present with me,” and the agency of it has not been abolished. And thus the Law, with a man who determines upon doing anything good, only acts so far as auxiliary to him, as that it has the same wish as himself. Then since he had stated it indistinctly, as he goes on he gives a yet more distinct

interpretation, by showing how the evil is present, how too the Law is a law to such a person only who has a mind to do what is good.

Ver. 22. “For I delight,” he says, “in the law of God after the inward man.””

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

He continues, “He means, for I knew even before this what was good, but when I find it set down in writing, I praise it.”

Ver. 23. “But I see another law warring against the law of my mind.””

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

He continues, “Here again he calls sin a law warring against the other, not in respect of good order, but from the strict obedience yielded to it by those who comply with it. As then it gives the name of master (κύριον Matt. vi. 24; Luke xvi. 13) to Mammon, and of god (Phil. iii. 19) to the belly, not because of their intrinsically deserving it, but because of the extreme obsequiousness of their subjects;”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):24** No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

And to **Luke 16 (KJV):13** No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

The Greek word translated “masters” in this verse is κύριος (pronounced kü'-re-os), from κῦρος (pronounced kÿros (supremacy)); supreme in authority, i.e. (as noun) controller; by implication, Master (as a respectful title):—God, Lord, master, Sir. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2962**

And to **Philippians 3 (KJV):19** Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

He continues, “so here he calls sin a law, owing to those who are so obsequious to it, and are afraid to leave it, just as those who have received the Law dread leaving the Law. This then, he means, is opposed to the law of nature; for this is what is meant by “the law of my mind.”

He refers again to **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

But Paul does not call sin a law. Paul is saying that there is a law of sin in his members, his flesh. A “law” speaks of the way things are. Like the law of gravity. If we jump off a roof, we will fall to the ground. There is a force that draws everything to the earth. It is true for everyone on earth.

And Paul is not speaking of the law of nature when he says, “the law of my mind”. As a born again believer, Paul’s mind is being renewed. Paul explains in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

The one that is spiritual is the one who has received the Spirit of God, as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things

also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

The natural man cannot understand the things of God unless he has the Spirit of God. Chrysostom did not understand that the man who is dead in sin cannot know what God wills. And so he insists on free will, as he says above, "And so the willing what is good and the not willing what is evil was made a fundamental part of us from the first." But Jesus spoke as in **Matthew 12 (NASB):34** You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. 35 The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil.

Man without the Spirit of God cannot do good, as we read above in **Romans 3 (KJV):12** They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

It is only after we have come to Christ and have been born again that we can do good.

Chrysostom continues, "And he next represents an array and battle, and refers the whole struggle to the law of nature. For that of Moses was subsequently added over and above: yet still both the one and the other, the one as teaching, the other as praising what was right, wrought no great effects in this battle; so great was the thralldom of sin, overcoming and getting the upper hand as it did. And this Paul setting forth, and showing the decided (κατὰ κράτος) victory it had, says, "I see another law warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity." He does not use the word conquering only, but "bringing me into captivity to the law of sin." He does not say the bent of the flesh, or the nature of the flesh, but "the law of sin." That is, the thrall, the power. In what sense then does he say, "Which is in my members?" Now what is this? Surely it does not make the members to be sin, but makes them as distinct from sin as possible. For that which is in a thing is diverse from that wherein it is. As then the commandment also is not evil, because by it sin took occasion, so neither is the nature of the flesh, even if sin subdues us by means of it. For in this way the soul will be evil, and much more so too, since it has authority in matters of action."

The "law of sin" means that it is just the way it is. If there is a "law of sin" in my members, it is its nature to sin. Chrysostom leaves out the spirit of man, which he thought was synonymous with the soul. And so he is very vague as to what this "law of sin" is, and calls it "the thrall, the power". He also turned it around and said that Paul, "calls sin a law warring against the other". But Paul did not call sin a law, but he said that there was a law in his members which was "the law of sin", as we read again in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

And Paul mentions the "law of sin and death" in **Romans 8 (KJV):2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

It is not just "the law of sin", but "the law of sin and death". And so our flesh is mortal, and has a "law of sin" or a nature to sin. And we have been "made me free from the law of sin and death" by the "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus", or the new divine nature in our spirit which was birthed in us by the Holy Spirit when we were born again.

Paul is very distinct in his writing as to where this law of sin is, that is, as he says, "in my members". But while our flesh is not evil, according to Scripture, it is where sin dwells. This does not make our soul evil. But after we have lived in the flesh, "indulging the desires of the

flesh and of the mind”, our soul will have a lot of sinful thoughts and ways of living that we will need to deal with after we have come to Christ, and have been born again.

Chrysostom continues, “But these things are not so, certainly they are not. Since neither if a tyrant and a robber were to take possession of a splendid mansion and a king’s court, would the circumstance be any discredit to the house, inasmuch as the entire blame would come on those who contrived such an act. But the enemies of the truth, along with their impiety, fall unawares also into great unreasonableness. For they do not accuse the flesh only, but they also disparage the Law. And yet if the flesh were evil, the Law would be good. For it wars against the Law, and opposes it. If, however, the Law be not good, then the flesh is good. **(Schaff Note:** It is peculiarly interesting to see how vigorously Chrys. combats the idea that the flesh is essentially evil, as if it were a current notion of his time. This view—derived from heathen sources—exerted a powerful influence in the Church from early times and became the fruitful source of ascetic rigors.—G.B.S.) For it wars and fights against it even by their own account. How come they then to assert that both belong to the devil, putting things opposed to each other before us? Do you see, along with their impiety, how great is their unreasonableness also? But such doctrines as these are not the Church’s, for it is the sin only that she condemns; and both the Laws which God has given, both that of nature and that of Moses, she says are hostile to this, and not to the flesh; for the flesh she denies to be sin, for it is a work of God’s, and one very useful too in order to virtue, if we live soberly.”

So Chrysostom denies the flesh to have a sinful nature because it “is a work of God’s”. The flesh is not sin, but it has a sinful nature inherited from Adam. Let us remember that before Christ, we were under the dominion of Satan, as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):** 1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Chrysostom continues, “Ver. 24. “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?””

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):**24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Paul calls our flesh “the body of this death”. What could be more explicit as to the nature of our flesh?

He continues, “Do you notice what a great thralldom that of vice is, in that it overcomes even a mind that delighted in the Law? For no one can rejoin, he means, that I hate the Law and abhor it, and so sin overcomes me. For “I delight in it, and consent to it,” and flee for refuge to it, yet still it had not the power of saving one who had fled to it.”

And so we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV):**21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

The law cannot give us life. Life comes by faith in Jesus Christ.

He continues, “But Christ saved even one that fled from Him. See what a vast advantage grace has! Yet the Apostle has not stated it thus; but with a sigh only, and a great lamentation,

as if devoid of any to help him, he points out by his perplexity the might of Christ, and says, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” The Law has not been able: conscience has proved unequal to it, though it praised what was good, and did not praise it only, but even fought against the contrary of it. For by the very words “warreth against” he shows that he was marshaled against it for his part. From what quarter then is one to hope for salvation?

Ver. 25. “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.””

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):25** I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

He continues, “Observe how he shows the necessity of having grace present with us, and that the well doings herein belong alike to the Father and the Son. For if it is the Father Whom he thanketh, still the Son is the cause of this thanksgiving. But when you hear him say, “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” do not suppose him to be accusing the flesh. For he does not say “body of sin,” but “body of death:” that is, the mortal body—that which hath been overcome by death, not that which gendered death. And this is no proof of the evil of the flesh, but of the marring (ἐπηρείας, thwarting) it has undergone.”

But the flesh is the “body of this death” because of sin, for death came because of sin, as we read again in **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

He continues, “As if any one who was taken captive by the savages were to be said to belong to the savages, not as being a savage, but as being detained by them: so the body is said to be of death, as being held down thereby, not as producing it. Wherefore also it is not the body that he himself wishes to be delivered from, but the mortal body, hinting, as I have often said, that from its becoming subject to suffering, it also became an easy prey to sin. Why then, it may be said, the thralldom of sin being so great before the times of grace, were men punished for sinning? Because they had such commands given them as might even under sin’s dominion be accomplished. For he did not draw them to the highest kind of conversation, but allowed them to enjoy wealth, and did not forbid having several wives, and to gratify anger in a just cause, and to make use of luxury within bounds. (Matt. v. 38)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):38** Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

And in **Leviticus 24 (KJV):20** Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again.

And in **Deuteronomy 19 (KJV):21** And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

He continues, “And so great was this condescension, that the written Law even required less than the law of nature. For the law of nature ordered one man to associate with one woman throughout. And this Christ shows in the words, “He which made them at the beginning, made them male and female.” (ib. xix. 4)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 19 (KJV):4** And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

He continues, “But the Law of Moses neither forbade the putting away of one and the taking in of another, nor prohibited the having of two at once! (ib. v. 31)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):31** It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

He continues, “And besides this there are also many other ordinances of the Law, that one might see those who were before its day fully performing, being instructed by the law of nature. They therefore who lived under the old dispensation had no hardship done them by so moderate a system of laws being imposed upon them. But if they were not, on these terms, able to get the upper hand, the charge is against their own listlessness. Wherefore Paul gives thanks, because Christ, without any rigorousness about these things, not only demanded no account of this moderate amount, but even made us able to have a greater race set before us. And therefore he says, “I thank my God through Jesus Christ.” And letting the salvation which all agreed about pass, he goes from the points he had already made good, to another further point, in which he states that it was not our former sins only that we were freed from, but we were also made invincible for the future. For “there is,” he says, “now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh.” Yet he did not say it before he had first recalled to mind our former condition again in the words, “So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.””

However, Paul is not speaking of “our former condition”, but his current condition as one who has been born again. And because he was born again, in his spirit he delights in the law of God after the inward man. As he yields to the divine nature now in his spirit, he will serve the law of God with his mind. The unbeliever cannot delight in the law of God after the inward man because he or she is dead in trespasses and sins in their spirit. They need to be born again to please God.

Chrysostom continues, “Chap. viii. ver. 1. “There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

He continues, “Then as the fact that many fall into sin even after baptism presented a difficulty (*ἀντέπιπτεν*), he consequently hastened to meet it, and says not merely “to them that are in Christ Jesus,” but adds, “who walk not after the flesh;” so showing that all afterward comes of our listlessness. For now we have the power of walking not after the flesh, but then it was a difficult task.”

The word “listlessness” means “characterized by lack of interest, energy, or spirit”.  
**(Merriam Webster)**

Chrysostom did not understand that it was impossible before we accept Christ to not walk after the flesh as we will see shortly. Thus, to be born again was even a requirement in the Old Testament. The Old Testament saints believed in the one who was to come. We believe in the one who has come, Jesus Christ.

He continues, “Then he gives another proof of it by the sequel, in the words, Ver. 2. “For the law of the Spirit of life hath made me free.””

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

He continues, “It is the Spirit he is here calling the law of the Spirit. For as he calls sin

the law of sin, so he here calls the Spirit the law of the Spirit.”

This was Chrysostom’s interpretation of what Paul was saying. It is actually Chrysostom who is calling the Spirit the law of the Spirit, and sin the law of sin. But Paul’s actual words are “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”. This refers to the divine nature in our spirit that we received when we were born again of the Spirit of God. The life we received is eternal life, and so it is a divine nature given to us by the Spirit of God. This makes us now the sons and daughters of God, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

We are not perfect yet, but when we see Him, we shall be like Him. At the resurrection, we will see Him, and our bodies will be made immortal, and the sin nature in our flesh will be removed.

Chrysostom continues, “And yet he named that of Moses as such, where he says, “For we know that the Law is spiritual.” What then is the difference? A great and unbounded one. For that was spiritual, but this is a law of the Spirit. Now what is the distinction between this and that? The other was merely given by the Spirit, but this even furnisheth those that receive it with the Spirit in large measure. Wherefore also he called it the law of life in contradistinction to that of sin, not that of Moses. For when he says, It freed me from the law of sin and death, it is not the law of Moses that he is here speaking of, since in no case does he style it the law of sin: for how could he one that he had called “just and holy” so often, and destructive of sin too? but it is that which warreth against the law of the mind. For this grievous war did the grace of the Spirit put a stop to, by slaying sin, and making the contest light to us and crowning us at the outstart, and then drawing us to the struggle with abundant help.”

But the Spirit did more than that. He gave life to our spirits that were dead in trespasses and sins, and He gave us a new nature in our spirits, which is “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”. This is why we now have eternal life, as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Chrysostom did not understand the Biblical truth of regeneration.

When we are born again, we are born of the Spirit of God, as Jesus taught in **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

The reason we must be born again is because we were spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Being in this state of spiritual death, we were “by nature children of wrath”. We

were totally dominated by the lusts of our flesh, and dead to God. So when we are born again, we are made spiritually alive to God, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

When we were made alive, this birth happened in our spirit as we read again in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Now being made alive together with Christ, it is the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that is the life of our spirit which has been born of the Spirit of God. Because the Spirit of God has now given life to our spirits, we have a new divine nature in our spirit, as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

This new divine nature in our spirits is what has set us free from the law of sin and death which is in our members, which Chrysostom cannot admit to being a nature. So let us read again in **Romans 8 (KJV):2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

This new life that is in our spirits that have been born again is eternal life, as we are assured of in **1 John 5 (KJV):11** And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

We are not trying to keep ourselves spiritually alive, or full of grace in order to keep our salvation. When we believe in Jesus Christ, we pass from death to life, as we read in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

The Church's belief in regeneration by baptism placed an emphasis on ritual that is not supported by Scripture. We are saved by faith when we believe in Jesus Christ.

Chrysostom continues, "Next as it is ever his wont to turn from the Spirit to the Son and the Father, and to reckon all our estate to lean upon the Trinity, so doth he here also. For after saying, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death," he pointed at the Father as doing this by the Son, then again at the Holy Spirit along with the Son. "For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free, he says. Then again, at the Father and the Son;

Ver. 3. "For what the Law could not do," he saith, "in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.""

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):3** For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

He continues, "Again, he seems indeed to be disparaging the Law. But if any one attends



strictly, he even highly praises it, by showing that it harmonizes with Christ, and gives preference to the same things. For he does not speak of the badness of the Law, but of “what it could not do;” and so again, “in that it was weak,” not, “in that it was mischievous, or designing.” And even weakness he does not ascribe to it, but to the flesh, as he says, “in that it was weak through the flesh,” using the word “flesh” here again not for the essence and subsistency itself, but giving its name to the more carnal sort of mind. In which way he acquits both the body and the Law of any accusation.”

But Paul is referring to the “flesh”, and not the “more carnal sort of mind”. And we also read as in **Romans 7 (KJV):17** Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Where does this sin dwell? In my flesh, as we continue in **Romans 7 (KJV):18** For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

So the law in verse 21 is describing the state of things as they actually are with our flesh.

We continue in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Why does Paul delight in the law of God after the inward man? Because that is the part of him that has been born again, and has a new divine nature as a result of his birth by the Spirit of God. Being born of the Spirit of God, it is only natural for his spirit, his inner man, to delight in the law of God. But the new birth of the Spirit of God does not erase the old nature of sin in my members, my flesh. Chrysostom did not understand that our bodies are mortal, and as such, also have a sin nature, for in our flesh is “the law of sin and death” as we read before in Romans 8:2. This does not make man as the creation of God irredeemable. Through Jesus Christ our Lord we have the victory, as we continue in **Romans 7 (KJV):24** O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Now our bodies, which are doomed to die, are waiting to be changed at the resurrection. When we see Him, we will be like Him, as we read again in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Chrysostom continues, “Yet not in this way only, but by what comes next also. For supposing the Law to be of the contrary part, how was it Christ came to its assistance, and fulfilled its requisitions, and lent it a helping hand by condemning sin in the flesh? For this was what was lacking, since in the soul the Lord had condemned it long ago. What then? is it the greater thing that the Law accomplished, but the less that the Only Begotten did? Surely not. For it was God that was the principal doer of that also, in that He gave us the law of nature, and added the written one to it. Again, there were no use of the greater, if the lesser had not been supplied. For what good is it to know what things ought to be done, if a man does not follow it out? None, for it were but a greater condemnation. And so He that hath saved the soul it is, Who hath made the flesh also easy to bridle. For to teach is easy, but to show besides a way in which these things were easily done, this is the marvel. Now it was for this that the Only Begotten came, and did not depart before He had set us free from this difficulty. But what is greater, is

the method of the victory; for He took none other flesh, but this very one which was beset with troubles. So it is as if any one were to see in the street a vile woman of the baser sort being beaten, and were to say he was her son, when he was the king's, and so to get her free from those who ill treated her. And this He really did, in that He confessed that He was the Son of Man, and stood by it (i.e. the flesh), and condemned the sin. However, He did not endure to smite it besides; or rather, He smote it with the blow of His death, but in this very act it was not the smitten flesh which was condemned and perished, but the sin which had been smiting. And this is the greatest possible marvel. For if it were not in the flesh that the victory took place, it would not be so astonishing, since this the Law also wrought. But the wonder is, that it was with the flesh (μετὰ σαρκός) that His trophy was raised, and that what had been overthrown numberless times by sin, did itself get a glorious victory over it. For behold what strange things there were that took place! One was, that sin did not conquer the flesh; another, that sin was conquered, and conquered by it too. For it is not the same thing not to get conquered, and to conquer that which was continually overthrowing us. A third is, that it not only conquered it, but even chastised it. For by not sinning it kept from being conquered, but by dying also, He overcame and condemned it, having made the flesh, that before was so readily made a mock of by it, a plain object of fear to it. In this way then, He at once unnerved its power, and abolished the death by it introduced. For so long as it took hold of sinners, it with justice kept pressing to its end. But after finding a sinless body, when it had given it up to death, it was condemned as having acted unjustly. Do you observe, how many proofs of victory there are? The flesh not being conquered by sin, Its even conquering and condemning it, Its not condemning it barely, but condemning it as having sinned. For after having convicted it of injustice, he proceeds to condemn it, and that not by power and might barely, but even by the rules of justice. For this is what he means by saying, "for sin condemned sin in the flesh.""

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):3** For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

He continues, "As if he had said that he had convicted it of great sin, and then condemned it. So you see it is sin that getteth condemned everywhere, and not the flesh, for this is even crowned with honor, and has to give sentence against the other. But if he does say that it was "in the likeness" of flesh that he sent the Son, do not therefore suppose that His flesh was of a different kind. For as he called it "sinful," this was why he put the word "likeness." (**Schaff Note:** The Fathers lay great stress upon this phrase of the Apostles. August. *contr. Faust.* xiv. 5, argues, that this likeness consisted in our Lord's flesh being mortal; death being the penalty of sin: vid. also *de Nuptiis et Concupisc.* 1. 12. vid. also Basil, Ep. 261, where writing against the Apollinarians, he interprets this text to mean, that whereas Christ had all affections of human nature, which implied the reality of His assumption of it, He had not those which infringe our nature, i.e. which arise from sin. Athanasius, writing against the same heretics, observes, that Christ's sinlessness was like Adam's before the fall (In Apoll. ii. 6): or as St. Cyril observes, greater than before the fall because He has a physical inability to sin, arising from His personality being Divine, vid. Cyr. Alex. *in Esai. l. i. Orat.* 4, *fin.* At the same time He took the flesh, not of Adam unfallen, but fallen, such as ours. *Vid. Leont. contra Nest. et Eutych. lib. 2 apud Canis.* vol. i. p. 568. Gall. xii. 681. Fulgent. *Ep. ad. Regin. Tertull. de Carn. Christi.* xvi.)"

In the **Schaff Note** above, the last view, "At the same time He took the flesh, not of

Adam unfallen, but fallen, such as ours”, is correct. Christ’s body was mortal. This proves He had flesh like Adam’s after the fall, since Adam died and brought death upon the entire human race by his sin, as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):21** For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

However, Christ was not born spiritually dead in trespasses and sins, as we were as descendants of Adam, for God gave Christ birth, as we read in **Luke 1 (KJV):35** And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Chrysostom continues, “For sinful flesh it was not that Christ had, but like indeed to our sinful flesh, yet sinless, and in nature the same with us.”

Christ had no earthly father, so he was born alive spiritually. But his flesh was like ours, and doomed to die. And He did no sin, as we read in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):21** For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

Chrysostom continues, “And so even from this it is plain that by nature the flesh was not evil.”

The flesh is not evil, but it has a sinful nature, as we read again **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

He continues, “For it was not by taking a different one instead of the former, nor by changing this same one in substance, that Christ caused it to regain the victory: but He let it abide in its own nature, and yet made it bind on the crown of victory over sin, and then after the victory raised it up, and made it immortal. What then, it may be said, is this to me, whether it was this flesh that these things happened in? Nay, it concerns thee very much. Wherefore also he proceeds:

Ver. 4. “That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh.””

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):4** That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

He continues, “What meaneth this word, righteousness? Why, the end, the scope, the well doing. For what was its design, and what did it enjoin? To be without sin.”

John Piper has an excellent definition of “righteousness”, as he says, ”God’s righteousness is His unwavering allegiance to do what is right, that is, most ultimately, to uphold the infinite worth of His glory.” **The Future of Justification, A Response to N. T. Wright, by John Piper, page 78.**

It is God’s righteousness that is put down to our account when God justifies us, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all

have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

This is our standing with God after we are born again. As we are progressively sanctified, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us. But our standing does not change.

Chrysostom continues, “This then is made good to us (κατώρθωται ἡμῖν) now through Christ. And the making a stand against it, and the getting the better of it, came from Him. But it is for us to enjoy the victory. Then shall we never sin henceforth? We never shall unless we have become exceedingly relaxed and supine. And this is why he added, “to them that walk not after the flesh.” For lest, after hearing that Christ hath delivered thee from the war of sin, and that the requisition (δικαίωμα) of the Law is fulfilled in thee, by sin having been “condemned in the flesh,” thou shouldest break up all thy defenses; therefore, in that place also, after saying, “there is therefore no condemnation,” he added, “to them that walk not after the flesh;” and here also, “that the requisition of the Law might be fulfilled in us,” he proceeds with the very same thing; or rather, not with it only, but even with a much stronger thing. For after saying, “that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us that walk not after the flesh,” he proceeds, “but after the Spirit.”

So showing, that it is not only binding upon us to keep ourselves from evil deeds, but also to be adorned (κομᾶν) with good. For to give thee the crown is His; but it is thine to hold it fast when given. For the righteousness of the Law, that one should not become liable to its curse, Christ has accomplished for thee. Be not a traitor then to so great a gift, but keep guarding this goodly treasure. For in this passage he shows that the Font will not suffice to save us, unless, after coming from it, we display a life worthy of the Gift. And so he again advocates the Law in saying what he does. For when we have once become obedient to Christ, we must use all ways and plans so that its righteousness, which Christ fulfilled, may abide in us, and not come to naught.”

Chrysostom did not understand what the justification of God means to the believer. When God justifies us, He puts His very own righteousness down to our account, and gives us a standing of sons and daughters. And so we read as in **Romans 8 (KJV):33** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

When we were born again by faith in Jesus Christ, we were also justified by faith in Jesus Christ. We are now sons of God. This is what faith in Jesus Christ does for us. We don't lose His righteousness when we sin. His blood continually cleanses us as we walk in the light, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

This relates to a progressive sanctification in our soul, which is composed of our mind, will, heart, emotions, and conscience. Our spirit is made new by regeneration. But our soul must be cleansed of our past, and this happens as we begin walking in the light of the word of God.

Chrysostom continues, “Ver. 5. “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.””

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

He continues, “Yet even this is no disparaging of the flesh. For so long as it keeps its own place, nothing amiss cometh to pass. But when we let it have its own will in everything, and it passes over its proper bounds, and rises up against the soul, then it destroys and corrupts everything, yet not owing to its own nature, but to its being out of proportion, and the disorder thereupon ensuing. “But they that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit.””

Chrysostom again denies that the flesh has a nature to sin.

He continues, “Ver. 6. “For to be carnally minded is death.””

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):6** For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

He continues, “He does not speak of the nature of the flesh, or the essence of the body, but of being carnally “minded,” which may be set right again, and abolished. And in saying thus, he does not ascribe to the flesh any reasoning power of its own. Far from it. But to set forth the grosser motion of the mind, and giving this a name from the inferior part, and in the same way as he often is in the habit of calling man in his entireness, and viewed as possessed of a soul, flesh. “But to be spiritually minded.” Here again he speaks of the spiritual mind, in the same way as he says further on, “But He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the spirit” (ver. 27);”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):27** And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

But to be “carnally minded” is to be thinking about things that will satisfy our fleshly desires. To be “spiritually minded” is to be thinking about the things of God, and this brings life and peace.

He continues, “and he points out many blessings resulting from this, both in the present life, and in that which is to come. For as the evils which being carnally minded introduces, are far outnumbered by those blessings which a spiritual mind affords. And this he points out in the words “life and peace.” The one is in contraposition to the first—for death is what he says to be carnally minded is. And the other in contraposition to the following. For after mentioning peace, he goes on,

Ver. 7. “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God:” and this is worse than death.”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):7** Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

He continues, “Then to show how it is at once death and enmity; “for it is not subject to the Law of God,” he says, “neither indeed can be.” But be not troubled at hearing the “neither indeed can be.” For this difficulty admits of an easy solution. For what he here names “carnal mindedness” is the reasoning (or “way of thinking,” λογισμὸν) that is earthly, gross, and eager-hearted after the things of this life and its wicked doings. It is of this he says “neither yet can” it “be subject” to God. And what hope of salvation is there left, if it be impossible for one who is bad to become good? This is not what he says. Else how would Paul have become such as he was? how would the (penitent) thief, or Manasses, or the Ninevites, or how would David after falling have recovered himself? How would Peter after the denial have raised himself up? (1 Cor. v. 5) How could he that had lived in fornication have been enlisted among Christ’s fold? (2 Cor. ii. 6–11)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 5 (KJV):5** To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

And to **2 Corinthians 2 (KJV):6** Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. 7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. 8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. 9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. 10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; 11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

He continues, “How could the Galatians who had “fallen from grace” (Gal. v. 4), have attained their former dignity again?”

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):4** Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

He continues, “What he says then is not that it is impossible for a man that is wicked to become good, but that it is impossible for one who continues wicked to be subject to God. Yet for a man to be changed, and so become good, and subject to Him, is easy. For he does not say that man cannot be subject to God, but, wicked doing cannot be good. As if he had said, fornication cannot be chastity, nor vice virtue. And this it says in the Gospel also, “A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit” (Matt. vii. 18), not to bar the change from virtue to vice, but to say how incapable continuance in vice is of bringing forth good fruits.”

He refers in context to **Matthew 7 (KJV):15** Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Repentance is a requirement to be saved, as Jesus taught in **Luke 13 (KJV):1** There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Chrysostom continues, “For He does not say that an evil tree cannot become a good one, but that bring forth good fruit it cannot, while it continues evil. For that it can be changed, He shows from this passage, and from another parable, when He introduces the tares as becoming wheat, on which score also He forbids their being rooted up; “Lest,” He says, “ye root up also the wheat with them” (ib. xiii. 29); that is, that which will spring (γίνεσθαι, 4 mss. τίκτεσθαι) from them.”

He refers in context to **Matthew 13 (KJV):24** Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.  
27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

But Chrysostom exceeds what is written. The tares were planted by the enemy. The wheat was planted by the man which sowed good seed. The tares in this parable did not become wheat. In the parable the tares are those who were never actually born again, but only pretended to be as wheat.

He continues, “It is vice then he means by carnal mindedness, and by spiritual mindedness the grace given, and the working of it discernible in the right determination of mind, not discussing in any part of this passage, a substance and an entity, but virtue and vice.”

But “carnal mindedness” is a mind that is dominated by the flesh, in which sin dwells. Without the Spirit of God, we are in the flesh and cannot please God. With the Spirit of God in our lives, we can become spiritually minded as we grow in grace and knowledge of the word of God. This is a process, as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV)**: 1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Chrysostom continues, “For that which thou hadst no power to do under the Law, now, he means, thou wilt be able to do, to go on uprightly, and with no intervening fall, if thou layest hold of the Spirit’s aid. For it is not enough not to walk after the flesh, but we must also go after the Spirit, since turning away from what is evil will not secure our salvation, but we must also do what is good. And this will come about, if we give our souls up to the Spirit, and persuade our flesh to get acquainted with its proper position, for in this way we shall make it also spiritual; as also if we be listless we shall make our soul carnal. For since it was no natural necessity which put the gift into us, but the freedom of choice placed it in our hands, it rests with thee henceforward whether this shall be or the other.”

Chrysostom did not understand that when we are born again, we are babes in Christ. As such, we are carnal, as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV)**: 1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

The Corinthians were still saved, for Paul addresses them as “brethren” in verse one above. But they were babes in Christ. Paul was teaching them how to become spiritual. This is a process in the lives of all believers. But we cannot make our flesh spiritual by persuading “our flesh to get acquainted with its proper position”, as Chrysostom intimates above. Our flesh will become “spiritual” at the resurrection, and not before, as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV)**: 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in

incorruption: 43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: 44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

Chrysostom continues, “For He, on His part, has performed everything. For sin no longer warreth against the law of our mind, neither doth it lead us away captive as heretofore, for all that state has been ended and broken up, and the affections cower in fear and trembling at the grace of the Spirit.”

Chrysostom misunderstood the Scripture. Paul is describing the present state of a believer in Romans 7. The sin nature is not erased, “ended”, or “broken up” in our flesh when we are born again. But we are now enabled to overcome it as we yield to the new nature of the Spirit in our spirit, and the Holy Spirit who fills us.

He continues, “But if thou wilt quench the light, and cast out the holder of the reins, and chase the helmsman away, then charge the tossing thenceforth upon thyself. For since virtue hath been now made an easier thing (for which cause also we are under far stricter obligations of religious living), consider how men’s condition lay when the Law prevailed, and how at present, since grace hath shone forth. The things which aforetime seemed not possible to any one, virginity, and contempt of death, and of other stronger sufferings, are now in full vigor through every part of the world, and it is not with us alone, but with the Scythians, and Thracians, and Indians, and Persians, and several other barbarous nations, that there are companies of virgins, and clans of martyrs, and congregations of monks, and these now grown even more numerous than the married, and strictness of fasting, and the utmost renunciation of property. Now these are things which, with one or two exceptions, persons who lived under the Law never conceived even in a dream. Since thou seest then the real state of things voiced with a shriller note than any trumpet, let not thyself grow soft and treacherous to so great a grace. Since not even after the faith is it possible for a listless man to be saved!”

Chrysostom did not understand that when one has truly believed, he or she has passed from death to life. If we are “listless” as he says, God will chasten us, but not condemn us, as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):32** But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

He continues, “For the wrestlings are made easy that thou mayest strive and conquer, nor that thou shouldest sleep, or abuse the greatness of the grace by making it a reason for listlessness, so wallowing again in the former mire. And so he goes on to say,

Ver. 8. “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.””

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):8** So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

He continues, “What then? Are we, it will be said, to cut our bodies in pieces to please God, and to make our escape from the flesh? and would you have us be homicides, and so lead us to virtue? You see what inconsistencies are gendered by taking the words literally. For by “the flesh” in this passage, he does not mean the body, or the essence of the body, but that life which is fleshly and worldly, and uses self-indulgence and extravagance to the full, so making the entire man flesh. For as they that have the wings of the Spirit, make the body also spiritual, so do they who bound off from this, and are the slaves of the belly, and of pleasure, make the soul also flesh, not that they change the essence of it, but that they mar its noble birth. And this mode of speaking is to be met with in many parts of the Old Testament also, to signify by flesh the gross and earthly life, which is entangled in pleasures that are not convenient. For to Noah



He says, “My Spirit shall not always make its abode in these men, because they are flesh.” (Gen. vi. 3 as the LXX give it.)”

He refers to **Genesis 6 (Septuagint):3** And the Lord God said, My Spirit shall certainly not remain among these men for ever, because they are flesh, but their days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

And to **Genesis 6 (KJV):3** And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

But Paul is speaking of those who live according to their flesh, as Chrysostom also says, “that life which is fleshly and worldly, and uses self-indulgence and extravagance to the full”.

Chrysostom continues, “And yet Noah was himself also compassed about with flesh. But this is not the complaint, the being compassed about with the flesh, for this is so by nature, but the having chosen a carnal life. Wherefore also Paul saith, “But they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Then he proceeds:

Ver. 9. “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.””

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):9** But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

He continues, “Here again, he does not mean flesh absolutely, but such sort of flesh, that which was in a whirl and thralldom of passions. Why then, it may be said, does he not say so, nor state any difference? It is to rouse the hearer, and to show that he that liveth aright is not even in the body. For inasmuch as it was in a manner clear to every one that the spiritual man was not in sin, he states the greater truth that it was not in sin alone, that the spiritual man was not, but not even in the flesh was he henceforward, having become from that very moment an Angel, and ascended into heaven, and henceforward barely carrying the body about.”

We do read as in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

But being spiritual really has to do with our awareness and knowledge of the spiritual realm, and spiritual things, as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):15** Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

And being spiritual is being led of the Spirit, as in **Galatians 5 (KJV):18** But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

And **Romans 8 (KJV):14** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons

of God.

To the unbeliever, all of this is foolishness.

Chrysostom continues, “Now if this be thy reason for disparaging the flesh, because it is by its name that he calls the fleshly life, at this rate you are also for disparaging the world, because wickedness is often called after it, as Christ also said to His disciples, “Ye are not of this world;” and again to His brethren, He says, “The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth.” (John xv. 19. ib. vii. 7)”

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):19** If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

And to **John 7 (KJV):7** The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

He continues, “And the soul too Paul must afterwards be calling estranged from God, since to those that live in error, he gives the name of men of the soul (1 Cor. ii. 14, ψυχικὸς A.V. natural).”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.

Being spiritual has to do with knowing the things of the Spirit of God, which the natural man cannot receive because he does not have the Spirit of God. But when we receive the Spirit of God when we are born again, we are able to understand the things of God because our natural man is aided by the Spirit of God within us. Our mind is renewed, or made new, as we think on the things of God. Our whole world changes when we include God in our thinking.

Chrysostom continues, “But this is not so, indeed it is not so. For we are not to look to the bare words, but always to the sentiment of the speaker, and so come to a perfectly distinct knowledge of what is said. For some things are good, some bad, and some indifferent. Thus the soul and the flesh belong to things indifferent, since each may become either the one or the other. But the spirit belongs to things good, and at no time becometh any other thing. Again, the mind of the flesh, that is, ill-doing, belongs to things always bad. “For it is not subject to the law of God.” If then thou yieldest thy soul and body to the better, thou wilt have become of its part. If on the other hand thou yield to the worse, then art thou made a partaker of the ruin therein, not owing to the nature of the soul and the flesh, but owing to that judgment which has the power of choosing either. And to show that these things are so, and that the words do not disparage the flesh, let us take up the phrase itself again, and sift it more thoroughly. “But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit,” he says. What then? were they not in the flesh, and did they go about without any bodies? What sense would this be? You see that it is the carnal life that he intimates.”

And he is correct here. The Scripture speaks of a carnal lifestyle that is dominated by the desires of the flesh. That is what the Scripture speaks of when it refers to living in the flesh, as

we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):13** For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

In Chrysostom's thinking, if one is a believer and he or she lives after the flesh, they will die and lose their salvation. But the Scripture is clear that once we are born again, God deals with us as sons and daughters. If we sin, He will chasten us. If we continue in sin, God will judge us, but not condemn us, as we read in context in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):30** For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

The reason many were weak and sickly among them, and many slept, that is they died, is because they were eating the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner. God's discipline may include sickness and physical death, but not condemnation with the world.

However, Chrysostom will not allow the flesh to be a nature, but Paul plainly says that sin is in our members, as we read again in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

He continues, "And why did he not say, But ye are not in sin? It is that you may come to know that Christ hath not extinguished the tyranny of sin only, but hath even made the flesh to weigh us down less, and to be more spiritual, not by changing its nature, but rather by giving it wings. For as when fire cometh in company with iron, the iron also becomes fire, though abiding in its own nature still; thus with them that believe, and have the Spirit, the flesh henceforth goeth over into that manner of working, and becometh wholly spiritual, crucified in all parts, and flying with the same wings as the soul, such as was the body of him who here speaks. Wherefore all self-indulgence and pleasure he made scorn of, and found his self-indulgence in hunger, and stripes, and prisons, and did not even feel pain in undergoing them. (2 Cor. xi)"

He refers to **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):18** Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also. 19 For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise. 20 For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face. 21 I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also. 22 Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. 23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. 28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? 30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. 31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. 32 In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the damascenes with a garrison,

desirous to apprehend me: 33 And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.

He continues, “And it was to show this that he said, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment,” etc. (ib. iv. 17)”

He refers in context to **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):17** For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

He continues, “So well had he tutored even the flesh to be in harmony with the spirit. “If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you” (εἴπερ.) He often uses this “if so be,” not to express any doubt, but even when he is quite persuaded of the thing, and instead of “since,” as when he says, “If it is a righteous thing,” for “seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you.” (2 Thess. i. 6) Again, “Have ye suffered so many things in vain, if it be yet in vain?” (Gal. iii. 4)”

He refers to **2 Thessalonians 1 (KJV):6** Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

And to **Galatians 3 (KJV):4** Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.

He continues, ““Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ.” He does not say, if ye have not, but he brings forward the distressing word, as applied to other persons. “He is none of His,” he says.

Ver. 10. “And if Christ be in you.””

He refers in context to **Romans 8 (KJV):9** But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

He continues, “Again, what is good he applies to them, and the distressing part was short and parenthetic. And that which is an object of desire, is on either side of it, and put at length too, so as to throw the other into shade. Now this he says, not as affirming that the Spirit is Christ, far from it, but to show that he who hath the Spirit not only is called Christ’s, but even hath Christ Himself. For it cannot but be that where the Spirit is, there Christ is also. For wheresoever one Person of the Trinity is, there the whole Trinity is present. For It is undivided in Itself, and hath a most entire Oneness. What then, it may be said, will happen, if Christ be in us? “The body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” You see the great evils that come of not having the Holy Spirit; death, enmity against God, inability to satisfy His laws, not being Christ’s as we should be, the want of His indwelling. Consider now also what great blessings come of having the Spirit. Being Christ’s, having Christ himself, vying with the Angels (for this is what mortifying the flesh is), and living an immortal life, holding henceforward the earnest of the Resurrection, running with ease the race of virtue. For he does not say so little as that the body is henceforward inactive for sin, but that it is even dead, so magnifying the ease of the race.”

Above, he refers again to **Romans 8 (KJV):10** And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Paul is not saying that sin is dead, but that the body is dead because of sin. That is, our

body is mortal. The Spirit is life because of righteousness, that is, because of the righteousness Jesus obtained for us by dying on the cross, as we read in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

And Paul is not saying “that the body is henceforward inactive for sin”, but that we have victory over the sinful nature of our flesh because of the Spirit of God who has given life to our spirits when we had faith in Jesus Christ. And if we sin, God has made provision for us, as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Chrysostom continues, “For such an one without troubles and labors gains the crown. Then afterward for this reason he adds also, “to sin,” that you may see that it is the viciousness, not the essence of the body, that He hath abolished at once. For if the latter had been done, many things even of a kind to be beneficial to the soul would have been abolished also. This however is not what he says, but while it is yet alive and abiding, he contends, it is dead. For this is the sign of our having the Son, of the Spirit being in us, that our bodies should be in no respect different from those that lie on the bier with respect to the working of sin (**Schaff Note:** so the mss. Sav. “of the body.” The preceding words are slightly corrupt.) But be not affrighted at hearing of mortifying. For in it you have what is really life, with no death to succeed it: and such is that of the Spirit. It yieldeth not to death any more, but weareth out death and consumeth it, and that which it receiveth, it keepeth it immortal. And this is why after saying “the body is dead,” he does not say, “but the Spirit ‘liveth,’” but, “is life,” to point out that He (the Spirit) had the power of giving this to others also. Then again to brace up his hearer, he tells him the cause of the Life, and the proof of it. Now this is righteousness; for where there is no sin, death is not to be seen either; but where death is not to be seen, life is indissoluble.”

The Scripture also says as in **Romans 6 (NASB):11** Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

The body is not bad, or evil. But the unregenerate have no right standards by which to judge their actions. So whatever their flesh may desire, they give in to it willingly. And because sin dwells in our members, in our unregenerate state, we lived after the flesh in sin. But when we were born again, our spirit was made alive by the Holy Spirit who gave birth to our spirit. Our flesh did not change, but now, having a new nature in our spirit, we are to consider our body as dead to sin, and live after the Spirit.

Chrysostom continues, “Ver. 11. “But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up our Lord shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.””

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):11** But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

It was the Holy Spirit who raised Christ from the dead, as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV):4** And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

And He will also raise us up.

He continues, “Again, he touches the point of the Resurrection, since this was the most

encouraging hope to the hearer, and gave him a security from what had happened unto Christ. Now be not thou afraid because thou art compassed about with a dead body. Let it have the Spirit, and it shall assuredly rise again. What then, shall the bodies which have not the Spirit not rise? How then must “all stand before the judgment seat of Christ?” (Rom. xiv. 10) or how will the account of hell be trustworthy?”

He refers to **Romans 14 (KJV):10** But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

But only believers will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. The wicked dead are judged at the White Throne judgement, after the thousand year reign of Christ, as in **Revelation 20 (KJV):11** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

He continues, “For if they that have not the Spirit rise not, there will not be a hell at all. What then is it which is said? All shall rise, yet not all to life, but some to punishment and some to life. (John v. 29)”

He refers in context to **John 5 (KJV):28** Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

He continues, “This is why he did not say, shall raise up, but shall quicken. (Dan. xii. 2)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):11** But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

And to **Daniel 12 (KJV):2** And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

The word “quicken” in Romans 8:11 in the Greek is ζῳοποιέω (pronounced zo-o-poi-e'-o), from the same as G2226 and G4160; to (re-)vitalize (literally or figuratively):—make alive, give life, quicken. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2227**

It is derived from two Greek words, ζῳον (pronounced zo'-on), neuter of a derivative of G2198; a live thing, i.e. an animal:—beast. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2226**

And ποιέω (pronounced poi-e'-o), apparently a prolonged form of an obsolete primary; to make or do (in a very wide application, more or less direct): **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4160**

So the correct translation is to make alive, or give life to, as in **Romans 8 (NASB):11** But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Paul is referring to the resurrection of the body in this verse.

Chrysostom continues, “And this is a greater thing than resurrection, and is given to the just only. And the cause of this honor he adds in the words, “By His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” And so if while here thou drive away the grace of the Spirit, and do not depart with it still safe, thou wilt assuredly perish, though thou dost rise again. For as He will not endure then, if

He see His Spirit shining in thee, to give thee up to punishment, so neither will He allow them, if He see It quenched, to bring thee into the Bride-chamber, even as He admitted not those virgins. (Matt. xxv. 12)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 25 (KJV):10** And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

We see again that Chrysostom believed one could “drive away the grace of the Spirit”, and “assuredly perish”, that is, lose their salvation. He simply did not understand the Biblical truth about regeneration. To Chrysostom, regeneration was about receiving the “grace of the Spirit”, which one could drive away if they did not live rightly.

The parable of the virgins was about being ready for the Son of man’s coming. If we have been born again, we have oil, and we are ready.

Chrysostom continues, “Suffer not thy body then to live in this world, that it may live then! Make it die, that it die not. For if it keep living, it will not live: but if it die, then shall it live. And this is the case with resurrection in general. For it must die first and be buried, and then become immortal. But this has been done in the Font. It has therefore had first its crucifixion and burial, and then been raised. This has also happened with the Lord’s Body. For that also was crucified and buried (**Schaff Note: 7 mss. died**) and rose again. This then let us too be doing: let us keep continually mortifying it in its works. I do not mean in its substance—far be it from me—but in its inclinations towards evil doings.”

And we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):13** For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

And in **Colossians 3 (KJV):5** Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

Chrysostom did acknowledge “its inclinations towards evil doings”, that is, of the flesh.

He continues, “For this is a life too, or rather this only is life, undergoing nothing that is common to man, nor being a slave to pleasures. For he who has set himself under the rule of these, has no power even to live through the low spirits, the fears, and the dangers, and the countless throng of ills, that rise from them. For if death must be expected, he hath died, before death, of fear. And if it be disease he dreads, or affront, or poverty, or any of the other ills one cannot anticipate, he is ruined and hath perished. What then can be more miserable than a life of this sort? But far otherwise is he that liveth to the Spirit, for he stands at once above fears and grief and dangers and every kind of change: and that not by undergoing no such thing, but, what is much greater, by thinking scorn of them when they assail him. And how is this to be? It will be if the Spirit dwell in us continually. For he does not speak of any short stay made thereby, but of a continual indwelling. Hence he does not say “the Spirit which” dwelt, but “which dwelleth in us,” so pointing to a continual abiding. He then is most truly alive, who is dead to this life. Hence he says, “The Spirit is life because of righteousness.” And to make the thing clearer, let me bring before you two men, one who is given up to extravagances and pleasures, and the deceitfulness of this life; and the other made dead to all these; and let us see which is more really the living one. For let one of these two be very rich and much looked up to, keeping

parasites and flatterers, and let us suppose him to spend the whole day upon this, in reveling and drunkenness: and let the other live in poverty, and fasting, and hard fare, and strict rules (φιλοσοφία 139·), and at evening partake of necessary food only; or if you will let him even pass two or three days without food. Which then of these two think we (**Schaff Note:** 3 mss. you) is most really alive? Men in general will, I know, reckon the former so, the man that takes his pleasure (Sav. σκιρτώντα, mss. τρυφώντα) and squanders his goods. But we reckon the man that enjoys the moderate fare. Now then since it is still a subject of contest and opposition let us go into the houses of them both, and just at the very time too when in your judgment the rich man is living in truest sense, in the very season of self-indulgence, and when we have got in, let us look and see the real condition of each of these men. For it is from the actions that it appears which is alive and which dead. Shall we not find the one among his books, or in prayer and fasting, or some other necessary duty, awake and sober, and conversing with God? but the other we shall see stupid in drunkenness, and in no better condition than a dead man. And if we wait till the evening, we shall see this death coming upon him more and more, and then sleep again succeeding to that: but the other we shall see even in the night keeping from wine and sleep. Which then shall we pronounce to be most alive, the man that lies in a state of insensibility, and is an open laughing-stock to everybody? or the man that is active, and conversing with God? For if you go up to the one, and tell him something he ought to know, you will not hear him say a word, any more than a dead man. But the latter, whether you choose to be in his company at night or by day, you will see to be an angel rather than a man, and will hear him speak wisdom about things in Heaven. Do you see how one of them is alive above all men living, and the other in a more pitiable plight even than the dead? And even if he have a mind to stir he sees one thing instead of another, and is like people that are mad, or rather is in a worse plight even than they. For if any one were to do them any harm, we should at once feel pity for the sufferer, and rebuke the doer of the wrong. But this man, if we were to see a person trample on him, we should not only be disinclined to pity, but should even give judgment against him, now that he was fallen. And will you tell me this is life, and not a harder lot than deaths unnumbered? So you see the self-indulgent man is not only dead, but worse than dead, and more miserable than a man possessed. For the one is the object of pity, the other of hatred. And the one has allowance made him, the other suffers punishment for his madness. But if externally he is so ridiculous, as having his saliva tainted, and his breath stinking of wine, just consider what case his wretched soul, inhumed as it were in a grave, in such a body as this, is probably in. For one may look upon this as much the same as if one were to permit a damsel, comely, chaste, free-born, of good family, and handsome, to be trampled on, and every way insulted by a serving woman, that was savage, and disgustful, and impure; drunkenness being something of this sort. And who, being in his senses, would not choose to die a thousand deaths, rather than live a single day in this way? For even if at daylight he were to get up, and seem to be sober from that reveling (**Schaff Note:** or absurd show, κωμωδίας, 1 ms. κώμου) of his, still even then it is not the clear brightness of temperance which he enjoys, since the cloud from the storm of drunkenness still is hanging before his eyes. And even if we were to grant him the clearness of sobriety, what were he the better? For this soberness would be of no service to him, except to let him see his accusers. For when he is in the midst of his unseemly deeds, he is so far a gainer in not perceiving those that laugh at him. But when it is day he loses this comfort even, and while his servants are murmuring, and his wife is ashamed, and his friends accuse him, and his



enemies make sport of him, he knows it too. What can be more miserable than a life like this, to be laughed at all day by everybody, and when it is evening to do the same unseemly things afresh. But what if you would let me put the covetous before you? For this is another, and even a worse intoxication. But if it be an intoxication, then it must be a worse death by far than the former, since the intoxication is more grievous. And indeed it is not so sad to be drunk with wine as with covetousness. For in the former case, the penalty ends with the sufferings (**Schaff Note:** several ms. “sufferer,”) and results in insensibility, and the drunkard’s own ruin. But in this case the mischief passes on to thousands of souls, and kindles wars of sundry kinds upon all sides. Come then and let us put this beside the other, and let us see what are the points they have in common, and in what again this is worse than it, and let us make a comparison of drunkards today. For with that blissful man, who liveth to the Spirit, let them not be put at all in comparison, but only tried by one another. And again, let us bring the money-table before you, laden as it is with blood. What then have they in common, and in what are they like each other? It is in the very nature of the disease. For the species of drunkenness is different, as one comes of wine, the other of money, but its way of affecting them is similar, both being alike possessed with an exorbitant desire. For he who is drunken with wine, the more glasses he has drunk off, the more he longs for; and he that is in love with money, the more he compasses, the more he kindles the flame of desire, and the more importunate he renders his thirst. In this point then they resemble each other. But in another the covetous man has the advantage (in a bad sense). Now what is this? Why that the other’s affection is a natural one. For the wine is hot, and adds to one’s natural drought, and so makes drunkards thirsty. But what is there to make the other man always keep desiring more? how comes it that when he is increased in riches, then he is in the veriest poverty? This complaint then is a perplexing one, and has more of paradox about it. But if you please, we will take a view of them after the drunkenness also. Or rather, there is no such thing as ever seeing the covetous man after his drunkenness, so continual a state of intoxication is he in! Let us then view them both in the state of drunkenness, and let us get a distinct notion which is the most ridiculous, and let us again figure to ourselves a correct sketch of them. We shall see then the man who dotes with his wine at eventide with his eyes open, seeing no one, but moving about at mere haphazard, and stumbling against such as fall in his way, and spewing, and convulsed, and exposing his nakedness in an unseemly manner. (**Schaff Note:** See Habak. ii. 16)”

He refers to **Habakkuk 2 (KJV):16** Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the Lord's right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory.

In this paragraph, Chrysostom has come closest to the truth about walking after the flesh. It is to be controlled by the works of the flesh, as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):19** Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

And then we see the contrast of the works of the flesh, with the fruit of the Spirit, as we continue in **Galatians 5 (KJV):22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And

they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Chrysostom continues, “And if his wife be there, or his daughter, or his maid-servant, or anybody else, they will laugh at him heartily. And now let us bring before you the covetous man. Here what happens is not deserving of laughter only, but even of a curse, and exceeding wrath, and thunderbolts without number. At present however let us look at the ridiculous part, for this man as well as the other has an ignorance of all, whether friend or foe. And like him too, though his eyes are open, he is blinded. And as the former takes all he sees for wine, so does this man take all for money. And his spewing is even more disgusting. For it is not food that he vomits, but words of abuse, of insolence, of war, of death, that draws upon his own head lightnings without number from above. And as the body of the drunkard is livid and dissolving, so also is the other’s soul. Or rather, even his body is not free from this disorder, but it is taken even worse, care eating it away worse than wine does (as do anger too and want of sleep), and by degrees exhausting it entirely. And he that is seized with illness from wine, after the night is over may get sober. But this person is always drunken day and night, watching or sleeping, so paying a severer penalty for it than any prisoner, or person at work in the mines, or suffering any punishment more grievous than this, if such there be. Is it then life pray, and not death? or rather, is it not a fate more wretched than any death? For death gives the body rest, and sets it free from ridicule, as well as disgrace and sins: but these drunken fits plunge it into all these, stopping up the ears, dulling the eyesight, keeping down the understanding in great darkness. For it will not bear the mention of anything but interest, and interest upon interest, and shameful gains, and odious traffickings, and ungentlemanly and slave like transactions, barking like a dog at everybody, and hating everybody, averse to everybody, at war with everybody, without any reason for it, rising up against the poor, grudging at the rich, and civil to nobody. And if he have a wife, or children, or friends, if he may not use them all towards getting gain, these are to him more his enemies than natural enemies. What then can be worse than madness of this sort, and what more wretched? when a man is preparing rocks for his own self on every side, and shoals, and precipices, and gulfs, and pits without number, while he has but one body, and is the slave of one belly. And if any thrust thee into a state office, thou wilt be a runaway, through fear of expense. Yet to thyself thou art laying up countless charges far more distressing than those, enlisting thyself for services not only more expensive, but also more dangerous, to be done for mammon, and not paying this tyrant a money contribution only, nor of bodily labor, torture to the soul, and grief, but even of thy blood itself, that thou mayest have some addition to thy property (miserable and sorrow-stricken man!) out of this barbarous slavery. Do you not see those who are taken day by day to the grave, how they are carried to tombs naked and destitute of all things, unable to take with them aught that is in the house, but bearing what clothes they have about them to the worm? Consider these day by day, and perchance the malady will abate, unless you mean even by such an occasion to be still more mad at the expensiveness of the funeral rites—for the malady is importunate, the disease terrible! This then is why we address you upon this subject at every meeting, and constantly foment your hearing, that at all events by your growing accustomed to such thoughts, some good may come. But be not contentious, for it is not only at the Day to come, but even before it, that this manifold malady brings with it sundry punishments. For if I were to tell you of those who pass their days in chains, or of one

nailed to a lingering disease, or of one struggling with famine, or of any other thing whatsoever, I could point out no one who suffers so much as they do who love money. For what severer evil can befall one, than being hated by all men, than hating all men, than not having kindly feeling towards any, than being never satisfied, than being in a continual thirst, than struggling with a perpetual hunger, and that a more distressing one than what all men esteem such? than having pains day by day, than being never sober, than being continually in worries and harasses? For all these things, and more than these, are what the covetous set their shoulder to; in the midst of their gaining having no perception of pleasure, though scraping to themselves from all men, because of their desiring more. But in the case of their incurring a loss, if it be but of a farthing, they think they have suffered most grievously, and have been cast out of life itself. What language then can put these evils before you? And if their fate here be such, consider also what comes after this life, the being cast out of the kingdom, the pain that comes from hell, the perpetual chains, the outer darkness, the venomous worm, the gnashing of teeth, the affliction, the sore straitening, the rivers of fire, the furnaces that never get quenched. And gathering all these together, and weighing them against the pleasure of money, tear up now this disease root and branch, that so receiving the true riches, and being set free from this grievous poverty, thou mayest obtain the present blessings, and those to come, by the grace and love toward man, etc.”

And of the “pain that comes from hell”, we read in **Mark 9 (KJV):**43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: 48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER I, page 5-6**

Ver. 4. “That He might deliver us out of this present evil world.”

Another class of heretics (**Schaff Note:** That is, the Manichees, who considered matter intrinsically evil, and paid divine honors to the sun, moon, and stars. Vid. Epiph. *Hær.* lxvi. [On Mani and the Manichean heresy see Schaff, *Church History*, Vol. II. pp. 498–508 where a full account of the literature is given also.—G.A.]) seize upon these words of Paul, and pervert his testimony to an accusation of the present life. Lo, say they, he has called this present world evil, and pray tell me what does “world” [age] αἶων mean but time measured by days and seasons? Is then the distinction of days and the course of the sun evil? no one would assert this even if he be carried away to the extreme of unreasonableness. “But” they say, “it is not the ‘time,’ but the present ‘life,’ which he hath called evil.” Now the words themselves do not in fact say this; but the heretics do not rest in the words, and frame their charge from them, but propose to themselves a new mode of interpretation. At least therefore they must allow us to produce our interpretation, and the rather in that it is both pious and rational. We assert then that evil cannot be the cause of good, yet that the present life is productive of a thousand prizes and rewards. And so the blessed Paul himself extols it abundantly in the words, “But if to live in the flesh, if

this is the fruit of my work, then what I shall choose I wont not;" (Philip. i. 22) and then placing before himself the alternative of living upon earth, and departing and being with Christ, he decides for the former. But were this life evil, he would not have thus spoken of it, nor could any one, however strenuous his endeavor, draw it aside into the service of virtue. For no one would ever use evil for good, fornication for chastity, envy for benevolence. And so, when he says, that "the mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be," (Rom. viii. 7) he means that vice, as such, cannot become virtue; and the expression, "evil world," must be understood to mean evil actions, and a depraved moral principle. Again, Christ came not to put us to death and deliver us from the present life in that sense, but to leave us in the world, and prepare us for a worthy participation of our heavenly abode. Wherefore He saith to the Father, "And these are in the world, and I come to Thee; I pray not that Thou shouldest take them from the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil," (John xvii. 11, 15) i.e., from sin. Further, those who will not allow this, but insist that the present life is evil, should not blame those who destroy themselves; for as he who withdraws himself from evil is not blamed, but deemed worthy of a crown, so he who by a violent death, by hanging or otherwise, puts an end to his life, ought not to be condemned. Whereas God punishes such men more than murderers, and we all regard them with horror, and justly; for if it is base to destroy others, much more is it to destroy one's self. Moreover, if this life be evil, murderers would deserve a crown, as rescuing us from evil. Besides this, they are caught by their own words, for in that they place the sun in the first, and the moon in the second rank of their deities, and worship them as the givers of many goods, their statements are contradictory. For the use of these and the other heavenly bodies, is none other than to contribute to our present life, which they say is evil, by nourishing and giving light to the bodies of men and animals and bringing plants to maturity. How is it then that the constitution of this "evil life" is so ministered to by those, who according to you are gods? Gods indeed they are not, far from it, but works of God created for our use; nor is this world evil. And if you tell me of murderers, of adulterers, of tomb robbers, these things have nothing to do with the present life, for these offences proceed not from that life which we live in the flesh, but from a depraved will. For, if they were necessarily connected with this life, as embraced in one lot with it, no man would be free or pure from them, for no man can escape the characteristic accidents of humanity, such as, to eat and drink, to sleep and grow, to hunger and thirst, to be born and die, and the like; no man can ever become superior to these, neither sinner nor just man, king nor peasant, We all are subject to the necessity of nature. And so if vice were an essential element of this life, no one could avoid it, any more than the things just mentioned. And let me not be told that good men are rare, for natural necessity is insuperable by all, so that as long as one virtuous man shall be found, my argument will in no wise be invalidated. Miserable, wretched man! what is it thou sayest? Is this life evil, wherein we have learnt to know God, and meditate on things to come, and have become angels instead of men, and take part in the choirs of the heavenly powers? What other proof do we need of an evil and depraved mind?

"Why then," they say, "does Paul call the present life evil?" In calling the present world [age] evil, he has accommodated himself to our usage, who are wont to say, "I have had a bad day," thereby complaining not of the time itself, but of actions or circumstances. And so Paul in complaining of evil principles of action has used these customary forms of speech; and he shows that Christ hath both delivered us from our offences, and secured us for the future. The

first he has declared in the words, “Who gave Himself for our sins;” and by adding, “that He might deliver us out of this present evil world,” he has pronounced our future safety. For neither of these did the Law avail, but grace was sufficient for both.

Ver. 4. “According to the will of our God and Father.”

Since they were terrified by their notion that by deserting that old Law and adhering to the new, they should disobey God, who gave the Law, he corrects their error, and says, that this seemed good to the Father also: and not simply “the Father,” but “our Father,” which he does in order to affect them by showing that Christ has made His Father our Father.

Ver. 5. “To whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 4. “That He might deliver us out of this present evil world.”

He refers to **Galatians 1 (KJV):4** Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

He continues, “Another class of heretics (**Schaff Note:** That is, the Manichees, who considered matter intrinsically evil, and paid divine honors to the sun, moon, and stars. Vid. Epiph. *Hær.* lxvi. [On Mani and the Manichean heresy see Schaff, *Church History*, Vol. II. pp. 498–508 where a full account of the literature is given also.—G.A.]) seize upon these words of Paul, and pervert his testimony to an accusation of the present life. Lo, say they, he has called this present world evil, and pray tell me what does “world” [age] *αἶων* mean but time measured by days and seasons? Is then the distinction of days and the course of the sun evil? no one would assert this even if he be carried away to the extreme of unreasonableness. “But” they say, “it is not the ‘time,’ but the present ‘life,’ which he hath called evil.” Now the words themselves do not in fact say this; but the heretics do not rest in the words, and frame their charge from them, but propose to themselves a new mode of interpretation. At least therefore they must allow us to produce our interpretation, and the rather in that it is both pious and rational. We assert then that evil cannot be the cause of good, yet that the present life is productive of a thousand prizes and rewards. And so the blessed Paul himself extols it abundantly in the words, “But if to live in the flesh, if this is the fruit of my work, then what I shall choose I wont not;” (Philip. i. 22) and then placing before himself the alternative of living upon earth, and departing and being with Christ, he decides for the former.”

He refers in context to **Philippians 1 (KJV):21** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. 23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: 24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. 25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; 26 That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

He continues, “But were this life evil, he would not have thus spoken of it, nor could any one, however strenuous his endeavor, draw it aside into the service of virtue. For no one would ever use evil for good, fornication for chastity, envy for benevolence. And so, when he says, that “the mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be,” (Rom. viii. 7) he means that vice, as such, cannot become virtue;”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):7** Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it

is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

The carnal mind is the mind set on the things of the flesh.

He continues, “and the expression, “evil world,” must be understood to mean evil actions, and a depraved moral principle.”

He refers again to **Galatians 1 (KJV):4** Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

The word “world” in the Greek is **αἰών** (pronounced i-o'n), from the same as G104; properly, an age; by extension, perpetuity (also past); by implication, the world; specially (Jewish) a Messianic period (present or future):—age, course, eternal, (for) ever(-more), (n-) ever, (beginning of the, while the) world (began, without end). Compare G5550. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G165**

He continues, “Again, Christ came not to put us to death and deliver us from the present life in that sense, but to leave us in the world, and prepare us for a worthy participation of our heavenly abode. Wherefore He saith to the Father, “And these are in the world, and I come to Thee; I pray not that Thou shouldest take them from the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil,” (John xvii. 11, 15) i.e., from sin.”

He refers to **John 17 (KJV):11** And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

And to **John 17 (KJV):15** I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

“The evil” could also relate to the evil one, Satan, as we read in **John 17 (NKJV):15** I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

And it could relate to those who do “evil actions”, and have “a depraved moral principle”, as Chrysostom has said.

He continues, “Further, those who will not allow this, but insist that the present life is evil, should not blame those who destroy themselves; for as he who withdraws himself from evil is not blamed, but deemed worthy of a crown, so he who by a violent death, by hanging or otherwise, puts an end to his life, ought not to be condemned. Whereas God punishes such men more than murderers, and we all regard them with horror, and justly; for if it is base to destroy others, much more is it to destroy one's self.”

Chrysostom appears to rank suicide as a mortal sin, a sin whereby one loses their salvation. But if one has been born again, it is not possible to commit such a sin. Even if one were to commit suicide, they would still be saved, having only built wood, hay, and stubble on the foundation, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):15** If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

The fire in the case of suicide would be whatever led him or her to do so.

He continues, “Moreover, if this life be evil, murderers would deserve a crown, as rescuing us from evil. Besides this, they are caught by their own words, for in that they place the sun in the first, and the moon in the second rank of their deities, and worship them as the givers of many goods, their statements are contradictory. For the use of these and the other heavenly bodies, is none other than to contribute to our present life, which they say is evil, by nourishing and giving light to the bodies of men and animals and bringing plants to maturity.

How is it then that the constitution of this “evil life” is so ministered to by those, who according to you are gods? Gods indeed they are not, far from it, but works of God created for our use; nor is this world evil. And if you tell me of murderers, of adulterers, of tomb robbers, these things have nothing to do with the present life, for these offences proceed not from that life which we live in the flesh, but from a depraved will. For, if they were necessarily connected with this life, as embraced in one lot with it, no man would be free or pure from them, for no man can escape the characteristic accidents of humanity, such as, to eat and drink, to sleep and grow, to hunger and thirst, to be born and die, and the like; no man can ever become superior to these, neither sinner nor just man, king nor peasant, We all are subject to the necessity of nature. And so if vice were an essential element of this life, no one could avoid it, any more than the things just mentioned.”

But the Scripture says all have sinned, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

And all are by nature children of wrath, as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

When Chrysostom says, “these offences proceed not from that life which we live in the flesh, but from a depraved will”, he will not allow man to have a depraved nature, but only a “depraved will”.

He continues, “And let me not be told that good men are rare, for natural necessity is insuperable by all, so that as long as one virtuous man shall be found, my argument will in no wise be invalidated. Miserable, wretched man! what is it thou sayest? Is this life evil, wherein we have learnt to know God, and meditate on things to come, and have become angels instead of men, and take part in the choirs of the heavenly powers? What other proof do we need of an evil and depraved mind?

“Why then,” they say, “does Paul call the present life evil?” In calling the present world [age] evil, he has accommodated himself to our usage, who are wont to say, “I have had a bad day,” thereby complaining not of the time itself, but of actions or circumstances. And so Paul in complaining of evil principles of action has used these customary forms of speech; and he shows that Christ hath both delivered us from our offences, and secured us for the future. The first he has declared in the words, “Who gave Himself for our sins;” and by adding, “that He might deliver us out of this present evil world,” he has pronounced our future safety. For neither of these did the Law avail, but grace was sufficient for both.”

However, we read as in **1 John 5 (NASB):19** We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power of* the evil one.

And we are in a battle, as we read in **Ephesians 6 (NASB):12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

He continues, “Ver. 4. “According to the will of our God and Father.””

He again refers to **Galatians 1 (KJV):4** Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

He continues, “Since they were terrified by their notion that by deserting that old Law and adhering to the new, they should disobey God, who gave the Law, he corrects their error, and says, that this seemed good to the Father also: and not simply “the Father,” but “our Father,” which he does in order to affect them by showing that Christ has made His Father our Father.

Ver. 5. “To whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.””

He refers to **Galatians 1 (KJV):5** To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

## Commentary Summary

Concerning **The Nature of the Flesh**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XII, page 419-427**, he says, “And what, it will be said, is the good of the Law, if it adds to the disorder? None; but much mischief even. Yet the charge is not against the Law, but the listlessness of those who received it.”

But the law gives us knowledge of sin, which leads us to Christ, as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV):24** Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

The law shows us our need for Christ. When we become aware of our sin, we become aware of our need of a Savior.

And he says, “For it did not give existence to sin that before was not, but only pointed out what had escaped notice. And this is even a praise of the Law, if at least before it they had been sinning without perceiving it.”

And he says, “This then was why the Law was given. Now no law is ever given to put an end to things natural, but in order to correct a way of acting purposely wicked. And this the lawgivers that are without too are aware of, and all mankind in general. For it is the evils from viciousness alone that they are for setting right, and they do not undertake to extirpate those allotted us along with our nature; since this they cannot do. For things natural remain unalterable (**Schaff Note:** Arist. *Eth.* b. 2, c. 1), as we have told you frequently in other discourses also.”

We can agree with Chrysostom that our bodies are good as the creation of God. But sin brought death upon the human race. Without sin, there would be no death. Sin brought a change in our nature in our flesh. Our flesh now has a nature to sin. This is overcome by faith in Jesus Christ and being born again. Chrysostom did not understand the new birth. To him it was simply grace received at baptism. He did not understand that our spirit is made alive to God when we are born again, and it now has a new divine nature as a result of being born of the Spirit of God. As we yield to this new nature in our spirit, we do not sin. If we yield to the sin nature in our flesh, we sin, but God has made provision for us, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Our soul, that is, our mind, will, heart, emotions, and conscience, is in between our spirit and our body. While our spirit has been born again, our soul will go through a progressive sanctification.

And he says, “For if we cast out wickedness, we should bring virtue in also: and by these



means we shall clearly teach that wickedness is no natural evil, and shall be able easily to stop the mouths of them that enquire for the origin of evil, not by means of words only, but of actions also, since we share the same nature with them, but are freed from their wickedness.”

It is true that we share the same nature in our flesh with unbelievers, but in our spirit we have been raised from the dead.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIII, page 427-439**, He begins, as he quotes, “Rom. VII. 14 “For we know that the Law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.””

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):14** For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

He explains “sold under sin”, as he says, “For when the body had become mortal, it was henceforth a necessary thing for it to receive concupiscence, and anger, and pain, and all the other passions, which required a great deal of wisdom (φιλοσοφίας) to prevent their flooding us, and sinking reason in the depth of sin. For in themselves they were not sin, but, when their extravagancy was unbridled, it wrought this effect. Thus (that I may take one of them and examine it as a specimen) desire is not sin: but when it has run into extravagance, being not minded to keep within the laws of marriage, but springing even upon other men’s wives; then the thing henceforward becomes adultery, yet not by reason of the desire, but by reason of its exorbitancy.”

And Chrysostom is correct here. Desire in itself is not sinful. We have a desire to eat something for dinner. This is not sinful. But if we overeat, this could be detrimental to our health. And if we indulge ourselves in this “exorbitancy”, this could lead to other sinful indulgences.

And he says, “You see here, that the understanding is not yet perverted, but keeps up its own noble character even during the action.”

However, as we read in Ephesians 4:18, the unbeliever is darkened in his understanding.

And he says, “And yet if the Law was to blame for the sin, how comes it that he felt a delight in it, yet hated what it orders to be done? For, “I consent,” he says, “unto the Law, that it is good.””

But Paul did not hate “what it orders to be done”, referring to the Law. He hated what he did in spite of what he would not do, as we read again in **Romans 7 (KJV):15** For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

Chrysostom “makes sin answerable for everything”. So, even though our flesh is where sin dwells, he does not hold our flesh in any way responsible for our actions. To Chrysostom, it is just sin, and a choice one makes. It doesn’t matter where it dwells.

And he says, “so Paul in saying, that “in my flesh dwelleth no good thing,” is not finding fault with the body, but pointing out the soul’s superiority. For this it is that has the whole duty or pilotage put into its hands, and that of playing. And this Paul here points out, giving the governing power to the soul, and after dividing man into these two things, the soul and the body, he says, that the flesh has less of reason, and is destitute of discretion, and ranks among things to be led, not among things that lead.”

But we just read in **Romans 7 (KJV):15** For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

If the soul is governing, why isn't the flesh following. Chrysostom did not understand that there are three parts to man's being, that is, spirit, soul, and body. Before we accept Christ, our spirit was dead in trespasses and sins. Our soul could not connect with God. We lived "according to the flesh". We could not please God. But when we were born again, we now delight in the law of God after the inward man, because our spirit is that part of us that is born again. But in our flesh is a law of sin, as in Romans 7:23.

And he says, "And this Paul here points out, giving the governing power to the soul, and after dividing man into these two things, the soul and the body, he says, that the flesh has less of reason, and is destitute of discretion, and ranks among things to be led, not among things that lead. But the soul has more wisdom, and can see what is to be done and what not, yet is not equal to pulling in the horse as it wishes. And this would be a charge not against the flesh only, but against the soul also, which knows indeed what it ought to do, but still does not carry out in practice what seems best to it. "For to will," he says, "is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not.""

Chrysostom did not find "fault with the body", or the soul. His assumption that man has free will, even in his unregenerate state, affected his thinking. Even though Paul says that "in my flesh dwelleth no good thing" in Romans 7:18, he still didn't find fault with the body. He believed that man has free will regardless.

He says, "Do you see, how he acquits the essence of the soul, as well as the essence of the flesh, from accusation, and removes it entirely to sinful actions?"

So to Chrysostom, sin is not a nature in our flesh, but a choice of our mind. He seems to ignore the fact that Paul said sin was in him, that is, in his flesh.

Chrysostom considers sin an outward force working on our will to make "the evil moral choice". But Paul says that "in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing". And he is very specific where sin resides, as he says, "(that is, in my flesh)", and "the law of sin which is in my members" in Romans 7:23.

And so Chrysostom says, "And so the willing what is good and the not willing what is evil was made a fundamental part of us from the first."

But when man sinned, change happened. Death came upon the human race. Man's flesh became mortal, and it now has a nature to sin, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Now he again quotes **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

And he says, "so here he calls sin a law, owing to those who are so obsequious to it, and are afraid to leave it, just as those who have received the Law dread leaving the Law. This then, he means, is opposed to the law of nature; for this is what is meant by "the law of my mind."

But Paul does not call sin a law. Paul is saying there is a law of sin in his members, his flesh. A "law" speaks of the way things are, like the law of gravity. If we jump off a roof, we will fall to the ground. There is a force that draws everything to the earth. It is true for everyone on earth.

And Paul is not speaking of the law of nature when he says, "the law of my mind". As a born again believer, Paul's mind is being renewed.

Man without the Spirit of God cannot do good, as we read above in **Romans 3 (KJV):12** They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

It is only after we have come to Christ and have been born again that we can do good.

The “law of sin” means that it is just the way it is. If there is a “law of sin” in my members, it is its nature. Chrysostom leaves out the spirit of man, which he thought was synonymous with the soul. And so he is very vague as to what this “law of sin” is, and calls it “the thrall, the power”. He also turned it around and said that Paul, “calls sin a law warring against the other”. But Paul did not call sin a law, but he said that there was a law in his members which was “the law of sin”, as we read again in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Chrysostom did not understand the Biblical truth of regeneration. When we are born again, we are born of the Spirit of God. The reason we must be born again is because we were dead in our trespasses and sins. Being in this state of spiritual death, we were “by nature children of wrath”. We were totally dominated by the lusts of our flesh, and dead to God. So when we are born again, we are made alive to God, and we have a new divine nature in our spirit.

Now being made alive together with Christ, it is the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that is the life of our spirit which has been born of the Spirit of God. Because the Spirit of God has now given life to our spirits, we have a new divine nature in our spirit.

This new divine nature in our spirits is what has set us free from the law of sin and death which is in our members. Chrysostom cannot admit this to being a nature because he did not understand that man is not just soul and body, but body, soul, and spirit.

So this life that is in our spirits, which have been born again, is eternal life.

We are not trying to keep ourselves full of grace to keep our salvation. When we believe in Jesus Christ, we pass from death to life.

The Church’s belief in regeneration by baptism placed an emphasis on ritual that is not supported by Scripture. We are saved, that is, born again, when we believe in Jesus Christ. Sin still dwells in our flesh, in our members. But our spirit has a new divine nature having been born of the Spirit of God. Our soul has all of the baggage of our past. We will go through a progressive sanctification in our soul, that is, in our mind, will, conscience, heart, and emotions as we grow in grace and knowledge of the word of God. This will not cease until we see Him, when we will be like Him.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER I, page 5-6**, he says, “And if you tell me of murderers, of adulterers, of tomb robbers, these things have nothing to do with the present life, for these offences proceed not from that life which we live in the flesh, but from a depraved will. For, if they were necessarily connected with this life, as embraced in one lot with it, no man would be free or pure from them, for no man can escape the characteristic accidents of humanity, such as, to eat and drink, to sleep and grow, to hunger and thirst, to be born and die, and the like; no man can ever become superior to these, neither sinner nor just man, king nor peasant, We all are subject to the necessity of nature. And so if vice were an essential element of this life, no one could avoid it, any more than the things just mentioned.”

But the Scripture says all have sinned, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

And the unsaved cannot please God, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):8** So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

And all are by nature children of wrath.

When Chrysostom says, “these offences proceed not from that life which we live in the flesh, but from a depraved will”, he will not allow man to have a depraved nature, but only a “depraved will”. But the Scripture is clear. Sin is in our members, in our flesh. And it is warring against the “law of my mind”, as we read again in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

## The Soul

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER V, page 38-39

Ver. 12. “I would that they which unsettle you, would even cut themselves off.”

Observe how bitterly he speaks here against their deceivers. At the outset he directed his charge against those who were deceived, and called them foolish, once and again. Now, having sufficiently corrected and instructed them, he turns to their deceivers. And you should remark his wisdom in the manner in which he admonishes and chastens the former as his own children, and as capable of receiving correction, but their deceivers he cuts off, as aliens and incurably depraved. And this he does, partly, when he says, “he shall bear his judgment whosoever he be;” partly when he utters the imprecation against them, “I would that they which unsettle you would even cut themselves off.” And he says well “that unsettle you.” For they had compelled them to abandon their own fatherland, their liberty, and their heavenly kindred, and to seek an alien and foreign one; they had cast them out of Jerusalem which is above and free, and compelled them to wander forth as captives and emigrants. On this account he curses them; and his meaning is as follows, For them I have no concern, “A man that is heretical after the first and second admonition refuse.” (Tit. iii. 10) If they will, let them not only be circumcised, but mutilated. Where then are those who dare to mutilate themselves; seeing that they draw down the Apostolic curse, and accuse the workmanship of God, and take part with the Manichees? For the latter call the body a treacherous thing, and from the evil principle; and the former by their acts give countenance to these wretched doctrines, cutting off the member as being hostile and treacherous. Ought they not much rather to put out the eyes, for it is through the eyes that desire enters the soul? But in truth neither the eye nor any other part of us is to blame, but the depraved will only. But if you will not allow this, why do you not mutilate the tongue for blasphemy, the hands for rapine, the feet for their evil courses, in short, the whole body? For the ear enchanted by the sound of a flute hath often enervated the soul; and the perception of a sweet perfume by the nostrils hath bewitched the mind, and made it frantic for pleasure. Yet this would be extreme wickedness and satanic madness. The evil spirit, ever delighting in slaughter, hath seduced them to crush the instrument, as if its Maker had erred, whereas it was only

necessary to correct the unruly passion of the soul. How then does it happen, one may say, that when the body is pampered, lust is inflamed? Observe here too that it is the sin of the soul, for to pamper the flesh is not an act of the flesh but of the soul, for if the soul choose to mortify it, it would possess absolute power over it. But what you do is just the same as if one seeing a man lighting a fire, and heaping on fuel, and setting fire to a house, were to blame the fire, instead of him who kindled it, because it had caught this heap of fuel, and risen to a great height. Yet the blame would attach not to the fire but to the one who kindled it; for it was given for the purpose of dressing food, affording light, and other like ministries, not for burning houses. In like manner desire is implanted for the rearing of families and the ensuring of life, not for adultery, or fornication, or lasciviousness; that a man may become a father, not an adulterer; a lawful husband, not a seducer; leaving heirs after him, not doing damage to another man's. For adultery arises not from nature, but from wantonness against nature, which prescribes the use not the misuse. These remarks I have not made at random, but as a prelude to a dispute, as skirmishing against those who assert that the workmanship of God is evil, and who neglecting the sloth of the soul, madly inveigh against the body, and traduce our flesh, whereof Paul afterwards discourses, accusing not the flesh, but devilish thoughts.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, "Ver. 12. "I would that they which unsettle you, would even cut themselves off."

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):12** I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

He continues, "Observe how bitterly he speaks here against their deceivers. At the outset he directed his charge against those who were deceived, and called them foolish, once and again. Now, having sufficiently corrected and instructed them, he turns to their deceivers. And you should remark his wisdom in the manner in which he admonishes and chastens the former as his own children, and as capable of receiving correction, but their deceivers he cuts off, as aliens and incurably depraved. And this he does, partly, when he says, "he shall bear his judgment whosoever he be;" partly when he utters the imprecation against them, "I would that they which unsettle you would even cut themselves off." And he says well "that unsettle you." For they had compelled them to abandon their own fatherland, their liberty, and their heavenly kindred, and to seek an alien and foreign one; they had cast them out of Jerusalem which is above and free, and compelled them to wander forth as captives and emigrants. On this account he curses them; and his meaning is as follows, For them I have no concern, "A man that is heretical after the first and second admonition refuse." (Tit. iii. 10)"

He refers to **Titus 3 (KJV):10** A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;

He continues, "If they will, let them not only be circumcised, but mutilated. Where then are those who dare to mutilate themselves; seeing that they draw down the Apostolic curse, and accuse the workmanship of God, and take part with the Manichees? For the latter call the body a treacherous thing, and from the evil principle; and the former by their acts give countenance to these wretched doctrines, cutting off the member as being hostile and treacherous. Ought they not much rather to put out the eyes, for it is through the eyes that desire enters the soul? But in truth neither the eye nor any other part of us is to blame, but the depraved will only."

Chrysostom had a strict adherence to his belief that man has free will. To Chrysostom, even unregenerate man has free will. So then sin is not a nature in the flesh, but a choice of the

the will in the soul. But what choice does an unbeliever have who is dead in trespasses and sins? It is the one who has been made alive to God, and who has been born again, who now has freedom over their will.

He continues, “But if you will not allow this, why do you not mutilate the tongue for blasphemy, the hands for rapine, the feet for their evil courses, in short, the whole body? For the ear enchanted by the sound of a flute hath often enervated the soul; and the perception of a sweet perfume by the nostrils hath bewitched the mind, and made it frantic for pleasure. Yet this would be extreme wickedness and satanic madness. The evil spirit, ever delighting in slaughter, hath seduced them to crush the instrument, as if its Maker had erred, whereas it was only necessary to correct the unruly passion of the soul. How then does it happen, one may say, that when the body is pampered, lust is inflamed? Observe here too that it is the sin of the soul, for to pamper the flesh is not an act of the flesh but of the soul, for if the soul choose to mortify it, it would possess absolute power over it.”

Chrysostom would have us believe that it is “only necessary to correct the unruly passion of the soul”.

But even we believers must choose to yield to the Spirit in order to “possess absolute power over it”, that is, the flesh.

He continues, “But what you do is just the same as if one seeing a man lighting a fire, and heaping on fuel, and setting fire to a house, were to blame the fire, instead of him who kindled it, because it had caught this heap of fuel, and risen to a great height. Yet the blame would attach not to the fire but to the one who kindled it; for it was given for the purpose of dressing food, affording light, and other like ministries, not for burning houses. In like manner desire is implanted for the rearing of families and the ensuring of life, not for adultery, or fornication, or lasciviousness; that a man may become a father, not an adulterer; a lawful husband, not a seducer; leaving heirs after him, not doing damage to another man’s. For adultery arises not from nature, but from wantonness against nature, which prescribes the use not the misuse. These remarks I have not made at random, but as a prelude to a dispute, as skirmishing against those who assert that the workmanship of God is evil, and who neglecting the sloth of the soul, madly inveigh against the body, and traduce our flesh, whereof Paul afterwards discourses, accusing not the flesh, but devilish thoughts.”

The word “traduce” means, “to expose to shame or blame by means of falsehood and misrepresentation”. (**Merriam Webster**)

And Paul refers to the carnal mind in **Romans 8 (KJV):5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

But the word “carnal” means fleshly. The flesh is the instigator of sin. It is “the sloth of the soul” that yields to the flesh and sin is committed. While standing strong for the work of God as good, that is, man’s flesh, Chrysostom did not understand the law of sin, which was in our members.

And while the workmanship of God is not evil, it is also true that desire is not evil. But Paul refers to the works of the flesh, as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):19** Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Only those who are Christ's can crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts. The unsaved are without a way, until they come to Christ.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER V, page 40-41**

Ver. 17. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, for these are contrary the one to the other: that ye may not do the things that ye would."

Here some make the charge that the Apostle has divided man into two parts, and that he states the essence of which he is compounded to be conflicting with itself, and that the body has a contest with the soul. But this is not so, most certainly; for by "the flesh," he does not mean the body; if he did, what would be the sense of the clause immediately following, "for it lusteth," he says, "against the Spirit?" yet the body moves not, but is moved, is not an agent, but is acted upon. How then does it lust, for lust belongs to the soul not to the body, for in another place it is said, "My soul longeth," (Ps. lxxxiv. 2) and, "Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee," (1 Sam. xx. 4) and, "Walk not according to the desires of thy heart," and, "So panteth my soul." (Ps. xlii. 1) Wherefore then does Paul say, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit?" he is wont to call the flesh, not the natural body but the depraved will, as where he says, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit," (Rom. viii. 8, 9) and again, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." What then? Is the flesh to be destroyed? was not he who thus spoke clothed with flesh? such doctrines are not of the flesh, but from the Devil, for "he was a murderer from the beginning." (John viii. 44) What then is his meaning? it is the earthly mind, slothful and careless, that he here calls the flesh, and this is not an accusation of the body, but a charge against the slothful soul. The flesh is an instrument, and no one feels aversion and hatred to an instrument, but to him who abuses it. For it is not the iron instrument but the murderer, whom we hate and punish. But it may be said that the very calling of the faults of the soul by the name of the flesh is in itself an accusation of the body. And I admit that the flesh is inferior to the soul, yet it too is good, for that which is inferior to what is good may itself be good, but evil is not inferior to good, but opposed to it. Now if you are able to prove to me that evil originates from the body, you are at liberty to accuse it; but if your endeavor is to turn its name into a charge against it, you ought to accuse the soul likewise. For he that is deprived of the truth is called "the natural man." (1 Cor. ii. 14) (**Schaff Note:** [That is, the "psychical" man, from ψυχή, the soul.—G.A.]) and the race of demons "the spirits of wickedness." (Eph. vi. 12)

Again, the Scripture is wont to give the name of the Flesh to the Mysteries of the Eucharist, and to the whole Church, calling them the Body of Christ. (Col. i. 24) Nay, to induce you to give the name of blessings to the things of which the flesh is the medium, you have only to imagine the extinction of the senses, and you will find the soul deprived of all discernment, and ignorant of what it before knew. For if the power of God is since "the creation of the world clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made," (Rom. i. 20) how could we see

them without eyes? and if “faith cometh of hearing,” (Rom. x. 17) how shall we hear without ears? and preaching depends on making circuits wherein the tongue and feet are employed. “For how shall they preach, except they be sent?” (Rom. x. 15) In the same way writing is performed by means of the hands. Do you not see that the ministry of the flesh produces for us a thousand benefits? In his expression, “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit,” he means two mental states. For these are opposed to each other, namely virtue and vice, not the soul and the body. Were the two latter so opposed they would be destructive of one another, as fire of water, and darkness of light. But if the soul cares for the body, and takes great forethought on its account, and suffers a thousand things in order not to leave it, and resists being separated from it, and if the body too ministers to the soul, and conveys to it much knowledge, and is adapted to its operations, how can they be contrary, and conflicting with each other? For my part, I perceive by their acts that they are not only not contrary but closely accordant and attached one to another. It is not therefore of these that he speaks as opposed to each other, but he refers to the contest of bad and good principles. (Compare Rom. vii. 23) To will and not to will belongs to the soul; wherefore he says, “these are contrary the one to the other,” that you may not suffer the soul to proceed in its evil desires. For he speaks this like a Master and Teacher in a threatening way.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 17. “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, for these are contrary the one to the other: that ye may not do the things that ye would.””

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):17** For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

He continues, “Here some make the charge that the Apostle has divided man into two parts, and that he states the essence of which he is compounded to be conflicting with itself, and that the body has a contest with the soul. But this is not so, most certainly; for by “the flesh,” he does not mean the body; if he did, what would be the sense of the clause immediately following, “for it lusteth,” he says, “against the Spirit?” yet the body moves not, but is moved, is not an agent, but is acted upon. How then does it lust, for lust belongs to the soul not to the body, for in another place it is said, “My soul longeth,” (Ps. lxxxiv. 2) and, “Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee,” (1 Sam. xx. 4) and, “Walk not according to the desires of thy heart,” and, “So panteth my soul.” (Ps. xlii. 1)”

He refers to **Psalms 84 (KJV):2** My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

And to **1 Samuel 20 (KJV):4** Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee.

And to **Psalms 42 (KJV):1** As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

But all of these Scriptures speak of believers, not unbelievers.

And when he said, “for lust belongs to the soul not to the body”, we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):16** This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

And we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.



The “lust of the soul” is never mentioned in Scripture. He does say “desires of the flesh and of the mind” in Ephesians 2:3 above. So it is possible to think of something and have a lust for it, and so it would be a desire of the mind. But our flesh has desires also, like a hunger for something. Chrysostom would not allow for this.

He continues, “Wherefore then does Paul say, “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit?” he is wont to call the flesh, not the natural body but the depraved will, as where he says, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit,” (Rom. viii. 8, 9) and again, “They that are in the flesh cannot please God.””

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):8** So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

But the flesh has desires as we read in Ephesians 2:3 above. And the flesh has feelings. The flesh feels cold or hot. The flesh feels hungry.

He continues, “What then? Is the flesh to be destroyed? was not he who thus spoke clothed with flesh? such doctrines are not of the flesh, but from the Devil, for “he was a murderer from the beginning.” (John viii. 44)”

He refers to **John 8 (KJV):44** Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

He continues, “What then is his meaning? it is the earthly mind, slothful and careless, that he here calls the flesh, and this is not an accusation of the body, but a charge against the slothful soul. The flesh is an instrument, and no one feels aversion and hatred to an instrument, but to him who abuses it.”

But the flesh is where sin dwells, that is, in our members. Because of Adam’s sin, we all are born with a mortal body, as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):21** For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

And we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):56** The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

Sin caused our bodies to be mortal, and gave us a nature to sin in our flesh, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Chrysostom continues, “For it is not the iron instrument but the murderer, whom we hate and punish. But it may be said that the very calling of the faults of the soul by the name of the flesh is in itself an accusation of the body. And I admit that the flesh is inferior to the soul, yet it too is good, for that which is inferior to what is good may itself be good, but evil is not inferior to good, but opposed to it. Now if you are able to prove to me that evil originates from the body, you are at liberty to accuse it; but if your endeavor is to turn its name into a charge against it, you ought to accuse the soul likewise. For he that is deprived of the truth is called “the natural man.” (1 Cor. ii. 14) (**Schaff Note:** [That is, the “psychical” man, from ψυχή, the soul.—G.A.]) and the race of demons “the spirits of wickedness.” (Eph. vi. 12)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

And to **Ephesians 6 (KJV):12** For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

But the natural man can receive the things of the Spirit of God if he has the Spirit of God, as we read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

He continues, “Again, the Scripture is wont to give the name of the Flesh to the Mysteries of the Eucharist, and to the whole Church, calling them the Body of Christ. (Col. i. 24)”

He refers to **Colossians 1 (KJV):24** Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

The word for “body” in the Greek is **σῶμα** (pronounced so'-mä), from G4982; the body (as a sound whole), used in a very wide application, literally or figuratively:—bodily, body, slave. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4983**

The word for “flesh” in the Greek is **σάρξ** (pronounced sä'rks), probably from the base of G4563; flesh (as stripped of the skin), i.e. (strictly) the meat of an animal (as food), or (by extension) the body (as opposed to the soul (or spirit), or as the symbol of what is external, or as the means of kindred), or (by implication) human nature (with its frailties (physically or morally) and passions), or (specially), a human being (as such):—carnal(-ly, + -ly minded), flesh(-ly). **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4561**

These two Greek words are never used interchangeably. The Scripture never speaks of the Body of Christ as the “flesh of Christ”. And it does not give “the name of the Flesh to the Mysteries of the Eucharist”. The “body of Christ” is a figure of the Church. Just as a body has many members, so we in the Church, like a body, have different functions.

He continues, “Nay, to induce you to give the name of blessings to the things of which the flesh is the medium, you have only to imagine the extinction of the senses, and you will find the soul deprived of all discernment, and ignorant of what it before knew. For if the power of God is since “the creation of the world clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made,” (Rom. i. 20) how could we see them without eyes? and if “faith cometh of hearing,” (Rom. x. 17) how shall we hear without ears? and preaching depends on making circuits wherein the tongue and feet are employed. “For how shall they preach, except they be sent?” (Rom. x. 15)”

He refers to **Romans 1 (KJV):20** For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

And to **Romans 10 (KJV):17** So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

And to **Romans 10 (KJV):15** And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

He continues, “In the same way writing is performed by means of the hands. Do you not

see that the ministry of the flesh produces for us a thousand benefits? In his expression, “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit,” he means two mental states. For these are opposed to each other, namely virtue and vice, not the soul and the body.”

He refers again to **Galatians 5 (KJV):17** For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

Chrysostom makes an analogy which obscures the meaning of the verse. It’s as if he reads the verse as, “For vice is against virtue, and virtue is against vice: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”

What this does is make a distance between the truth in the Scripture and the believer. It is as if the believer now sees the truth in the Scripture as represented by something else. It is not that lust isn’t vice, or that the Spirit doesn’t have anything to do with virtue, but that it is not a literal translation of the Scripture. Our flesh has appetites. If we allow our flesh to lead us, we will mind the things of the flesh, as in **Romans 8 (KJV):5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

But if we are after the Spirit, we will mind “the things of the Spirit”. The “the things of the Spirit” are revealed in the word of God. Just thinking about virtue will not necessarily be about “the things of the Spirit”. We must continue in His word, as Jesus taught in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

And in **Colossians 3 (KJV):16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Chrysostom did not understand that our flesh contains sin. It is where sin dwells. But this nature to sin in our flesh is overcome by the new nature in our spirits when we are born again. We who have been born again are able to utilize our flesh in a right way, not yielding to its lusts. Our soul now has the ability to say yes to the Spirit, and yield to the leading of the Spirit.

Chrysostom continues, “Were the two latter so opposed they would be destructive of one another, as fire of water, and darkness of light. But if the soul cares for the body, and takes great forethought on its account, and suffers a thousand things in order not to leave it, and resists being separated from it, and if the body too ministers to the soul, and conveys to it much knowledge, and is adapted to its operations, how can they be contrary, and conflicting with each other? For my part, I perceive by their acts that they are not only not contrary but closely accordant and attached one to another. It is not therefore of these that he speaks as opposed to each other, but he refers to the contest of bad and good principles. (Compare Rom. vii. 23)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

It’s not that the body is bad or evil. But because of sin, our flesh is mortal and has a sin nature that we inherited from Adam. The unsaved are “after the flesh”. Their whole goal in life is to satisfy their flesh.

He continues, “To will and not to will belongs to the soul; wherefore he says, “these are contrary the one to the other,” that you may not suffer the soul to proceed in its evil desires. For

he speaks this like a Master and Teacher in a threatening way.”

Chrysostom writes as if the soul is at war with itself. He refers again to **Galatians 5 (KJV):17** For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

He could not see that the law of sin is “in my members”. To will does belong to the soul, as we read in **Job 6 (KJV):7** The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.

And in **Job 7 (KJV):15** So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life.

The soul has feelings, as we read in **Job 7 (KJV):11** Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

The soul has mind, as we read in **Psalms 139 (KJV):14** I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

We are to trust in the Lord with all our heart, as we read in **Proverbs 3 (KJV):5** Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

The word “heart” in Hebrew is **לֵב** (pronounced **lêb**), a form of H3824; the heart; also used (figuratively) very widely for the feelings, the will and even the intellect; likewise for the centre of anything:—care for, comfortably, consent, × considered, courag(-eous), friend(-ly), ((broken-), (hard-), (merry-), (stiff-), (stout-), double) heart(-ed), × heed, × I, kindly, midst, mind(-ed), × regard(-ed), × themselves, × unawares, understanding, × well, willingly, wisdom. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H3820**

The heart is the center of our emotions. The mind, will, heart, emotions, and conscience also belong to the soul.

Before Christ, our conscience is defiled, as we read in **Titus 1 (KJV):15** Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

After we receive Christ, in our soul we are progressively cleansed as we walk in the light of the word of God, and yield to the Spirit of God, and the new nature in our spirits which have been born again. But it is the law of sin in my members that is at war with the Spirit of God, and the new nature in the spirit of the believer. As we yield to the Spirit we have victory over this sin nature in our flesh. This is a choice we must make in our soul.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER V, page 42**

Ver. 19, 20, 21. “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; fornication, (**Schaff Note:** [“The sins here mentioned seem to fall into four classes: (1) Sensual sins; fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness; (2) Unlawful dealings in things spiritual; idolatry, sorcery; (3) Violations of brotherly love; enmities...envyings; (4) Excesses, drunkenness and revellings.”—Lightfoot.—G.A.]) uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wrath, factions, divisions, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I forewarn you even as I did forewarn you, that they which practice such things

shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Answer me now, thou that accusest thine own flesh, and supposest that this is said of it as of an enemy and adversary. Let it be allowed that adultery and fornication proceed, as you assert, from the flesh; yet hatred, variance, emulations, strife, heresies, and witchcraft, these arise merely from a depraved moral choice. And so it is with the others also, for how can they belong to the flesh? you observe that he is not here speaking of the flesh, but of earthly thoughts, which trail upon the ground. Wherefore also he alarms them by saying, that “they which practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” If these things belonged to nature and not to a bad moral choice, his expression, “they practice,” is inappropriate, it should be, “they suffer.” And why should they be cast out of the kingdom, for rewards and punishments relate not to what proceeds from nature but from choice?

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 19, 20, 21. “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; fornication, (**Schaff Note:** [“The sins here mentioned seem to fall into four classes: (1) Sensual sins; fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness; (2) Unlawful dealings in things spiritual; idolatry, sorcery; (3) Violations of brotherly love; enmities...envyings; (4) Excesses, drunkenness and revellings.”—Lightfoot.—G.A.]) uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wrath, factions, divisions, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I forewarn you even as I did forewarn you, that they which practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.””

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):**19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

He continues, “Answer me now, thou that accusest thine own flesh, and supposest that this is said of it as of an enemy and adversary. Let it be allowed that adultery and fornication proceed, as you assert, from the flesh; yet hatred, variance, emulations, strife, heresies, and witchcraft, these arise merely from a depraved moral choice. And so it is with the others also, for how can they belong to the flesh? you observe that he is not here speaking of the flesh, but of earthly thoughts, which trail upon the ground. Wherefore also he alarms them by saying, that “they which practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” If these things belonged to nature and not to a bad moral choice, his expression, “they practice,” is inappropriate, it should be, “they suffer.” And why should they be cast out of the kingdom, for rewards and punishments relate not to what proceeds from nature but from choice?”

Our actions are a result of our choices, but our flesh is what we yield to when we make bad choices. After we have believed in Jesus Christ, we have a choice to yield to the Spirit of God, or yield to our fleshly desires. All of the works in Galatians 5:19-21 are called “works of the flesh”. Chrysostom would have us call them works of our soul.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER V, page 42**

Ver. 24. “And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.”

That they might not object, “And who is such a man as this?” he points out by their works those who have attained to this perfection, here again giving the name of the “flesh” to evil actions. He does not mean that they had destroyed their flesh, otherwise how were they going to live? for that which is crucified is dead and inoperative, but he indicates the perfect rule of life. For the desires, although they are troublesome, rage in vain. Since then such is the power of the Spirit, let us live therein and be content therewith, as he adds himself,

Ver. 25. “If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk,”

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 24. “And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.”

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):24** And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

He continues, “That they might not object, “And who is such a man as this?” he points out by their works those who have attained to this perfection, here again giving the name of the “flesh” to evil actions.”

Paul is not speaking here of “those who have attained to this perfection”, but of our standing with Christ, as we read in **Galatians 2 (KJV):20** I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

When I believe in Jesus Christ, I am crucified with Christ, being identified with Him in His death and resurrection.

He continues, “He does not mean that they had destroyed their flesh, otherwise how were they going to live? for that which is crucified is dead and inoperative, but he indicates the perfect rule of life. For the desires, although they are troublesome, rage in vain. Since then such is the power of the Spirit, let us live therein and be content therewith, as he adds himself,

Ver. 25. “If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk,”

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):25** If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. As we acknowledge our crucifixion with Christ, we walk by the Spirit.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY V, page 73-74**

Moral. Think then, how vast an evil is it, when God hath employed so many methods to reconcile us, and hath effected it, that we should again fall back into enmity! This enmity no fresh Baptism, but hell itself awaits; no fresh remission, but searching trial. The mind of the flesh is luxury and indolence, the “mind of the flesh” is covetousness and all kinds of sin. Why is it said the mind of the flesh? While yet the flesh could do nothing without the soul. He does not say this to the disparagement of the flesh, any more than when he says the “natural man,” (1 Cor. ii. 14) he uses that expression to the disparagement of the soul, for neither body nor soul in itself, if it receive not the impulse which is far above, is able to achieve any thing great or noble. Hence he calls those acts which the soul performs of herself, “natural; ψυχικά” and those which the body performs of itself “carnal.” Not because these are natural, but because, inasmuch as

they receive not that direction from heaven, they perish. So the eyes are good, but without light, will commit innumerable errors; this, however, is the fault of their weakness, not of nature. Were the errors natural, then should we never be able to use them aright at all. For nothing that is natural is evil. Why then does he call carnal affections sins? Because whenever the flesh exalts herself, and gets the mastery over her charioteer, she produces ten thousand mischiefs. The virtue of the flesh is, her subjection to the soul. It is her vice to govern the soul. As the horse then may be good and nimble, and yet this is not shown without a rider; so also the flesh will then show her goodness, when we cut off her prancings. But neither again is the rider shown, if he have not skill. Nay he himself will do mischief yet more fearful than that before named. So that on all hands we must have the Spirit at hand. This being at hand will impart new strength to the rider; this will give beauty both to body and soul. For just as the soul, while dwelling in the body, makes it beautiful, but when she leaves it destitute of her own native energy and departs, like a painter confounding his colors together, the greatest loathsomeness ensues, every one of the several parts hastening to corruption, and dissolution:—so is it also when the Spirit forsakes the body and the soul, the loathsomeness which ensues is worse and greater. Do not then, because the body is inferior to the soul, revile it, for neither do I endure to revile the soul because it hath no strength without the Spirit. If one need say anything at all, the soul is deserving of the greater censure than the body; for the body indeed can do no greivous harm without the soul, whereas the soul can do much without the body. Because, we know, when the one is even wasting away, and has no wantonness, the soul is busily employed. Even as those sorcerers, magicians, envious persons, enchanters, especially cause the body to waste away. But besides this, not even luxury is the effect of the necessity of the body, but rather of the inattentiveness of the soul; for food, not feasting, is the object of the necessity of the body. For if I have a mind to put on a strong curb, I stop the horse; but the body is unable to check the soul in her evil courses. Wherefore then does he call it the carnal mind? Because it comes to be wholly of the flesh, for when she has the mastery, then she goes wrong, as soon as ever she has deprived herself of reason, and of the supremacy of the soul. The virtue therefore of the body consists in this, in its submission to the soul, since of itself the flesh is neither good nor evil. For what could the body ever do of itself? It is then by its connection that the body is good, good because of its subjection, but of itself neither good nor evil, with capacity, however, both for one and for the other, and having an equal tendency either way. The body has a natural desire, not however of fornication, nor of adultery, but of pleasure; the body has a desire not of feasting, but of food; not of drunkenness, but of drink. For in proof that it is not drunkenness that is the natural desire of the body, mark how, whenever you exceed the measure, when you go beyond the boundary-lines, it cannot hold out a moment longer. Up to this point it is of the body, but all the rest of the excesses, as e.g., when she is hurried away into sensualities, when she becomes stupefied, these are of the soul. For though the body be good, still it is vastly inferior to the soul, as lead is less of value than gold, and yet gold needs lead to solder it, and just so has the soul need also of the body. Or in the same way as a noble child requires a conductor, so again does the soul stand in need of the body. For, as we speak of childish things, not to the disparagement of childhood, but only of those acts which are done during childhood; so also are we now speaking of the body.

Yet it is in our power, if we will, no longer to be in the flesh, no, nor upon the earth, but in heaven, and in the Spirit. For our being here or there, is not determined so much by our

position, as by our disposition. Of many people, at least, who are in some place, we say they are not there, when we say, “Thou wast not here. And again Thou art not here.” And why do I say this? We often say, “Thou art not at (ἐν) thyself, I am not at (ἐν) myself,” and yet what can be more material (a stronger instance of corporeal locality) than this, that a man is near in ourselves, in heaven, in the Spirit. Let us abide in the peace and in the grace of God, that we may be set at liberty from all the things of the flesh, and may be able to attain to those good things which are promised in Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, and might, and honor, now and henceforth, and for ever and ever. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “Moral. Think then, how vast an evil is it, when God hath employed so many methods to reconcile us, and hath effected it, that we should again fall back into enmity! This enmity no fresh Baptism, but hell itself awaits; no fresh remission, but searching trial.”

This reflects the thinking of the Church in the time of Chrysostom. One who had been baptized, and born again according to their belief in the time of Chrysostom, could lose their salvation if they “again fall back into enmity”. The Biblical truths about regeneration, justification, and sanctification were not understood. It has taken time for the Church to recover these truths.

He continues, “The mind of the flesh is luxury and indolence, the “mind of the flesh” is covetousness and all kinds of sin. Why is it said the mind of the flesh? While yet the flesh could do nothing without the soul. He does not say this to the disparagement of the flesh, any more than when he says the “natural man,” (1 Cor. ii. 14) he uses that expression to the disparagement of the soul, for neither body nor soul in itself, if it receive not the impulse which is far above, is able to achieve any thing great or noble.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The “natural man” is the man without the Spirit of God, that is, an unbeliever. The “mind of the flesh” is the “mind after the flesh”, or set on the things of the flesh, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

He continues, “Hence he calls those acts which the soul performs of herself, “natural; ψυχικά” and those which the body performs of itself “carnal.”

The word “natural” in the Greek is ψυχικός (pronounced psü-khe-ko's), from G5590; sensitive, i.e. animate (in distinction on the one hand from G4152, which is the higher or renovated nature; and on the other from G5446, which is the lower or bestial nature):—natural, sensual.

Chrysostom continues, “Not because these are natural, but because, inasmuch as they receive not that direction from heaven, they perish. So the eyes are good, but without light, will commit innumerable errors; this, however, is the fault of their weakness, not of nature. Were the errors natural, then should we never be able to use them aright at all. For nothing that is natural is evil. Why then does he call carnal affections sins? Because whenever the flesh exalts herself,



and gets the mastery over her charioteer, she produces ten thousand mischiefs. The virtue of the flesh is, her subjection to the soul. It is her vice to govern the soul.”

But the flesh is not able to be subject to the soul without the Spirit of God. This is why those in the flesh cannot please God, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):8** So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

So believers can please God, but unbelievers cannot please God.

He continues, “As the horse then may be good and nimble, and yet this is not shown without a rider; so also the flesh will then show her goodness, when we cut off her prancings. But neither again is the rider shown, if he have not skill. Nay he himself will do mischief yet more fearful than that before named. So that on all hands we must have the Spirit at hand. This being at hand will impart new strength to the rider; this will give beauty both to body and soul. For just as the soul, while dwelling in the body, makes it beautiful, but when she leaves it destitute of her own native energy and departs, like a painter confounding his colors together, the greatest loathsomeness ensues, every one of the several parts hastening to corruption, and dissolution:—so is it also when the Spirit forsakes the body and the soul, the loathsomeness which ensues is worse and greater.”

Chrysostom believed that the Spirit would forsake the body if we persisted in sin. He will refer to Saul in **1 Samuel 16 (KJV):14** But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.

We will discuss this under the heading, **Losing Salvation**. For now, let us remember the promise of Jesus in **John 14 (KJV):16** And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

He continues, “Do not then, because the body is inferior to the soul, revile it, for neither do I endure to revile the soul because it hath no strength without the Spirit. If one need say anything at all, the soul is deserving of the greater censure than the body; for the body indeed can do no grievous harm without the soul, whereas the soul can do much without the body. Because, we know, when the one is even wasting away, and has no wantonness, the soul is busily employed. Even as those sorcerers, magicians, envious persons, enchanters, especially cause the body to waste away. But besides this, not even luxury is the effect of the necessity of the body, but rather of the inattentiveness of the soul; for food, not feasting, is the object of the necessity of the body. For if I have a mind to put on a strong curb, I stop the horse; but the body is unable to check the soul in her evil courses. Wherefore then does he call it the carnal mind? Because it comes to be wholly of the flesh, for when she has the mastery, then she goes wrong, as soon as ever she has deprived herself of reason, and of the supremacy of the soul. The virtue therefore of the body consists in this, in its submission to the soul, since of itself the flesh is neither good nor evil. For what could the body ever do of itself?”

However, the flesh is where our sin dwells, as we read again in **Romans 7 (KJV):15** For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Paul is very specific where sin is here, that is, “in my flesh”. And in verse 18 he says that in his flesh “dwelleth no good thing”. He continues in **Romans 7 (KJV):19** For the good that I

would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

The unregenerate do not delight in the law of God after the inward man. Paul is speaking as a believer, as we continue in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

This “law of sin” is in “my members”. He continues in **Romans 7 (KJV):24** O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

The unregenerate do not serve the law of God with their mind. But through regeneration, that is, through being born again, we have been delivered from “the body of this death”. Paul then explains this regeneration, as we continue to read in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

The “law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” is the law of our spirit that has been born again. This is what makes us free from the sin nature of our flesh. We are now able to enjoy life in our bodies as we yield to the Spirit.

Chrysostom continues, “It is then by its connection that the body is good, good because of its subjection, but of itself neither good nor evil, with capacity, however, both for one and for the other, and having an equal tendency either way. The body has a natural desire, not however of fornication, nor of adultery, but of pleasure; the body has a desire not of feasting, but of food; not of drunkenness, but of drink. For in proof that it is not drunkenness that is the natural desire of the body, mark how, whenever you exceed the measure, when you go beyond the boundary lines, it cannot hold out a moment longer. Up to this point it is of the body, but all the rest of the excesses, as e.g., when she is hurried away into sensualities, when she becomes stupefied, these are of the soul.”

Chrysostom has turned it around. He does not realize that the sinful impulses come from the sin nature in our flesh where sin dwells, and which will produce the works of the flesh if we do not yield to the Spirit of God. He is essentially calling these works of the flesh the “works of the soul”.

He continues, “For though the body be good, still it is vastly inferior to the soul, as lead is less of value than gold, and yet gold needs lead to solder it, and just so has the soul need also of the body. Or in the same way as a noble child requires a conductor, so again does the soul stand in need of the body. For, as we speak of childish things, not to the disparagement of childhood, but only of those acts which are done during childhood; so also are we now speaking of the body.

Yet it is in our power, if we will, no longer to be in the flesh, no, nor upon the earth, but in heaven, and in the Spirit. For our being here or there, is not determined so much by our position, as by our disposition. Of many people, at least, who are in some place, we say they are not there, when we say, “Thou wast not here. And again Thou art not here.” And why do I say this? We often say, “Thou art not at (ἐν) thyself, I am not at (ἐν) myself,” and yet what can be

more material (a stronger instance of corporeal locality) than this, that a man is near in ourselves, in heaven, in the Spirit. Let us abide in the peace and in the grace of God, that we may be set at liberty from all the things of the flesh, and may be able to attain to those good things which are promised in Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, and might, and honor, now and henceforth, and for ever and ever. Amen.”

He comes closest to the truth here when he prays that we “may be set at liberty from all the things of the flesh”.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY XVIII, page 134-135**

Yes, but thou slayest no sheep? No, thou slayest men, reasonable souls, some by famine, others by blasphemies. Nothing can be more frenzied than a sacrifice like this. Who ever beheld souls sacrificed? How accursed is the altar of covetousness! When thou passest by this idol’s altar here, thou shalt see it reeking with the blood of bullocks and goats; but when thou shalt pass by the altar of covetousness, thou shalt see it breathing the shocking odor of human blood. Stand here before it in this world, and thou shalt see, not the wings of birds burning, no vapor, no smoke exhaled, but the bodies of men perishing. For some throw themselves among precipices, others tie the halter, others thrust the dagger through their throat. Hast thou seen the cruel and inhuman sacrifices? Wouldest thou see yet more shocking ones than these? Then I will show thee no longer the bodies of men, but the souls of men slaughtered in the other world. Yes, for it is possible for a soul to be slain with the slaughter peculiar to the soul; for as there is a death of the body, so is there also of the soul. “The soul that sinneth,” saith the Prophet, “it shall die.” (Ezek. xviii. 4) The death of the soul, however, is not like the death of the body; it is far more shocking. For this bodily death, separating the soul and the body the one from the other, releases the one from many anxieties and toils, and transmits the other into a manifest abode: then when the body has been in time dissolved and crumbled away, it is again gathered together in incorruption, and receives back its own proper soul. Such we see is this bodily death. But that of the soul is awful and terrific. For this death, when dissolution takes place, does not let it pass, as the body does, but binds it down again to an imperishable body, and consigns it to the unquenchable fire. This then is the death of the soul. And as therefore there is a death of the soul, so is there also a slaughter of the soul. What is the slaughter of the body? It is the being turned into a corpse, the being stripped of the energy derived from the soul. What is the slaughter of the soul? It is its being made a corpse also. And how is the soul made a corpse? Because as the body then becomes a corpse when the soul leaves it destitute of its own vital energy, so also does the soul then become a corpse, when the Holy Spirit leaves it destitute of His spiritual energy.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “Yes, but thou slayest no sheep? No, thou slayest men, reasonable souls, some by famine, others by blasphemies. Nothing can be more frenzied than a sacrifice like this. Who ever beheld souls sacrificed? How accursed is the altar of covetousness! When thou passest by this idol’s altar here, thou shalt see it reeking with the blood of bullocks and goats; but when thou shalt pass by the altar of covetousness, thou shalt see it breathing the shocking odor of human blood. Stand here before it in this world, and thou

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He refers to **Ezekiel 18 (KJV):4** Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

He continues, “The death of the soul, however, is not like the death of the body; it is far more shocking. For this bodily death, separating the soul and the body the one from the other, releases the one from many anxieties and toils, and transmits the other into a manifest abode: then when the body has been in time dissolved and crumbled away, it is again gathered together in incorruption, and receives back its own proper soul. Such we see is this bodily death. But that of the soul is awful and terrific. For this death, when dissolution takes place, does not let it pass, as the body does, but binds it down again to an imperishable body, and consigns it to the unquenchable fire. This then is the death of the soul. And as therefore there is a death of the soul, so is there also a slaughter of the soul. What is the slaughter of the body? It is the being turned into a corpse, the being stripped of the energy derived from the soul. What is the slaughter of the soul? It is its being made a corpse also. And how is the soul made a corpse? Because as the body then becomes a corpse when the soul leaves it destitute of its own vital energy, so also does the soul then become a corpse, when the Holy Spirit leaves it destitute of His spiritual energy.”

And we read in **Matthew 10 (KJV):28** And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

And in **Mark 9 (KJV):43** And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: 48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY IV, page 421-422**

Moral. Let us then “glorify God,” and bear God both “in our body and in our spirit.” (1 Cor. vi. 20) And how is one to glorify Him in the body? saith one, and how in the spirit? The soul is here called the spirit to distinguish it from the body. But how may we glorify Him in the body and in the spirit? He glorifies Him in the body, who does not commit adultery or fornication, who avoids gluttony and drunkenness, who does not affect a showy exterior, who makes such provision for himself as is sufficient for health only: and so the woman, who does not perfume nor paint her person, but is satisfied to be such as God made her, and adds no

device of her own. For why dost thou add thy own embellishments to the work which God made? Is not His workmanship sufficient for thee? or dost thou endeavor to add grace to it, as if forsooth thou wert the better artist? It is not for thyself, but to attract crowds of lovers, that thou thus adornest thy person, and insultest thy Creator. And do not say, “What can I do? It is no wish of my own, but I must do it for my husband. I cannot win his love except I consent to this.” God made thee beautiful, that He might be admired even in thy beauty, and not that He might be insulted. Do not therefore make Him so ill a return, but requite Him with modesty and chastity. God made thee beautiful, that He might increase the trials of thy modesty. For it is much harder for one that is lovely to be modest, than for one who has no such attractions, for which to be courted. Why does the Scripture tell us, that “Joseph was a goodly person, and well favored” (Gen. xxxix. 6), but that we might the more admire his modesty coupled with beauty? Has God made thee beautiful? Why dost thou make thyself otherwise? For as though one should overlay a golden statue with a daubing of mire, so it is with those women that use paints. Thou besmearest thyself with red and white earth! But the homely, you say, may fairly have recourse to this. And why? To hide their ugliness? It is a vain attempt. For when was the natural appearance improved upon by that which is studied and artificial? And why shouldest thou be troubled at thy want of beauty, since it is no reproach? For hear the saying of the Wise Man, “Commend not a man for his beauty, neither abhor a man for his outward appearance.” (Eccclus. xi. 2) Let God be rather admired, the best Artificer, and not man, who has no merit in being made such as he is. What are the advantages, tell me, of beauty? None. It exposes its possessor to greater trials, mishaps, perils, and suspicions. She that wants it escapes suspicion; she that possesses it, except she practice a great and extraordinary reserve, incurs an evil report, and what is worse than all, the suspicion of her husband, who takes less pleasure in beholding her beauty, than he suffers pain from jealousy. And her beauty fades in his sight from familiarity, whilst she suffers in her character from the imputation of weakness, dissipation, and wantonness, and her very soul becomes degraded and full of haughtiness. To these evils personal beauty is exposed. But she who has not this attraction, escapes unmolested. The dogs do not assail her; she is like a lamb, reposing in a secure pasture, where no wolf intrudes to harass her, because the shepherd is at hand to protect her.

The real superiority is, not that one is fair, and the other homely, but it is a superiority that one, even if she is not fair, is unchaste, and the other is not wicked. Tell me wherein is the perfection of eyes? Is it in their being soft, and rolling, and round, and dark, or in their clearness and quick sightedness. Is it the perfection of a lamp to be elegantly formed, and finely turned, or to shine brightly, and to enlighten the whole house? We cannot say it is not this, for the other is indifferent, and this the real object. Accordingly we often say to the maid whose charge it is, “You have made a bad lamp of it.” So entirely is it the use of a lamp to give light. So it matters not what is the appearance of the eye, whilst it performs its office with full efficiency. We call the eye bad, which is dim or disordered, and which, when open, does not see. For that is bad, which does not perform its proper office—and this is the fault of eyes. And for a nose, tell me, when is it a good one? When it is straight, and polished on either side, and finely proportioned? or when it is quick to receive odors, and transmit them to the brain? Any one can answer this.

Come now, let us illustrate this by an example—as of grippers, I mean the instruments so called; we say those are well-made, which are able to take up and hold things, not those which are only handsomely and elegantly shaped. So those are good teeth which are fit for the service

of dividing and chewing our food, not those which are beautifully set. And applying the same reasoning to other parts of the body, we shall call those members beautiful, which are sound, and perform their proper functions aright. So we think any instrument, or plant, or animal good, not because of its form or color, but because it answers its purpose. And he is thought a good servant, who is useful and ready for our service, not one who is comely but dissolute. I trust ye now understand how it is in your power to be beautiful.

And since the greatest and most important benefits are equally enjoyed by all, we are under no disadvantage. Whether we are beautiful or not, we alike behold this universe, the sun, the moon, and the stars; we breathe the same air, we partake alike of water, and the fruits of the earth. And if we may say what will sound strange, the homely are more healthy than the beautiful. For these, to preserve their beauty, engage in no labor, but give themselves up to indolence and delicate living, by which their bodily energies are impaired; whilst the others, having no such care, spend all their attention simply and entirely on active pursuits.

Let us then “glorify God, and take and bear Him in our body.” (1 Cor. vi. 20) Let us not affect a beautiful appearance; that care is vain and unprofitable. Let us not teach our husbands to admire the mere outward form; for if such be thy adornment, his very habit of viewing thy face will make him easy to be captivated by a harlot. But if thou teachest him to love good manners, and modesty, he will not be ready to wander, for he will see no attractions in a harlot, in whom those qualities are not found, but the reverse. Neither teach him to be captivated by laughter, nor by a loose dress, lest thou prepare a poison against thyself. Accustom him to delight in modesty, and this thou wilt do, if thy attire be modest. But if thou hast a flaunting air, an unsteady manner, how canst thou address him in a serious strain? and who will not hold thee in contempt and derision?

But how is it possible to glorify God in our spirit? By practicing virtue, by adorning the soul. For such embellishment is not forbidden. Thus we glorify God, when we are good in every respect, and we shall be glorified by Him in a much higher degree in that great day. For “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.” (Rom. viii. 18) Of which that we may all be partakers, God grant, by the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “Moral. Let us then “glorify God,” and bear God both “in our body and in our spirit.” (1 Cor. vi. 20)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):20** For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

He continues, “And how is one to glorify Him in the body? saith one, and how in the spirit? The soul is here called the spirit to distinguish it from the body.”

Chrysostom did not see a difference between soul and spirit. That there is a difference is revealed in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Our spirit is where we have contact with God. In our unregenerate state of unbelief, our spirit is dead in trespasses and sins. We have no contact or relationship with God. When we are born again, our relationship with God is renewed, and our spirit is made alive to God by the

birth of the Holy Spirit, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Our soul is where we have contact with our fellow man. Our soul is composed of mind, will, heart, which is the center of our feelings or emotions, and our conscience. When we are born again, this is the part of us that is progressively renewed and sanctified as we grow in grace and knowledge.

Our flesh is where we have contact with the physical world through our five senses of touch, taste, sight, hearing, and the sense of smell. Chrysostom did not understand the difference between soul and spirit. He thought that they were the same, as he says above, "The soul is here called the spirit to distinguish it from the body."

He continues, "But how may we glorify Him in the body and in the spirit? He glorifies Him in the body, who does not commit adultery or fornication, who avoids gluttony and drunkenness, who does not affect a showy exterior, who makes such provision for himself as is sufficient for health only: and so the woman, who does not perfume nor paint her person, but is satisfied to be such as God made her, and adds no device of her own. For why dost thou add thy own embellishments to the work which God made? Is not His workmanship sufficient for thee? or dost thou endeavor to add grace to it, as if forsooth thou wert the better artist? It is not for thyself, but to attract crowds of lovers, that thou thus adornest thy person, and insultest thy Creator. And do not say, "What can I do? It is no wish of my own, but I must do it for my husband. I cannot win his love except I consent to this." God made thee beautiful, that He might be admired even in thy beauty, and not that He might be insulted. Do not therefore make Him so ill a return, but requite Him with modesty and chastity. God made thee beautiful, that He might increase the trials of thy modesty. For it is much harder for one that is lovely to be modest, than for one who has no such attractions, for which to be courted. Why does the Scripture tell us, that "Joseph was a goodly person, and well favored" (Gen. xxxix. 6), but that we might the more admire his modesty coupled with beauty?"

He refers to **Genesis 39 (KJV):6** And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.

He continues, "Has God made thee beautiful? Why dost thou make thyself otherwise? For as though one should overlay a golden statue with a daubing of mire, so it is with those women that use paints. Thou besmearest thyself with red and white earth! But the homely, you say, may fairly have recourse to this. And why? To hide their ugliness? It is a vain attempt. For when was the natural appearance improved upon by that which is studied and artificial? And why shouldest thou be troubled at thy want of beauty, since it is no reproach? For hear the saying of the Wise Man, "Commend not a man for his beauty, neither abhor a man for his outward appearance." (Ecclus. xi. 2)"

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 11 (KJV):2** Commend not a man for his beauty; neither abhor a man for his outward appearance.

He continues, "Let God be rather admired, the best Artificer, and not man, who has no merit in being made such as he is. What are the advantages, tell me, of beauty? None. It exposes its possessor to greater trials, mishaps, perils, and suspicions. She that wants it escapes suspicion; she that possesses it, except she practice a great and extraordinary reserve, incurs an evil report, and what is worse than all, the suspicion of her husband, who takes less pleasure in

beholding her beauty, than he suffers pain from jealousy. And her beauty fades in his sight from familiarity, whilst she suffers in her character from the imputation of weakness, dissipation, and wantonness, and her very soul becomes degraded and full of haughtiness. To these evils personal beauty is exposed. But she who has not this attraction, escapes unmolested. The dogs do not assail her; she is like a lamb, reposing in a secure pasture, where no wolf intrudes to harass her, because the shepherd is at hand to protect her.

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Let us then "glorify God, and take and bear Him in our body." (1 Cor. vi. 20)"

He refers again to **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):20** For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

He continues, "Let us not affect a beautiful appearance; that care is vain and unprofitable. Let us not teach our husbands to admire the mere outward form; for if such be thy adornment, his very habit of viewing thy face will make him easy to be captivated by a harlot. But if thou teachest him to love good manners, and modesty, he will not be ready to wander, for he will see no attractions in a harlot, in whom those qualities are not found, but the reverse. Neither teach him to be captivated by laughter, nor by a loose dress, lest thou prepare a poison against thyself. Accustom him to delight in modesty, and this thou wilt do, if thy attire be modest. But if thou



hast a flaunting air, an unsteady manner, how canst thou address him in a serious strain? and who will not hold thee in contempt and derision?”

And we read in **1 Peter 3 (KJV)**:1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. 3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: 6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. 7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

He continues, “But how is it possible to glorify God in our spirit? By practicing virtue, by adorning the soul. For such embellishment is not forbidden. Thus we glorify God, when we are good in every respect, and we shall be glorified by Him in a much higher degree in that great day. For “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.” (Rom. viii. 18)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV)**:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

He concludes, “Of which that we may all be partakers, God grant, by the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XXXIII, page 116**

Ver. 23. “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father.”

“We, O woman,” He saith, “excel you in the manner of our worship, but even this shall henceforth have an end. Not the places only, but even the manner of serving God shall be changed. And this change is at your very doors. ‘For the hour cometh, and now is.’”

[2.] For since what the Prophets said they said long before the event, to show that here it is not so, He saith, “And now is.” Think not, He saith, that this is a prophecy of such a kind as shall be accomplished after a long time, the fulfillment is already at hand and at your very doors, “when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.” In saying “true,” (**Schaff Note:** al. “truth.”) He excludeth Jews as well as Samaritans; for although the Jews be better than the Samaritans, yet are they far inferior to those that shall come, as inferior as is the type to the reality. But He speaketh of the Church, that she is the “true” worship, and such as is meet for God.

“For the Father seeketh such to worship Him.”

If then He in times past sought such as these, He allowed to those others their way of worship, not willingly, but from condescension, and for this reason, that He might bring them in also. Who then are “the true worshipers”? Those who confine not their service by place, and

who serve God in spirit; as Paul saith, “Whom I serve in my spirit in the Gospel of His Son”: and again, “I beseech you that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, acceptable unto God, your reasonable service.” (Rom. i. 9 and xii. 1) But when he saith,

Ver. 24. “God is a Spirit” [God is spirit]. He declareth nothing else than His incorporeal Nature. Now the service of that which is incorporeal must needs be of the same character, and must be offered by that in us which is incorporeal, to wit, the soul, and purity of mind. Wherefore He saith, “they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” For because both Samaritans and Jews were careless about the soul, but took great pains about the body, cleansing it in divers ways, it is not, He saith, by purity of body, but by that which is incorporeal in us, namely the mind, that the incorporeal One is served. Sacrifice then not sheep and calves, but dedicate thyself to the Lord; make thyself a holocaust, this is to offer a living sacrifice. Ye must worship “in truth”; as former things were types, such as circumcision, and whole burnt offerings, and victims, and incense, they now no longer exist, but all is “truth.” For a man must now circumcise not his flesh, but his evil thoughts, and crucify himself, and remove and slay his unreasonable desires.” The woman was made dizzy by His discourse, and fainted in at the sublimity of what He said, and, in her trouble, hear what she saith:

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 23. “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father.”

He refers to **John 4 (KJV):23** But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

He continues, ““We, O woman,” He saith, “excel you in the manner of our worship, but even this shall henceforth have an end.”

The woman refers to the woman of Samaria Jesus met at the well in **John 4 (KJV):7** There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

He continues, “Not the places only, but even the manner of serving God shall be changed. And this change is at your very doors. ‘For the hour cometh, and now is.’”

[2.] For since what the Prophets said they said long before the event, to show that here it is not so, He saith, “And now is.” Think not, He saith, that this is a prophecy of such a kind as shall be accomplished after a long time, the fulfillment is already at hand and at your very doors, “when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.” In saying “true,” (**Schaff Note:** al. “truth.”) He excludeth Jews as well as Samaritans; for although the Jews be better than the Samaritans, yet are they far inferior to those that shall come, as inferior as is the type to the reality. But He speaketh of the Church, that she is the “true” worship, and such as is meet for God.

“For the Father seeketh such to worship Him.””

The Jews and Samaritans who have not believed in Jesus Christ are excluded, but God does not exclude Jews who are believers in Jesus Christ, or anyone else who has believed in Jesus Christ but does not belong to “the Church”. The Church is the “true” worship, and such as is meet for God”. And “true” worship is done by those who worship God in Spirit and in truth, and it may include Jews and Samaritans who have believed in Jesus Christ.

Chrysostom continues, “If then He in times past sought such as these, He allowed to those others their way of worship, not willingly, but from condescension, and for this reason,

that He might bring them in also. Who then are “the true worshipers”? Those who confine not their service by place, and who serve God in spirit; as Paul saith, “Whom I serve in my spirit in the Gospel of His Son”: and again, “I beseech you that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, acceptable unto God, your reasonable service.” ( Rom. i. 9 and xii. 1)”

He refers to **Romans 1 (KJV):9** For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

And to **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Chrysostom agrees with the Scripture here.

He continues, “But when he saith,

Ver. 24. “God is a Spirit” [God is spirit]. He declareth nothing else than His incorporeal Nature.”

He refers to **John 4 (KJV):24** God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

He continues, “Now the service of that which is incorporeal must needs be of the same character, and must be offered by that in us which is incorporeal, to wit, the soul, and purity of mind.”

Chrysostom again equates the soul with the spirit. That we have a soul and a spirit is revealed in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And of our spirit we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

He continues, “Wherefore He saith, “they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” For because both Samaritans and Jews were careless about the soul, but took great pains about the body, cleansing it in divers ways, it is not, He saith, by purity of body, but by that which is incorporeal in us, namely the mind, that the incorporeal One is served. Sacrifice then not sheep and calves, but dedicate thyself to the Lord; make thyself a holocaust, this is to offer a living sacrifice.”

Our minds are renewed as we present ourselves a living sacrifice, acceptable unto God. This renewal happens as we walk in the light of the word of God, and grow in grace and knowledge. The knowledge of God renews our minds. Chrysostom agrees with the Scripture here.

He continues, “Ye must worship “in truth”; as former things were types, such as circumcision, and whole burnt offerings, and victims, and incense, they now no longer exist, but all is “truth.” For a man must now circumcise not his flesh, but his evil thoughts, and crucify himself, and remove and slay his unreasonable desires.” The woman was made dizzy by His discourse, and fainted in at the sublimity of what He said, and, in her trouble, hear what she saith:”

He refers to **John 4 (KJV):25** The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. 26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

“Who being” (saith he) “the brightness of His glory.” See what Paul is doing. Having said, “Who being the brightness of His glory,” he added again, “He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty”: what names he hath used, nowhere finding a name for the Substance. For neither “the Majesty,” nor “the Glory” setteth forth the Name, which he wishes to say, but is not able to find a name. For this is what I said at the beginning, that oftentimes we think something, and are not able to express [it]: since not even the word God is a name of substance, nor is it at all possible to find a name of that Substance.

And what marvel, if it be so in respect of God, since not even in respect of an Angel, could one find a name expressive of his substance? Perhaps too, neither in respect of the soul. For this name [soul] doth not seem to me to be significative of the substance thereof, but of breathing. For one may see that the same [thing] is called both Soul and Heart and Mind: for, saith he, “Create in me a clean heart, O God” (Ps. li. 10), and one may often see that it [the soul] is called spirit.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, ““Who being” (saith he) “the brightness of His glory.””

He refers to **Hebrews 1 (KJV):3** Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:

He continues, “See what Paul is doing. Having said, “Who being the brightness of His glory,” he added again, “He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty”: what names he hath used, nowhere finding a name for the Substance. For neither “the Majesty,” nor “the Glory” setteth forth the Name, which he wishes to say, but is not able to find a name. For this is what I said at the beginning, that oftentimes we think something, and are not able to express [it]: since not even the word God is a name of substance, nor is it at all possible to find a name of that Substance.

And what marvel, if it be so in respect of God, since not even in respect of an Angel, could one find a name expressive of his substance? Perhaps too, neither in respect of the soul. For this name [soul] doth not seem to me to be significative of the substance thereof, but of breathing. For one may see that the same [thing] is called both Soul and Heart and Mind: for, saith he, “Create in me a clean heart, O God” (Ps. li. 10), and one may often see that it [the soul] is called spirit.”

He refers to **Psalms 51 (KJV):10** Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

The word “spirit” in the Hebrew is רוּחַ (pronounced rü'·akh), from H7306; wind; by resemblance breath, i.e. a sensible (or even violent) exhalation; figuratively, life, anger, unsubstantiality; by extension, a region of the sky; by resemblance spirit, but only of a rational being (including its expression and functions):—air, anger, blast, breath, × cool, courage, mind, ×quarter, × side, spirit(-ual), tempest, × vain, (whirl-) wind(-y). **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H7307**

It is true that at times, soul and spirit are used interchangeably as the unseen parts of man. However, this does not mean that they are the same. We read in **Luke 8 (KJV):53** And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. 54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. 55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

And in **Genesis 35 (KJV):18** And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin. 19 And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.

To understand the difference between soul and spirit, we read of the creation of man in **Genesis 2 (KJV):7** And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

The word “breath” in Hebrew is נְשָׁמָה (pronounced nesh·ä·mä'), from H5395; a puff, i.e. wind, angry or vital breath, divine inspiration, intellect. or (concretely) an animal:—blast, (that) breath(-eth), inspiration, soul, spirit. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H5397**

God breathed into man the breath of life, referring to the spirit of man, and man became a living soul. The spirit united with the body makes man a living soul.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY VI, page 396**

[8.] And [he said] “Today,” that they might never be without hope. “Exhort one another daily,” he says, [“while it is called today,”] that is, even if a man have sinned, as long as it is “Today,” he has hope: let no man then despair so long as he lives. Above all things indeed, he says, “let there not be an evil heart of unbelief.” (c. iii. 12) But even suppose there should be, let no man despair, but let him recover himself; for as long as we are in this world, the “Today” is in season. But here he means not unbelief only, but also murmurings: “whose carcasses,” he says, “fell’ in the wilderness.” (Numbers 14:29)

Then, lest any think that they will simply be deprived of rest only, he adds also the punishment, saying (c. iv. 12), “For the Word of God is quick, and powerful; and sharper than any two-edged sword, and pierceth even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow: and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Here he is speaking of Hell and of punishment. “It pierceth” (he says) into the secrets of our heart, and cutteth asunder the soul. Here it is not the falling of carcasses nor, as there, the being deprived of a country, but of a heavenly kingdom; and being delivered to an everlasting hell, and to undying punishment and vengeance.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “[8.] And [he said] “Today,” that they might never be without hope. “Exhort one another daily,” he says, [“while it is called today,”] that is, even if a man have sinned, as long as it is “Today,” he has hope: let no man then despair so long as he lives. Above all things indeed, he says, “let there not be an evil heart of unbelief.” (c. iii. 12)”

He refers to **Hebrews 3 (KJV):12** Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

He continues, “But even suppose there should be, let no man despair, but let him recover

himself; for as long as we are in this world, the “Today” is in season. But here he means not unbelief only, but also murmurings: “whose carcasses,” he says, “fell’ in the wilderness.” (Numbers 14:29)”

He refers to **Numbers 14 (KJV):29** Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward which have murmured against me.

He continues, “Then, lest any think that they will simply be deprived of rest only, he adds also the punishment, saying (c. iv. 12), “For the Word of God is quick, and powerful; and sharper than any two-edged sword, and pierceth even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow: and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.””

He refers in context to **Hebrews 4 (KJV):9** There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. 11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. 12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

He continues, “Here he is speaking of Hell and of punishment. “It pierceth” (he says) into the secrets of our heart, and cutteth asunder the soul. Here it is not the falling of carcasses nor, as there, the being deprived of a country, but of a heavenly kingdom; and being delivered to an everlasting hell, and to undying punishment and vengeance.”

But the Scripture is not speaking of cutting “asunder the soul”, but of the difference between the soul and spirit. The word of God is able to give us discernment between soul and spirit, just as we have discernment in the physical realm of the difference between joints and marrow. The word of God also gives us discernment of “the thoughts and intents of the heart”, that is, knowing good and evil.

## Commentary Summary

Concerning **The Soul**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER V, page 38-39**, he says, “How then does it happen, one may say, that when the body is pampered, lust is inflamed? Observe here too that it is the sin of the soul, for to pamper the flesh is not an act of the flesh but of the soul, for if the soul choose to mortify it, it would possess absolute power over it.”

Chrysostom would have us believe that it is “only necessary to correct the unruly passion of the soul”.

But even we believers must choose to yield to the Spirit in order to “possess absolute power over it”, that is, the flesh.

And he says, “These remarks I have not made at random, but as a prelude to a dispute, as skirmishing against those who assert that the workmanship of God is evil, and who neglecting the sloth of the soul, madly inveigh against the body, and traduce our flesh, whereof Paul afterwards discourses, accusing not the flesh, but devilish thoughts.”

But the flesh is the instigator of sin. It is “the sloth of the soul” that yields to the flesh and sin is committed. While standing for the work of God as good, that is, man’s flesh, Chrysostom did not understand the law of sin, which was in our members.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER V, page 40-41**, he says, “Wherefore then does Paul say, “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit?” he is wont to call the flesh, not the natural body but the depraved will, as where he says, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit,” (Rom. viii. 8, 9) and again, “They that are in the flesh cannot please God.””

And he says, “What then is his meaning? it is the earthly mind, slothful and careless, that he here calls the flesh, and this is not an accusation of the body, but a charge against the slothful soul. The flesh is an instrument, and no one feels aversion and hatred to an instrument, but to him who abuses it. For it is not the iron instrument but the murderer, whom we hate and punish. But it may be said that the very calling of the faults of the soul by the name of the flesh is in itself an accusation of the body.”

And he says, “In his expression, “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit,” he means two mental states. For these are opposed to each other, namely virtue and vice, not the soul and the body.”

And he says, “How then does it lust, for lust belongs to the soul not to the body, for in another place it is said, “My soul longeth,” (Ps. lxxxiv. 2) and, “Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee,” (1 Sam. xx. 4) and, “Walk not according to the desires of thy heart,” and, “So panteth my soul.” (Ps. xlii. 1)”

The “lust of the soul” is never mentioned in Scripture. Paul does say “desires of the flesh and of the mind” in Ephesians 2:3. So it is possible to think of something and have a lust for it, and so it would be a desire of the mind. But our flesh has desires also, like a hunger for something. Chrysostom would not allow for this.

And he says, “Wherefore then does Paul say, “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit?” he is wont to call the flesh, not the natural body but the depraved will, as where he says, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit,” (Rom. viii. 8, 9) and again, “They that are in the flesh cannot please God.””

But the flesh has desires as we read in Ephesians 2:3. And the flesh has feelings. The flesh feels cold or hot. The flesh feels hungry.

And he says, “In the same way writing is performed by means of the hands. Do you not see that the ministry of the flesh produces for us a thousand benefits? In his expression, “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit,” he means two mental states. For these are opposed to each other, namely virtue and vice, not the soul and the body.”

Chrysostom makes an analogy which obscures the meaning of the verse. It’s as if he reads the verse as, “For vice is against virtue, and virtue is against vice: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” But the verse reads as in **Galatians 5 (KJV):17** For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

Chrysostom did not understand that our flesh contains sin. It is where sin dwells. When Adam sinned, our flesh became mortal. Our flesh also inherited a nature to sin. But this nature to sin in our flesh is overcome by the new nature in our spirits when we are born again. We who have been born again are able to utilize our flesh in a right way, not yielding to its lusts. Our

soul now has the ability to say yes to the Spirit, and yield to the leading of the Spirit.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER V, page 42**, he says, “Let it be allowed that adultery and fornication proceed, as you assert, from the flesh; yet hatred, variance, emulations, strife, heresies, and witchcraft, these arise merely from a depraved moral choice. And so it is with the others also, for how can they belong to the flesh? you observe that he is not here speaking of the flesh, but of earthly thoughts, which trail upon the ground.”

And he argues, “If these things belonged to nature and not to a bad moral choice, his expression, “they practice,” is inappropriate, it should be, “they suffer.” And why should they be cast out of the kingdom, for rewards and punishments relate not to what proceeds from nature but from choice?”

But our actions are a result of our choices, and our flesh is what we yield to when we make bad choices. After we have believed in Jesus Christ, we have a choice to yield to the Spirit of God, or yield to our fleshly desires. All of the works in Galatians 5:19-21 are called “works of the flesh”. Chrysostom would have us call them works of our soul.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER V, page 42**, he says, as he quotes, “Ver. 24. “And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.”

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):24** And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

He then says, “That they might not object, “And who is such a man as this?” he points out by their works those who have attained to this perfection, here again giving the name of the “flesh” to evil actions.”

Paul is not speaking here of “those who have attained to this perfection”, but of our standing with Christ. That is, we who have believed are in Christ, as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):5** So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

And in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

Being in Christ, we are identified with Him in His death, and resurrection. As we acknowledge our crucifixion with Christ, we walk by the Spirit.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY V, page 73-74**, he says, “Think then, how vast an evil is it, when God hath employed so many methods to reconcile us, and hath effected it, that we should again fall back into enmity! This enmity no fresh Baptism, but hell itself awaits; no fresh remission, but searching trial.”

One who had been baptized, and born again according to their belief in the time of Chrysostom, could lose their salvation if they “again fall back into enmity”.

And he says, “For if I have a mind to put on a strong curb, I stop the horse; but the body is unable to check the soul in her evil courses. Wherefore then does he call it the carnal mind? Because it comes to be wholly of the flesh, for when she has the mastery, then she goes wrong, as soon as ever she has deprived herself of reason, and of the supremacy of the soul. The virtue therefore of the body consists in this, in its submission to the soul, since of itself the flesh is neither good nor evil. For what could the body ever do of itself?”



However, the flesh is where our sin dwells, as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

And he says, “For in proof that it is not drunkenness that is the natural desire of the body, mark how, whenever you exceed the measure, when you go beyond the boundary lines, it cannot hold out a moment longer. Up to this point it is of the body, but all the rest of the excesses, as e.g., when she is hurried away into sensualities, when she becomes stupefied, these are of the soul.”

Chrysostom has turned it around. He does not realize that the sinful impulses come from the sin nature in our flesh where sin dwells, and which will produce the works of the flesh if we do not yield to the Spirit of God. He is essentially calling these works of the flesh the “works of the soul”.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY XVIII, page 134-135**, he says, “The death of the soul, however, is not like the death of the body; it is far more shocking.”

And he says, “And as therefore there is a death of the soul, so is there also a slaughter of the soul.”

And he says, “What is the slaughter of the soul? It is its being made a corpse also. And how is the soul made a corpse? Because as the body then becomes a corpse when the soul leaves it destitute of its own vital energy, so also does the soul then become a corpse, when the Holy Spirit leaves it destitute of His spiritual energy.”

And he agrees with the Scripture, as we read in **Matthew 10 (KJV):28** And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

But the Holy Spirit does not leave the believer, as we read in **John 14 (KJV):16** And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY IV, page 421-422**, he says, “Moral. Let us then “glorify God,” and bear God both “in our body and in our spirit.” (1 Cor. vi. 20)

And how is one to glorify Him in the body? saith one, and how in the spirit? The soul is here called the spirit to distinguish it from the body.”

Chrysostom did not see a difference between soul and spirit, which is mentioned in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

And he says, “But how is it possible to glorify God in our spirit? By practicing virtue, by adorning the soul. For such embellishment is not forbidden. Thus we glorify God, when we are good in every respect, and we shall be glorified by Him in a much higher degree in that great day. For “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.” (Rom. viii. 18)”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XXXIII, page 116**, he says, ““But when he saith,

Ver. 24. “God is a Spirit” [God is spirit]. He declareth nothing else than His incorporeal

Nature.”

He refers to **John 4 (KJV):24** God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

He then says, “Now the service of that which is incorporeal must needs be of the same character, and must be offered by that in us which is incorporeal, to wit, the soul, and purity of mind.”

Chrysostom again equates the soul with the spirit.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY II, page 372**, he says, “And what marvel, if it be so in respect of God, since not even in respect of an Angel, could one find a name expressive of his substance? Perhaps too, neither in respect of the soul. For this name [soul] doth not seem to me to be significative of the substance thereof, but of breathing. For one may see that the same [thing] is called both Soul and Heart and Mind: for, saith he, “Create in me a clean heart, O God” (Ps. li. 10), and one may often see that it [the soul] is called spirit.”

It is true that at times, soul and spirit are used interchangeably as the unseen parts of man. But when God breathed into man the breath of life, referring to the spirit of man, man became a living soul. The spirit united with the body makes man a living soul.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY VI, page 396**, he says, “Then, lest any think that they will simply be deprived of rest only, he adds also the punishment, saying (c. iv. 12), “For the Word of God is quick, and powerful; and sharper than any two-edged sword, and pierceth even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow: and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Here he is speaking of Hell and of punishment. “It pierceth” (he says) into the secrets of our heart, and cutteth asunder the soul. Here it is not the falling of carcasses nor, as there, the being deprived of a country, but of a heavenly kingdom; and being delivered to an everlasting hell, and to undying punishment and vengeance.”

But the Scripture is not speaking of cutting “asunder the soul”, but of the difference between the soul and spirit. The word of God is able to give us discernment between soul and spirit, just as we have discernment in the physical realm of the difference between joints and marrow. The word of God also gives us discernment of “the thoughts and intents of the heart”, that is, of knowing good and evil.

## Prayers for the Dead

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY VI, page 389**

18. When you go home, therefore, discourse of all these things with those who are in your house; and as many persons often do, when they come back from a meadow, having plucked there a rose, or a violet, or some flower of that kind, they return twisting it about with their fingers; and as some, again, when they quit the gardens to go home, take with them branches of trees, with their fruit upon them; and as others, moreover, from sumptuous feasts, carry away leavings of the entertainment for their dependents; so indeed do thou, departing from hence, take an exhortation home to thy wife, thy children, and all thine household. For this admonition is more profitable than the meadow, the garden, or the banqueting table. These roses never wither; these fruits never drop off; these dainties never corrupt. The former yield a temporary delight; but the latter a lasting advantage, not only after this reformation has taken place, but in the very act of reforming. For think what a good practice this would be, having dismissed all other matters public or private, to discourse (Deuteronomy 6:7) only of the divine laws continually, at the table, in the forum, and in your other meetings. Would we give our attention to these things, we should say nothing of a dangerous or injurious nature, nor should we sin unwittingly. Giving our leisure to discourse respecting these things, we should be able to withdraw our soul even from this despondency that hangs over us, instead of looking with so much anxiety as we do, whilst we say one to another, "Hath the Emperor heard what hath happened? Is he incensed? What sentence hath he pronounced? Hath any one petitioned him? What? Will he himself endure to destroy utterly a city so great and populous?" Casting these and all such cares upon God, let us be anxious only as to what He hath commanded! Thus shall we rid ourselves of all these sorrows; and although ten only among us should succeed, the ten would quickly become twenty; the twenty fifty; the fifty a hundred; the hundred a thousand; the thousand all the city. And just as when ten lamps are lighted, one may easily fill the whole house with light, so also with respect to right actions; should only ten act rightly, we shall light up a general flame throughout the city, to shine forth, and to procure us safety. For not so naturally does the fire, when it falls upon a forest, kindle the neighbouring trees successively, as will the emulation for virtue, when it seizes upon a few minds, be mighty in its progress to diffuse itself through the whole community.

19. Give me cause, then, to exult over you both in the present life, and at that future Day, when those to whom talents have been entrusted, shall be summoned! Your good reputation is a sufficient reward for my labours; and if I see you living in piety, I have all I wish. Do, then, what yesterday I recommended, and today will repeat, and will not cease to say it. Fix a penalty for those who swear; a penalty which is a gain, and not a loss; and prepare yourselves henceforth so as you may give us a proof of success. For I shall endeavour to hold a long conversation with each of you, when this assembly is dismissed; in order that in the continuance of discourse I may discover the persons who have been acting rightly, and those who have not. And if I find any one still swearing, I shall make him manifest to all who are amended, that by reproving, rebuking, and correcting, we may quickly deliver him from this evil habit. For better it is that he should amend through being reproached here, than that he should be put to shame,

and punished, in the presence of the whole assembled universe, on that Day, when our sins shall be revealed to the eyes of all men! But God forbid that any in this fair assembly should appear there suffering such things! but by the prayers of the holy fathers, (See **Schaff Note** below) correcting all our offences, and having shown forth the abundant fruit of virtue, may we depart hence with much confidence, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom, and with whom, be glory to the Father together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

**(Schaff Note:** εὐχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων. See on Rom. xvi. 24, Hom. XXXII., where the translation perhaps ought to be, “These imitators of Paul. Only let us yield ourselves worthy of such intercession.” This rendering is confirmed by its agreement with Hom. XLIV. on Gen. xix. 29; Ben. iv. 448, 449. But there is a difficulty in it owing to the reference to St. Paul’s *departure*. This may be explained as a turn of rhetoric. The passage on Gen. xix. does not define whether saints on earth or above are spoken of; but from others it is probable he means the latter. The close of the Homily on St. Meletius, Ben. ii. 522, A. speaks of such intercession, and that of Hom. *in SS. Bernicen and Prosd.* Ben. ii. 645, D. of invoking it. The Homily quoted above, on the intercession of Abraham, warns men against trusting to prayers of saints so as to neglect their own life. An expression like that in the text occurs in a Homily *de Sp. Sancto*, attributed to St. Chrys. by Photius, Ben. iii. 799, C.; Origen on Cant. ii. 5, asserts the intercession of the saints, proving it from 2 Mac. xv. 14, and on Numb. xxxii., Hom. XXVI. 6, he asks, who doubts it? Hom. I. 7, on Ezekiel, he invokes an angel, as holding that angels are present, though in a rhetorical way. Lib. 2, in Job (*fin.*) sometimes cited as his, is spurious, and the Com. on Lament. doubtful, and the manner of invocation looks as if of later date. St. Cyprian, *Ep. 57, ad Cornel. fin.* desires that whoever dies first may pray for the other; and *de Hab. Virg. fin.* makes a similar request: and so Theodosia in *Euseb. de Mart. Pal. c. 7*. **In the fourth century, the invocation of departed saints, or prayer to God for their prayers, becomes common.** So Eusebius, on Ps. lxxviii. (79) takes verse 11, *Preserve Thou the sons of the slain* (Heb. *of death*), *i.e.*, of the martyrs. At the close of his Com. on Isaiah, he prays just as St. Chrys. in the text. St. Athanas. *ad Marcellin.* 31, t. i. p. 1001, says we should sing the Psalms exactly, “that the inspired writers may know their own words, and pray with us, or rather, that the Holy Spirit who spoke in them, hearing the words He dictated to them, may take our part” (συναντιλέβηται, Comp. Rom. viii. 26). A direct address to the Blessed Virgin.....“Queen, and Mother of God, intercede for us!” is quoted as his (*Serm. in Annunt.* t. ii. p. 401), but is spurious, as is there stated. St. James, of Nisibis, Ser. 4, p. 72, seems to speak of an angel presenting our prayers, which his editor connects with Tertullian’s *Angelus Orationis*, *de Or.* xii. and Tob. xii. 12. St. Hilary, on Ps. cxxiv. (125) 2, takes the *hills* (as others constantly elsewhere), for the saints and angels. On Matt. xxv. p. 736, he says, “none shall be helped by another’s works and merits, because every one must buy oil for his own lamp.” This seems to imply the existence of the same tendency which St. Chrysostom reproves, as quoted above on Gen. xix. The Martyr Justina, early in this century, is said by St. Greg. Naz. *Or.* xviii. p. 279 (Ben. Or. xxiv. 11, p. 443 d.), to have implored the aid of the Virgin Mary. In the latter part of the century, instances are more frequent. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat. Myst.* v. (6), says, “Then we commemorate also those who have fallen asleep before us, first, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, that at their prayers and intervention God would receive our petition.” St.

Basil, Hom. on the Forty Martyrs, c. 8, t. 2, p. 155, speaks strongly of the value of their intercession, and recommends asking it. "Here is found a pious woman praying for her children, the return of her husband, his recovery when sick: let your prayers be made with the martyrs!" To Julian the Apostate, Ep. 360, al. 205, Ben. iii. 462. "I also receive the holy apostles, prophets, and martyrs, and call on them to supplication unto God, that through them, that is, through their mediation, the merciful God may become propitious to me, and a ransom of my sins may be made and granted." To St. Ambrose, Ep. 197, al. 55, Ben. iii. 288, he speaks of the relics of a martyr as protection to those who kept them. St. Ephraim, in *Martyres*, t. iii. Gr. Lat. p. 251, has, "Victorious Martyrs, willing sufferers for the love of your God and Saviour, ye that have boldness of speech toward the Lord Himself; intreat, holy as ye are, for us that are worthless, and sinners, and full of listlessness, that the grace of Christ may come upon us." Some prayers to the Blessed Virgin, calling her the only hope of sinners, and giving her the titles of our Lord, are ascribed to him. Such would stand alone in this age, and long after. But one which has been long known in Latin (ed. Voss, p. 543), has been generally thought spurious. The last Roman Edition contains more, but even the mss. from which they are taken seem to ascribe them but doubtfully to him ("Prayers collected from Holy Scripture, but most of them from St. Ephraim," &c.), especially as others precede these. He, however, used invocation freely, though some allowance must be made for his rich imagination, and his fondness for apostrophe. Thus he apostrophises Faith, *adv. Scrut. Ser.* vi. Gr. Lat. iii. 160, 161. "O Faith! I pray Thee adapt Thy vastness to our littleness! for while we may not see and measure thee, love can neither rest nor be silent!" "Come hither, O Faith, Gift of God to the Holy Church, and rest in this bosom!" Several spurious passages, as from the *Christus Patiens* attributed to St. Greg. Naz. l. 2582 (but rejected and objected to by the Ben. editor), are examined by Mr. Palmer, Letter v. to Dr. Wiseman. The real practice of St. Greg. Naz. appears in his funeral oration on St. Basil, *Or.* xx. fin. p. 373 (Ben. xliii. 82, p. 831). "But do thou, O divine and sacred head, look on us from above, and either remove by the intercessions the thorn in the flesh that chastises us, or persuade us to bear it with fortitude," &c. *Or.* vi. *ad Greg. Nyss.* p. 140 (Ben. xi. 5, p. 245), he says, that martyrs are "Mediators for attaining a divine state" (ἰατροὶ θεοῦ). St. Chrysostom is of the same date. St. Greg. Nyss. on St. Theodorus, speaks repeatedly of asking his intercession. "To touch his relics, if any chance give one the opportunity...Then, shedding on them the tear of piety and affection, as though to the martyr, appearing in full presence, they present their entreaty for intercession; beseeching him, as an attendant\* upon God, and invoking him as one who obtains favors at will," t. iii. p. 580, and so in other parts of the oration; and in p. 586, he begs him, if need be, to call his brother martyrs to his aid. And in the close of his life of St. Ephraim, he both invokes him, "Remember us all, asking remission for our sins;" and speaks of a person having invoked his help, in circumstances of danger, with success. St. Ambrose, *de Vid.* c. 9, says, "The angels are to be entreated for us, who are given us for our guard; the martyrs are to be entreated, whose patronage we may in a manner claim by the pledge of their bodies. They can pray for our sins, who have washed in their own blood their own sins, if such they had." These are most of the authors alleged down to the end of the fourth century, but in most of the later of them other passages of the same kind appear. Thus the practice of direct invocation seems to have come in by degrees, and that chiefly in the course of this century. Some passages relating merely to the intercession of the saints have been passed over, as they would rather confuse the view of the subject of *seeking* it. Bellarmine, *De Sanctis*,

l. i. c. 19, and Coccius, *Thesaur.* l. v., art. 4, give collections of passages. See on Fleury, Book 19, c. 31, Tr. p. 202, note k. \*δορυφόρον. A term which shows that an allusion to an earthly court is intended.)

**Commentary:** First, to explain the background of this Homily, we read the following in PREFACE TO THE BENEDICTINE EDITION, page 317-318:

1. Among the events which occurred in the time of John Chrysostom, there is none more memorable than that sedition of the inhabitants of Antioch, in which the Statues of the Emperor Theodosius and Flacilla his wife were thrown down and dragged about the city, at which Theodosius was so exasperated, as even to think of destroying the city entirely. This afforded ample matter for our Chrysostom to exercise his powers of preaching. For as the people of Antioch were fluctuating between hope and fear (sudden accidents offering of course daily some fresh cause for hope or alarm) Chrysostom, compelled as he was to adapt his style to circumstances as they arose, almost always without preparation, delivered on the spur of the occasion these Homilies, which are certainly well deserving of admiration. At one time his object here is to console a people struggling with present distress; at another, to strengthen minds that were sinking under the extremity of danger; and above all, by repeated admonition, to persuade the people of Antioch, on occasion of the threatened calamities, to correct the vices and to wipe away the crimes that had thus provoked God's wrath; which endeavour on the part of Chrysostom certainly ended in results agreeable to his desire, as he sometimes acknowledges.

2. But the cause of this great sedition was, according to the testimony of Zosimus, excess of taxation, which was daily inventing new imposts; an exaction required either for the celebration of the fifth year upon which Arcadius had entered, from the time he was proclaimed under the title of Augustus, and the tenth year of the Emperor Theodosius, commencing in the year 388, or for the expenses of the war against the tyrant Maximus, or on account of both these events, as well as for other necessities of the state. The people of Antioch, that is to say, the superior class of the citizens, dismayed at the burden of this impost, first approached the prefect, and with tears lamented the excess of the tax that had been announced, and implored the Divine assistance. And next, a multitude of vagabonds and foreigners of the lowest class of the people, in a state of excited feeling, broke out into deeds of violence. At first they turned every thing upside down in the public baths; hence they proceeded to the prefect's palace, and attacked the doors and windows, and were scarcely repelled, when they turned their rage in another direction, and attacked the painted tablets of the Emperors with stones, covered them with filth, and reduced them to a ruinous condition, while they loaded the Augusti themselves with curses and reproaches. At length they threw down the Statues of the Emperor Theodosius and Flacilla his deceased wife, and dragged them through the streets of the city; and had already commenced further outrages, when they were put down by a band of archers, dispatched from the prefect. The sedition being thus extinguished, fear took the place of madness, and the expectation of impending punishment caused the burdensome tax that had been imposed to be entirely forgotten. What followed afterwards will be narrated below in the review of the Homilies. Something must now be said as to the year of the sedition, in which these Homilies were delivered.

That should explain the background Chrysostom was writing in. Now Chrysostom

begins, as he says, “18. When you go home, therefore, discourse of all these things with those who are in your house; and as many persons often do, when they come back from a meadow, having plucked there a rose, or a violet, or some flower of that kind, they return twisting it about with their fingers; and as some, again, when they quit the gardens to go home, take with them branches of trees, with their fruit upon them; and as others, moreover, from sumptuous feasts, carry away leavings of the entertainment for their dependents; so indeed do thou, departing from hence, take an exhortation home to thy wife, thy children, and all thine household. For this admonition is more profitable than the meadow, the garden, or the banqueting table. These roses never wither; these fruits never drop off; these dainties never corrupt. The former yield a temporary delight; but the latter a lasting advantage, not only after this reformation has taken place, but in the very act of reforming. For think what a good practice this would be, having dismissed all other matters public or private, to discourse (Deuteronomy 6:7) only of the divine laws continually, at the table, in the forum, and in your other meetings.”

He refers to **Deuteronomy 6 (KJV):7** And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

He continues, “Would we give our attention to these things, we should say nothing of a dangerous or injurious nature, nor should we sin unwittingly. Giving our leisure to discourse respecting these things, we should be able to withdraw our soul even from this despondency that hangs over us, instead of looking with so much anxiety as we do, whilst we say one to another, “Hath the Emperor heard what hath happened? Is he incensed? What sentence hath he pronounced? Hath any one petitioned him? What? Will he himself endure to destroy utterly a city so great and populous?” Casting these and all such cares upon God, let us be anxious only as to what He hath commanded! Thus shall we rid ourselves of all these sorrows; and although ten only among us should succeed, the ten would quickly become twenty; the twenty fifty; the fifty a hundred; the hundred a thousand; the thousand all the city. And just as when ten lamps are lighted, one may easily fill the whole house with light, so also with respect to right actions; should only ten act rightly, we shall light up a general flame throughout the city, to shine forth, and to procure us safety. For not so naturally does the fire, when it falls upon a forest, kindle the neighbouring trees successively, as will the emulation for virtue, when it seizes upon a few minds, be mighty in its progress to diffuse itself through the whole community.

19. Give me cause, then, to exult over you both in the present life, and at that future Day, when those to whom talents have been entrusted, shall be summoned! Your good reputation is a sufficient reward for my labours; and if I see you living in piety, I have all I wish. Do, then, what yesterday I recommended, and today will repeat, and will not cease to say it. Fix a penalty for those who swear; a penalty which is a gain, and not a loss; and prepare yourselves henceforth so as you may give us a proof of success. For I shall endeavour to hold a long conversation with each of you, when this assembly is dismissed; in order that in the continuance of discourse I may discover the persons who have been acting rightly, and those who have not. And if I find any one still swearing, I shall make him manifest to all who are amended, that by reproving, rebuking, and correcting, we may quickly deliver him from this evil habit. For better it is that he should amend through being reproached here, than that he should be put to shame, and punished, in the presence of the whole assembled universe, on that Day, when our sins shall

be revealed to the eyes of all men! But God forbid that any in this fair assembly should appear there suffering such things! but by the prayers of the holy fathers, (See **Schaff Note** above) correcting all our offences, and having shown forth the abundant fruit of virtue, may we depart hence with much confidence, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom, and with whom, be glory to the Father together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.”

As Chrysostom says, “but by the prayers of the holy fathers, correcting all our offences...”, so in the Schaff Note above, we read, “In the fourth century, the invocation of departed saints, or prayer to God for their prayers, becomes common.”

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XLI, page 253-254**

[8.] “But I know not whither he hath gone,” say you. Wherefore knowest thou not, tell me? For according as he lived well or otherwise, it is evident whither he will go. “Nay, on this very account I lament,” say you, “because he departed being a sinner.” (**Schaff Note:** Bingham observes, lib. xv. cap. 3. sect. 16. “Another reason for praying for the dead was, they conceived all men to die with some remainders of frailty and corruption, and therefore desired that God would deal with them according to His mercy, and not in strict justice according to their merits.” “These prayers,” he proceeds to say, see lib. xxiii. cap. 3. sect. 3. and 13. “are not made upon the Romish supposition of the soul’s being in purgatory or any place of torment, but on principles that perfectly overthrow it.” For they call those for whom they offer, Saints including among them the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles and Prophets: and they represent them as having ‘pleased God,’ “being at rest,” “sleeping in Christ,” “departed in His Faith,” and other equivalent expressions. *Vid.* Brett’s *Liturgies*, p. 270–272. Ed. 1838. See also Bp. Bull, vol. ii. 261. Oxford Ed.) This is a mere pretext and excuse. For if this were the reason of thy mourning for the departed, thou oughtest to have formed and corrected him, when he was alive. The fact is thou dost every where look to what concerns thyself, not him.

But grant that he departed with sin upon him, even on this account one ought to rejoice, that he was stopped short in his sins and added not to his iniquity; and help him as far as possible, not by tears, but by prayers and supplications and alms and offerings. For not unmeaningly have these things been devised, nor do we in vain make mention of the departed in the course of the divine mysteries, and approach God in their behalf, beseeching the Lamb Who is before us, Who taketh away the sin of the world;—not in vain, but that some refreshment may thereby ensue to them. Not in vain doth he that standeth by the altar cry out when the tremendous mysteries are celebrated, “For all that have fallen asleep in Christ, and for those who perform commemorations in their behalf.” (**Schaff Note:** These expressions are not *verbatim* either in St. Chrysostom’s or in any other of the Liturgies translated by Brett, but in substance they are in all.) For if there were no commemorations for them, these things would not have been spoken: since our service is not a mere stage show, God forbid! yea, it is by the ordinance of the Spirit that these things are done.

Let us then give them aid and perform commemoration for them. For if the children of Job were purged by the sacrifice of their father, why dost thou doubt that when we too offer for



the departed, some consolation arises to them? since God is wont to grant the petitions of those who ask for others. And this Paul signified saying, “that in a manifold Person (**Schaff Note:**  $\nu$  πολλῶν προσώπων: “in a great Person,” “the Person of a manifold Being, i.e., of the whole Church.” The common reading is ἐκ πολλῶν προσώπων. St. Chrysostom may have thought that the Apostle was alluding to the Liturgical Service as the voice of the whole mystical Body of Christ. See his comment on the place in Hom. 2 on 2 Cor. §. 3, 4. Ed. Bened. [The singular reading of Chrysostom in this place does not seem to be sustained by any Greek mss., but is represented in several codices of the old Itala version. On the principle of the *durior lectio* it might claim attention, but surely on no other ground. C.] your gift towards us bestowed by many may be acknowledged with thanksgiving on your behalf.” (2 Cor. i. 11) Let us not then be weary in giving aid to the departed, both by offering on their behalf and obtaining prayers for them: for the common Expiation of the world is even before us. Therefore with boldness do we then intreat for the whole world, and name their names with those of martyrs, of confessors, of priests. For in truth one body are we all, though some members are more glorious than others; and it is possible from every source to gather pardon for them, from our prayers, from our gifts in their behalf, from those whose names are named with theirs. Why therefore dost thou grieve? Why mourn, when it is in thy power to gather so much pardon for the departed?

[9.] Is it then that thou art become desolate and hast lost a protector? Nay, never mention this. For thou hast not surely lost thy God. And so, as long as thou hast Him, He will be better to thee than husband and father and child and kinsman: since even when they were alive, He it was who did all things.

These things therefore think upon, and say with David, “The Lord is my light and my Saviour, whom shall I fear? (Ps. xxvii. 1) Say, Thou art a Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widows: “(Ps. lxxviii. 5) and draw down His aid, and thou shalt have Him to care for thee now more than before, by how much thou art in a state of greater difficulty.

Or hast thou lost a child? Thou hast not lost it; say not so. This thing is sleep, not death; removal, not destruction; a journeying from the worse unto the better. (**Schaff Note:** The same idea is thus expressed by Tertullian. “Why mourn, if thy faith be that he hath not perished? Why bear impatiently *his* being withdrawn for a while, of whom thou believest that he will return? It is but a journey, which thou accountest death. It is not meet to mourn for him who is gone before, but simply to miss him and long for him.” *De Patient.* c. 9.) Do not then provoke God to anger; but propitiate Him. For if thou bearest it nobly, there will thence accrue some relief both to the departed and to thyself; but if the contrary, thou dost the more kindle God’s anger. For if when a servant was chastised by his master, thou didst stand by and complain, thou wouldest the more exasperate the master against thyself. Do not then so; but give thanks, that hereby also this cloud of sadness may be scattered from thee. Say with that blessed one, “the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.” (Job i. 21) Consider how many more well-pleasing in His sight have never received children at all, nor been called fathers. “Nor would I wish to have been so,” say you, “for surely it were better not to have had experience than after having tasted the pleasure to fall from it.” Nay, I beseech thee, say not so, provoke not thus also the Lord to wrath: but for what thou hast received, give Him thanks; and for what thou hast not to the end, give Him glory. Job said not that which thou sayest unthankfully, “it were better not to have received,” but both for the one he gave thanks, saying, “The Lord gave;” and for the other he blessed God, saying, “The Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord for ever.” And his wife he

thus silenced, justifying himself against her, and uttering those admirable words, “Have we received good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?” And yet after this a fiercer temptation befell him: yet was he not even thus unnerved, but in like manner bore it nobly and glorified God.

This also do thou, and consider with thyself that man hath not taken him, but God who made him, who more than thyself cares for him and knows what is good for him: who is no enemy nor lier-in-wait. See how many, living, have made life intolerable to their parents. “But seest thou not the right-hearted ones?” say you. I see these too, but even these are not so safe as thy child is. For though they are now approved, yet it is uncertain what their end will be; but for him thou hast no longer any fear, nor dost thou tremble lest anything should happen to him or he experience any change.

These things also do thou consider respecting a good wife and guardian of thine house, and for all things give thanks unto God. And even if thou shalt lose a wife, give thanks. Perhaps God’s will is to lead thee to continence, He calls thee to a nobler field of conflict,

He was pleased to set thee free from this bond. If we thus command ourselves, we shall both gain the joy of this life and obtain the crowns which are to come, &c. &c.

**Commentary:** Chrysostom begins, as he says, “[8.] “But I know not whither he hath gone,” say you. Wherefore knowest thou not, tell me? For according as he lived well or otherwise, it is evident whither he will go. “Nay, on this very account I lament,” say you, “because he departed being a sinner.” (**Schaff Note:** Bingham observes, lib. xv. cap. 3. sect. 16. “Another reason for praying for the dead was, they conceived all men to die with some remainders of frailty and corruption, and therefore desired that God would deal with them according to His mercy, and not in strict justice according to their merits.” “These prayers,” he proceeds to say, see lib. xxiii. cap. 3. sect. 3. and 13. “are not made upon the Romish supposition of the soul’s being in purgatory or any place of torment, but on principles that perfectly overthrow it.” For they call those for whom they offer, Saints including among them the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles and Prophets: and they represent them as having ‘pleased God,’ “being at rest,” “sleeping in Christ,” “departed in His Faith,” and other equivalent expressions. *Vid.* Brett’s *Liturgies*, p. 270–272. Ed. 1838. See also Bp. Bull, vol. ii. 261. Oxford Ed.)”

Chrysostom continues, “This is a mere pretext and excuse. For if this were the reason of thy mourning for the departed, thou oughtest to have formed and corrected him, when he was alive. The fact is thou dost every where look to what concerns thyself, not him.

But grant that he departed with sin upon him, even on this account one ought to rejoice, that he was stopped short in his sins and added not to his iniquity; and help him as far as possible, not by tears, but by prayers and supplications and alms and offerings. For not unmeaningly have these things been devised, nor do we in vain make mention of the departed in the course of the divine mysteries, and approach God in their behalf, beseeching the Lamb Who is before us, Who taketh away the sin of the world;—not in vain, but that some refreshment may thereby ensue to them. Not in vain doth he that standeth by the altar cry out when the tremendous mysteries are celebrated, “For all that have fallen asleep in Christ, and for those who perform commemorations in their behalf.” (**Schaff Note:** These expressions are not *verbatim* either in St. Chrysostom’s or in any other of the Liturgies translated by Brett, but in substance they are in all.) For if there were no commemorations for them, these things would

not have been spoken: since our service is not a mere stage show, God forbid! yea, it is by the ordinance of the Spirit that these things are done.

Let us then give them aid and perform commemoration for them. For if the children of Job were purged by the sacrifice of their father, why dost thou doubt that when we too offer for the departed, some consolation arises to them?"

He refers to **Job 1 (KJV):4** And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. 5 And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

But this Job did while his children were still alive, and in the time of the Old Testament when animal sacrifice was the acceptable method of atoning for sins before God.

Chrysostom continues, "since God is wont to grant the petitions of those who ask for others. And this Paul signified saying, "that in a manifold Person (**Schaff Note:**  $\nu$  πολλῶν προσώπων: "in a great Person," "the Person of a manifold Being, i.e., of the whole Church." The common reading is  $\epsilon\kappa$  πολλῶν προσώπων. St. Chrysostom may have thought that the Apostle was alluding to the Liturgical Service as the voice of the whole mystical Body of Christ. See his comment on the place in Hom. 2 on 2 Cor. §. 3, 4. Ed. Bened. [The singular reading of Chrysostom in this place does not seem to be sustained by any Greek mss., but is represented in several codices of the old Itala version. On the principle of the *durior lectio* it might claim attention, but surely on no other ground. C.]")

Chrysostom continues, "your gift towards us bestowed by many may be acknowledged with thanksgiving on your behalf." (2 Cor. i. 11)"

He refers to **2 Corinthians 1 (KJV):11** Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

He continues, "Let us not then be weary in giving aid to the departed, both by offering on their behalf and obtaining prayers for them: for the common Expiation of the world is even before us. Therefore with boldness do we then intreat for the whole world, and name their names with those of martyrs, of confessors, of priests. For in truth one body are we all, though some members are more glorious than others; and it is possible from every source to gather pardon for them, from our prayers, from our gifts in their behalf, from those whose names are named with theirs. Why therefore dost thou grieve? Why mourn, when it is in thy power to gather so much pardon for the departed?"

However, Jesus taught that there are no second chances, as we read in **Luke 16 (KJV):20** And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil

things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Chrysostom continues, “[9.] Is it then that thou art become desolate and hast lost a protector? Nay, never mention this. For thou hast not surely lost thy God. And so, as long as thou hast Him, He will be better to thee than husband and father and child and kinsman: since even when they were alive, He it was who did all things.

These things therefore think upon, and say with David, “The Lord is my light and my Saviour, whom shall I fear? (Ps. xxvii. 1) Say, Thou art a Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widows: “(Ps. lxxviii. 5) and draw down His aid, and thou shalt have Him to care for thee now more than before, by how much thou art in a state of greater difficulty.”

He refers to **Psalm 27 (KJV):1** The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

And to **Psalm 68 (KJV):5** A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.

He continues, “Or hast thou lost a child? Thou hast not lost it; say not so. This thing is sleep, not death; removal, not destruction; a journeying from the worse unto the better. (**Schaff Note:** The same idea is thus expressed by Tertullian. “Why mourn, if thy faith be that he hath not perished? Why bear impatiently *his* being withdrawn for a while, of whom thou believest that he will return? It is but a journey, which thou accountest death. It is not meet to mourn for him who is gone before, but simply to miss him and long for him.” *De Patient.* c. 9.) Do not then provoke God to anger; but propitiate Him. For if thou bearest it nobly, there will thence accrue some relief both to the departed and to thyself; but if the contrary, thou dost the more kindle God’s anger. For if when a servant was chastised by his master, thou didst stand by and complain, thou wouldest the more exasperate the master against thyself. Do not then so; but give thanks, that hereby also this cloud of sadness may be scattered from thee. Say with that blessed one, “the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.” (Job i. 21)”

He refers to **Job 1 (KJV):21** And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

He continues, “Consider how many more well-pleasing in His sight have never received children at all, nor been called fathers. “Nor would I wish to have been so,” say you, “for surely it were better not to have had experience than after having tasted the pleasure to fall from it.” Nay, I beseech thee, say not so, provoke not thus also the Lord to wrath: but for what thou hast received, give Him thanks; and for what thou hast not to the end, give Him glory. Job said not that which thou sayest unthankfully, “it were better not to have received,” but both for the one he gave thanks, saying, “The Lord gave;” and for the other he blessed God, saying, “The Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord for ever.” And his wife he thus silenced, justifying himself against her, and uttering those admirable words, “Have we received good at

the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?””

He refers to **Job 2 (KJV):9** Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. 10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

He continues, “And yet after this a fiercer temptation befell him: yet was he not even thus unnerved, but in like manner bore it nobly and glorified God.

This also do thou, and consider with thyself that man hath not taken him, but God who made him, who more than thyself cares for him and knows what is good for him: who is no enemy nor lier-in-wait. See how many, living, have made life intolerable to their parents. “But seest thou not the right-hearted ones?” say you. I see these too, but even these are not so safe as thy child is. For though they are now approved, yet it is uncertain what their end will be; but for him thou hast no longer any fear, nor dost thou tremble lest anything should happen to him or he experience any change.

These things also do thou consider respecting a good wife and guardian of thine house, and for all things give thanks unto God. And even if thou shalt lose a wife, give thanks. Perhaps God’s will is to lead thee to continence, He calls thee to a nobler field of conflict,

He was pleased to set thee free from this bond. If we thus command ourselves, we shall both gain the joy of this life and obtain the crowns which are to come, &c. &c.”

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY III, page 484-485**

2 Timothy i. 13–18

“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost Which dwelleth in us. This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: but, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.”

Not by letters alone did Paul instruct his disciple in his duty, but before by words also which he shows, both in many other passages, as where he says, “whether by word or our Epistle” (2 Thess. ii. 15), and especially here. Let us not therefore suppose that anything relating to doctrine was spoken imperfectly. For many things he delivered to him without writing. Of these therefore he reminds him, when he says, “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me.” After the manner of artists, I have impressed on thee the image of virtue, fixing in thy soul a sort of rule, and model, and outline of all things pleasing to God. These things then hold fast, and whether thou art meditating any matter of faith or love, or of a sound mind, form from hence your ideas of them. It will not be necessary to have recourse to others for examples, when all has been deposited within thyself.

“That good thing which was committed unto thee keep,”—how?—“by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.” For it is not in the power of a human soul, when instructed with things so

great, to be sufficient for the keeping of them. And why? Because there are many robbers, and thick darkness, and the devil still at hand to plot against us; and we know not what is the hour, what the occasion for him to set upon us. How then, he means, shall we be sufficient for the keeping of them? “By the Holy Ghost”; that is if we have the Spirit with us, if we do not expel grace, He will stand by us. For, “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.” (Ps. cxxvii. 1) This is our wall, this our castle, this our refuge. If therefore It dwelleth in us, and is Itself our guard, what need of the commandment? That we may hold It fast, may keep It, and not banish It by our evil deeds.

Then he describes his trials and temptations, not to depress his disciple, but to elevate him, that if he should ever fall into the same, he may not think it strange, when he looks back and remembers what things happened to his Teacher. What then says he? Since it was probable that Timothy might be apprehended, and be deserted, and be relieved by no friendly attention, or influence, or assistance, but be abandoned even by his friends and the faithful themselves, hear what he says, “This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me.” It seems that there were then in Rome many persons from the regions of Asia. “But no one stood by me,” he says, no one acknowledged me, all were alienated. And observe the philosophy of his soul. He only mentions their conduct, he does not curse them, but he praises him that showed kindness to him, and invokes a thousand blessings upon him, without any curse on them. “Of whom is Phygellus and Hermogenes. The Lord give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain. But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out diligently and found me.” Observe how he everywhere speaks of the shame, and not of the danger, lest Timothy should be alarmed. And yet it was a thing that was full of peril. For he gave offense to Nero by making friends with one of his prisoners. But when he was in Rome, he says, he not only did not shun intercourse with me, but “sought me out very diligently, and found me.”

“The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.”

Such ought the faithful to be. Neither fear, nor threats, nor disgrace, should deter them from assisting one another, standing by them and succoring them as in war. For they do not so much benefit those who are in danger, as themselves, by the service they render to them, making themselves partakers of the crowns due to them. For example, is any one of those who are devoted to God visited with affliction and distress, and maintaining the conflict with great fortitude; whilst thou art not yet brought (**Schaff Note:** εἰλκύσθης, “drawn.” See on Stat. Hom. i. 8) to this conflict? It is in thy power if thou wilt, without entering into the course, to be a sharer of the crowns reserved for him, by standing by him, preparing his mind, and animating and exciting him. Hence it is that Paul elsewhere says, “Ye have done well that ye did communicate with my affliction. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.” (Philip. iv. 14, 16) And how could they that were far off share in the affliction of him that was not with them? How? He says, “ye sent once and again unto my necessities.” Again he says, speaking of Epaphroditus, “Because he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, that he might supply your lack of service toward me.” (Philip. ii. 30) For as in the service of kings, not only those who fight the battle, but those who guard the baggage, share in the honor; and not merely so, but frequently even have an equal portion of the spoils, though they

have not imbrued their hands in blood, nor stood in array, nor even seen the ranks of the enemy; so it is in these conflicts. For he who relieves the combatant, when wasted with hunger, who stands by him, encouraging him by words, and rendering him every service, he is not inferior to the combatant.

For do not suppose Paul the combatant, that irresistible and invincible one, but some one of the many, who, if he had not received much consolation and encouragement, would not perhaps have stood, would not have contended. So those who are out of the contest may perchance be the cause of victory to him, who is engaged in it, and may be partakers of the crowns reserved for the victor. And what wonder, if he who communicates to the living is thought worthy of the same rewards with those who contend, since it is possible to communicate after death even with the departed, with those who are asleep, who are already crowned, who want for nothing. For hear Paul saying, "Partaking in the memories of the Saints." (**Schaff Note:** Rom. xii. 13, where some read  $\mu\nu\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota\varsigma$ . On the passage, however, he reads  $\chi\rho\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota\varsigma$ , "necessities," as E.V.; see on Rom. Hom. xxi. 1352 B. adds, "when thou buildest his monument.") And how may this be done? When thou admirest a man, when thou doest any of those acts for which he was crowned, thou art evidently a sharer in his labors, and in his crowns.

"The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day." He had compassion on me, he says, he shall therefore have the like return in that terrible Day, when we shall have need of much mercy. "The Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord." Are there two Lords then? By no means. But "to us there is one Lord Christ Jesus, and one God." (1 Cor. viii. 6) Here those who are infected with the heresy of Marcion assail this expression; but let them learn that this mode of speech is not uncommon in Scripture; as when it is said, "The Lord said unto my Lord" (Ps. cx. 1); and again, "I said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord" (Ps. xvi. 2); and, "The Lord rained fire from the Lord." (Gen. xix. 24) This indicates that the Persons are of the same substance, not that there is a distinction of nature. For we are not to understand that there are two substances differing from each other, but two Persons, each being of the same substance.

Observe too, that he says, "The Lord grant him mercy." For as he himself had obtained mercy from Onesiphorus, so he wished him to obtain the same from God. Moral. And if Onesiphorus, who exposed himself to danger, is saved by mercy, much more are we also saved by the same. For terrible indeed, terrible is that account, and such as needs great love for mankind, that we may not hear that awful sentence, "Depart from me...I never knew you, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. vii. 23); or that fearful word, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41): that we may not hear, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed" (Luke xvi. 26): that we may not hear that voice full of horror, "Take him away, and cast him into outer darkness": that we may not hear those words full of terror, "Thou wicked and slothful servant." (Matt. xxii. 13, and xxv. 26) For awful truly and terrible is that tribunal. And yet God is gracious and merciful. He is called a God "of mercies and a God of comfort" (2 Cor. i. 3); good as none else is good, and kind, and gentle, and full of pity, Who "willeth not the death of a sinner, but that he should be converted and live." (Ez. xviii. 24; xxxiii. 11) Whence then, whence is that Day so full of agony and anguish? A stream of fire is rolling before His face. The books of our deeds are opened. The day itself is burning as an oven, the angels are flying around, and many furnaces are prepared. How then is He good

and merciful, and full of lovingkindness to man? Even herein is He merciful, and He shows in these things the greatness of His lovingkindness. For He holds forth to us these terrors, that being constrained by them, we may be awakened to the desire of the kingdom.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “2 Timothy i. 13–18

“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost Which dwelleth in us. This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: but, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.”

He refers to **2 Timothy 1 (KJV)**:13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. 15 This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. 16 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: 17 But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. 18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

He continues, “Not by letters alone did Paul instruct his disciple in his duty, but before by words also which he shows, both in many other passages, as where he says, “whether by word or our Epistle” (2 Thess. ii. 15), and especially here.”

He refers to **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV)**:15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

He continues, “Let us not therefore suppose that anything relating to doctrine was spoken imperfectly. For many things he delivered to him without writing. Of these therefore he reminds him, when he says, “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me.” After the manner of artists, I have impressed on thee the image of virtue, fixing in thy soul a sort of rule, and model, and outline of all things pleasing to God. These things then hold fast, and whether thou art meditating any matter of faith or love, or of a sound mind, form from hence your ideas of them. It will not be necessary to have recourse to others for examples, when all has been deposited within thyself.

“That good thing which was committed unto thee keep,”—how?—“by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.” For it is not in the power of a human soul, when instructed with things so great, to be sufficient for the keeping of them. And why? Because there are many robbers, and thick darkness, and the devil still at hand to plot against us; and we know not what is the hour, what the occasion for him to set upon us. How then, he means, shall we be sufficient for the keeping of them? “By the Holy Ghost”; that is if we have the Spirit with us, if we do not expel grace, He will stand by us. For, “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.” (Ps. cxxvii. 1)”

He refers to **Psalms 127 (KJV)**:1 Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.



He continues, “This is our wall, this our castle, this our refuge. If therefore It dwelleth in us, and is Itself our guard, what need of the commandment? That we may hold It fast, may keep It, and not banish It by our evil deeds.

Then he describes his trials and temptations, not to depress his disciple, but to elevate him, that if he should ever fall into the same, he may not think it strange, when he looks back and remembers what things happened to his Teacher. What then says he? Since it was probable that Timothy might be apprehended, and be deserted, and be relieved by no friendly attention, or influence, or assistance, but be abandoned even by his friends and the faithful themselves, hear what he says, “This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me.” It seems that there were then in Rome many persons from the regions of Asia.”

But Paul is speaking of the churches he planted in Asia.

Chrysostom continues, ““But no one stood by me,” he says, no one acknowledged me, all were alienated. And observe the philosophy of his soul. He only mentions their conduct, he does not curse them, but he praises him that showed kindness to him, and invokes a thousand blessings upon him, without any curse on them. “Of whom is Phygellus and Hermogenes. The Lord give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain. But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out diligently and found me.” Observe how he everywhere speaks of the shame, and not of the danger, lest Timothy should be alarmed. And yet it was a thing that was full of peril. For he gave offense to Nero by making friends with one of his prisoners. But when he was in Rome, he says, he not only did not shun intercourse with me, but “sought me out very diligently, and found me.”

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Such ought the faithful to be. Neither fear, nor threats, nor disgrace, should deter them from assisting one another, standing by them and succoring them as in war. For they do not so much benefit those who are in danger, as themselves, by the service they render to them, making themselves partakers of the crowns due to them. For example, is any one of those who are devoted to God visited with affliction and distress, and maintaining the conflict with great fortitude; whilst thou art not yet brought (**Schaff Note:** εἰλκύσθης, “drawn.” See on Stat. Hom. i. 8) to this conflict? It is in thy power if thou wilt, without entering into the course, to be a sharer of the crowns reserved for him, by standing by him, preparing his mind, and animating and exciting him. Hence it is that Paul elsewhere says, “Ye have done well that ye did communicate with my affliction. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.” (Philip. iv. 14, 16)”

He refers in context to **Philippians 4 (KJV):** 14 Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. 15 Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. 16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

He continues, “And how could they that were far off share in the affliction of him that was not with them? How? He says, “ye sent once and again unto my necessities.” Again he says, speaking of Epaphroditus, “Because he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, that he might supply your lack of service toward me.” (Philip. ii. 30)”

He refers in context to **Philippians 2 (KJV):25** Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. 26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. 27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. 29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: 30 Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

He continues, “For as in the service of kings, not only those who fight the battle, but those who guard the baggage, share in the honor; and not merely so, but frequently even have an equal portion of the spoils, though they have not imbrued their hands in blood, nor stood in array, nor even seen the ranks of the enemy; so it is in these conflicts. For he who relieves the combatant, when wasted with hunger, who stands by him, encouraging him by words, and rendering him every service, he is not inferior to the combatant.

For do not suppose Paul the combatant, that irresistible and invincible one, but some one of the many, who, if he had not received much consolation and encouragement, would not perhaps have stood, would not have contended. So those who are out of the contest may perchance be the cause of victory to him, who is engaged in it, and may be partakers of the crowns reserved for the victor. And what wonder, if he who communicates to the living is thought worthy of the same rewards with those who contend, since it is possible to communicate after death even with the departed, with those who are asleep, who are already crowned, who want for nothing. For hear Paul saying, “Partaking in the memories of the Saints.” (**Schaff Note:** Rom. xii. 13, where some read *μνείαις*. On the passage, however, he reads *χρείαις*, “necessities,” as E.V.; see on Rom. Hom. xxi. 1352 B. adds, “when thou buildest his monument.”)”

He refers to **Romans 12 (KJV):13** Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

So we see Chrysostom’s thinking here, that “it is possible to communicate after death even with the departed, with those who are asleep, who are already crowned, who want for nothing”.

He continues, “And how may this be done? When thou admirest a man, when thou doest any of those acts for which he was crowned, thou art evidently a sharer in his labors, and in his crowns.”

But each one shall receive his own reward according to his own labor, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):8** Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

He continues, ““The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.” He had compassion on me, he says, he shall therefore have the like return in that terrible Day, when we shall have need of much mercy. “The Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord.” Are there two Lords then? By no means. But “to us there is one Lord Christ Jesus, and one God.” (1 Cor. viii. 6)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 8 (KJV):6** But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we

by him.

He continues, “Here those who are infected with the heresy of Marcion assail this expression; but let them learn that this mode of speech is not uncommon in Scripture; as when it is said, “The Lord said unto my Lord” (Ps. cx. 1); and again, “I said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord” (Ps. xvi. 2); and, “The Lord rained fire from the Lord.” (Gen. xix. 24)”

He refers to **Psalm 110 (KJV):1** The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

And to **Psalm 16 (KJV):2** O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee;

And to **Genesis 19 (KJV):24** Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven;

He continues, “This indicates that the Persons are of the same substance, not that there is a distinction of nature. For we are not to understand that there are two substances differing from each other, but two Persons, each being of the same substance.

Observe too, that he says, “The Lord grant him mercy.” For as he himself had obtained mercy from Onesiphorus, so he wished him to obtain the same from God. Moral. And if Onesiphorus, who exposed himself to danger, is saved by mercy, much more are we also saved by the same. For terrible indeed, terrible is that account, and such as needs great love for mankind, that we may not hear that awful sentence, “Depart from me...I never knew you, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. vii. 23); or that fearful word, “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. xxv. 41): that we may not hear, “Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed” (Luke xvi. 26): that we may not hear that voice full of horror, “Take him away, and cast him into outer darkness”: that we may not hear those words full of terror, “Thou wicked and slothful servant.” (Matt. xxii. 13, and xxv. 26)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 7 (KJV):22** Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

And to **Matthew 25 (KJV):41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

And to **Luke 16 (KJV):26** And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

And to **Matthew 22 (KJV):13** Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

And to **Matthew 25 (KJV):26** His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

He continues, “For awful truly and terrible is that tribunal. And yet God is gracious and merciful. He is called a God “of mercies and a God of comfort” (2 Cor. i. 3);”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 1 (KJV):3** Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

He continues, “good as none else is good, and kind, and gentle, and full of pity, Who

“willeth not the death of a sinner, but that he should be converted and live.” (Ez. xviii. 24; xxxiii. 11)”

He refers to **Ezekiel 18 (KJV):24** But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

And to **Ezekiel 33 (KJV):11** Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

He continues, “Whence then, whence is that Day so full of agony and anguish? A stream of fire is rolling before His face. The books of our deeds are opened. The day itself is burning as an oven, the angels are flying around, and many furnaces are prepared. How then is He good and merciful, and full of lovingkindness to man? Even herein is He merciful, and He shows in these things the greatness of His lovingkindness. For He holds forth to us these terrors, that being constrained by them, we may be awakened to the desire of the kingdom.”

In Chrysostom’s thinking, the possibility of one losing the grace of God, and thus salvation, was always before him. But he did not understand the Biblical truth of regeneration, and our justification by God which gives us a standing of righteousness.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY VI, page 389**, he says, “But God forbid that any in this fair assembly should appear there suffering such things! but by the prayers of the holy fathers, (See **Schaff Note**) correcting all our offences, and having shown forth the abundant fruit of virtue, may we depart hence with much confidence, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom, and with whom, be glory to the Father together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.”

The **Schaff Note** said, “In the fourth century, the invocation of departed saints, or prayer to God for their prayers, becomes common.”

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XLI, page 253-254**, he says, “But grant that he departed with sin upon him, even on this account one ought to rejoice, that he was stopped short in his sins and added not to his iniquity; and help him as far as possible, not by tears, but by prayers and supplications and alms and offerings. For not unmeaningly have these things been devised, nor do we in vain make mention of the departed in the course of the divine mysteries, and approach God in their behalf, beseeching the Lamb Who is before us, Who taketh away the sin of the world;—not in vain, but that some refreshment may thereby ensue to them. Not in vain doth he that standeth by the altar cry out when the tremendous mysteries are celebrated, “For all that have fallen asleep in Christ, and for those who perform commemorations in their behalf.””

And, speaking of the departed, he says, “Let us then give them aid and perform commemoration for them. For if the children of Job were purged by the sacrifice of their father, why dost thou doubt that when we too offer for the departed, some consolation arises to them?”

He refers to **Job 1 (KJV):4** And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. 5 And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.”

But this Job did while his children were still alive. In the time of the Old Testament this was the accepted method of atoning for sins before God.

And he says, “Let us not then be weary in giving aid to the departed, both by offering on their behalf and obtaining prayers for them: for the common Expiation of the world is even before us.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON TIMOTHY, HOMILY III, page 484-485**, he says, “So those who are out of the contest may perchance be the cause of victory to him, who is engaged in it, and may be partakers of the crowns reserved for the victor. And what wonder, if he who communicates to the living is thought worthy of the same rewards with those who contend, since it is possible to communicate after death even with the departed, with those who are asleep, who are already crowned, who want for nothing. For hear Paul saying, “Partaking in the memories of the Saints.””

But as the **Schaff Note** explains, the word in the Greek that Chrysostom translates as “memories” is not found in the Greek text of the New Testament. The Greek word is **χρεία** (pronounced khra'-ä), from the base of G5530 or G5534; employment, i.e. an affair; also (by implication) occasion, demand, requirement or destitution:—business, lack, necessary(-ity), need(-ful), use, want. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5532**

The correct translation is as in verse 13, as we read in context in **Romans 12 (KJV):9** Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

So Paul is not saying, “Partaking in the memories of the Saints”, but “distributing to the needs of the saints” in verse 13 above.

There is no middle ground between the righteous and the unrighteous at death, as we read in **Luke 16 (KJV):19** There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from

thence.

At the resurrection of Jesus all of the righteous in Abraham's bosom were taken up to heaven. Now all the righteous go directly to heaven.

# Grief

## Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY VII, page 390

*Recapitulation of former exhortations. Sin brought death and grief into the world, and they tend to its cure. Grief serviceable only for the destruction of sin. Remarks upon the passage, Gen. 1. 1. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." It is argued that God's forethought for man in the work of creation affords grounds of comfort; and that mercy is shewn even in chastisement, as in the saying, "Adam, where art thou?" Concluding admonition on the avoidance of oaths.*

1. Yesterday, I discoursed unto your Charity in many words, and upon many subjects; and if out of this variety, it be not possible for you to retain all, I wish more particularly to recall to memory the observation, that God hath implanted the affection grief in our natures for no other reason but because of sin, and He hath made this evident from actual experience. For whilst we are grieved and distressed through the loss of wealth; or by reason of sickness, and death, and the other evils that befall us, we not only reap no consolation from our sorrow, but we also increase the force of these calamities. But if we are in pain and sorrow for our sins, we diminish the weight of sin; we make that little which is great; and very often we blot it all out entirely. Ye should continually remember this, I repeat, in order that ye may mourn for sin only, and for nothing besides; and the additional fact, that sin, though it brought death and sadness into our life, is again destroyed by both these; which I have recently made evident. Therefore, let us fear nothing so much as sin and transgression. Let us not fear punishment, and then we shall escape punishment. Even as the Three Children were not afraid of the furnace, and so escaped from the furnace. Such indeed it becomes the servants of God to be. For if those who were brought up under the Old dispensation, when death was not yet slain, (Hosea 13:14) nor his "brazen gates broken down," nor his "iron bars smitten in sunder;" (Psalm 107:16, Isaiah 45:2) so nobly encountered their end, how destitute of all defense or excuse shall we be, if, after having had the benefit of such great grace, we attain not even to the same measure of virtue as they did, now when death is only a name, devoid of reality. For death is nothing more than a sleep, a journey, a migration, a rest, a tranquil haven; an escape from trouble, and a freedom from the cares of this present life!

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, "1. Yesterday, I discoursed unto your Charity in many words, and upon many subjects; and if out of this variety, it be not possible for you to retain all, I wish more particularly to recall to memory the observation, that God hath implanted the affection grief in our natures for no other reason but because of sin, and He hath made this evident from actual experience. For whilst we are grieved and distressed through the loss of wealth; or by reason of sickness, and death, and the other evils that befall us, we not only reap no consolation from our sorrow, but we also increase the force of these calamities. But if we are in pain and sorrow for our sins, we diminish the weight of sin; we make that little which is great; and very often we blot it all out entirely. Ye should continually remember this, I repeat, in order that ye may mourn for sin only, and for nothing besides;"

Chrysostom did not understand that grief is a natural process when we experience a loss.

Grief is not just about sin. Shutting down our feelings, or denying our feelings when we have a loss, only leads to more problems in our lives. As we learn to process our feelings, we are able to let go of the loss, and the hurts of our past.

He continues, “and the additional fact, that sin, though it brought death and sadness into our life, is again destroyed by both these; which I have recently made evident. Therefore, let us fear nothing so much as sin and transgression. Let us not fear punishment, and then we shall escape punishment. Even as the Three Children were not afraid of the furnace, and so escaped from the furnace. Such indeed it becomes the servants of God to be. For if those who were brought up under the Old dispensation, when death was not yet slain, (Hosea 13:14) nor his “brazen gates broken down,” nor his “iron bars smitten in sunder;” (Psalm 107:16, Isaiah 45:2)”

He refers to **Hosea 13 (KJV):14** I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

And to **Psalm 107 (KJV):16** For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.

And to **Isaiah 45 (KJV):2** I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

He continues, “so nobly encountered their end, how destitute of all defense or excuse shall we be, if, after having had the benefit of such great grace, we attain not even to the same measure of virtue as they did, now when death is only a name, devoid of reality. For death is nothing more than a sleep, a journey, a migration, a rest, a tranquil haven; an escape from trouble, and a freedom from the cares of this present life!”

In the Old Testament, the saints went to Sheol, as Jacob reveals in **Genesis 37 (NASB):33** Then he examined it and said, “It is my son’s tunic. A wild beast has devoured him; Joseph has surely been torn to pieces!” 34 So Jacob tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. 35 Then all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, “Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son.” So his father wept for him.

And David reveals the same in **Psalm 16 (KJV):10** For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

The word translated “hell” in Hebrew is **שְׁאוֹל** (pronounced sheh·ole’), hades or the world of the dead (as if a subterranean retreat), including its accessories and inmates:—grave, hell, pit. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H7585**

This is the same Hebrew word as in Genesis 37:35 above.

Sheol contained Abraham’s bosom, as we read in **Luke 16 (KJV):22** And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

Sheol was divided into two parts, Abraham’s bosom where the righteous dead went before Jesus died on the cross and made a way into heaven for us. It also contained hell, where the unrighteous dead go at death. Abraham’s bosom is now empty as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):8** Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above



all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Jesus descended into Sheol in Hebrew, and Hades in Greek, and led captivity captive into heaven. Now the righteous dead go directly to heaven at death. Their bodies sleep in the dust of the earth until the resurrection, when soul and spirit will again be united with a glorified body.

## **Commentary Summary**

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY VII, page 390**, he says, “1. Yesterday, I discoursed unto your Charity in many words, and upon many subjects; and if out of this variety, it be not possible for you to retain all, I wish more particularly to recall to memory the observation, that God hath implanted the affection grief in our natures for no other reason but because of sin, and He hath made this evident from actual experience.”

Chrysostom would have us “mourn for sin only, and for nothing besides”. But grief is a process that takes time. When we experience a loss, our feelings are involved. We may experience shock. But grief will follow, and usually in the five stages of denial, anger, bargaining, sadness, and acceptance. This is known as the Kubler-Ross model.

Mourning is like sadness, the fourth stage of grief. Grief is a natural process which we can accomplish by processing our feelings as we go through each of the five stages. This will take time, but as we process our feelings, we will get through it.

## The Sabbath

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY XII, page 421-422

9. For this reason, here dismissing this subject; and having given to the laborious and studious an opportunity, by what has been said, of going over likewise the other parts of Creation; we shall now direct our discourse to another point which is itself also demonstrative of God's providence. What then is this second point? It is, that when God formed man, he implanted within him from the beginning a natural law. And what then was this natural law? He gave utterance to conscience within us; and made the knowledge of good things, and of those which are the contrary, to be self-taught. For we have no need to learn that fornication is an evil thing, and that chastity is a good thing, but we know this from the first. And that you may learn that we know this from the first, the Lawgiver, when He afterwards gave laws, and said, "Thou shalt not kill," (Exodus 20:13) did not add, "since murder is an evil thing," but simply said, "Thou shalt not kill;" for He merely prohibited the sin, without teaching. How was it then when He said, "Thou shalt not kill," that He did not add, "because murder is a wicked thing." The reason was, that conscience had taught this beforehand; and He speaks thus, as to those who know and understand the point. Wherefore when He speaks to us of another commandment, not known to us by the dictate of consciences He not only prohibits, but adds the reason. When, for instance, He gave commandment respecting the Sabbath; "On the seventh day thou shalt do no work;" He subjoined also the reason for this cessation. What was this? "Because on the seventh day God rested from all His works which He had begun to make." (Exodus 20:10) And again; "Because thou wert a servant in the land of Egypt." (Deuteronomy 24:22) For what purpose then I ask did He add a reason respecting the Sabbath, but did no such thing in regard to murder? Because this commandment was not one of the leading ones. It was not one of those which were accurately defined of our conscience, but a kind of partial and temporary one; and for this reason it was abolished afterwards. (See **Schaff Note** below) But those which are necessary and uphold our life, are the following; "Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not steal." On this account then He adds no reason in this case, nor enters into any instruction on the matter, but is content with the bare prohibition.

**(Schaff Note:** κατελύθη μετὰ ταῦτα. See on Matt. v. 17, Hom. XVI. (1), St. Augustin, contr. Faust. vi. 4, speaks of it as allegorical, and now become superfluous in the letter. And Ep. lv. (al. cxix.), (*Ad inq. Jan. i. 2*), c. 22, he writes, "of all the Ten Commandments only that of the Sabbath is enjoined to be observed figuratively, which figure we have received to be understood, not to be still celebrated by rest of the body." St. Chrys. on Gen. ii. 3, Hom. X. (7), has, "Now already from the beginning God offered us instruction typically (αἰνιγματωδῶς), teaching us to dedicate and separate the one day in the circle of the week wholly to employment in things spiritual;" thus making the Sabbath a *type* of the Lord's Day, and rest *from* secular, of rest *in* spiritual work.)

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, "9. For this reason, here dismissing this subject; and having given to the laborious and studious an opportunity, by what has been said, of going over

likewise the other parts of Creation; we shall now direct our discourse to another point which is itself also demonstrative of God's providence. What then is this second point? It is, that when God formed man, he implanted within him from the beginning a natural law. And what then was this natural law? He gave utterance to conscience within us; and made the knowledge of good things, and of those which are the contrary, to be self-taught. For we have no need to learn that fornication is an evil thing, and that chastity is a good thing, but we know this from the first. And that you may learn that we know this from the first, the Lawgiver, when He afterwards gave laws, and said, "Thou shalt not kill," (Exodus 20:13) did not add, "since murder is an evil thing," but simply said, "Thou shalt not kill;" for He merely prohibited the sin, without teaching."

He refers to **Exodus 20 (KJV):13** Thou shalt not kill.

He continues, "How was it then when He said, "Thou shalt not kill," that He did not add, "because murder is a wicked thing." The reason was, that conscience had taught this beforehand; and He speaks thus, as to those who know and understand the point. Wherefore when He speaks to us of another commandment, not known to us by the dictate of consciences He not only prohibits, but adds the reason. When, for instance, He gave commandment respecting the Sabbath; "On the seventh day thou shalt do no work;" He subjoined also the reason for this cessation. What was this? "Because on the seventh day God rested from all His works which He had begun to make." (Exodus 20:10) And again; "Because thou wert a servant in the land of Egypt." (Deuteronomy 24:22)"

He refers in context to **Exodus 20 (KJV):10** But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

And to **Deuteronomy 24 (KJV):22** And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

He continues, "For what purpose then I ask did He add a reason respecting the Sabbath, but did no such thing in regard to murder? Because this commandment was not one of the leading ones. It was not one of those which were accurately defined of our conscience, but a kind of partial and temporary one; and for this reason it was abolished afterwards. (See **Schaff Note** below) But those which are necessary and uphold our life, are the following; "Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not steal." On this account then He adds no reason in this case, nor enters into any instruction on the matter, but is content with the bare prohibition."

In the **Schaff Note** above, we read, "St. Chrys. on Gen. ii. 3, Hom. X. (7), has, "Now already from the beginning God offered us instruction typically (*αἰνιγματωδῶς*), teaching us to dedicate and separate the one day in the circle of the week wholly to employment in things spiritual;" thus making the Sabbath a *type* of the Lord's Day, and rest *from* secular, of rest *in* spiritual work."

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY XII, page 421-422**, he says, “we shall now direct our discourse to another point which is itself also demonstrative of God’s providence. What then is this second point? It is, that when God formed man, he implanted within him from the beginning a natural law. And what then was this natural law? He gave utterance to conscience within us; and made the knowledge of good things, and of those which are the contrary, to be self-taught.”

And we read also in **Romans 2 (KJV):14** For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: 15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

Chrysostom writes that the law of the Sabbath is not one the conscience would recognize, but that it is still a law. But he says in his Homily X (7) on Genesis 2:3, “Now already from the beginning God offered us instruction typically (αἰνιγματωδῶς), teaching us to dedicate and separate the one day in the circle of the week wholly to employment in things spiritual;” thus making the Sabbath a type of the Lord’s Day, and rest from secular, of rest in spiritual work.”

We read in context in **Genesis 2 (KJV):1** Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

And we read in **Hebrews 4 (NASB):8** For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. 9 Consequently, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

The words “Sabbath rest” in verse 9, are a translation of the Greek word **σαββατισμός** (pronounced sab-bat-is-mos’); from a derivative of G4521; a "sabbatism", i.e. (figuratively) the repose of Christianity (as a type of heaven):—rest.

In Hebrews 4:9 above, this is referring to the rest of the inheritance, which Israel did not enter into because of their unbelief. We as believers in Jesus Christ enter into His rest as we rest from our works “as God did from His”.

But the first rest for the believer is the rest of salvation, which Jesus taught in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

As we take His yoke upon us, we will enter the rest of serving, walking in the works that He has ordained for us to do. We can then enter the rest of the inheritance mentioned in Hebrews 4:8-10 above. The final rest for us will be the rest of perfection, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

## Forgiveness

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY XX, page 477-479**

15. What allowance then can be made for us, if even when we might receive so great a reward we still do not obey the Lawgiver, but persist in our contempt; for that this is a contempt is plain from hence. If the Emperor had laid down a law, that all those who were enemies should be reconciled to one another, or have their heads cut off, should we not every one make haste to a reconciliation with his neighbour? Yes! truly, I think so! What excuse then have we, in not ascribing the same honour to the Lord, that we should do to those who are our fellow-servants? For this reason we are commanded to say, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." (Matthew 6:12) What can be more mild, what more merciful, than this precept! He hath made thee a judge of the pardon of thine own offences! If thou forgivest few things, He forgives thee few! If thou forgivest many things, He forgives thee many! If thou pardonest from the heart, and sincerely, God in like manner also pardons thee! If besides pardoning him thou accountest him a friend, God will also thus deal with thee; so that the more he has sinned, so much the more is it necessary that we should hasten to a reconciliation; since it becomes a cause of greater offences being forgiven us. Art thou willing to learn that there is no pardon for us, if we are mindful of injuries, and that there is no one who can deliver us? I will make what I assert plain by an example. Suppose that a neighbour has done you a certain injury, that he has seized your goods; has confiscated or embezzled them; and not to confine myself to such a case, let me add to it more things and worse beside, and whatever you will; he has longed to destroy you; he has exposed you to a thousand perils; he has manifested every sort of malice towards you; and left nothing undone that human wickedness can do? For not to go over every thing separately, suppose that he has injured you to such an extent as no one ever injured any before;—why, even in this case, if you are resentful, you will not be worthy of pardon. And I will explain how it is so.

16. If one of your servants owed you an hundred pieces of gold; and some one again was indebted to him in a few pieces of silver; and if the servants' debtor were to come, and entreat and supplicate you that he might obtain indulgence, and you were to call in your own servant, and charge him, saying, "Forgive this man the debt, and from the sum thou owest me I will deduct this debt;" should that servant afterwards be wicked and shameless enough to seize on his debtor, could any one then rescue him out of your hands? Would you not most assuredly inflict a thousand stripes upon him, as having been insulted to the last extremity? And very justly too. This also God will do: for He will say to thee on That Day, "O wicked and villainous servant, yea, was it of thine own thou forgavest him? Out of what thou wert indebted to Me, thou wert ordered to account to him. For "Remit," He saith, "and I will remit unto thee! although, to speak truly, if I had not added this condition, it would have been even then thy duty to have remitted at the instance of thy Lord. But in this case, I did not command thee as a master, but I asked it as a favour from a friend; and I asked it out of My own property; and I promised to give greater things in return; and yet with all this, thou wert not made a better man." Moreover men, when they act in this manner, put down as much to their own servants' accounts, as the measure of the debt is. Thus, for example, suppose the servant owes his master

a hundred pieces of gold; and the debtor of the servant owes ten pieces, should the latter remit his debt, the master does not remit him his hundred pieces, but these ten only; and all the rest he still demands. But it is not so with God; if you remit a few things to your fellow-servant, He remits all your debt.

17. Whence does this appear? From the very Prayer itself. "For if," saith He, "ye forgive men their debts, your heavenly Father will forgive your debts." (Matthew 6:14) And as much as the difference is between "a hundred pence" and "ten thousand talents," (Matthew 18:24,28) so great is it between the debts on the one side, and those on the other!

What punishment then must he not deserve, who when he would receive ten thousand talents, in the room of a hundred pence, yet will not even so remit this small sum, but offers up the Prayer against himself. For when thou sayest, "Forgive us, as we forgive," and afterwards dost not forgive, thou art supplicating of God nothing else than that He would entirely deprive thee of all excuse or indulgence. "But I do not presume to say," replies some one, "Forgive me as I forgive" but only, "Forgive me." But what matters this? For if thou say it not thyself, yet God so doeth; as thou forgivest, He forgives. And this He hath made quite evident from what follows; for there it is said, "If ye forgive not men, neither doth your heavenly Father forgive you." Think not, therefore, that it is a pious caution, not to repeat the whole sentence; nor offer up the Prayer by halves, but as He bade thee so pray thou, in order that the very obligation of that expression, putting thee daily in fear, may compel thee to the exercise of forgiveness towards thy neighbours.

18. Do not tell me, "I have besought him many times, I have entreated, I have supplicated, but I have not effected a reconciliation." Never desist till you have reconciled him. For He said not, "Leave thy gift, and go thy way." Entreat thy brother. But, "Go thy way. Be reconciled." (Matthew 5:24) So that, although you may have made many entreaties, yet you must not desist until you have persuaded. God entreats us every day, and we do not hear; and yet He does not cease entreating. And dost thou then disdain to entreat thy fellow servant. How is it then possible for thee ever to be saved? Suppose that thou hast often pleaded and been repulsed; for this, however, thou wilt obtain a larger reward. For in proportion as he is contentious, and thou perseverest in entreating, so much the more is thy recompense increased. In proportion as the good work is accomplished with greater difficulty, and the reconciliation is one of much labour, so much the greater will be the judgment on him, and so much the brighter will be the crowns of victory for thy forbearance. Let us not merely applaud all this, but exemplify it too in our deeds; and never recede from the work, until we are restored to our former state of friendship. For it is not enough merely to avoid grieving an enemy, or doing him an injury, or being in our minds unkindly disposed towards him; but it is necessary that we should prepare him to be kindly affected towards ourselves. For I hear many saying, "I have no hostility; I am not annoyed; neither have I any thing to do with him." But this is not what God commands, that thou shouldest have nothing to do with him; but that thou shouldest have much to do with him. For this reason he is thy "brother." For this reason He said not, "Forgive thy brother what thou hast against him. But what then? "Go thy way. First be reconciled to him;" and should he have "any thing against thee," yet desist not, before thou hast reunited the member in friendly concord." But thou, who in order that thou mayest obtain a useful servant, tellest out the gold, and discourest with many merchants, and often undertakest long journeys, tell me, art thou not up and doing to the utmost, in order that thou mayest convert an enemy into

a friend? And how then wilt thou be able to call upon God, whilst thou art thus neglecting His laws? Assuredly, the possession of a servant will be of no great profit to us; but the making an enemy a friend, will render God propitious and favourable toward us; and will easily set us free from our sins; and gain us praise with men, as well as great security in our life; for nothing can be more unsafe than he who has even only a single enemy. For our earthly reputation is injured, whilst such a man is saying a thousand evil things of us to every body. Our minds are also in a state of fermentation, and our conscience disturbed; and we are exposed to a continual tempest of anxious thoughts.

19. Now since we are conscious of the truth of all this, let us set ourselves free from chastisement and vengeance; and let us shew our reverence for the present feast, by doing all that has been said; and those same favours which we think to obtain from the Emperor on account of the feast, let us ourselves enable others to enjoy. For I hear, indeed, many saying, that the Emperor, out of his reverence for the Holy Passover, will be reconciled to the city and will pardon all its offences. How absurd then is it, that when we have to depend for our safety upon others, we bring forward the feast, and its claims; but that when we are commanded to be reconciled one with another, we treat this same feast with disdain, and think nothing of it. No one, truly, so pollutes this holy feast, as he does, who, whilst he is keeping it, cherishes malignity. Or rather, I might say, that such a person cannot possibly keep it, though he should remain without food ten days successively. For where there is enmity and strife, there can be neither fast nor festival. Thou wouldest not dare to touch the holy Sacrifice with unwashed hands, however pressing the necessity might be. Approach not then with an unwashed soul! For this is far worse than the other and brings a heavier punishment. For nothing so fills the mind with impurity, as anger remaining constantly within it. The spirit of meekness settles not where wrath or passion exists; and when a man is destitute of the Holy Spirit, what hope of salvation shall he have, and how shall he walk aright? Do not then, O beloved, whilst thou art desirous to be revenged of thine enemy, cast thyself down headlong; nor cause thyself to be left alone without the guardianship of God! For, in truth, if the duty were a difficult one, yet the greatness of the punishment, which results from this action of disobedience, were sufficient to arouse the most slothful and supine, and to persuade them to undergo every degree of labour. But now our argument has shewn that the duty is most easy, if we are willing.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “15. What allowance then can be made for us, if even when we might receive so great a reward we still do not obey the Lawgiver, but persist in our contempt; for that this is a contempt is plain from hence. If the Emperor had laid down a law, that all those who were enemies should be reconciled to one another, or have their heads cut off, should we not every one make haste to a reconciliation with his neighbour? Yes! truly, I think so! What excuse then have we, in not ascribing the same honour to the Lord, that we should do to those who are our fellow servants? For this reason we are commanded to say, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):12** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

He continues, “What can be more mild, what more merciful, than this precept! He hath made thee a judge of the pardon of thine own offences! If thou forgivest few things, He forgives thee few! If thou forgivest many things, He forgives thee many! If thou pardonest from the heart, and sincerely, God in like manner also pardons thee! If besides pardoning him thou

accountest him a friend, God will also thus deal with thee; so that the more he has sinned, so much the more is it necessary that we should hasten to a reconciliation; since it becomes a cause of greater offences being forgiven us. Art thou willing to learn that there is no pardon for us, if we are mindful of injuries, and that there is no one who can deliver us? I will make what I assert plain by an example. Suppose that a neighbour has done you a certain injury, that he has seized your goods; has confiscated or embezzled them; and not to confine myself to such a case, let me add to it more things and worse beside, and whatever you will; he has longed to destroy you; he has exposed you to a thousand perils; he has manifested every sort of malice towards you; and left nothing undone that human wickedness can do? For not to go over every thing separately, suppose that he has injured you to such an extent as no one ever injured any before;—why, even in this case, if you are resentful, you will not be worthy of pardon. And I will explain how it is so.

16. If one of your servants owed you an hundred pieces of gold; and some one again was indebted to him in a few pieces of silver; and if the servants' debtor were to come, and entreat and supplicate you that he might obtain indulgence, and you were to call in your own servant, and charge him, saying, "Forgive this man the debt, and from the sum thou owest me I will deduct this debt;" should that servant afterwards be wicked and shameless enough to seize on his debtor, could any one then rescue him out of your hands? Would you not most assuredly inflict a thousand stripes upon him, as having been insulted to the last extremity? And very justly too. This also God will do: for He will say to thee on That Day, "O wicked and villainous servant, yea, was it of thine own thou forgavest him? Out of what thou wert indebted to Me, thou wert ordered to account to him. For "Remit," He saith, "and I will remit unto thee! although, to speak truly, if I had not added this condition, it would have been even then thy duty to have remitted at the instance of thy Lord. But in this case, I did not command thee as a master, but I asked it as a favour from a friend; and I asked it out of My own property; and I promised to give greater things in return; and yet with all this, thou wert not made a better man." Moreover men, when they act in this manner, put down as much to their own servants' accounts, as the measure of the debt is. Thus, for example, suppose the servant owes his master a hundred pieces of gold; and the debtor of the servant owes ten pieces, should the latter remit his debt, the master does not remit him his hundred pieces, but these ten only; and all the rest he still demands. But it is not so with God; if you remit a few things to your fellow-servant, He remits all your debt.

17. Whence does this appear? From the very Prayer itself. "For if," saith He, "ye forgive men their debts, your heavenly Father will forgive your debts." (Matthew 6:14) And as much as the difference is between "a hundred pence" and "ten thousand talents," (Matthew 18:24,28) so great is it between the debts on the one side, and those on the other!"

He refers in context to **Matthew 6 (KJV):14** For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

And in context to **Matthew 18 (KJV):24** And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with



compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. 28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

He continues, “What punishment then must he not deserve, who when he would receive ten thousand talents, in the room of a hundred pence, yet will not even so remit this small sum, but offers up the Prayer against himself. For when thou sayest, “Forgive us, as we forgive,” and afterwards dost not forgive, thou art supplicating of God nothing else than that He would entirely deprive thee of all excuse or indulgence. “But I do not presume to say,” replies some one, “Forgive me as I forgive” but only, “Forgive me.” But what matters this? For if thou say it not thyself, yet God so doeth; as thou forgivest, He forgives. And this He hath made quite evident from what follows; for there it is said, “If ye forgive not men, neither doth your heavenly Father forgive you.” Think not, therefore, that it is a pious caution, not to repeat the whole sentence; nor offer up the Prayer by halves, but as He bade thee so pray thou, in order that the very obligation of that expression, putting thee daily in fear, may compel thee to the exercise of forgiveness towards thy neighbours.”

Chrysostom would have us be in “daily in fear” in order to keep his law of forgiveness.

He continues, “18. Do not tell me, “I have besought him many times, I have entreated, I have supplicated, but I have not effected a reconciliation.” Never desist till you have reconciled him. For He said not, “Leave thy gift, and go thy way.” Entreat thy brother. But, “Go thy way. Be reconciled.” (Matthew 5:24)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):24** Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

He continues, “So that, although you may have made many entreaties, yet you must not desist until you have persuaded. God entreats us every day, and we do not hear; and yet He does not cease entreating. And dost thou then disdain to entreat thy fellow servant. How is it then possible for thee ever to be saved?”

Reconciliation can be strived for, but may not be dependent on us. Once we have forgiven from our heart, we can reconcile. But if the other party is not willing, we can still be free by releasing them from any issue we had with them.

Chrysostom continues, “Suppose that thou hast often pleaded and been repulsed; for this, however, thou wilt obtain a larger reward. For in proportion as he is contentious, and thou perseverest in entreating, so much the more is thy recompense increased. In proportion as the good work is accomplished with greater difficulty, and the reconciliation is one of much labour, so much the greater will be the judgment on him, and so much the brighter will be the crowns of victory for thy forbearance. Let us not merely applaud all this, but exemplify it too in our deeds; and never recede from the work, until we are restored to our former state of friendship. For it is not enough merely to avoid grieving an enemy, or doing him an injury, or being in our minds unkindly disposed towards him; but it is necessary that we should prepare him to be kindly affected towards ourselves. For I hear many saying, “I have no hostility; I am not annoyed; neither have I any thing to do with him.” But this is not what God commands, that thou shouldest have nothing to do with him; but that thou shouldest have much to do with him. For this reason he is thy “brother.” For this reason He said not, “Forgive thy brother what thou hast against him. But what then? “Go thy way. First be reconciled to him;” and should he have “any thing against thee,” yet desist not, before thou hast reunited the member in friendly concord.”

But thou, who in order that thou mayest obtain a useful servant, tellest out the gold, and discourest with many merchants, and often undertakest long journeys, tell me, art thou not up and doing to the utmost, in order that thou mayest convert an enemy into a friend? And how then wilt thou be able to call upon God, whilst thou art thus neglecting His laws? Assuredly, the possession of a servant will be of no great profit to us; but the making an enemy a friend, will render God propitious and favourable toward us; and will easily set us free from our sins; and gain us praise with men, as well as great security in our life; for nothing can be more unsafe than he who has even only a single enemy. For our earthly reputation is injured, whilst such a man is saying a thousand evil things of us to every body. Our minds are also in a state of fermentation, and our conscience disturbed; and we are exposed to a continual tempest of anxious thoughts.”

We can be open to reconciliation, but if the other is not willing, we are not to make ourselves the victim of their unforgiveness. We must accept the things we cannot change, have courage to change the things we can, and have wisdom to know the difference. We cannot change people. But we can pray for them.

Chrysostom continues, “19. Now since we are conscious of the truth of all this, let us set ourselves free from chastisement and vengeance; and let us shew our reverence for the present feast, by doing all that has been said; and those same favours which we think to obtain from the Emperor on account of the feast, let us ourselves enable others to enjoy. For I hear, indeed, many saying, that the Emperor, out of his reverence for the Holy Passover, will be reconciled to the city and will pardon all its offences. How absurd then is it, that when we have to depend for our safety upon others, we bring forward the feast, and its claims; but that when we are commanded to be reconciled one with another, we treat this same feast with disdain, and think nothing of it. No one, truly, so pollutes this holy feast, as he does, who, whilst he is keeping it, cherishes malignity. Or rather, I might say, that such a person cannot possibly keep it, though he should remain without food ten days successively. For where there is enmity and strife, there can be neither fast nor festival. Thou wouldest not dare to touch the holy Sacrifice with unwashed hands, however pressing the necessity might be. Approach not then with an unwashed soul! For this is far worse than the other and brings a heavier punishment. For nothing so fills the mind with impurity, as anger remaining constantly within it. The spirit of meekness settles not where wrath or passion exists; and when a man is destitute of the Holy Spirit, what hope of salvation shall he have, and how shall he walk aright? Do not then, O beloved, whilst thou art desirous to be revenged of thine enemy, cast thyself down headlong; nor cause thyself to be left alone without the guardianship of God! For, in truth, if the duty were a difficult one, yet the greatness of the punishment, which results from this action of disobedience, were sufficient to arouse the most slothful and supine, and to persuade them to undergo every degree of labour. But now our argument has shewn that the duty is most easy, if we are willing.”

Paul taught as in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

We are not responsible for others who will not forgive, or reconcile. God has called us to peace, as we read in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):15** But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY XX, page 477-479**, he says, “What excuse then have we, in not ascribing the same honour to the Lord, that we should do to those who are our fellow servants? For this reason we are commanded to say, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)”

And he asks, “Art thou willing to learn that there is no pardon for us, if we are mindful of injuries, and that there is no one who can deliver us?”

And he says, “Thus, for example, suppose the servant owes his master a hundred pieces of gold; and the debtor of the servant owes ten pieces, should the latter remit his debt, the master does not remit him his hundred pieces, but these ten only; and all the rest he still demands. But it is not so with God; if you remit a few things to your fellow-servant, He remits all your debt.”

We see that the real issue in Chrysostom’s thinking about forgiveness is salvation. Salvation is about faith in Jesus Christ, as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; **9** That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. **10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

After we have faith in Jesus Christ, we are born again, and God justifies us. With His righteousness imputed to us, we have a standing of righteousness. Forgiveness is then something we do as we walk in the light of the word of God. This is how we maintain our fellowship with the Lord, moment by moment, but our salvation is secure because of our standing of righteousness.

Jesus said, “I am the door” in **John 10 (KJV):9** I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

Once we have gone through the door, we are saved. We don’t lose our salvation if we don’t forgive someone. But we will lose fellowship with the Lord if we do not forgive from our heart those who have offended us. But if we confess our sins, He forgives, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

## The Sacraments

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY XX, page 481

24. Being mindful then of all these things, be urgent with all, for the speedy fulfilment of this precept. And tell me not, that you will do this by little and little; nor put it off till the morrow, for this tomorrow never finds an end. Forty days (**Schaff Note:** Forty days from Quinquagesima, leaving ten till Easter; see Preface below) have already passed away. Should the Holy Easter pass away, I will thenceforward pardon no one, nor employ further admonition, but a commanding authority, and severity not to be despised. For this apology drawn from custom is of no force. Why may not the thief as well plead custom, and get free from punishment? Why may not the murderer and adulterer? Therefore I protest, and give warning to all, that if, when I have met you in private, and put the matter to the proof (and I will certainly put it to the proof), I detect any who have not corrected this vice, I will inflict punishment upon them, by ordering them to be excluded from the Holy Mysteries; (**Schaff Note:** St. Ambrose (Life by Paulinus, sec. 34), forbade Theodosius to enter the church at all, after the massacre of Thessalonica. St. Basil refused *Communion* to Valens, who had joined the Arians, but did not attempt to prevent his entering the church. See St. Greg. Naz. Or. 20 (Ben. 43). He even allowed him to present an offering; but this was an indulgence. Offenders would be liable of course to Ecclesiastical censure, if they took a nearer place than was allowed them.) not that they may remain always shut out, but that having reformed themselves, they may thus enter in, and with a pure conscience enjoy the Holy Table; for this is to be a partaker of the Communion! God grant that through the prayers of those who preside over us, (**Schaff Note:** τῶν προέδρων, a title of bishops. See Bingham, b. 2, c. 2. sec. 5. Flavian was probably not yet returned, but would be always supposed to pray for the people. The plural is sometimes used of a single person, especially one of dignity. Some other persons are called πατέρες in Hom. XVI., and in Hom. VI. probably departed saints, where see of the intercession of saints in general.) as well as of all the saints, having corrected these and all other deficiencies, we may obtain the kingdom of heaven through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, honour, and adoration, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “24. Being mindful then of all these things, be urgent with all, for the speedy fulfilment of this precept. And tell me not, that you will do this by little and little; nor put it off till the morrow, for this tomorrow never finds an end. Forty days (**Schaff Note:** Forty days from Quinquagesima, leaving ten till Easter; see Preface below) have already passed away. Should the Holy Easter pass away, I will thenceforward pardon no one, nor employ further admonition, but a commanding authority, and severity not to be despised. For this apology drawn from custom is of no force. Why may not the thief as well plead custom, and get free from punishment? Why may not the murderer and adulterer? Therefore I protest, and give warning to all, that if, when I have met you in private, and put the matter to the proof (and I will certainly put it to the proof), I detect any who have not corrected this vice, I will inflict punishment upon them, by ordering them to be excluded from the Holy Mysteries;

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Chrysostom continues, “not that they may remain always shut out, but that having reformed themselves, they may thus enter in, and with a pure conscience enjoy the Holy Table; for this is to be a partaker of the Communion!”

“Communion”, the “Holy Table”, was one of the “Holy Mysteries”.

He continues, “God grant that through the prayers of those who preside over us, **(Schaff Note:** τῶν προέδρων, a title of bishops. See Bingham, b. 2, c. 2. sec. 5. Flavian was probably not yet returned, but would be always supposed to pray for the people. The plural is sometimes used of a single person, especially one of dignity. Some other persons are called πατέρες in Hom. XVI., and in Hom. VI. probably departed saints, where see of the intercession of saints in general.)”

Chrysostom continues, “as well as of all the saints, having corrected these and all other deficiencies, we may obtain the kingdom of heaven through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, honour, and adoration, now and ever, world without end. Amen.”

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, PREFACE TO THE BENEDICTINE EDITION, CONCERNING THE STATUES, page 325**

“He supposes it was spoken on the third Sunday in Lent, reckoning for the first Sunday that which preceded the first day of the fast, which we call **Quinquagesima Sunday**.”

**Commentary:** In summary, he mentions Lent which was the time of fasting before Easter.

“The name Quinquagesima originates from Latin *quinquagesimus* (fiftieth). This is in reference to the fifty days before Easter Day using inclusive counting which counts both Sundays (normal counting would count only one of these). Since the forty days of the Lent do not include Sundays, the first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday, succeeds Quinquagesima Sunday by only three days.” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quinquagesima>

## **Communion**

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXXXII, page 491-492**

“*And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave* **(Schaff Note:** [εχαριστια (from verse 27) is substituted for ελογοσα; and ἔδωκεν (from the same verse) for ἐδδου (rec. text) or δος, of the more ancient authorities.—R.] ) *it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; This is my body.*” “*And He took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them,*

saying, *Drink ye all of it; This is my blood of the New Testament, Which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.*” (**Schaff Note:** [The text agrees exactly with the received; except in the substitution of ὑπὲρ for περ. The R.V. following the older authorities, omits “new,” also rendering διαθηκη “covenant” in the text.—R.]) Ah! how great is the blindness of the traitor! Even partaking of the mysteries, he remained the same; and admitted to the most holy (**Schaff Note:** [φορικωδেষτη, “most awful;” literally, “most terrifying,” but applied to religious awe.—R.]) table, he changed not. And this Luke shows by saying, that after this Satan entered (Luke 22:3; see also John 13:27) into him, not as despising the Lord’s body, but thenceforth laughing to scorn the traitor’s shamelessness. For indeed his sin became greater from both causes, as well in that he came to the mysteries with such a disposition, as that having approached them, he did not become better, either from fear, or from the benefit, or from the honor. But Christ forbade him not, although He knew all things, that thou mightest learn that He omits none of the things that pertain to correction. Wherefore both before this, and after this, He continually admonished him, and checked him, both by deeds, and by words; both by fear, and by kindness; both by threatening, and by honor. But none of these things withdrew him from that grievous pest. Wherefore thenceforth He leaves him, and by the mysteries again reminds the disciples of His being slain, and in the midst of the meal His discourse is of the cross, by the continual repeating of the prediction, making His passion easy to receive. For if, when so many things had been done and foretold, they were troubled; if they had heard none of these things, what would they not have felt?

“And as they were eating, He took bread, and brake it.” Why can it have been that He ordained this sacrament then, at the time of the passover? That thou mightest learn from everything, both that He is the lawgiver of the Old Testament, and that the things therein are foreshadowed because of these things. Therefore, I say, where the type is, there He puts the truth.

But the evening is a sure sign of the fullness of times, and that the things were now come to the very end.

And He gives thanks, to teach us how we ought to celebrate this sacrament, and to show that not unwillingly doth He come to the passion, and to teach us whatever we may suffer to bear it thankfully, thence also suggesting good hopes. For if the type was a deliverance from such bondage, how much more will the truth set free the world, and will He be delivered up for the benefit of our race. Wherefore, I would add, neither did He appoint the sacrament before this, but when henceforth the rites of the law were to cease. And thus the very chief of the feasts He brings to an end, removing them to another most awful table, and He saith, “Take, eat, This is my body, Which is broken for many.”

And how were they not confounded at hearing this? Because He had before told unto them many and great things touching this. Wherefore that He establishes no more, for they had heard it sufficiently, but he speaks of the cause of His passion, namely, the taking away of sins. And He calls it blood of a New Testament, that of the undertaking, the promise, the new law. For this He undertook also of old, and this comprises the Testament that is in the new law. And like as the Old Testament had sheep and bullocks, so this has the Lord’s blood. Hence also He shows that He is soon to die, wherefore also He made mention of a Testament, and He reminds them also of the former Testament, for that also was dedicated with blood. And again He tells the cause of His death, “which is shed for many for the remission of sins;” and He saith, “Do

this in remembrance of me.” Seest thou how He removes and draws them off from Jewish customs. For like as ye did that, He saith, in remembrance of the miracles in Egypt, so do this likewise in remembrance of me. That was shed for the preservation of the firstborn, this for the remission of the sins of the whole world. For, “This,” saith He, “is my blood, which is shed for the remission of sins.”

But this He said, indicating thereby, that His passion and His cross are a mystery, by this too again comforting His disciples. And like as Moses saith, “This shall be to you for an everlasting memorial,” (Exodus 12:14) so He too, “in remembrance of me,” until I come. (**Schaff Note:** See 1 Cor. xi. 26, and St. Chrys. on the place, Hom. XXVII. on 1 Cor., where he attributes the words “until He come,” expressly to St. Paul. Various early writers attribute them to our Lord.) Therefore also He saith, “With desire I have desired to eat this passover,” (Luke 22:15) that is, to deliver you the new rites, and to give a passover, by which I am to make you spiritual.

And He Himself drank of it. For lest on hearing this, they should say, What then? do we drink blood, and eat flesh? and then be perplexed (for when He began to discourse concerning these things, even at the very sayings many were offended), (John 6:61-62, 66) therefore lest they should be troubled then likewise, He first did this Himself, leading them to the calm participation of the mysteries. Therefore He Himself drank His own blood. What then must we observe that other ancient rite also? some one may say. By no means. For on this account He said, “Do this,” that He might withdraw them from the other. For if this worketh remission of sins, as it surely doth work it, the other is now superfluous.

As then in the case of the Jews, so here also He hath bound up the memorial of the benefit with the mystery, by this again stopping the mouths of heretics. For when they say, Whence is it manifest that Christ was sacrificed? together with the other arguments we stop their mouths from the mysteries also. For if Jesus did not die, of what are the rites the symbols?

2. Seest thou how much diligence hath been used, that it should be ever borne in mind that He died for us? For since the Marcionists, and Valentinians, and Manichæans were to arise, denying this dispensation, He continually reminds us of the passion even by the mysteries, (so that no man should be deceived); at once saving, and at the same time teaching by means of that sacred table. For this is the chief of the blessings; wherefore Paul also is in every way pressing this.

Then, when He had delivered it, He saith, “I will not drink of the fruit of this wine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” (**Schaff Note:** Matthew 26:29 [The word “henceforth” is omitted; “this” is joined with “vine,” and “new” is in a different position in the Greek. All these are variations from the received text, which is also followed in the R. V.—R.]) For because He had discoursed with them concerning passion and cross, He again introduces what He has to say of His resurrection, having made mention of a kingdom before them, (ε μσονασθητην) table, and rise up in drunkenness, whereas it were meet to give thanks, and end with an hymn.

Hear this, as many as wait not again for the last prayer of the mysteries, for this is a symbol of that. He gave thanks before He gave it to His disciples, that we also may give thanks. He gave thanks, and sang an hymn after the giving, that we also may do this selfsame thing.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “*And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and*

*gave thanks, and brake it, and gave* (**Schaff Note:** [εχαριστια (from verse 27) is substituted for ελογσα; and ἔδωκεν (from the same verse) for ἔδδου (rec. text) or δος, of the more ancient authorities.—R.]) *it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; This is my body.*” “*And He took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; This is my blood of the New Testament, Which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.*” (**Schaff Note:** [The text agrees exactly with the received; except in the substitution of ὑπρ for περ. The R.V. following the older authorities, omits “new,” also rendering διαθηκη “covenant” in the text.—R.]”

He refers to **Matthew 26 (KJV):26** And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

The word “testament” in verse 28 is a translation of the same Greek word which is also translated as “covenant” in the **New American Standard Bible**, as in **Matthew 26 (NASB):26** While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” 27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

And just so we know that Jesus did refer to the “new covenant”, we also read as in **Luke 22 (NASB):20** And in the same way *He took* the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.

He continues, “Ah! how great is the blindness of the traitor! Even partaking of the mysteries, he remained the same; and admitted to the most holy (**Schaff Note:** [φρικωδεστη, “most awful;” literally, “most terrifying,” but applied to religious awe.—R.]) table, he changed not. And this Luke shows by saying, that after this Satan entered (Luke 22:3; see also John 13:27) into him, not as despising the Lord’s body, but thenceforth laughing to scorn the traitor’s shamelessness.”

He refers to **Luke 22 (KJV):3** Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

And to **John 13 (KJV):27** And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

He continues, “For indeed his sin became greater from both causes, as well in that he came to the mysteries with such a disposition, as that having approached them, he did not become better, either from fear, or from the benefit, or from the honor. But Christ forbid him not, although He knew all things, that thou mightest learn that He omits none of the things that pertain to correction. Wherefore both before this, and after this, He continually admonished him, and checked him, both by deeds, and by words; both by fear, and by kindness; both by threatening, and by honor. But none of these things withdrew him from that grievous pest. Wherefore thenceforth He leaves him, and by the mysteries again reminds the disciples of His being slain, and in the midst of the meal His discourse is of the cross, by the continual repeating of the prediction, making His passion easy to receive. For if, when so many things had been done and foretold, they were troubled; if they had heard none of these things, what would they not have felt?

“And as they were eating, He took bread, and brake it.” Why can it have been that He ordained this sacrament then, at the time of the passover? That thou mightest learn from



everything, both that He is the lawgiver of the Old Testament, and that the things therein are foreshadowed because of these things. Therefore, I say, where the type is, there He puts the truth.”

We note here that a “sacrament” has been “ordained”, according to Chrysostom. Now also, the the things in the Old Testament are “foreshadowed because of these things”. That is, the things in the Old Testament are shadows of the things that were to come, as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):1** For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

And in **Hebrews 8 (KJV):3** For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. 4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: 5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

The “type” is the “shadow” of things to come. Chrysostom correctly puts the “type” in the Old Testament, and the “truth” in the New Testament as we shall see.

He continues, “But the evening is a sure sign of the fullness of times, and that the things were now come to the very end.

And He gives thanks, to teach us how we ought to celebrate this sacrament, and to show that not unwillingly doth He come to the passion, and to teach us whatever we may suffer to bear it thankfully, thence also suggesting good hopes. For if the type was a deliverance from such bondage, how much more will the truth set free the world, and will He be delivered up for the benefit of our race. Wherefore, I would add, neither did He appoint the sacrament before this, but when henceforth the rites of the law were to cease. And thus the very chief of the feasts He brings to an end, removing them to another most awful table, and He saith, “Take, eat, This is my body, Which is broken for many.””

He refers again to **Matthew 26 (KJV):26** And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

The “type” he refers to here, which “was a deliverance”, was the Passover feast. The fulfillment of the “type” is the death of Jesus on the cross.

He continues, “And how were they not confounded at hearing this? Because He had before told unto them many and great things touching this. Wherefore that He establishes no more, for they had heard it sufficiently, but he speaks of the cause of His passion, namely, the taking away of sins. And He calls it blood of a New Testament, that of the undertaking, the promise, the new law. For this He undertook also of old, and this comprises the Testament that is in the new law. And like as the Old Testament had sheep and bullocks, so this has the Lord’s blood. Hence also He shows that He is soon to die, wherefore also He made mention of a Testament, and He reminds them also of the former Testament, for that also was dedicated with blood. And again He tells the cause of His death, “which is shed for many for the remission of sins;” and He saith, “Do this in remembrance of me.” Seest thou how He removes and draws them off from Jewish customs. For like as ye did that, He saith, in remembrance of the miracles in Egypt, so do this likewise in remembrance of me. That was shed for the preservation of the firstborn, this for the remission of the sins of the whole world. For, “This,” saith He, “is my

blood, which is shed for the remission of sins.””

Chrysostom understood that the Lord had fulfilled the laws of sacrifice in the Old Testament, and that His blood was for “the remission of the sins of the whole world”.

He continues, “But this He said, indicating thereby, that His passion and His cross are a mystery, by this too again comforting His disciples.”

Again, a “mystery” is “something not understood or beyond understanding”. (**Merriam Webster**)

He continues, “And like as Moses saith, “This shall be to you for an everlasting memorial,” (Exodus 12:14) so He too, “in remembrance of me,” until I come. (**Schaff Note:** See 1 Cor. xi. 26, and St. Chrys. on the place, Hom. XXVII. on 1 Cor., where he attributes the words “until He come,” expressly to St. Paul. Various early writers attribute them to our Lord.)”

He refers in context, speaking of the Passover, to **Exodus 12 (KJV):13** And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. 14 And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.

And Jesus spoke as in **John 21 (KJV):22** Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

Chrysostom continues, “Therefore also He saith, “With desire I have desired to eat this passover,” (Luke 22:15) that is, to deliver you the new rites, and to give a passover, by which I am to make you spiritual.”

He refers to **Luke 22 (KJV):15** And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:

He continues, “And He Himself drank of it. For lest on hearing this, they should say, What then? do we drink blood, and eat flesh? and then be perplexed (for when He began to discourse concerning these things, even at the very sayings many were offended), (John 6:61-62, 66) therefore lest they should be troubled then likewise, He first did this Himself, leading them to the calm participation of the mysteries.”

He refers in context to **John 6 (KJV):54** Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. 59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. 60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? 61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? 62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

And to **John 6 (KJV):66** From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

He continues, “Therefore He Himself drank His own blood.”

That is, He drank of the fruit of the vine, which is a type of His blood, as it may be implied in **Mark 14 (KJV):25** Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the

vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

Chrysostom continues, “What then must we observe that other ancient rite also? some one may say. By no means. For on this account He said, “Do this,” that He might withdraw them from the other. For if this worketh remission of sins, as it surely doth work it, the other is now superfluous.

As then in the case of the Jews, so here also He hath bound up the memorial of the benefit with the mystery, by this again stopping the mouths of heretics. For when they say, Whence is it manifest that Christ was sacrificed? together with the other arguments we stop their mouths from the mysteries also. For if Jesus did not die, of what are the rites the symbols?

2. Seest thou how much diligence hath been used, that it should be ever borne in mind that He died for us? For since the Marcionists, and Valentinians, and Manichæans were to arise, denying this dispensation, He continually reminds us of the passion even by the mysteries, (so that no man should be deceived); at once saving, and at the same time teaching by means of that sacred table. For this is the chief of the blessings; wherefore Paul also is in every way pressing this.

Then, when He had delivered it, He saith, “I will not drink of the fruit of this vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” (**Schaff Note:** Matthew 26:29 [The word “henceforth” is omitted; “this” is joined with “vine,” and “new” is in a different position in the Greek. All these are variations from the received text, which is also followed in the R.V.—R.]”

He refers to **Matthew 26 (KJV):29** But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

And to **Matthew 26 (NASB):29** But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.”

He continues, “For because He had discoursed with them concerning passion and cross, He again introduces what He has to say of His resurrection, having made mention of a kingdom before them, (ε μσονασθητην) table, and rise up in drunkenness, whereas it were meet to give thanks, and end with an hymn.

Hear this, as many as wait not again for the last prayer of the mysteries, for this is a symbol of that. He gave thanks before He gave it to His disciples, that we also may give thanks. He gave thanks, and sang an hymn after the giving, that we also may do this selfsame thing.”

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXXXII, page 496-497**

6. These things I say to you that receive, and to you that minister. For it is necessary to address myself to you also, that you may with much care distribute the gifts there. There is no small punishment for you, if being conscious of any wickedness in any man, you allow him to partake of this table. “His blood shall be required at your hands.” (Ezekiel 33:8) Though any one be a general, though a deputy, though it be he himself who is invested with the diadem, and come unworthily, forbid him, the authority thou hast is greater than his. Thou, if thou wert entrusted to keep a spring of water clean for a flock, and then wert to see a sheep having much mire on its mouth, thou wouldest not suffer it to stoop down unto it and foul the stream: but now being entrusted with a spring not of water, but of blood and of spirit, if thou seest any

having on them sin, which is more grievous than earth and mire, coming unto it, art thou not displeased? dost thou not drive them off? and what excuse canst thou have?

For this end God hath honored you with this honor, that ye should discern these things. This is your office, this your safety, this your whole crown, not that ye should go about clothed in a white and shining vestment.

And whence know I, you may say, this person, and that person? I speak not of the unknown, but of the notorious.

Shall I say something more fearful. It is not so grievous a thing for the energumens (**Schaff Note:** *i.e.*, vexed with devils) to be within, as for such as these, whom Paul affirms to trample Christ under foot, and to “account the blood of the covenant unclean, and to do despite to the grace of the Spirit.” (**Schaff Note:** Hebrews 10:29 [Slightly altered, as in Homily LXXV. 5, p. 455.—R.]) For he that hath fallen into sin and draws nigh, is worse than one possessed with a devil. For they, because they are possessed are not punished, but those, when they draw nigh unworthily, are delivered over to undying punishment. Let us not therefore drive away these only, but all without exception, whomsoever we may see coming unworthily.

Let no one communicate who is not of the disciples. Let no Judas receive, lest he suffer the fate of Judas. This multitude also is Christ’s body. Take heed, therefore, thou that ministerest at the mysteries, lest thou provoke the Lord, not purging this body. Give not a sword instead of meat.

Nay, though it be from ignorance that he come to communicate, forbid him, be not afraid. Fear God, not man. If thou shouldest fear man, thou wilt be laughed to scorn even by him, but if God, thou wilt be an object of respect even to men.

But if thou darest not to do it thyself, bring him to me; I will not allow any to dare do these things. I would give up my life rather than impart of the Lord’s blood to the unworthy; and will shed my own blood rather than impart of such awful blood contrary to what is meet.

But if any hath not known the bad man, after much inquiry, it is no blame. For these things have been said about the open sinners. For if we amend these, God will speedily discover to us the unknown also; but if we let these alone, wherefore should He then make manifest those that are hidden.

But these things I say, not that we repel them only, nor cut them off, but in order that we may amend them, and bring them back, that we may take care of them. For thus shall we both have God propitious, and shall find many to receive worthily; and for our own diligence, and for our care for others, receive great reward; unto which God grant we may all attain by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory world without end. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “6. These things I say to you that receive, and to you that minister.”

So he is speaking to priests and to laity.

He continues, “For it is necessary to address myself to you also, that you may with much care distribute the gifts there. There is no small punishment for you, if being conscious of any wickedness in any man, you allow him to partake of this table. “His blood shall be required at your hands.” (Ezekiel 33:8)”

He refers in context to **Ezekiel 33 (KJV):7** So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a

watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. 8 When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

He continues, “Though any one be a general, though a deputy, though it be he himself who is invested with the diadem, and come unworthily, forbid him, the authority thou hast is greater than his. Thou, if thou wert entrusted to keep a spring of water clean for a flock, and then wert to see a sheep having much mire on its mouth, thou wouldest not suffer it to stoop down unto it and foul the stream: but now being entrusted with a spring not of water, but of blood and of spirit, if thou seest any having on them sin, which is more grievous than earth and mire, coming unto it, art thou not displeased? dost thou not drive them off? and what excuse canst thou have?”

He is speaking to priests about those who may come to the Lord’s Supper unworthily, and he is holding them responsible for anyone who would partake unworthily.

He continues, “For this end God hath honored you with this honor, that ye should discern these things. This is your office, this your safety, this your whole crown, not that ye should go about clothed in a white and shining vestment.

And whence know I, you may say, this person, and that person? I speak not of the unknown, but of the notorious.

Shall I say something more fearful. It is not so grievous a thing for the energumens (**Schaff Note:** *i.e.*, vexed with devils) to be within, as for such as these, whom Paul affirms to trample Christ under foot, and to “account the blood of the covenant unclean, and to do despite to the grace of the Spirit.” (**Schaff Note:** Hebrews 10:29 [Slightly altered, as in Homily LXXV. 5, p. 455.—R.]”

He refers in context to **Hebrews 10 (KJV):26** For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28 He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

He continues, “For he that hath fallen into sin and draws nigh, is worse than one possessed with a devil. For they, because they are possessed are not punished, but those, when they draw nigh unworthily, are delivered over to undying punishment. Let us not therefore drive away these only, but all without exception, whomsoever we may see coming unworthily.”

He is speaking to priests in order that they should not allow anyone to come to the Lord’s Supper unworthily. And Paul warns of this in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):23** For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and

drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

In that “many sleep”, we see that some had committed the sin unto death, which the apostle John speaks of in **1 John 5 (KJV):16** If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

Chrysostom says that one who partakes unworthily shall be “delivered over to undying punishment”. He implies that the punishment is eternal. But even though a brother may commit this sin, he or she is “chastened of the Lord”, even unto death, that they “should not be condemned with the world”, as in 1 Corinthians 11:32 above.

He continues, “Let no one communicate who is not of the disciples. Let no Judas receive, lest he suffer the fate of Judas. This multitude also is Christ’s body. Take heed, therefore, thou that ministerest at the mysteries, lest thou provoke the Lord, not purging this body. Give not a sword instead of meat.

Nay, though it be from ignorance that he come to communicate, forbid him, be not afraid. Fear God, not man. If thou shouldest fear man, thou wilt be laughed to scorn even by him, but if God, thou wilt be an object of respect even to men.

But if thou darest not to do it thyself, bring him to me; I will not allow any to dare do these things. I would give up my life rather than impart of the Lord’s blood to the unworthy; and will shed my own blood rather than impart of such awful blood contrary to what is meet.”

We see John Chrysostom’s commitment to serving the Lord here.

He continues, “But if any hath not known the bad man, after much inquiry, it is no blame. For these things have been said about the open sinners. For if we amend these, God will speedily discover to us the unknown also; but if we let these alone, wherefore should He then make manifest those that are hidden.

But these things I say, not that we repel them only, nor cut them off, but in order that we may amend them, and bring them back, that we may take care of them. For thus shall we both have God propitious, and shall find many to receive worthily; and for our own diligence, and for our care for others, receive great reward; unto which God grant we may all attain by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory world without end. Amen.”

And we read of Paul’s instruction in **1 Corinthians 5 (KJV):9** I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: 10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. 11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. 12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put

away from among yourselves that wicked person.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY XVII, page 448-450**

[5.] ( Chap. x. 1) “For” (he says) “the Law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things”; i.e. not the very reality. For as in painting, so long as one [only] draws the outlines, it is a sort of “shadow” but when one has added the bright paints and laid in the colors, then it becomes “an image.” Something of this kind also was the Law.

“For” (he says) “the Law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things,” i.e. of the sacrifice, of the remission: “can never by those sacrifices with which they offered continually make the comers thereunto perfect.” (Ver. 2–9) “For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins? But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo! I come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me, to do Thy will, O God. Above when He said, Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt offerings, and [offering] for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein, which are offered by the Law, then He said, Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God! He taketh away the first that He may establish the second.”

Thou seest again the superabundance [of his proofs]? This sacrifice (he says) is one; whereas the others were many: therefore they had no strength, because they were many. For, tell me, what need of many, if one had been sufficient? so that their being many, and offered “continually,” proves that they [the worshipers] were never made clean. For as a medicine, when it is powerful and productive of health, and able to remove the disease entirely, effects all after one application; as, therefore, if being once applied it accomplishes the whole, it proves its own strength in being no more applied, and this is its business, to be no more applied; whereas if it is applied continually, this is a plain proof of its not having strength. For it is the excellence of a medicine to be applied once, and not often. So is it in this case also. Why forsooth are they continually cured with the “same sacrifices”? For if they were set free from all their sins, the sacrifices would not have gone on being offered every day. For they had been appointed to be continually offered in behalf of the whole people, both in the evening and in the day. So that there was an arraignment of sins, and not a release from sins; an arraignment of weakness, not an exhibition of strength. For because the first had no strength, another also was offered: and since this effected nothing, again another; so that it was an evidence of sins. The “offering” indeed then, was an evidence of sins, the “continually,” an evidence of weakness. But with regard to Christ, it was the contrary: He was “once offered.” The types therefore contain the figure only, not the power; just as in images, the image has the figure of the man, not the power. So that the reality and the type have [somewhat] in common with one another. For the figure exists equally in both, but not the power. So too also is it in respect of Heaven and of the tabernacle, for the figure was equal: for there was the Holy of Holies, but the power and the other things were not the same.

What is, “He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself”? What is this

“putting away”? it is making contemptible. For sin has no longer any boldness; for it is made of no effect in that when it ought to have demanded punishment, it did not demand it: that is, it suffered violence: when it expected to destroy all men, then it was itself destroyed.

“He hath appeared by the sacrifice of Himself” (he says), that is, “He hath appeared,” unto God, and drawn near [unto Him]. For do not [think] because the High Priest was wont to do this oftentimes in the year....So that henceforward this is done in vain, although it is done; for what need is there of medicines where there are no wounds? On this account He ordained offerings “continually,” because of their want of power, and that a remembrance of sins might be made.

[6.] What then? do not we offer every day? We offer indeed, but making a remembrance of His death, and this [remembrance] is one and not many. How is it one, and not many?

Inasmuch as that [Sacrifice] was once for all offered, [and] carried into the Holy of Holies. This is a figure of that [sacrifice] and this remembrance of that. For we always offer the same, not one sheep now and tomorrow another, but always the same thing: so that the sacrifice is one. And yet by this reasoning, since the offering is made in many places, are there many Christs? but Christ is one everywhere, being complete here and complete there also, one Body. As then while offered in many places, He is one body and not many bodies; so also [He is] one sacrifice. He is our High Priest, who offered the sacrifice that cleanses us. That we offer now also, which was then offered, which cannot be exhausted. This is done in remembrance of what was then done. For (saith He) “do this in remembrance of Me.” (Luke xxii. 19) It is not another sacrifice, as the High Priest, but we offer always the same, or rather we perform a remembrance of a Sacrifice.

[7.] But since I have mentioned this sacrifice, I wish to say a little in reference to you who have been initiated; little in quantity, but possessing great force and profit, for it is not our own, but the words of Divine Spirit. What then is it? Many partake of this sacrifice once in the whole year, others twice; others many times. Our word then is to all; not to those only who are here, but to those also who are settled in the desert. (**Schaff Note:** The Eremites.) For they partake once in the year, and often indeed at intervals of two years.

What then? which shall we approve? those [who receive] once [in the year]? those who [receive] many times? those who [receive] few times? Neither those [who receive] once, nor those [who receive] often, nor those [who receive] seldom, but those [who come] with a pure conscience, from a pure heart, with an irreproachable life. Let such draw near continually; but those who are not such, not even once. Why, you will ask? Because they receive to themselves judgment, yea and condemnation, and punishment, and vengeance. And do not wonder. For as food, nourishing by nature, if received by a person without appetite, ruins and corrupts all [the system], and becomes an occasion of disease, so surely is it also with respect to the awful mysteries. Dost thou feast at a spiritual table, a royal table, and again pollute thy mouth with mire? Dost thou anoint thyself with sweet ointment, and again fill thyself with ill savors?

Tell me, I beseech thee, when after a year thou partakest of the Communion, dost thou think that the Forty Days (**Schaff Note:** Lent; devoted to preparation for the Easter Communion.) are sufficient for thee for the purifying of the sins of all that time? And again, when a week has passed, dost thou give thyself up to the former things? Tell me now, if when thou hast been well for forty days after a long illness, thou shouldest again give thyself up to the food which caused the sickness, hast thou not lost thy former labor too? For if natural things are



changed, much more those which depend on choice. As for instance, by nature we see, and naturally we have healthy eyes; but oftentimes from a bad habit [of body] our power of vision is injured. If then natural things are changed, much more those of choice. Thou assignest forty days for the health of the soul, or perhaps not even forty, and dost thou expect to propitiate God? Tell me, art thou in sport?

These things I say, not as forbidding you the one and annual coming, but as wishing you to draw near continually.

[8.] These things have been given to the holy. This the Deacon also proclaims when he calls on the holy; (**Schaff Note:** After the Oblation was made and before the Communion the deacon proclaimed τὰ ἅγια τοῖς ἁγίοις, “The Holy things for the holy.”) even by this call searching the faults of all. For as in a flock, where many sheep indeed are in good health, but many are full of the scab, it is needful that these should be separated from the healthy; so also in the Church: since some sheep are healthy, and some diseased, by this voice he separates the one from the other, the priest [I mean] going round on all sides by this most awful cry, and calling and drawing on the holy. For it is not possible that a man should know the things of his neighbor, (for “what man,” he says, “knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?”— 1 Cor. ii. 11): he utters this voice after the whole sacrifice has been completed, that no person should come to the spiritual fountain carelessly and in a chance way. For in the case of the flock also (for nothing prevents us from again using the same example), the sickly ones we shut up within, and keep them in the dark, and give them different food, not permitting them to partake either of pure air, or of simple grass, or of the fountain without [the fold]. In this case then also this voice is instead of fetters.

Thou canst not say, ‘I did not know, I was not aware that danger attends the matter.’ Nay surely Paul too especially testified this. But wilt thou say, ‘I never read it’? This is not an apology, but even an accusation. Dost thou come into the Church every day and yet art ignorant of this?

However, that thou mayest not have even this excuse to offer, for this cause, with a loud voice, with an awful cry, like some herald lifting up his hand on high, standing aloft, conspicuous to all, and after that awful silence crying out aloud, he invites some, and some he forbids, not doing this with his hand, but with his tongue more distinctly than with his hand. For that voice, falling on our ears, just like a hand, thrusts away and casts out some, and introduces and presents others.

Tell me then, I beseech [you], in the Olympic games does not the herald stand, calling out with loud and uplifted voice, saying, “Does any one accuse this man? Is he a slave? Is he a thief? Is he one of wicked manners?” And yet, those contests for prizes are not of the soul nor yet of good morals, but of strength and the body. If then where there is exercise of bodies, much examination is made about character, how much rather here, where the soul is alone the combatant. Our herald then even now stands, not holding each person by the head, and drawing him forward, but holding all together by the head within; he does not set against them other accusers, but themselves against themselves. For he says not, “Does any one accuse this man?” but what? “If any man accuse himself.” For when he says, The Holy things for the holy, he means this: “If any is not holy, let him not draw near.”

He does not simply say, “free from sins,” but, “holy.” For it is not merely freedom from sins which makes a man holy, but also the presence of the Spirit, and the wealth of good works.

I do not merely wish (he says) that you should be delivered from the mire, but also that you should be bright and beautiful. For if the Babylonian King, when he made choice of the youths from the captives, chose out those who were beautiful in form, and of fair countenance: much more is it needful that we, when we stand by the royal table, should be beautiful in form, [I mean] that of the soul, having adornment of gold, our robe pure, our shoes royal, the face of our soul well-formed, the golden ornament put around it, even the girdle of truth. Let such an one as this draw near, and touch the royal cups.

But if any man clothed in rags, filthy, squalid, wish to enter in to the royal table, consider how much he will suffer, the forty days not being sufficient to wash away the offenses which have been committed in all the time. For if hell is not sufficient, although it be eternal (for therefore also it *is* eternal), much more this short time. For we have not shown a strong repentance, but a weak.

[9.] Eunuchs especially ought to stand by the King: by eunuchs, I mean those who are clear in their mind, having no wrinkle nor spot, lofty in mind, having the eye of the soul gentle and quick-sighted, active and sharp, not sleepy nor supine; full of much freedom, and yet far from impudence and overboldness, wakeful, healthful, neither very gloomy and downcast, nor yet dissolute and soft.

This eye we have it in our own power to create, and to make it quicksighted and beautiful. For when we direct it, not to the smoke nor to the dust (for such are all human things), but to the delicate breeze, to the light air, to things heavenly and high, and full of much calmness and purity, and of much delight, we shall speedily restore it, and shall invigorate it, as it luxuriates in such contemplation. Hast thou seen covetousness and great wealth? do not thou lift up thine eye thereto. The thing is mire, it is smoke, an evil vapor, darkness, and great distress and suffocating cares. Hast thou seen a man cultivating righteousness, content with his own, and having abundant space for recreation, having anxieties, not fixing his thoughts on things here? Set [thine eye] there, and lift [it] up on high; and thou wilt make it far the most beautiful, and more splendid, feasting it not with the flowers of the earth, but with those of virtue, with temperance, moderation, and all the rest. For nothing so troubles the eye as an evil conscience (“Mine eye,” it is said, “was troubled by reason of anger”— Ps. vi. 7); nothing so darkens it. Set it free from this injury, and thou wilt make it vigorous and strong, ever nourished with good hopes.

And may we all make both it and also the other energies of the soul, such as Christ desires, that being made worthy of the Head who is set over us, we may depart thither where He wishes. For He saith, “I will that where I am, they also may be with Me, that they may behold My glory.” (John xvii. 24) Which may we all enjoy in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost be glory, might, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.”

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “[5.] (Chap. x. 1) “For” (he says) “the Law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things”; i.e. not the very reality. For as in painting, so long as one [only] draws the outlines, it is a sort of “shadow” but when one has added the bright paints and laid in the colors, then it becomes “an image.” Something of this kind also was the Law.”

He refers to **Hebrews 10 (KJV):1** For the law having a shadow of good things to come,

and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

He continues, ““For” (he says) “the Law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things,” i.e. of the sacrifice, of the remission: “can never by those sacrifices with which they offered continually make the comers thereunto perfect.” (Ver. 2–9) “For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins? But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo! I come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me, to do Thy will, O God. Above when He said, Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt offerings, and [offering] for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein, which are offered by the Law, then He said, Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God! He taketh away the first that He may establish the second.”

He refers to **Hebrews 10 (KJV):2** For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

He continues, “Thou seest again the superabundance [of his proofs]? This sacrifice (he says) is one; whereas the others were many: therefore they had no strength, because they were many. For, tell me, what need of many, if one had been sufficient? so that their being many, and offered “continually,” proves that they [the worshipers] were never made clean. For as a medicine, when it is powerful and productive of health, and able to remove the disease entirely, effects all after one application; as, therefore, if being once applied it accomplishes the whole, it proves its own strength in being no more applied, and this is its business, to be no more applied; whereas if it is applied continually, this is a plain proof of its not having strength. For it is the excellence of a medicine to be applied once, and not often. So is it in this case also. Why forsooth are they continually cured with the “same sacrifices”? For if they were set free from all their sins, the sacrifices would not have gone on being offered every day. For they had been appointed to be continually offered in behalf of the whole people, both in the evening and in the day. So that there was an arraignment of sins, and not a release from sins; an arraignment of weakness, not an exhibition of strength. For because the first had no strength, another also was offered: and since this effected nothing, again another; so that it was an evidence of sins. The “offering” indeed then, was an evidence of sins, the “continually,” an evidence of weakness. But with regard to Christ, it was the contrary: He was “once offered.””

And we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):27** Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when

he offered up himself.

And in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):28** So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Chrysostom has well spoken here.

He continues, “The types therefore contain the figure only, not the power; just as in images, the image has the figure of the man, not the power. So that the reality and the type have [somewhat] in common with one another. For the figure exists equally in both, but not the power. So too also is it in respect of Heaven and of the tabernacle, for the figure was equal: for there was the Holy of Holies, but the power and the other things were not the same.”

And this is a good explanation of types in the Bible.

He continues, “What is, “He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself”? What is this “putting away”? it is making contemptible. For sin has no longer any boldness; for it is made of no effect in that when it ought to have demanded punishment, it did not demand it: that is, it suffered violence: when it expected to destroy all men, then it was itself destroyed.

“He hath appeared by the sacrifice of Himself” (he says), that is, “He hath appeared,” unto God, and drawn near [unto Him]. For do not [think] because the High Priest was wont to do this oftentimes in the year....So that henceforward this is done in vain, although it is done; for what need is there of medicines where there are no wounds? On this account He ordained offerings “continually,” because of their want of power, and that a remembrance of sins might be made.

[6.] What then? do not we offer every day? We offer indeed, but making a remembrance of His death, and this [remembrance] is one and not many. How is it one, and not many?

Inasmuch as that [Sacrifice] was once for all offered, [and] carried into the Holy of Holies. This is a figure of that [sacrifice] and this remembrance of that. For we always offer the same, not one sheep now and tomorrow another, but always the same thing: so that the sacrifice is one. And yet by this reasoning, since the offering is made in many places, are there many Christs? but Christ is one everywhere, being complete here and complete there also, one Body. As then while offered in many places, He is one body and not many bodies; so also [He is] one sacrifice. He is our High Priest, who offered the sacrifice that cleanses us. That we offer now also, which was then offered, which cannot be exhausted. This is done in remembrance of what was then done. For (saith He) “do this in remembrance of Me.” (Luke xxii. 19)”

He refers to **Luke 22 (KJV):19** And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

He continues, “It is not another sacrifice, as the High Priest, but we offer always the same, or rather we perform a remembrance of a Sacrifice.”

So Chrysostom here is clear that the Lord’s Supper is not another sacrifice, but a “remembrance of a Sacrifice”.

He continues, “[7.] But since I have mentioned this sacrifice, I wish to say a little in reference to you who have been initiated; little in quantity, but possessing great force and profit, for it is not our own, but the words of Divine Spirit. What then is it? Many partake of this sacrifice once in the whole year, others twice; others many times.”

But here we note that Chrysostom says that “Many partake of this sacrifice...” He does not refer to it only as a remembrance here, but a partaking of a sacrifice.

He continues, “Our word then is to all; not to those only who are here, but to those also

who are settled in the desert. (**Schaff Note:** The Eremites.) For they partake once in the year, and often indeed at intervals of two years.

What then? which shall we approve? those [who receive] once [in the year]? those who [receive] many times? those who [receive] few times? Neither those [who receive] once, nor those [who receive] often, nor those [who receive] seldom, but those [who come] with a pure conscience, from a pure heart, with an irreproachable life. Let such draw near continually; but those who are not such, not even once. Why, you will ask? Because they receive to themselves judgment, yea and condemnation, and punishment, and vengeance.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):27** Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

He continues, “And do not wonder. For as food, nourishing by nature, if received by a person without appetite, ruins and corrupts all [the system], and becomes an occasion of disease, so surely is it also with respect to the awful mysteries. Dost thou feast at a spiritual table, a royal table, and again pollute thy mouth with mire? Dost thou anoint thyself with sweet ointment, and again fill thyself with ill savors?”

Tell me, I beseech thee, when after a year thou partakest of the Communion, dost thou think that the Forty Days (**Schaff Note:** Lent; devoted to preparation for the Easter Communion.) are sufficient for thee for the purifying of the sins of all that time? And again, when a week has passed, dost thou give thyself up to the former things? Tell me now, if when thou hast been well for forty days after a long illness, thou shouldest again give thyself up to the food which caused the sickness, hast thou not lost thy former labor too? For if natural things are changed, much more those which depend on choice. As for instance, by nature we see, and naturally we have healthy eyes; but oftentimes from a bad habit [of body] our power of vision is injured. If then natural things are changed, much more those of choice. Thou assignest forty days for the health of the soul, or perhaps not even forty, and dost thou expect to propitiate God? Tell me, art thou in sport?”

But we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

We don't need to “propitiate God”. “Jesus Christ the righteous” is the “propitiation for our sins”. All we need to do is confess our sin when we sin, and He is faithful to forgive us, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

He continues, “These things I say, not as forbidding you the one and annual coming, but as wishing you to draw near continually.”

Jesus put no requirement of how often we should celebrate the Lord's Supper. He just said to do it in remembrance of Him, as we read in **Luke 22 (KJV):19** And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

And in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):25** After the same manner also he took the cup, when he

had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

Chrysostom continues, “[8.] These things have been given to the holy. This the Deacon also proclaims when he calls on the holy; (**Schaff Note:** After the Oblation was made and before the Communion the deacon proclaimed τὰ ἅγια τοῖς ἁγίοις, “The Holy things for the holy.”) even by this call searching the faults of all. For as in a flock, where many sheep indeed are in good health, but many are full of the scab, it is needful that these should be separated from the healthy; so also in the Church: since some sheep are healthy, and some diseased, by this voice he separates the one from the other, the priest [I mean] going round on all sides by this most awful cry, and calling and drawing on the holy. For it is not possible that a man should know the things of his neighbor, (for “what man,” he says, “knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?”— 1 Cor. ii. 11 ).”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):11** For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

He continues, “he utters this voice after the whole sacrifice has been completed, that no person should come to the spiritual fountain carelessly and in a chance way. For in the case of the flock also (for nothing prevents us from again using the same example), the sickly ones we shut up within, and keep them in the dark, and give them different food, not permitting them to partake either of pure air, or of simple grass, or of the fountain without [the fold]. In this case then also this voice is instead of fetters.

Thou canst not say, ‘I did not know, I was not aware that danger attends the matter.’ Nay surely Paul too especially testified this. But wilt thou say, ‘I never read it’? This is not an apology, but even an accusation. Dost thou come into the Church every day and yet art ignorant of this?

However, that thou mayest not have even this excuse to offer, for this cause, with a loud voice, with an awful cry, like some herald lifting up his hand on high, standing aloft, conspicuous to all, and after that awful silence crying out aloud, he invites some, and some he forbids, not doing this with his hand, but with his tongue more distinctly than with his hand. For that voice, falling on our ears, just like a hand, thrusts away and casts out some, and introduces and presents others.

Tell me then, I beseech [you], in the Olympic games does not the herald stand, calling out with loud and uplifted voice, saying, “Does any one accuse this man? Is he a slave? Is he a thief? Is he one of wicked manners?” And yet, those contests for prizes are not of the soul nor yet of good morals, but of strength and the body. If then where there is exercise of bodies, much examination is made about character, how much rather here, where the soul is alone the combatant. Our herald then even now stands, not holding each person by the head, and drawing him forward, but holding all together by the head within; he does not set against them other accusers, but themselves against themselves. For he says not, “Does any one accuse this man?” but what? “If any man accuse himself.” For when he says, The Holy things for the holy, he means this: “If any is not holy, let him not draw near.”

He does not simply say, “free from sins,” but, “holy.” For it is not merely freedom from sins which makes a man holy, but also the presence of the Spirit, and the wealth of good works.”

Actually, when we have been born again, we are saints, or holy ones, as Paul addressed the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV)**:1 Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, 2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's: 3 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Corinthians were babes in Christ, and yet carnal, but in standing they were sons and daughters of God, that is, saints or holy ones. But the Deacon was warning the church not to eat of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner.

Chrysostom continues, "I do not merely wish (he says) that you should be delivered from the mire, but also that you should be bright and beautiful. For if the Babylonian King, when he made choice of the youths from the captives, chose out those who were beautiful in form, and of fair countenance: much more is it needful that we, when we stand by the royal table, should be beautiful in form, [I mean] that of the soul, having adornment of gold, our robe pure, our shoes royal, the face of our soul well-formed, the golden ornament put around it, even the girdle of truth. Let such an one as this draw near, and touch the royal cups.

But if any man clothed in rags, filthy, squalid, wish to enter in to the royal table, consider how much he will suffer, the forty days not being sufficient to wash away the offenses which have been committed in all the time. For if hell is not sufficient, although it be eternal (for therefore also it *is* eternal), much more this short time. For we have not shown a strong repentance, but a weak."

Again, we see the emphasis on ritual here. By the one standing by "the royal table", and "beautiful in form", and "having adornment of gold, our robe pure", he seems to refer to one who is saved. The one "clothed in rags, filthy, squalid" must refer to one who is not saved, as we read in **Matthew 22 (KJV)**:11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: 12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

Jesus offered one sacrifice for sins, forever, as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV)**:12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

And He is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, as we read in **Hebrews 5 (KJV)**:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

He continues, "[9.] Eunuchs especially ought to stand by the King: by eunuchs, I mean those who are clear in their mind, having no wrinkle nor spot, lofty in mind, having the eye of the soul gentle and quick-sighted, active and sharp, not sleepy nor supine; full of much freedom, and yet far from impudence and overboldness, wakeful, healthful, neither very gloomy and downcast, nor yet dissolute and soft.

This eye we have it in our own power to create, and to make it quick-sighted and beautiful. For when we direct it, not to the smoke nor to the dust (for such are all human things), but to the delicate breeze, to the light air, to things heavenly and high, and full of much calmness and purity, and of much delight, we shall speedily restore it, and shall invigorate it, as it luxuriates in such contemplation. Hast thou seen covetousness and great wealth? do not thou

lift up thine eye thereto. The thing is mire, it is smoke, an evil vapor, darkness, and great distress and suffocating cares. Hast thou seen a man cultivating righteousness, content with his own, and having abundant space for recreation, having anxieties, not fixing his thoughts on things here? Set [thine eye] there, and lift [it] up on high; and thou wilt make it far the most beautiful, and more splendid, feasting it not with the flowers of the earth, but with those of virtue, with temperance, moderation, and all the rest. For nothing so troubles the eye as an evil conscience (“Mine eye,” it is said, “was troubled by reason of anger”— Ps. vi. 7); nothing so darkens it. Set it free from this injury, and thou wilt make it vigorous and strong, ever nourished with good hopes.

And may we all make both it and also the other energies of the soul, such as Christ desires, that being made worthy of the Head who is set over us, we may depart thither where He wishes. For He saith, “I will that where I am, they also may be with Me, that they may behold My glory.” (John xvii. 24)”

He refers to **John 17 (KJV):24** Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

He concludes, “Which may we all enjoy in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost be glory, might, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.”

#### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, On the Priesthood, Book VI, page 76-77**

4. But of those who are subject to the Priest, the greater number are hampered with the cares of this life, and this makes them the slower in the performance of spiritual duties. Whence it is necessary for the teacher to sow every day (so to speak), in order that by its frequency at least, the word of doctrine may be able to be grasped by those who hear. For excessive wealth, and an abundance of power, and sloth the offspring of luxury, and many other things beside these, choke the seeds which have been let fall. Often too the thick growth of thorns does not suffer the seed to drop even upon the surface of the soil. Again, excess of trouble, stress of poverty, constant insults, and other such things, the reverse of the foregoing, take the mind away from anxiety about things divine; and of their people’s sins, not even the smallest part can become apparent; for how should it, in the case of those the majority of whom they do not know even by sight?

The Priest’s relations with his people involve thus much difficulty. But if any inquire about his relations with God, he will find the others to be as nothing, since these require a greater and more thorough earnestness. For he who acts as an ambassador on behalf of the whole city—but why do I say the city? on behalf of the whole world indeed—prays that God would be merciful to the sins of all, not only of the living, but also of the departed. **(Schaff Note:** All the ancient Liturgies contained prayers for the departed. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Catech. Mystag., v. n. vi.), speaking of the prayer after consecration, says: “and then we pray for our holy fathers and bishops, and for all that have fallen asleep before us, believing that it will be a very great benefit to their souls to have supplication offered for them whilst the holy and most awful sacrifice is lying upon the altar,” but the practice was not based upon anything like the later Roman doctrine of purgatory. It was the natural expression of a devout belief in



the “communion of saints.” See Bingham’s Antiquities, Book xv.) What manner of man ought he to be? For my part I think that the boldness of speech of Moses and Elias, is insufficient for such supplication. For as though he were entrusted with the whole world and were himself the father of all men, he draws near to God, beseeching that wars may be extinguished everywhere, that tumults may be quelled; asking for peace and plenty, and a swift deliverance from all the ills that beset each one, publicly and privately; and he ought as much to excel in every respect all those on whose behalf he prays, as rulers should excel their subjects.

And whenever he invokes the Holy Spirit, and offers the most dread sacrifice, and constantly handles the common Lord of all, tell me what rank shall we give him? What great purity and what real piety must we demand of him? For consider what manner of hands they ought to be which minister in these things, and of what kind his tongue which utters such words, (**Schaff Note:** “And we pray and beseech Thee, send down thy Holy Ghost upon us and upon these gifts here outspread, and make this bread to be the precious body of thy Christ, and that which is in the cup the precious blood of Christ, having so changed them by thy Holy Spirit that to us who partake of them they may be for the cleansing of our souls, the remission of sins, the communion of the Holy Spirit.” (**Liturgy of St. Chrysostom**)) and ought not the soul which receives so great a spirit to be purer and holier than anything in the world? At such a time angels stand by the Priest; and the whole sanctuary, and the space round about the altar, is filled with the powers of heaven, in honor of Him who lieth thereon. For this, indeed, is capable of being proved from the very rites which are being then celebrated. I myself, moreover, have heard some one once relate, that a certain aged, venerable man, accustomed to see revelations, used to tell him, that he being thought worthy of a vision of this kind, at such a time, saw, on a sudden, so far as was possible for him, a multitude of angels, clothed in shining robes, and encircling the altar, and bending down, as one might see soldiers in the presence of their King, and for my part I believe it. Moreover another told me, without learning it from some one else, but as being himself thought worthy to be both an ear and eye witness of it, that, in the case of those who are about to depart hence, if they happen to be partakers of the mysteries, with a pure conscience, when they are about to breathe their last, angels keep guard over them for the sake of what they have received, and bear them hence. And dost thou not yet tremble to introduce a soul into so sacred a mystery of this kind, and to advance to the dignity of the Priesthood, one robed in filthy raiment, whom Christ has shut out from the rest of the band of guests? (Matthew 22:13) The soul of the Priest should shine like a light beaming over the whole world. But mine has so great darkness overhanging it, because of my evil conscience, as to be always cast down and never able to look up with confidence to its Lord. Priests are the salt of the earth. (Matthew 5:13) But who would easily put up with my lack of understanding, and my inexperience in all things, but thou, who hast been wont to love me beyond measure. For the Priest ought not only to be thus pure as one who has been dignified with so high a ministry, but very discreet, and skilled in many matters, and to be as well versed in the affairs of this life as they who are engaged in the world, and yet to be free from them all more than the recluses who occupy the mountains. For since he must mix with men who have wives, and who bring up children, who possess servants, and are surrounded with wealth, and fill public positions, and are persons of influence, he too should be a many-sided man—I say many-sided, not unreal, nor yet fawning and hypocritical, but full of much freedom and assurance, and knowing how to adapt himself profitably, where the circumstances of the case require it, and to be both kind and severe, for it

is not possible to treat all those under one's charge on one plan, since neither is it well for physicians to apply one course of treatment to all their sick, nor for a pilot to know but one way of contending with the winds. For, indeed, continual storms beset this ship of ours, and these storms do not assail from without only, but take their rise from within, and there is need of much condescension, and circumspection, and all these different matters have one end in view, the glory of God, and the edifying of the Church.

5. Great is the conflict which recluses undergo, and much their toil. (**Schaff Note:** The following descriptions of monastic life were no doubt drawn from the habits of the monks in the neighbourhood of Antioch, who dwelt on the mountainous heights of Silpius and Casius, south of the city. They lived in separate huts or cabins, but were subject to an abbot and a common rule, probably very similar to that which Pachomius had recently established in Egypt, and which became very generally adopted in the East. There are frequent allusions to the habits of these monks in Chrysostom's Homilies. See especially St. Matt. Hom. LXVIII. c. 3, and LXIX. c. 3; also Life of St. Chrysostom by the translator, pp. 59–68, 3d ed.) But if any one compare their exertions with those which the right exercise of the Priesthood involves, he will find the difference as great as the distance between a king and a commoner. For there, if the labor is great indeed, yet the conflict is common to body and soul, or rather the greater part of it is accomplished by the condition of the body, and if this be not strong, the inclination remains undeveloped, and is unable to come out into action. For the habit of intense fasting, and sleeping on the ground, and keeping vigil, and refraining from the bath, and great toil, and all other means which they use for the affliction of the body are given up, when the body to be thus disciplined is not strong. But in this case purity of soul is the business in hand, and no bodily vigor is required to show its excellence. For what does strength of body contribute towards our being not self-willed, or proud, or headstrong, but sober and prudent, and orderly, and all else, wherein St. Paul filled up the picture of the perfect Priest? But no one could say this of the virtues of the recluse.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, "4. But of those who are subject to the Priest, the greater number are hampered with the cares of this life, and this makes them the slower in the performance of spiritual duties. Whence it is necessary for the teacher to sow every day (so to speak), in order that by its frequency at least, the word of doctrine may be able to be grasped by those who hear. For excessive wealth, and an abundance of power, and sloth the offspring of luxury, and many other things beside these, choke the seeds which have been let fall. Often too the thick growth of thorns does not suffer the seed to drop even upon the surface of the soil. Again, excess of trouble, stress of poverty, constant insults, and other such things, the reverse of the foregoing, take the mind away from anxiety about things divine; and of their people's sins, not even the smallest part can become apparent; for how should it, in the case of those the majority of whom they do not know even by sight?"

The Priest's relations with his people involve thus much difficulty. But if any inquire about his relations with God, he will find the others to be as nothing, since these require a greater and more thorough earnestness. For he who acts as an ambassador on behalf of the whole city—but why do I say the city? on behalf of the whole world indeed—prays that God would be merciful to the sins of all, not only of the living, but also of the departed."

One wonders if he ever read in **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one

mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

As he mentions praying for the “departed”, we continue, “(**Schaff Note:** All the ancient Liturgies contained prayers for the departed. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Catech. Mystag., v. n. vi.), speaking of the prayer after consecration, says: “and then we pray for our holy fathers and bishops, and for all that have fallen asleep before us, believing that it will be a very great benefit to their souls to have supplication offered for them whilst the holy and most awful sacrifice is lying upon the altar,” but the practice was not based upon anything like the later Roman doctrine of purgatory. It was the natural expression of a devout belief in the “communion of saints.” See Bingham’s Antiquities, Book xv.)”

Chrysostom continues, “What manner of man ought he to be? For my part I think that the boldness of speech of Moses and Elias, is insufficient for such supplication. For as though he were entrusted with the whole world and were himself the father of all men, he draws near to God, beseeching that wars may be extinguished everywhere, that tumults may be quelled; asking for peace and plenty, and a swift deliverance from all the ills that beset each one, publicly and privately; and he ought as much to excel in every respect all those on whose behalf he prays, as rulers should excel their subjects.

And whenever he invokes the Holy Spirit, and offers the most dread sacrifice, and constantly handles the common Lord of all, tell me what rank shall we give him? What great purity and what real piety must we demand of him? For consider what manner of hands they ought to be which minister in these things, and of what kind his tongue which utters such words, (**Schaff Note:** “And we pray and beseech Thee, send down thy Holy Ghost upon us and upon these gifts here outspread, and make this bread to be the precious body of thy Christ, and that which is in the cup the precious blood of Christ, having so changed them by thy Holy Spirit that to us who partake of them they may be for the cleansing of our souls, the remission of sins, the communion of the Holy Spirit.” (**Liturgy of St. Chrysostom**)) and ought not the soul which receives so great a spirit to be purer and holier than anything in the world? At such a time angels stand by the Priest; and the whole sanctuary, and the space round about the altar, is filled with the powers of heaven, in honor of Him who lieth thereon.”

So according to the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, it was more than just a “remembrance”.

He continues, “For this, indeed, is capable of being proved from the very rites which are being then celebrated. I myself, moreover, have heard some one once relate, that a certain aged, venerable man, accustomed to see revelations, used to tell him, that he being thought worthy of a vision of this kind, at such a time, saw, on a sudden, so far as was possible for him, a multitude of angels, clothed in shining robes, and encircling the altar, and bending down, as one might see soldiers in the presence of their King, and for my part I believe it. Moreover another told me, without learning it from some one else, but as being himself thought worthy to be both an ear and eye witness of it, that, in the case of those who are about to depart hence, if they happen to be partakers of the mysteries, with a pure conscience, when they are about to breathe their last, angels keep guard over them for the sake of what they have received, and bear them hence. And dost thou not yet tremble to introduce a soul into so sacred a mystery of this kind, and to advance to the dignity of the Priesthood, one robed in filthy raiment, whom Christ has shut out from the rest of the band of guests? (Matthew 22:13)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 22 (KJV):11** And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: 12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

A wedding garment is symbolic of righteousness in this parable. This is made clear as we read in **Revelation 19 (KJV):7** Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

The word “righteousness” in the Greek is in the Nominative, Plural, Neuter case, so verse 8 could be translated as, “And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of saints”.

But we read also, as in **Revelation 19 (KJV):8** It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

However, in Matthew 22:11-14, the “wedding garment” must refer to the “righteousness of God”, for the one who did not possess it was cast “into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”, which is a description of Hell.

He continues, “The soul of the Priest should shine like a light beaming over the whole world. But mine has so great darkness overhanging it, because of my evil conscience, as to be always cast down and never able to look up with confidence to its Lord. Priests are the salt of the earth. (Matthew 5:13)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):13** Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

But this verse does not refer to priests, but to disciples, as we read in context in **Matthew 5 (KJV):1** And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: 2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, 3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

He continues, “But who would easily put up with my lack of understanding, and my inexperience in all things, but thou, who hast been wont to love me beyond measure. For the Priest ought not only to be thus pure as one who has been dignified with so high a ministry, but very discreet, and skilled in many matters, and to be as well versed in the affairs of this life as they who are engaged in the world, and yet to be free from them all more than the recluses who occupy the mountains.”

The priesthood had become “so high a ministry” in the early Church. All of the sacramental ritual made it seem so. But there is no support in the Scriptures for such a ministry or ritual.

Chrysostom continues, “For since he must mix with men who have wives, and who bring up children, who possess servants, and are surrounded with wealth, and fill public positions, and are persons of influence, he too should be a many-sided man—I say many-sided, not unreal, nor yet fawning and hypocritical, but full of much freedom and assurance, and knowing how to adapt himself profitably, where the circumstances of the case require it, and to be both kind and

severe, for it is not possible to treat all those under one's charge on one plan, since neither is it well for physicians to apply one course of treatment to all their sick, nor for a pilot to know but one way of contending with the winds. For, indeed, continual storms beset this ship of ours, and these storms do not assail from without only, but take their rise from within, and there is need of much condescension, and circumspection, and all these different matters have one end in view, the glory of God, and the edifying of the Church.

5. Great is the conflict which recluses undergo, and much their toil. (**Schaff Note:** The following descriptions of monastic life were no doubt drawn from the habits of the monks in the neighbourhood of Antioch, who dwelt on the mountainous heights of Silpius and Casius, south of the city. They lived in separate huts or cabins, but were subject to an abbot and a common rule, probably very similar to that which Pachomius had recently established in Egypt, and which became very generally adopted in the East. There are frequent allusions to the habits of these monks in Chrysostom's Homilies. See especially St. Matt. Hom. LXVIII. c. 3, and LXIX. c. 3; also Life of St. Chrysostom by the translator, pp. 59–68, 3d ed.)”

Chrysostom continues, “But if any one compare their exertions with those which the right exercise of the Priesthood involves, he will find the difference as great as the distance between a king and a commoner. For there, if the labor is great indeed, yet the conflict is common to body and soul, or rather the greater part of it is accomplished by the condition of the body, and if this be not strong, the inclination remains undeveloped, and is unable to come out into action. For the habit of intense fasting, and sleeping on the ground, and keeping vigil, and refraining from the bath, and great toil, and all other means which they use for the affliction of the body are given up, when the body to be thus disciplined is not strong. But in this case purity of soul is the business in hand, and no bodily vigor is required to show its excellence. For what does strength of body contribute towards our being not self-willed, or proud, or headstrong, but sober and prudent, and orderly, and all else, wherein St. Paul filled up the picture of the perfect Priest? But no one could say this of the virtues of the recluse.”

But St. Paul never claimed to be a priest, but only an apostle. It was assumed by the early Church that a priesthood was necessary to handle holy things, and perform holy rituals.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY III, page 63-64**

I observe many partaking of Christ's Body lightly and just as it happens, and rather from custom and form, than consideration and understanding. When, saith a man, the holy season of Lent sets in, whatever a man may be, he partakes of the mysteries, or, when the day of the Lord's Epiphany (**Schaff Note:** This was the great festival of the Greek Church, being in remembrance of our Lord's Baptism, and, as it would appear, of His birth inclusively. The festival of Christmas, which had been in use in the West from an earlier date, was introduced at Antioch A.D. 376, with much opposition. Chrysostom, A.D. 387, urges its due celebration in his *Hom. de Beato Philogon*, and *Serm. in Diem Natal. J. C.*) comes. And yet it is not the Epiphany, nor is it Lent, that makes a fit time for approaching, but it is sincerity and purity of soul. With this, approach at all times; without it, never. “For as often,” (1 Cor. xi. 26) saith he, “as ye do this, ye proclaim the Lord's death,” i.e., “ye make a remembrance of the salvation that has been wrought for you, and of the benefits which I have bestowed.” Consider those who

partook of the sacrifices under the old Covenant, how great abstinence did they practice? How did they not conduct themselves? What did they not perform? They were always purifying themselves. And dost thou, when thou drawest nigh to a sacrifice, at which the very Angels tremble, dost thou measure the matter by the revolutions of seasons? and how shalt thou present thyself before the judgment seat of Christ, thou who presumest upon His body with polluted hands and lips? Thou wouldest not presume to kiss a king with an unclean mouth, and the King of heaven dost thou kiss with an unclean soul? It is an outrage. Tell me, wouldest thou choose to come to the Sacrifice with unwashen hands? No, I suppose, not. But thou wouldest rather choose not to come at all, than come with soiled hands. And then, thus scrupulous as thou art in this little matter, dost thou come with soiled soul, and thus dare to touch it? And yet the hands hold it but for a time, whereas into the soul it is dissolved entirely. What, do ye not see the holy vessels so thoroughly cleansed all over, so resplendent? Our souls ought to be purer than they, more holy, more brilliant. And why so? Because those vessels are made so for our sakes. They partake not of Him that is in them, they perceive Him not. But we do;—yes, verily. Now then, thou wouldest not choose to make use of a soiled vessel, and dost thou approach with a soiled soul? Observe the vast inconsistency of the thing. At the other times ye come not, no, not though often ye are clean; but at Easter, however flagrant an act ye may have committed, ye come. Oh! the force of custom and of prejudice! In vain is the daily Sacrifice, (**Schaff Note:** [On Chrysostom’s view of the eucharistic sacrifice, see *Prolegomena*, p. 21, note.—G.A.]) in vain do we stand before the Altar; there is no one to partake. These things I am saying, not to induce you to partake any how, but that ye should render yourselves worthy to partake. Art thou not worthy of the Sacrifice, nor of the participation? If so, then neither art thou of the prayer. Thou hearest the herald, standing, and saying, “As many as are in penitence, all pray.” As many as do not partake, are in penitence. If thou art one of those that are in penitence, thou oughtest not to partake; for he that partakes not, is one of those that are in penitence. Why then does he say, “Depart, ye that are not qualified to pray,” whilst thou hast the effrontery to stand still? But no, thou art not of that number, thou art of the number of those who are qualified to partake, and yet art indifferent about it, and regardest the matter as nothing.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “I observe many partaking of Christ’s Body lightly and just as it happens, and rather from custom and form, than consideration and understanding. When, saith a man, the holy season of Lent sets in, whatever a man may be, he partakes of the mysteries, or, when the day of the Lord’s Epiphany (**Schaff Note:** This was the great festival of the Greek Church, being in remembrance of our Lord’s Baptism, and, as it would appear, of His birth inclusively. The festival of Christmas, which had been in use in the West from an earlier date, was introduced at Antioch A.D. 376, with much opposition. Chrysostom, A.D. 387, urges its due celebration in his *Hom. de Beato Philogon*, and *Serm. in Diem Natal. J. C.*) comes. And yet it is not the Epiphany, nor is it Lent, that makes a fit time for approaching, but it is sincerity and purity of soul. With this, approach at all times; without it, never. “For as often,” (1 Cor. xi. 26) saith he, “as ye do this, ye proclaim the Lord’s death,” i.e., “ye make a remembrance of the salvation that has been wrought for you, and of the benefits which I have bestowed.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):26** For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

He continues, “Consider those who partook of the sacrifices under the old Covenant, how

great abstinence did they practice? How did they not conduct themselves? What did they not perform? They were always purifying themselves. And dost thou, when thou drawest nigh to a sacrifice, at which the very Angels tremble, dost thou measure the matter by the revolutions of seasons? and how shalt thou present thyself before the judgment seat of Christ, thou who presumest upon His body with polluted hands and lips? Thou wouldest not presume to kiss a king with an unclean mouth, and the King of heaven dost thou kiss with an unclean soul? It is an outrage. Tell me, wouldest thou choose to come to the Sacrifice with unwashed hands? No, I suppose, not. But thou wouldest rather choose not to come at all, than come with soiled hands. And then, thus scrupulous as thou art in this little matter, dost thou come with soiled soul, and thus dare to touch it? And yet the hands hold it but for a time, whereas into the soul it is dissolved entirely. What, do ye not see the holy vessels so thoroughly cleansed all over, so resplendent? Our souls ought to be purer than they, more holy, more brilliant. And why so? Because those vessels are made so for our sakes. They partake not of Him that is in them, they perceive Him not. But we do;—yes, verily.”

Chrysostom refers to “the Sacrifice” above. Again he does not mention “remembrance” when he mentions “the Sacrifice”.

Chrysostom continues, “Now then, thou wouldest not choose to make use of a soiled vessel, and dost thou approach with a soiled soul? Observe the vast inconsistency of the thing. At the other times ye come not, no, not though often ye are clean; but at Easter, however flagrant an act ye may have committed, ye come. Oh! the force of custom and of prejudice! In vain is the daily Sacrifice, (**Schaff Note:** [On Chrysostom’s view of the eucharistic sacrifice, see *Prolegomena*, p. 21, note.—G.A.] )”

You can read this under the heading above, **Getting to Know Chrysostom/Chapter XIII.—His Theology and Exegesis.**

He continues, “in vain do we stand before the Altar; there is no one to partake. These things I am saying, not to induce you to partake any how, but that ye should render yourselves worthy to partake. Art thou not worthy of the Sacrifice, nor of the participation? If so, then neither art thou of the prayer. Thou hearest the herald, standing, and saying, “As many as are in penitence, all pray.” As many as do not partake, are in penitence. If thou art one of those that are in penitence, thou oughtest not to partake; for he that partakes not, is one of those that are in penitence. Why then does he say, “Depart, ye that are not qualified to pray,” whilst thou hast the effrontery to stand still? But no, thou art not of that number, thou art of the number of those who are qualified to partake, and yet art indifferent about it, and regardest the matter as nothing.”

We are warned about eating the Lord’s Supper in an unworthy manner, as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):20** When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. 21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. 22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? what shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. 23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in

remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. 33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. 34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

The word “damnation” in verse 29 above in the Greek is **κρίμα** (pronounced kre'-mä), from G2919; a decision (the function or the effect, for or against ("crime")):—avenge, condemned, condemnation, damnation, + go to law, judgment. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2917**

This Greek word comes from **κρίνω** (pronounced kre'-no), properly, to distinguish, i.e. decide (mentally or judicially); by implication, to try, condemn, punish:—avenge, conclude, condemn, damn, decree, determine, esteem, judge, go to (sue at the) law, ordain, call in question, sentence to, think. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2919**

So a better translation of verse 29 is as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (NASB):29** For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly.

And so we read again in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):30** For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, CONCERNING THE STATUES, HOMILY XX, page 481**, he says, “Therefore I protest, and give warning to all, that if, when I have met you in private, and put the matter to the proof (and I will certainly put it to the proof), I detect any who have not corrected this vice, I will inflict punishment upon them, by ordering them to be excluded from the Holy Mysteries; not that they may remain always shut out, but that having reformed themselves, they may thus enter in, and with a pure conscience enjoy the Holy Table; for this is to be a partaker of the Communion!”

In the **Introduction to the Orthodox Church**, we read “The word ‘Mystery’ is used in Orthodoxy to denote what is known in Western Christianity as a Sacrament. The Italian theologian Peter Lombard (c.1100-1160) first enumerated seven Sacraments and this number was later adopted by the Orthodox church. However, Orthodoxy does not restrict the list to these seven, rather any action designed to bring us closer to the presence of God and done through the church has some degree of sacramentality about it. As in the Catholic Church, the Mysteries of the faith convey divine grace to those who receive them worthily.”

**<http://orthodoxfaith.co.uk/mysteries>**

They also list the seven sacraments as Baptism, Chrismation (Confirmation), Eucharist,



Holy Orders, Holy Unction, Marriage, and Penance. However, they were not all as well defined in the time of Chrysostom. But certainly they were all present in his time. And it is interesting that they were essentially the same as the western Church based in Rome.

**In Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, PREFACE TO THE BENEDICTINE EDITION, CONCERNING THE STATUES, page 325**, he says, “He supposes it was spoken on the third Sunday in Lent, reckoning for the first Sunday that which preceded the first day of the fast, which we call **Quinquagesima Sunday**.”

“The name Quinquagesima originates from Latin *quinquagesimus* (fiftieth). This is in reference to the fifty days before Easter Day” using inclusive counting which counts both Sundays (normal counting would count only one of these). Since the forty days of the Lent do not include Sundays, the first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday, succeeds Quinquagesima Sunday by only three days.” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quinquagesima>

We see the emphasis on ritual in the time of Chrysostom.

Concerning **Communion**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXXXII, page 491-492**, he says, “And as they were eating, He took bread, and brake it.” Why can it have been that He ordained this sacrament then, at the time of the passover? That thou mightest learn from everything, both that He is the lawgiver of the Old Testament, and that the things therein are foreshadowed because of these things. Therefore, I say, where the type is, there He puts the truth.”

Chrysostom understood that the Lord had fulfilled the laws of sacrifice in the Old Testament, and that His blood was for “the remission of the sins of the whole world”.

He also understood that the Passover was a type of the sacrifice of the cross. That is, the Passover “foreshadowed” the cross.

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY LXXXII, page 496-497**, he says, ““For he that hath fallen into sin and draws nigh, is worse than one possessed with a devil. For they, because they are possessed are not punished, but those, when they draw nigh unworthily, are delivered over to undying punishment. Let us not therefore drive away these only, but all without exception, whomsoever we may see coming unworthily.”

He is speaking to priests in order that they should not allow anyone to come to the Lord’s Supper unworthily. Chrysostom says that one who partakes unworthily shall be “delivered over to undying punishment”. He implies that the punishment is eternal. But even though a brother may commit this sin, and he or she is “chastened of the Lord” even unto death, they will “not be condemned with the world”, as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):32** But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

**In Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY XVII, page 448-450**, he says, ““It is not another sacrifice, as the High Priest, but we offer always the same, or rather we perform a remembrance of a Sacrifice.”

And he says, “[6.] What then? do not we offer every day? We offer indeed, but making a remembrance of His death, and this [remembrance] is one and not many. How is it one, and not many?

Inasmuch as that [Sacrifice] was once for all offered, [and] carried into the Holy of Holies. This is a figure of that [sacrifice] and this remembrance of that.”

And, speaking of the offerings of the Old Testament, he explains, “The “offering” indeed

then, was an evidence of sins, the “continually,” an evidence of weakness. But with regard to Christ, it was the contrary: He was “once offered.””

And he explains how the sacrifices of the Old Testament were only types of the true sacrifice of Christ on the cross, as he says, “The types therefore contain the figure only, not the power; just as in images, the image has the figure of the man, not the power. So that the reality and the type have [somewhat] in common with one another. For the figure exists equally in both, but not the power. So too also is it in respect of Heaven and of the tabernacle, for the figure was equal: for there was the Holy of Holies, but the power and the other things were not the same.”

And he says, “It is not another sacrifice, as the High Priest, but we offer always the same, or rather we perform a remembrance of a Sacrifice.”

So Chrysostom here is clear that the Lord’s Supper is not another sacrifice, but a “remembrance of a Sacrifice”.

But then he says, “Many partake of this sacrifice once in the whole year, others twice; others many times.”

He doesn’t mention a remembrance here.

And then he says, “Thou assignest forty days for the health of the soul, or perhaps not even forty, and dost thou expect to propitiate God? Tell me, art thou in sport?”

But we read in **1 John 2 (KJV)**:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

We don’t need to “propitiate God”. Jesus Christ the righteous is the propitiation for our sins. All we need to do is confess our sin when we sin, and He is faithful to forgive us, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV)**:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And he says, “[8.] These things have been given to the holy. This the Deacon also proclaims when he calls on the holy;”

And he says, “he utters this voice after the whole sacrifice has been completed, that no person should come to the spiritual fountain carelessly and in a chance way.”

Here he does not include the word “remembrance”. And what is a “sacrifice” that “has been completed”, but a sacrifice that has been offered?

And he explains, “For when he says, The Holy things for the holy, he means this: “If any is not holy, let him not draw near.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, On the Priesthood, Book VI, page 76-77**, he says, “And whenever he invokes the Holy Spirit, and offers the most dread sacrifice, and constantly handles the common Lord of all, tell me what rank shall we give him? What great purity and what real piety must we demand of him? For consider what manner of hands they ought to be which minister in these things, and of what kind his tongue which utters such words, (**Schaff Note**: “And we pray and beseech Thee, send down thy Holy Ghost upon us and upon these gifts here outspread, and make this bread to be the precious body of thy Christ, and that which is in the cup the precious blood of Christ, having so changed them by thy Holy Spirit that to us who partake of them they may be for the cleansing of our souls, the remission of sins, the communion of the Holy Spirit.” (**Liturgy of St. Chrysostom**)) and ought not the soul which

receives so great a spirit to be purer and holier than anything in the world? At such a time angels stand by the Priest; and the whole sanctuary, and the space round about the altar, is filled with the powers of heaven, in honor of Him who lieth thereon.”

So according to the **Liturgy of St. Chrysostom**, it was more than just a “remembrance”. And there was an altar, and all this was done “in honor of Him who lieth thereon.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON EPHESIANS, HOMILY III, page 63-64**, referring to Communion he says, “Tell me, wouldest thou choose to come to the Sacrifice with unwashen hands?”

Again he does not mention “remembrance” here when he mentions “the Sacrifice”. But Jesus said to do this in remembrance of Him, as we read in **Luke 22 (KJV):19** And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

## Losing Salvation

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW, HOMILY XXVI, page 181

For not at all among Jews only may one see this taking place, but also among them that have believed. For Judas too was a child of the kingdom, and it was said to him with the disciples, “Ye shall sit on twelve thrones;” (Matt. xix. 28) yet he became a child of hell; whereas the Ethiopian, barbarian as he was, and of them “from the east and west,” shall enjoy the crowns with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. This takes place among us also now. “For many,” saith He, “that are first shall be last, and the last first.” (Matt. xix. 30) And this He saith, that neither the one may grow languid, as unable to return; nor the others be confident, as standing fast. This John also declared before from the beginning, when he said, “God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” (Matt. iii. 9) Thus, since it was so to come to pass, it is proclaimed long before; that no one may be confounded at the strangeness of the event. But he indeed speaks of it as a possible thing (for he was first); Christ on the other hand as what will surely be, affording the proof of it from His works.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “For not at all among Jews only may one see this taking place, but also among them that have believed. For Judas too was a child of the kingdom, and it was said to him with the disciples, “Ye shall sit on twelve thrones;” (Matt. xix. 28)”

He refers to **Matthew 19 (KJV):28** And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

But Jesus spoke to those “which have followed me”. Judas was not one of those.

And we read of Judas in **Matthew 26 (KJV):24** The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

And in **John 17 (KJV):12** While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

And in **Psalms 41 (KJV):9** Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.

And Jesus knew whom He had chosen, as we read in **John 13 (KJV):18** I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

And in **John 6 (KJV):70** Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

Judas was a “child of the kingdom” of Israel, but he was never he a child of the Kingdom of God. He was always a “child of hell”. The condition for those who would sit on the twelve thrones was that you had to have followed Jesus. Judas did not believe in Jesus, and he was with Jesus, but he did not follow Jesus. He was never saved. There will still be twelve thrones, but the one Judas would have had if he had followed Jesus was taken by another who did believe in Him, and followed Him.

The “children of the kingdom” Jesus speaks of in Matthew 8:11 were those who were children of the kingdom of Israel as we read in context in **Matthew 8 (KJV):5** And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, 6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. 7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. 8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. 9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. 10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. 11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

In this sense, Judas was a “child of the kingdom”, that is, he was an Israelite. But Judas was never a child of the kingdom of God. So Judas did not lose his salvation.

Chrysostom continues, “yet he became a child of hell; whereas the Ethiopian, barbarian as he was, and of them “from the east and west,” shall enjoy the crowns with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. This takes place among us also now. “For many,” saith He, “that are first shall be last, and the last first.” (Matt. xix. 30)”

He refers to **Matthew 19 (KJV):30** But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

He continues, “And this He saith, that neither the one may grow languid, as unable to return; nor the others be confident, as standing fast. This John also declared before from the beginning, when he said, “God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” (Matt. iii. 9)”

He refers to **Matthew 3 (KJV):9** And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

He continues, “Thus, since it was so to come to pass, it is proclaimed long before; that no one may be confounded at the strangeness of the event. But he indeed speaks of it as a possible thing (for he was first); Christ on the other hand as what will surely be, affording the proof of it from His works.”

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, HOMILY I, page 8-9**

As if then we were banqueting with Christ Himself, and partaking of His table, let us do nothing at random, but let us pass our time in fastings, and prayers, and much sobriety of mind. For if a man who is destined to enter upon some temporal government, prepares himself all his life long, and that he may obtain some dignity, lays out his money, spends his time, and submits to endless troubles; what shall we deserve, who draw near to the kingdom of heaven with such negligence, and both show no earnestness before we have received, and after having received are again negligent? Nay, this is the very reason why we are negligent after having received, that we did not watch before we had received. Therefore many, after they have received,

immediately have returned to their former vomit, and have become more wicked, and drawn upon themselves a more severe punishment; when having been delivered from their former sins, herein they have more grievously provoked the Judge, that having been delivered from so great a disease, still they did not learn sobriety, but that has happened unto them, which Christ threatened to the paralytic man, saying, “Behold thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee” (John v. 14): and which He also predicted of the Jews, that “the last state shall be worse than the first.” (Matt. xii. 45) For *if*, saith He, showing that by their ingratitude they should bring upon them the worst of evils, “if I had not come, and spoken unto them, they had not had sin” (John xv. 22); so that the guilt of sins committed after these benefits is doubled and quadrupled, in that, after the honour put upon us, we show ourselves ungrateful and wicked. And the Laver of Baptism helps not a whit to procure for us a milder punishment. And consider: a man has gotten grievous sins by committing murder or adultery, or some other crime: *these* were remitted through Baptism. For there is no sin, no impiety, which does not yield and give place to this gift; for the Grace is Divine. A man has again committed adultery and murder; the former adultery is indeed done away, the murder forgiven, and not brought up again to his charge, “for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (Rom. xi. 29); but for those committed after Baptism he suffers a punishment as great as he would if both the former sins were brought up again, and many worse than these. For the guilt is no longer simply equal, but doubled and tripled. (**Schaff Note:** This view, that baptism cleansed from all sin, and that, therefore, sin after baptism was far more heinous and hard to be forgiven, held wide sway in the early church and operated as a powerful motive for the delay of baptism. The reception of the grace of baptism involves this increased liability to deadlier sin. For this reason Tertullian had urged its postponement. “And so according to the circumstances and disposition, and even age, of each individual, the delay of baptism is preferable; principally, however, in the case of little children.” “If any understand the weighty import of baptism, they will fear its reception more than its delay,” etc. *De Baptismo*, xviii. Chrys. did not carry the idea to this length.—G.B.S.)

Look: in proof that the penalty of these sins is greater, hear what St. Paul says: “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Heb. x. 28, 29)

Perhaps we have now deterred many from receiving baptism. Not however with this intention have we so spoken, but on purpose that having received it, they may continue in temperance and much moderation. ‘But I am afraid,’ says one. If thou wert afraid, thou wouldest have received and guarded it. ‘Nay,’ saith he, ‘but this is the very reason why I do not receive it,—that I am frightened.’ And art thou not afraid to depart thus? ‘God is merciful,’ saith he. Receive baptism then, because He is merciful and ready to help. But thou, where to be in earnest is the thing required, dost not allege this mercifulness; thou thinkest of this only where thou hast a mind to do so. And yet that was the time to resort to God’s mercy, and we shall then be surest of obtaining it, when we do our part. For he that has cast the whole matter upon God, and, after his baptism, sins, as being man it is likely, he may, and repents, shall obtain mercy; whereas he that prevaricates with God’s mercy, and departs this life with no portion in that grace, shall have his punishment without a word to be said for him. ‘But how if he depart,’ say you, ‘after having had the grace vouchsafed to him?’ He will depart empty again

of all good works. For it is impossible, yes, it is in my opinion impossible, that the man who upon such hopes dallied with baptism should have effected ought generous and good. And why dost thou harbor such fear, and presume upon the uncertain chance of the future? Why not convert this fear into labor and earnestness, and thou shalt be great and admirable? Which is best, to fear or to labor? Suppose some one to have placed thee, having nothing to do, in a tottering house, saying, Look for the decaying roof to fall upon thy head: for perhaps it will fall, perhaps not; but if thou hadst rather it should not, then work and inhabit the more secure apartment: which wouldest thou have rather chosen, that idle condition accompanied with fear, or this labor with confidence? Why then, act now in the same way. For the uncertain future is like a decayed house, ever threatening to fall; but this work, laborious though it be, ensures safety.

Now God forbid that it should happen to us to fall into so great straits as to sin after baptism. However, even if aught such should happen, God is merciful, and has given us many ways of obtaining remission even after this. But just as those who sin after baptism are punished for this reason more severely than the Catechumens, so again, those who know that there are medicines in repentance, and yet will not make use of them, will undergo a more grievous chastisement. For by how much the mercy of God is enlarged, by so much does the punishment increase, if we do not duly profit by that mercy. What sayest thou, O man? When thou wast full of such grievous evils, and given over, suddenly thou becamest a friend, and wast exalted to the highest honor, not by labors of thine own, but by the gift of God: thou didst again return to thy former misconduct; and though thou didst deserve to be sorely punished, nevertheless, God did not turn away, but gave unnumbered opportunities of salvation, whereby thou mayest yet become a friend: yet for all this, thou hast not the will to labor. What forgiveness canst thou deserve henceforth? Will not the Gentiles with good reason deride thee as a worthless drone? For if there be power in that doctrine of yours, say they, what means this multitude of uninitiated persons? If the mysteries be excellent and desirable, let none receive baptism at his last gasp. For that is not the time for giving of mysteries but for making of wills; the time for mysteries is in health of mind and soundness of soul. For, if a man would not prefer to make his will in such a condition; and if he does so make it, he gives a handle for subsequent litigation (and this is the reason why testators premise these words: “Alive, in my senses, and in health, I make this disposal of my property.”), how should it be possible for a person who is no longer master of his senses to go through the right course of preparation for the sacred mysteries? For if in the affairs of this life, the laws of the world would not permit a man who was not perfectly sound in mind to make a will, although it be in his own affairs that he would lay down the law; how, when thou art receiving instruction concerning the kingdom of heaven, and the unspeakable riches of that world, shall it be possible for thee to learn all clearly, when very likely too thou art beside thyself through the violence of thy malady? And when wilt thou say those words to Christ, in the act of being buried with Him when at the point to depart hence? For indeed both by works and by words must we show our good will towards Him. (Rom. vi. 4) Now what thou art doing is all one, as if a man should want to be enlisted as a soldier, when the war is just about to break up; or to strip for the contest in the arena, just when the spectators have risen from their seats. For thou hast thine arms given thee, not that thou shouldest straightway depart hence, but that being equipped therewith, thou mayest raise a trophy over the enemy. Let no one think that it is out of season to discourse on this subject, because it is not

Lent now. Nay, this it is that vexes me, that ye look to a set time in such matters. Whereas that Eunuch, barbarian as he was and on a journey, yea on the very highway, he did not seek for a set time (Acts viii. 27); no, nor the jailer, though he was in the midst of a set of prisoners, and the teacher he saw before him was a man scourged and in chains, and whom he was still to have in his custody. (ib. xvi. 29) But here, not being inmates of a jail, nor out on a journey, many are putting off their baptism even to their last breath.

**Commentary:** “As if then we were banqueting with Christ Himself, and partaking of His table, let us do nothing at random, but let us pass our time in fastings, and prayers, and much sobriety of mind. For if a man who is destined to enter upon some temporal government, prepares himself all his life long, and that he may obtain some dignity, lays out his money, spends his time, and submits to endless troubles; what shall we deserve, who draw near to the kingdom of heaven with such negligence, and both show no earnestness before we have received, and after having received are again negligent? Nay, this is the very reason why we are negligent after having received, that we did not watch before we had received. Therefore many, after they have received, immediately have returned to their former vomit, and have become more wicked, and drawn upon themselves a more severe punishment; when having been delivered from their former sins, herein they have more grievously provoked the Judge, that having been delivered from so great a disease, still they did not learn sobriety, but that has happened unto them, which Christ threatened to the paralytic man, saying, “Behold thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee” (John v. 14): and which He also predicted of the Jews, that “the last state shall be worse than the first.” (Matt. xii. 45)”

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):14** Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

And to **Matthew 12 (KJV):45** Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

He continues, “For *if*, saith He, showing that by their ingratitude they should bring upon them the worst of evils, “if I had not come, and spoken unto them, they had not had sin” (John xv. 22);”

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):22** If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.

He continues, “so that the guilt of sins committed after these benefits is doubled and quadrupled, in that, after the honour put upon us, we show ourselves ungrateful and wicked. And the Laver of Baptism helps not a whit to procure for us a milder punishment. And consider: a man has gotten grievous sins by committing murder or adultery, or some other crime: *these* were remitted through Baptism. For there is no sin, no impiety, which does not yield and give place to this gift; for the Grace is Divine. A man has again committed adultery and murder; the former adultery is indeed done away, the murder forgiven, and not brought up again to his charge, “for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (Rom. xi. 29);”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):29** For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

He continues, “but for those committed after Baptism he suffers a punishment as great as he would if both the former sins were brought up again, and many worse than these. For the



guilt is no longer simply equal, but doubled and tripled. (**Schaff Note:** This view, that baptism cleansed from all sin, and that, therefore, sin after baptism was far more heinous and hard to be forgiven, held wide sway in the early church and operated as a powerful motive for the delay of baptism. The reception of the grace of baptism involves this increased liability to deadlier sin. For this reason Tertullian had urged its postponement. “And so according to the circumstances and disposition, and even age, of each individual, the delay of baptism is preferable; principally, however, in the case of little children.” “If any understand the weighty import of baptism, they will fear its reception more than its delay,” etc. *De Baptismo*, xviii. Chrys. did not carry the idea to this length.—G.B.S.)

But we note that God has made provision for believers who sin after being born again, as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):**1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Chrysostom continues, and says, “Look: in proof that the penalty of these sins is greater, hear what St. Paul says: “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Heb. x. 28, 29)”

He refers to **Hebrews 10 (KJV):**28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

There were many laws in the Old Testament where capital punishment was required. Listed below are the mortal offenses which were punishable by death.

#### 1.) Murder

**Exodus 21 (KJV):**12 He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. 13 And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. 14 But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.

#### 2.) Striking your mother or father

**Exodus 21 (KJV):**15 And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death.

#### 3.) Kidnapping

**Exodus 21 (KJV):**16 And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.

#### 4.) Cursing your father or mother

**Exodus 21 (KJV):**17 And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death. **Leviticus 20 (KJV):**9 For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him.

5.) You were also held responsible if it is in your power, and you had knowledge of danger to anyone and you do nothing about it.

**Exodus 21 (KJV):**28 If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. 29 But if the ox

were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death.

#### 6.) Bestiality

**Exodus 22 (KJV):**19 Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death.

**Leviticus 20 (KJV):**15 And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast. 16 And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman, and the beast: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.

#### 7.) Idolatry

**Exodus 22 (KJV):**20 He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed.

#### 8.) Breaking the Sabbath, that is, doing work on the Sabbath

**Exodus 31 (KJV):**13 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. 14 Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. 15 Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.

#### 9.) Offering a child sacrifice

**Leviticus 20 (KJV):**1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones. 3 And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name.

#### 10.) Adultery

**Leviticus 20 (KJV):**10 And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

**Leviticus 20 (KJV):**11 And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.

**Leviticus 20 (KJV):**12 And if a man lie with his daughter in law, both of them shall surely be put to death: they have wrought confusion; their blood shall be upon them.

**Leviticus 20 (KJV):**14 And if a man take a wife and her mother, it is wickedness: they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they; that there be no wickedness among you.

#### 11.) Homosexuality

**Leviticus 20 (KJV):**13 If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.

#### 12.) Cursing God

**Leviticus 24 (KJV):**15 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin. 16 And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall

surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the Lord, shall be put to death.

13.) Entering the court of the tabernacle if you were not a Levite.

**Numbers 1 (NASB):**51 So when the tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle encamps, the Levites shall set it up. But the layman who comes near shall be put to death.

14.) Entering the tabernacle in the midst of the court if you were not a priest. Only a son of Aaron could enter. The other Levites who were not sons of Aaron, and therefore not priests, also could not enter the tabernacle. The other Levites were helpers of the priests, and did the set up of the tabernacle, as we read in **Numbers 16 (KJV):**8 And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi: 9 Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? 10 And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also? 11 For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the Lord: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?

**Numbers 3 (NASB):**10 So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons that they may keep their priesthood, but the layman who comes near shall be put to death.

**Numbers 3 (NASB):**38 Now those who were to camp before the tabernacle eastward, before the tent of meeting toward the sunrise, are Moses and Aaron and his sons, performing the duties of the sanctuary for the obligation of the sons of Israel; but the layman coming near was to be put to death.

**Numbers 18 (NASB):**7 But you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything concerning the altar and inside the veil, and you are to perform service. I am giving you the priesthood as a bestowed service, but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death.

15.) False prophets

**Deuteronomy 13 (NASB):**1 "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' 3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. 5 But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you."

And, for the first six of the ten commandments, you could suffer the death penalty if you broke them. At least two witnesses must testify for someone to be put to death as we read in **Deuteronomy 17 (NASB):**6 On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness. 7 The hand of the witnesses shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

The idea was that the punishment should fit the crime as we read in **Exodus 21 (KJV):**22 If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. 23 And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, 24 Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

However, in the New Testament, or under the New Covenant, we are not under the law, but under grace. But God deals with us as with sons and daughters, as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):**3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Chrysostom continues, “Perhaps we have now deterred many from receiving baptism. Not however with this intention have we so spoken, but on purpose that having received it, they may continue in temperance and much moderation. ‘But I am afraid,’ says one. If thou wert afraid, thou wouldest have received and guarded it. ‘Nay,’ saith he, ‘but this is the very reason why I do not receive it,—that I am frightened.’ And art thou not afraid to depart thus? ‘God is merciful,’ saith he. Receive baptism then, because He is merciful and ready to help. But thou, where to be in earnest is the thing required, dost not allege this mercifulness; thou thinkest of this only where thou hast a mind to do so. And yet that was the time to resort to God’s mercy, and we shall then be surest of obtaining it, when we do our part. For he that has cast the whole matter upon God, and, after his baptism, sins, as being man it is likely, he may, and repents, shall obtain mercy; whereas he that prevaricates with God’s mercy, and departs this life with no portion in that grace, shall have his punishment without a word to be said for him.”

But after one has been born again by faith in Jesus Christ, he will not depart “this life with no portion in that grace”. If he only builds wood, hay, or stubble, or even if he commits the sin unto death, he will still be saved, yet as by the fire of his bad choices in this life.

Chrysostom continues, “‘But how if he depart,’ say you, ‘after having had the grace vouchsafed to him?’ He will depart empty again of all good works. For it is impossible, yes, it is in my opinion impossible, that the man who upon such hopes dallied with baptism should have effected ought generous and good. And why dost thou harbor such fear, and presume upon the uncertain chance of the future? Why not convert this fear into labor and earnestness, and thou shalt be great and admirable? Which is best, to fear or to labor? Suppose some one to have

placed thee, having nothing to do, in a tottering house, saying, Look for the decaying roof to fall upon thy head: for perhaps it will fall, perhaps not; but if thou hadst rather it should not, then work and inhabit the more secure apartment: which wouldest thou have rather chosen, that idle condition accompanied with fear, or this labor with confidence? Why then, act now in the same way. For the uncertain future is like a decayed house, ever threatening to fall; but this work, laborious though it be, ensures safety.”

Chrysostom and the early Church did not understand the security of the believer. It is not the ritual of baptism that saves us, but faith in Jesus Christ. Once we have truly believed in Jesus Christ, and have been born again, God justifies us, as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

And in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

When we are justified, God imputes His righteousness down to our account, as we read in **Romans 4 (KJV):5** But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

And in **Romans 4 (KJV):9** Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

Abraham received the righteousness of God because of his faith, and this before he was circumcised.

The righteousness that is imputed to us when we believe is the same righteousness of God, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

Chrysostom continues, “Now God forbid that it should happen to us to fall into so great straits as to sin after baptism.”

But God has made provision for us. If we sin after we have been born again, we have an advocate with the Father, as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

He continues, “However, even if aught such should happen, God is merciful, and has given us many ways of obtaining remission even after this. But just as those who sin after baptism are punished for this reason more severely than the Catechumens, so again, those who know that there are medicines in repentance, and yet will not make use of them, will undergo a more grievous chastisement. For by how much the mercy of God is enlarged, by so much does

the punishment increase, if we do not duly profit by that mercy. What sayest thou, O man? When thou wast full of such grievous evils, and given over, suddenly thou becomest a friend, and wast exalted to the highest honor, not by labors of thine own, but by the gift of God: thou didst again return to thy former misconduct; and though thou didst deserve to be sorely punished, nevertheless, God did not turn away, but gave unnumbered opportunities of salvation, whereby thou mayest yet become a friend: yet for all this, thou hast not the will to labor. What forgiveness canst thou deserve henceforth? Will not the Gentiles with good reason deride thee as a worthless drone? For if there be power in that doctrine of yours, say they, what means this multitude of uninitiated persons? If the mysteries be excellent and desirable, let none receive baptism at his last gasp. For that is not the time for giving of mysteries but for making of wills; the time for mysteries is in health of mind and soundness of soul. For, if a man would not prefer to make his will in such a condition; and if he does so make it, he gives a handle for subsequent litigation (and this is the reason why testators premise these words: "Alive, in my senses, and in health, I make this disposal of my property:"), how should it be possible for a person who is no longer master of his senses to go through the right course of preparation for the sacred mysteries? For if in the affairs of this life, the laws of the world would not permit a man who was not perfectly sound in mind to make a will, although it be in his own affairs that he would lay down the law; how, when thou art receiving instruction concerning the kingdom of heaven, and the unspeakable riches of that world, shall it be possible for thee to learn all clearly, when very likely too thou art beside thyself through the violence of thy malady? And when wilt thou say those words to Christ, in the act of being buried with Him when at the point to depart hence? For indeed both by works and by words must we show our good will towards Him. (Rom. vi. 4)"

He refers to **Romans 6 (KJV):4** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

He continues, "Now what thou art doing is all one, as if a man should want to be enlisted as a soldier, when the war is just about to break up; or to strip for the contest in the arena, just when the spectators have risen from their seats. For thou hast thine arms given thee, not that thou shouldest straightway depart hence, but that being equipped therewith, thou mayest raise a trophy over the enemy. Let no one think that it is out of season to discourse on this subject, because it is not Lent now. Nay, this it is that vexes me, that ye look to a set time in such matters. Whereas that Eunuch, barbarian as he was and on a journey, yea on the very highway, he did not seek for a set time (Acts viii. 27);"

He refers to **Acts 8 (KJV):27** And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, 28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. 29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? 31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. 32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: 33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. 34 And the

eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. 36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

The eunuch did not seek a set time for baptism, as Chrysostom has noted, but was baptized right away after Philip had made sure that he believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

He continues, “no, nor the jailer, though he was in the midst of a set of prisoners, and the teacher he saw before him was a man scourged and in chains, and whom he was still to have in his custody. (ib. xvi. 29)”

He refers to **Acts 16 (KJV):**25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. 26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. 27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. 29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. 32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. 34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

He concludes, “But here, not being inmates of a jail, nor out on a journey, many are putting off their baptism even to their last breath.”

The reason they were doing so was because they misunderstood the Biblical truth about regeneration, and justification. Instead they had to carry a heavy weight of insecurity about their salvation. But Jesus calls us to rest, as we read in **Matthew 11 (KJV):**28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XXIII, page 132-133**

Ver. 27. “But I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.”

Here he implies that they are subject to the lust of the belly and give up the reins to it, and

under a pretence of perfection fulfil their own greediness; a thought which before also he was travailing to express, when he said, “meats for the belly, and the belly for meats.” (1 Cor. vi. 13) For since both fornication is caused by luxury, and it also brought forth idolatry, he naturally oftentimes inveighs against this disease; and pointing out how great things he suffered for the Gospel, he sets this also down among them. “As I went,” saith he, “beyond the commands, and this when it was no light matter for me:” (“for we endure all things,” it is said,) “so also here I submit to much labor in order to live soberly. Stubborn as appetite is and the tyranny of the belly, nevertheless I bridle it and give not myself up to the passion, but endure all labor not to be drawn aside by it.”

“For do not, I pray you, suppose that by taking things easily I arrive at this desirable result. For it is a race and a manifold struggle, and a tyrannical nature continually rising up against me and seeking to free itself. But I bear not with it but keep it down, and bring it into subjection with many struggles.” Now this he saith that none may despairingly withdraw from the conflicts in behalf of virtue because the undertaking is laborious. Wherefore he saith, “I buffet and bring into bondage.” He said not, “I kill:” nor, “I punish” for the flesh is not to be hated, but, “I buffet and bring into bondage;” which is the part of a master not of an enemy, of a teacher not of a foe, of a gymnastic master not of an adversary.

“Lest by any means, having preached to others, I myself should be a rejected.”

Now if Paul feared this who had taught so many, and feared it after his preaching and becoming an angel and undertaking the leadership of the whole world; what can we say?

For, “think not,” saith he, “because ye have believed, that this is sufficient for your salvation: since if to me neither preaching nor teaching nor bringing over innumerable persons, is enough for salvation unless I exhibit my own conduct also unblameable, much less to you.”

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 27. “But I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 9 (KJV):27** But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

He continues, “Here he implies that they are subject to the lust of the belly and give up the reins to it, and under a pretence of perfection fulfil their own greediness; a thought which before also he was travailing to express, when he said, “meats for the belly, and the belly for meats.” (1 Cor. vi. 13)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):13** Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

He continues, “For since both fornication is caused by luxury, and it also brought forth idolatry, he naturally oftentimes inveighs against this disease; and pointing out how great things he suffered for the Gospel, he sets this also down among them. “As I went,” saith he, “beyond the commands, and this when it was no light matter for me:” (“for we endure all things,” it is said,) “so also here I submit to much labor in order to live soberly. Stubborn as appetite is and the tyranny of the belly, nevertheless I bridle it and give not myself up to the passion, but endure all labor not to be drawn aside by it.”

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result. For it is a race and a manifold struggle, and a tyrannical nature continually rising up against me and seeking to free itself. But I bear not with it but keep it down, and bring it into subjection with many struggles.” Now this he saith that none may despairingly withdraw from the conflicts in behalf of virtue because the undertaking is laborious. Wherefore he saith, “I buffet and bring into bondage.” He said not, “I kill:” nor, “I punish” for the flesh is not to be hated, but, “I buffet and bring into bondage;” which is the part of a master not of an enemy, of a teacher not of a foe, of a gymnastic master not of an adversary.

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Now if Paul feared this who had taught so many, and feared it after his preaching and becoming an angel and undertaking the leadership of the whole world; what can we say?

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He is referring to **1 Corinthians 9 (KJV):27** But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

The word “castaway” in Greek is **ἀδόκιμος** (pronounced ä-do'-ke-mos), from G1 (as a negative particle) and G1384; unapproved, i.e. rejected; by implication, worthless (literally or morally):—castaway, rejected, reprobate. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G96**

This Greek word is derived from **δόκιμος** (pronounced do'-ke-mos), from G1380; properly, acceptable (current after assayal), i.e. approved:—approved, tried. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1384**

So adding the negative particle G1 to G1384, the word means not approved. Paul is speaking of rewards, as we read in context in **1 Corinthians 9 (KJV):24** Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Our salvation is secure once we have faith in Jesus Christ and have been born again. But our rewards are dependent on how we run the race.

And our salvation is not by works, as Paul taught in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

And in **Philippians 3 (KJV):8** Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

Paul is speaking of the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, as he says also in **Romans 3 (KJV):22** Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and

come short of the glory of God;

And we walk by faith, as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):7** (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

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page 37**

[3.] Having therefore everywhere excluded compulsion and pointing to (man's) voluntary choice and free power, he has said the same now. For even in these mystical blessings, (**Schaff Note:** i.e. of Baptism.) it is, on the one hand, God's part, to give the grace, on the other, man's to supply faith; and in after time there needs for what remains much earnestness. In order to preserve our purity, it is not sufficient for us merely to have been baptized and to have believed, but we must if we will continually enjoy this brightness, display a life worthy of it. This then is God's work in us. To have been born the mystical Birth, and to have been cleansed from all our former sins, comes from Baptism; but to remain for the future pure, never again after this to admit any stain belongs to our own power and diligence. And this is the reason why he reminds us of the manner of the birth, and by comparison with fleshly pangs shows its excellence, when he says,

Ver. 13. "Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God." This he has done, in order that, considering the vileness, and lowness of the first birth, which is "of blood," and "the will of the flesh," and perceiving the highness and nobleness of the second, which is by grace, we may form from thence some great opinion of it, and one worthy of the gift of Him who hath begotten us, and for the future exhibit much earnestness.

For there is no small fear, lest, having sometime defiled that beautiful robe by our after sloth and transgressions, we be cast out from the inner room and bridal chamber, like the five foolish virgins, or him who had not on a wedding garment. (Matt. xxv.; Matt. xxii) He too was one of the guests, for he had been invited; but because, after the invitation and so great an honor, he behaved with insolence towards Him who had invited him, hear what punishment he suffers, how pitiable, fit subject for many tears. For when he comes to partake of that splendid table, not only is he forbidden the least, but bound hand and foot alike, is carried into outer darkness, to undergo eternal and endless wailing and gnashing of teeth. Therefore, beloved, let not us either expect that faith is sufficient to us for salvation; for if we do not show forth a pure life, but come clothed with garments unworthy of this blessed calling, nothing hinders us from suffering the same as that wretched one. It is strange that He, who is God and King, is not ashamed of men who are vile, beggars, and of no repute, but brings even them of the cross ways to that table; while we manifest so much insensibility, as not even to be made better by so great an honor, but even after the call remain in our old wickedness, insolently abusing the unspeakable lovingkindness of Him who hath called us. For it was not for this that He called us to the spiritual and awful communion of His mysteries, that we should enter with our former wickedness; but that, putting off our filthiness, we should change our raiment to such as becomes those who are entertained in palaces. But if we will not act worthily of that calling this no longer rests with Him who hath honored us, but with ourselves; it is not He that casts us out from that admirable company of guests, but we cast out ourselves.

He has done all His part. He has made the marriage, He has provided the table, He has

sent men to call us, has received us when we came, and honored us with all other honor; but we, when we have offered insult to Him, to the company, and to the wedding, by our filthy garments, that is, our impure actions, are then with good cause cast out. It is to honor the marriage and the guests, that He drives off those bold and shameless persons; for were He to suffer those clothed in such a garment, He would seem to be offering insult to the rest. But may it never be that one, either of us or of other, find this of Him who has called us! For to this end have all these things been written before they come to pass, that we, being sobered by the threats of the Scriptures, may not suffer this disgrace and punishment to go on to the deed, but stop it at the word only, and each with bright apparel come to that call; which may it come to pass that we all enjoy, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom and with whom, to the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “[3.] Having therefore everywhere excluded compulsion and pointing to (man’s) voluntary choice and free power, he has said the same now. For even in these mystical blessings, (**Schaff Note:** i.e. of Baptism.) it is, on the one hand, God’s part, to give the grace, on the other, man’s to supply faith; and in after time there needs for what remains much earnestness.”

Chrysostom does not take into account **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Man does not “supply faith”. Faith is not of ourselves, but it is the gift of God.

He continues, “In order to preserve our purity, it is not sufficient for us merely to have been baptized and to have believed, but we must if we will continually enjoy this brightness, display a life worthy of it. This then is God’s work in us. To have been born the mystical Birth, and to have been cleansed from all our former sins, comes from Baptism; but to remain for the future pure, never again after this to admit any stain belongs to our own power and diligence.”

In other words, he is saying that we must keep ourselves saved.

He continues, “And this is the reason why he reminds us of the manner of the birth, and by comparison with fleshly pangs shows its excellence, when he says,

Ver. 13. “Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God.””

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):13** Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

But being born of God was not of our will, but of God. We now have a new nature in our spirit, and we are not our own, as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Our faith which was given to us by God caused us to be born again. And God then justified us because of the faith that He gave us. He then put His righteousness down to our account. So now we are not our own, for we have been bought with a price. Our salvation is secure.

Chrysostom continues, “This he has done, in order that, considering the vileness, and lowness of the first birth, which is “of blood,” and “the will of the flesh,” and perceiving the highness and nobleness of the second, which is by grace, we may form from thence some great opinion of it, and one worthy of the gift of Him who hath begotten us, and for the future exhibit

much earnestness.

For there is no small fear, lest, having sometime defiled that beautiful robe by our after sloth and transgressions, we be cast out from the inner room and bridal chamber, like the five foolish virgins, or him who had not on a wedding garment. (Matt. xxv.; Matt. xxii)”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV)**:1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

And to **Matthew 22 (KJV)**:8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. 9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. 10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. 11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: 12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

We must test ourselves, as we read in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV)**:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

He continues, “He too was one of the guests, for he had been invited; but because, after the invitation and so great an honor, he behaved with insolence towards Him who had invited him, hear what punishment he suffers, how pitiable, fit subject for many tears. For when he comes to partake of that splendid table, not only is he forbidden the least, but bound hand and foot alike, is carried into outer darkness, to undergo eternal and endless wailing and gnashing of teeth. Therefore, beloved, let not us either expect that faith is sufficient to us for salvation; for if we do not show forth a pure life, but come clothed with garments unworthy of this blessed calling, nothing hinders us from suffering the same as that wretched one.”

Chrysostom did not understand what is meant by the wedding garment in Matthew 22:12 above. The wedding garment is symbolic of the righteousness we must have to enter the kingdom of God. This righteousness is the righteousness of God which is imputed to us when we believe. The parable in Matthew 22:8-14 was a warning to the unbelieving Jews in the time of Jesus, and to all unbelievers today to have faith in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord.

Chrysostom did not understand that it is not by works, but by faith that we are saved, as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV)**:8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth,

and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

He continues, “It is strange that He, who is God and King, is not ashamed of men who are vile, beggars, and of no repute, but brings even them of the cross ways to that table; while we manifest so much insensibility, as not even to be made better by so great an honor, but even after the call remain in our old wickedness, insolently abusing the unspeakable lovingkindness of Him who hath called us. For it was not for this that He called us to the spiritual and awful communion of His mysteries, that we should enter with our former wickedness; but that, putting off our filthiness, we should change our raiment to such as becomes those who are entertained in palaces. But if we will not act worthily of that calling this no longer rests with Him who hath honored us, but with ourselves; it is not He that casts us out from that admirable company of guests, but we cast out ourselves.”

The one who was cast out in Matthew 22:13 was the one without a wedding garment, which is symbolic of the righteousness of God which is imputed to us when we believe in Jesus Christ. This one was cast out because he had never truly believed.

Chrysostom continues, “He has done all His part. He has made the marriage, He has provided the table, He has sent men to call us, has received us when we came, and honored us with all other honor; but we, when we have offered insult to Him, to the company, and to the wedding, by our filthy garments, that is, our impure actions, are then with good cause cast out. It is to honor the marriage and the guests, that He drives off those bold and shameless persons; for were He to suffer those clothed in such a garment, He would seem to be offering insult to the rest. But may it never be that one, either of us or of other, find this of Him who has called us! For to this end have all these things been written before they come to pass, that we, being sobered by the threats of the Scriptures, may not suffer this disgrace and punishment to go on to the deed, but stop it at the word only, and each with bright apparel come to that call; which may it come to pass that we all enjoy, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom and with whom, to the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Chrysostom took the parable out of context with the rest of Scripture. The one whom God has justified has the wedding garment. But let us make sure that we have really believed, as we read in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XII, page 43**

It behooves therefore those who have been deemed worthy to see and to hear such things, and who have enjoyed so great a gift, to display also a life worthy of the doctrines, that they may enjoy also the good things which are (laid up) there. For our Lord Jesus Christ came, not only that we might behold His glory here, but also that which shall be. For therefore He saith, “I will that these also be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory.” (c. xvii. 24) Now

if the glory here was so bright and splendid, what can one say of that (which shall be)? for it shall appear not on this corruptible earth, nor while we are in perishable bodies, but in a creation which is imperishable, and waxes not old, and with such brightness as it is not possible even to represent in words. O blessed, thrice blessed, yea many times so, they who are deemed worthy to be beholders of that glory! It is concerning this that the prophet says, “Let the unrighteous be taken away, that he behold not the glory of the Lord.” (Isa. xxvi. 10 , LXX) God grant that not one of us be taken away nor excluded ever from beholding it. For if we shall not hereafter enjoy it, then it is time to say of ourselves, “Good were it for” us, “if” we “had never been born.” For why do we live and breathe? What are we, if we fail of that spectacle, if no one grant us then to behold our Lord? If those who see not the light of the sun endure a life more bitter than any death, what is it likely that they who are deprived of that light must suffer? For in the one case the loss is confined to this one privation; but in the other it does not rest here, (though if this were the only thing to be dreaded, even then the degrees of punishment would not be equal, but one would be as much severer than the other, as that sun is incomparably superior to this,) but now we must look also for other vengeance; for he who beholds not that light must not only be led into darkness, but must be burned continually, and waste away, and gnash his teeth, and suffer ten thousand other dreadful things. Let us then not permit ourselves by making this brief time a time of carelessness and remissness, to fall into everlasting punishment, but let us watch and be sober, let us do all things, and make it all our business to attain to that felicity, and to keep far from that river of fire, which rushes with a loud roaring before the terrible judgment seat. For he who has once been cast in there, must remain for ever; there is no one to deliver him from his punishment, not father, not mother, not brother. And this the prophets themselves declared aloud; one saying, “Brother delivers not brother. Shall man deliver?” (Ps. xlix. 7, LXX) And Ezekiel has declared somewhat more than this, saying, “Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters.” (Ezek. xiv. 16) For one defense only, that through works, (**Schaff Note:** There are places where he allows that the prayers of others may avail a man in the Judgment, when they are the consequence of his good deeds. See on Statues, Hom. ii. § 17) is there, and he who is deprived of that cannot be saved by any other means. Revolving these things, then, and reflecting upon them continually, let us cleanse our life and make it lustrous, that we may see the Lord with boldness, and obtain the promised good things; through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom and with whom, to the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “It behooves therefore those who have been deemed worthy to see and to hear such things, and who have enjoyed so great a gift, to display also a life worthy of the doctrines, that they may enjoy also the good things which are (laid up) there. For our Lord Jesus Christ came, not only that we might behold His glory here, but also that which shall be. For therefore He saith, “I will that these also be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory.” (c. xvii. 24)”

He refers to **John 17 (KJV):24** Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

He continues, “Now if the glory here was so bright and splendid, what can one say of that (which shall be)? for it shall appear not on this corruptible earth, nor while we are in perishable

bodies, but in a creation which is imperishable, and waxes not old, and with such brightness as it is not possible even to represent in words. O blessed, thrice blessed, yea many times so, they who are deemed worthy to be beholders of that glory! It is concerning this that the prophet says, "Let the unrighteous be taken away, that he behold not the glory of the Lord." (Isa. xxvi. 10, LXX)"

He refers to **Isaiah 26 (Septuagint):10** For the ungodly one is put down: no one who will not learn righteousness on the earth, shall be able to do the truth: let the ungodly be taken away, that he see not the glory of the Lord.

And to **Isaiah 26 (KJV):10** Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.

He continues, "God grant that not one of us be taken away nor excluded ever from beholding it. For if we shall not hereafter enjoy it, then it is time to say of ourselves, "Good were it for" us, "if" we "had never been born." For why do we live and breathe? What are we, if we fail of that spectacle, if no one grant us then to behold our Lord? If those who see not the light of the sun endure a life more bitter than any death, what is it likely that they who are deprived of that light must suffer? For in the one case the loss is confined to this one privation; but in the other it does not rest here, (though if this were the only thing to be dreaded, even then the degrees of punishment would not be equal, but one would be as much severer than the other, as that sun is incomparably superior to this,) but now we must look also for other vengeance; for he who beholds not that light must not only be led into darkness, but must be burned continually, and waste away, and gnash his teeth, and suffer ten thousand other dreadful things. Let us then not permit ourselves by making this brief time a time of carelessness and remissness, to fall into everlasting punishment, but let us watch and be sober, let us do all things, and make it all our business to attain to that felicity, and to keep far from that river of fire, which rushes with a loud roaring before the terrible judgment seat. For he who has once been cast in there, must remain for ever; there is no one to deliver him from his punishment, not father, not mother, not brother. And this the prophets themselves declared aloud; one saying, "Brother delivers not brother. Shall man deliver?" (Ps. xlvi. 8, LXX) And Ezekiel has declared somewhat more than this, saying, "Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters." (Ezek. xiv. 16)"

He refers in context to **Psalms 48 (Septuagint):8** A brother does not redeem, shall a man redeem? he shall not give to God a ransom for himself, 9 or the price of the redemption of his soul, though he labour for ever, 10 and live to the end, [so] that he should not see corruption.

And to **Psalms 49 (KJV):7** None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: 8 (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:) 9 That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.

And in context to **Ezekiel 14 (KJV):14** Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God. 15 If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts: 16 Though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate.

He continues, "For one defense only, that through works, (**Schaff Note:** There are places

where he allows that the prayers of others may avail a man in the Judgment, when they are the consequence of his good deeds. See on Statues, Hom. ii. § 17) is there, and he who is deprived of that cannot be saved by any other means. Revolving these things, then, and reflecting upon them continually, let us cleanse our life and make it lustrous, that we may see the Lord with boldness, and obtain the promised good things; through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom and with whom, to the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Chrysostom is contrary to the Scriptures here. We are not saved by our works, as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):**8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

We walk by faith, not by sight.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 10, THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW, HOMILY XXVI, page 181**, he says, “For Judas too was a child of the kingdom, and it was said to him with the disciples, “Ye shall sit on twelve thrones;” (Matt. xix. 28) yet he became a child of hell;”

Jesus knew whom He had chosen, as we read in **John 13 (KJV):**18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

And in **John 6 (KJV):**70 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

In this sense, Judas was a “child of the kingdom”, that is, he was an Israelite. But Judas was never a child of the kingdom of God. He was always a “child of hell”. So Judas did not lose his salvation. He never had salvation.

And in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, HOMILY I, page 8-9**, he says, “A man has again committed adultery and murder; the former adultery is indeed done away, the murder forgiven, and not brought up again to his charge, “for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (Rom. xi. 29);”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):**29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

He continues, “but for those committed after Baptism he suffers a punishment as great as he would if both the former sins were brought up again, and many worse than these. For the guilt is no longer simply equal, but doubled and tripled.”

But we note that God has made provision for believers who sin after being born again, as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):**1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

The apostle John is addressing believers here, as he says, “My little children”, in verse 1.

And Chrysostom says, “For he that has cast the whole matter upon God, and, after his



baptism, sins, as being man it is likely, he may, and repents, shall obtain mercy; whereas he that prevaricates with God's mercy, and departs this life with no portion in that grace, shall have his punishment without a word to be said for him."

But after one has been born again by faith in Jesus Christ, he will not depart "this life with no portion in that grace". If he only builds wood, hay, or stubble, or even if he commits the sin unto death, he will still be saved, yet as by the fire of his bad choices in this life.

And he says, "Now God forbid that it should happen to us to fall into so great straits as to sin after baptism. However, even if aught such should happen, God is merciful, and has given us many ways of obtaining remission even after this. But just as those who sin after baptism are punished for this reason more severely than the Catechumens, so again, those who know that there are medicines in repentance, and yet will not make use of them, will undergo a more grievous chastisement."

But they will still be saved, yet as by fire, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):15** If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XXIII, page 132-133**, he says, "For, "think not," saith he, "because ye have believed, that this is sufficient for your salvation: since if to me neither preaching nor teaching nor bringing over innumerable persons, is enough for salvation unless I exhibit my own conduct also unblameable, much less to you.""

But in 1 Corinthians 9, Paul is not speaking of running for salvation, but running for rewards, as we read in context in **1 Corinthians 9 (KJV):24** Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

The word "castaway" in Greek is **ἀδόκιμος** (pronounced ä-do'-ke-mos), which means "not approved".

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY X, page 37**, he says, ""In order to preserve our purity, it is not sufficient for us merely to have been baptized and to have believed, but we must if we will continually enjoy this brightness, display a life worthy of it. This then is God's work in us. To have been born the mystical Birth, and to have been cleansed from all our former sins, comes from Baptism; but to remain for the future pure, never again after this to admit any stain belongs to our own power and diligence."

In other words, he is saying that we must keep ourselves saved.

And he says, "For there is no small fear, lest, having sometime defiled that beautiful robe by our after sloth and transgressions, we be cast out from the inner room and bridal chamber, like the five foolish virgins, or him who had not on a wedding garment. (Matt. xxv.; Matt. xxii)"

But if we have believed in Jesus Christ from our heart, we will have oil in our lamps, and we will be ready for the bridegroom when he comes. Chrysostom saw this parable as an instance where one lost their salvation. But Jesus was speaking to Jews who had no faith, and who were relying on being sons of Abraham for their salvation. Not having oil in their lamps, or not having a wedding garment would make them think, "what am I missing?" He spoke to them

in parables to get them to see that what they really needed was faith. The oil is symbolic of the new birth of the Spirit of God, which happens when we have faith in Jesus Christ. The wedding garment speaks of the righteousness of God that is imputed to us when we have faith in Jesus Christ. These are all obtained by faith in Jesus Christ. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. This is what Jesus was trying to tell them.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XII, page 43**, he says, ““For one defense only, that through works, (**Schaff Note:** There are places where he allows that the prayers of others may avail a man in the Judgment, when they are the consequence of his good deeds. See on Statues, Hom. ii. § 17.) is there, and he who is deprived of that cannot be saved by any other means.”

But the clear statement of the word of God is that we are saved by grace, as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

And in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

## The Unpardonable Sin

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XVI, page 57-58**

[4.] He then saith that he himself is not “worthy so much as to unloose the latchet of His shoe”; while the enemies of the truth are mad with such a madness, as to assert that they are worthy to know Him even as He knows Himself. What is worse than such insanity, what more frenzied than such arrogance? Well hath a wise man said, “The beginning of pride is not to know the Lord.” (**Schaff Note:** Ecclus. x. 12, LXX ἂ νθρώπου ἀφισταμένου ἀπὸ τοῦ K. Eng. ver. “when one departeth.”)

The devil would not have been brought down and become a devil, not being a devil before, had he not been sick of this disease. This it was that cast him out from that confidence, this sent him to the pit of fire, this was the cause of all his woes. For it is enough of itself to destroy every excellence of the soul, whether it find almsgiving, or prayer, or fasting, or anything. For, saith the Evangelist, “That which is highly esteemed among men is impure before the Lord.” (Luke xvi. 15 —not quoted exactly.) Therefore it is not only fornication or adultery that are wont to defile those who practice them, but pride also, and that far more than those vices. Why? Because fornication though it is an unpardonable sin, yet a man may plead the desire; but pride cannot possibly find any cause or pretext of any sort whatever by which to obtain so much as a shadow of excuse; it is nothing but a distortion and most grievous disease of the soul, produced from no other source but folly. For there is nothing more foolish than a

proud man, though he be surrounded with wealth, though he possess much of the wisdom of this world, though he be set in royal place, though he bear about with all things that among men appear desirable.

For if the man who is proud of things really good is wretched and miserable, and loses the reward of all those things, must not he who is exalted by things that are nought, and puffs himself up because of a shadow or the flower of the grass, (for such is this world's glory,) be more ridiculous than any, when he does just as some poor needy man might do, pining all his time with hunger, yet if ever he should chance one night to see a dream of good fortune, filled with conceit because of it?

O wretched and miserable! when thy soul is perishing by a most grievous disease, when thou art poor with utter poverty, art thou highminded because thou hast such and such a number of talents of gold? because thou hast a multitude of slaves and cattle? Yet these are not thine; and if thou dost not believe my words, learn from the experience of those who have gone before thee. And if thou art so drunken, that thou canst not be instructed even from what has befallen others, wait a little, and thou shalt know by what befalls thyself that these things avail thee nothing, when gasping for life, and master not of a single hour, not even of a little moment, thou shalt unwillingly leave them to those who are about thee, and these perhaps those whom thou wouldest not. For many have not been permitted even to give directions concerning them, but have departed suddenly, desiring to enjoy them, but not permitted, dragged from them, and forced to yield them up to others, giving place by compulsion to those to whom they would not. That this be not our case, let us, while we are yet in strength and health, send forward our riches hence to our own city, for thus only and in no other way shall we be able to enjoy them; so shall we lay them up in a place inviolate and safe. For there is nothing, there is nothing there that can take them from us; no death, no attested wills, no successors to inheritances, no false informations, no plottings against us, but he who has departed hence bearing away great wealth with him may enjoy it there for ever. Who then is so wretched as not to desire to revel in riches which are his own throughout? Let us then transfer our wealth, and remove it thither. We shall not need for such a removal asses, or camels, or carriages, or ships, (God hath relieved even us from this difficulty,) but we only want the poor, the lame, the crippled, the infirm. These are entrusted with this transfer, these convey our riches to heaven, these introduce the masters of such wealth as this to the inheritance of goods everlasting. Which may it be that we all attain through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom and with whom, to the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “[4.] He then saith that he himself is not “worthy so much as to unloose the latchet of His shoe”;

He refers in context to **John 1 (KJV):26** John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; 27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

He continues, “while the enemies of the truth are mad with such a madness, as to assert that they are worthy to know Him even as He knows Himself. What is worse than such insanity, what more frenzied than such arrogance? Well hath a wise man said, “The beginning of pride is not to know the Lord.” (**Schaff Note:** Ecclus. x. 12, LXX ἂνθρώπου ἀφισταμένου ἀπὸ τοῦ Κ. Eng. ver. “when one departeth.”)”

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 10 (KJV):12** The beginning of pride is when one departeth from God, and his heart is turned away from his Maker.

He continues, “The devil would not have been brought down and become a devil, not being a devil before, had he not been sick of this disease. This it was that cast him out from that confidence, this sent him to the pit of fire, this was the cause of all his woes. For it is enough of itself to destroy every excellence of the soul, whether it find almsgiving, or prayer, or fasting, or anything. For, saith the Evangelist, “That which is highly esteemed among men is impure before the Lord.” (Luke xvi. 15 —not quoted exactly.)”

He refers to **Luke 16 (KJV):15** And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

He continues, “Therefore it is not only fornication or adultery that are wont to defile those who practice them, but pride also, and that far more than those vices. Why? Because fornication though it is an unpardonable sin, yet a man may plead the desire; but pride cannot possibly find any cause or pretext of any sort whatever by which to obtain so much as a shadow of excuse; it is nothing but a distortion and most grievous disease of the soul, produced from no other source but folly.”

Chrysostom says that fornication “is an unpardonable sin”, but pride is a far worse sin. By unpardonable, I believe he means one who commits this sin loses the grace of the Spirit by which they are saved, and becomes unsaved unless he or she repents.

He continues, “For there is nothing more foolish than a proud man, though he be surrounded with wealth, though he possess much of the wisdom of this world, though he be set in royal place, though he bear about with all things that among men appear desirable.

For if the man who is proud of things really good is wretched and miserable, and loses the reward of all those things, must not he who is exalted by things that are nought, and puffs himself up because of a shadow or the flower of the grass, (for such is this world’s glory,) be more ridiculous than any, when he does just as some poor needy man might do, pining all his time with hunger, yet if ever he should chance one night to see a dream of good fortune, filled with conceit because of it?

O wretched and miserable! when thy soul is perishing by a most grievous disease, when thou art poor with utter poverty, art thou highminded because thou hast such and such a number of talents of gold? because thou hast a multitude of slaves and cattle? Yet these are not thine; and if thou dost not believe my words, learn from the experience of those who have gone before thee. And if thou art so drunken, that thou canst not be instructed even from what has befallen others, wait a little, and thou shalt know by what befalls thyself that these things avail thee nothing, when gasping for life, and master not of a single hour, not even of a little moment, thou shalt unwillingly leave them to those who are about thee, and these perhaps those whom thou wouldest not. For many have not been permitted even to give directions concerning them, but have departed suddenly, desiring to enjoy them, but not permitted, dragged from them, and forced to yield them up to others, giving place by compulsion to those to whom they would not. That this be not our case, let us, while we are yet in strength and health, send forward our riches hence to our own city, for thus only and in no other way shall we be able to enjoy them; so shall we lay them up in a place inviolate and safe. For there is nothing, there is nothing there that can take them from us; no death, no attested wills, no successors to inheritances, no false

informations, no plottings against us, but he who has departed hence bearing away great wealth with him may enjoy it there for ever. Who then is so wretched as not to desire to revel in riches which are his own throughout? Let us then transfer our wealth, and remove it thither. We shall not need for such a removal asses, or camels, or carriages, or ships, (God hath relieved even us from this difficulty,) but we only want the poor, the lame, the crippled, the infirm. These are entrusted with this transfer, these convey our riches to heaven, these introduce the masters of such wealth as this to the inheritance of goods everlasting. Which may it be that we all attain through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom and with whom, to the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.”

And Jesus taught as in **Matthew 6 (KJV):19** Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

### **Commentary Summary**

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY XVI, page 57-58**, he says, “Therefore it is not only fornication or adultery that are wont to defile those who practice them, but pride also, and that far more than those vices. Why? Because fornication though it is an unpardonable sin, yet a man may plead the desire; but pride cannot possibly find any cause or pretext of any sort whatever by which to obtain so much as a shadow of excuse; it is nothing but a distortion and most grievous disease of the soul, produced from no other source but folly.”

Chrysostom says that fornication “is an unpardonable sin”, but pride is a far worse sin. By unpardonable, I believe he means one who commits this sin loses the grace of the Spirit by which they are saved, and becomes unsaved unless he or she repents.

### **Losing the Holy Spirit**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XXVIII, page 539-540**

Ver. 13. “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”

That is, that ye may get clear of that heartlessness (ἀθυμίας) towards one another, and may never be cast down by temptations. And this will be by your abounding in hope. Now this is the cause of all good things, and it comes from the Holy Ghost. But it is not simply from the Spirit, but on condition of our contributing our part also. This is why he says, “in believing.” For this is the way for you to be filled with joy, if ye believe, if ye hope. Yet he does not say if ye hope, but, “if ye abound in hope,” so as not to find comfort in troubles only, but even to have joy through the abundance of faith and hope. And in this way, ye will also draw the Spirit to you. In this way, when He is come ye will continually keep to all good things. For just as food

maintaineth our life, and by this ruleth the body, so if we have good works, we shall have the Spirit; and if we have the Spirit, we shall also have good works. As also, on the other hand, if we have no works, the Spirit flieth away. But if we be deserted by the Spirit, we shall also halt in our works. For when this hath gone, the unclean one cometh: this is plain from Saul. For what if he doth not choke (1 Samuel 16:14) us as he did him, still he strangles us in some other way by wicked works. We have need then of the harp of David, that we may charm our souls with the divine songs, both these, and those from good actions. Since if we do the one only, and while we listen to the charm, war with the charmer by our actions, as he did of old (1 Sam. xix. 10); the remedy will even turn to judgment to us, and the madness become the more furious. For before we heard, the wicked demon was afraid lest we should hear it and recover. But when after hearing it even, we continue the same as we were, this is the very thing to rid him of his fear. Let us sing then the Psalm of good deeds, that we may cast out the sin that is worse than the demon. For a demon certainly will not deprive us of heaven, but doth in some cases even work with the sober-minded. But sin will assuredly cast us out. For this is a demon we willingly receive, a self-chosen madness. Wherefore also it hath none to pity it or to pardon it. Let us then sing charms over a soul in this plight, as well from the other Scriptures, as also from the blessed David. And let the mouth sing, and the mind be instructed. Even this is no small thing. For if we once teach the tongue to sing, the soul will be ashamed to be devising the opposite of what this singeth. Nor is this the only good thing that we shall gain, for we shall also come to know many things which are our interest. For he discourseth to thee both of things present, and things to come, and of things seen, and of the invisible Creation. And if thou wouldest learn about the Heaven, whether it abideth as it is or shall be changed, he gives thee a clear answer, and will say, "The heavens shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, O God, and they shall be changed." (Ps. cii. 26) And if thou wishest to hear of the form of them again, thou shalt hear, "That spreadeth forth the Heaven like a curtain" (δέππιν). And if thou be minded to know further about the back of them, he will tell thee again, "that covereth His upper chambers with waters." (Ps. civ. 2, 3) And even here he does not pause, but will likewise discourse with thee on the breadth and height, and show thee that these are of equal measure. For, "As far as the east," he says, "is from the west, so far hath He set our iniquities from us. Like as the heaven's height above the earth, so is the Lord's mercy upon them that fear Him." (ib. ciii. 12, 11) But if thou wouldest busy thyself with the foundation of the earth, even this he will not hide from thee, but thou shalt hear him singing and saying, "He hath founded it upon the seas." (ib. xxiv. 2) And if of earthquakes thou art desirous to know, whence they come, he will free thee from this difficulty also, by saying, "That looketh upon the earth, and maketh it tremble." (ib. civ. 32) And if thou enquire the use of the night, this too mayest thou learn, and know from him. For "therein all the beasts of the forest do move." (ib. 20) And in what way the mountains are for use, he will tell thee, "The high mountains are for the stags." And why there are rocks, "The rocks are a refuge for the porcupines." (ib. 18) Why are there trees yielding no fruit? learn from him, for "there the sparrows build their nests." (ib. 17) Why are there fountains in the wildernesses? hear, "that by them the fowls of the heaven dwell, and the wild beasts." (ib. 12) Why is there wine? not that thou mayest drink only (for water is of a nature to suffice for this), but that thou mayest be gladdened also, "For wine maketh glad the heart of man." (ib. 15) And by knowing this you will know how far the use of wine is allowable. Whence are the fowls and the wild beasts nourished? thou wilt hear from his words, "All these wait upon Thee, to

give them their meat in due season.” (ib. 27) If thou sayest, For what purpose are the cattle? he will answer thee, that these also are for thee, “That causeth the grass,” he says, “to grow for the cattle, and the green herb for the service (or retinue) of men.” (ib. 14) What is the use of the moon? hear him saying, “He made the moon for seasons.” (Ps. civ. 19) And that all things seen and those not seen are made, is a thing that he has also clearly taught us by saying, “Himself spake, and they were made, He commanded, and they were created.” (ib. xxxiii. 9) And that there is an end of death, this he also teaches when he says, “God shall deliver my soul from the hand of hell when He shall receive me.” (ib. xlix. 15) Whence was our body made? he also tells us; “He remembereth that we are dust” (ib. ciii. 14); and again, whither goeth it away? “It shall return to its dust.” (ib. civ. 29) Why was this universe made? For thee: “For thou crownest him with glory and honor, and settest him over the works of Thy hands.” (ib. viii. 5, 6) Have we men any community with the Angels? This he also tells us, saying as follows, “Thou hast made him a little lower than the Angels.” Of the love of God, “Like as a father pitieth his own children, even so is the Lord merciful to them that fear Him.” (ib. ciii. 13) And of the things that are to meet us after our present life, and of that undisturbed condition, he teacheth, “Return unto thy rest, O my soul.” (ib. cxvi. 7) Why the Heaven is so great, this he will also say. For it is because “the heavens declare the glory of God.” (ib. xix. 1) Why day and night were made,—not that they may shine and give us rest only, but also that they may instruct us. “For there are no speeches nor words, the sounds of which (i.e. day and night) are not heard.” (ib. 3) How the sea lies round about the earth, this too thou wilt learn from hence. “The deep as a garment is the envelopment thereof.” For so the Hebrew has it.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 13. “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”

He refers to **Romans 15 (KJV):**13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

He continues, “That is, that ye may get clear of that heartlessness (*ἀθυμία*) towards one another, and may never be cast down by temptations. And this will be by your abounding in hope. Now this is the cause of all good things, and it comes from the Holy Ghost. But it is not simply from the Spirit, but on condition of our contributing our part also. This is why he says, “in believing.” For this is the way for you to be filled with joy, if ye believe, if ye hope. Yet he does not say if ye hope, but, “if ye abound in hope,” so as not to find comfort in troubles only, but even to have joy through the abundance of faith and hope. And in this way, ye will also draw the Spirit to you. In this way, when He is come ye will continually keep to all good things. For just as food maintaineth our life, and by this ruleth the body, so if we have good works, we shall have the Spirit; and if we have the Spirit, we shall also have good works. As also, on the other hand, if we have no works, the Spirit flieth away. But if we be deserted by the Spirit, we shall also halt in our works.”

So he is saying that if we have no works, the Spirit leaves us.

He continues, “For when this hath gone, the unclean one cometh: this is plain from Saul. For what if he doth not choke (1 Samuel 16:14) us as he did him, still he strangles us in some other way by wicked works.”

He refers to **1 Samuel 16 (KJV):**14 But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.

He continues, “We have need then of the harp of David, that we may charm our souls with the divine songs, both these, and those from good actions. Since if we do the one only, and while we listen to the charm, war with the charmer by our actions, as he did of old (1 Sam. xix. 10);”

He refers to **1 Samuel 16 (KJV):23** And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

He refers to **1 Samuel 19 (KJV):10** And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin: but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night.

He continues, “the remedy will even turn to judgment to us, and the madness become the more furious. For before we heard, the wicked demon was afraid lest we should hear it and recover. But when after hearing it even, we continue the same as we were, this is the very thing to rid him of his fear. Let us sing then the Psalm of good deeds, that we may cast out the sin that is worse than the demon. For a demon certainly will not deprive us of heaven, but doth in some cases even work with the sober-minded. But sin will assuredly cast us out. For this is a demon we willingly receive, a self-chosen madness. Wherefore also it hath none to pity it or to pardon it. Let us then sing charms over a soul in this plight, as well from the other Scriptures, as also from the blessed David. And let the mouth sing, and the mind be instructed. Even this is no small thing. For if we once teach the tongue to sing, the soul will be ashamed to be devising the opposite of what this singeth. Nor is this the only good thing that we shall gain, for we shall also come to know many things which are our interest. For he discourseth to thee both of things present, and things to come, and of things seen, and of the invisible Creation. And if thou wouldest learn about the Heaven, whether it abideth as it is or shall be changed, he gives thee a clear answer, and will say, “The heavens shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, O God, and they shall be changed.” (Ps. cii. 26)”

He refers to **Psalm 101 (Septuagint):26** In the beginning thou, O Lord, didst lay the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. 27 They shall perish, but thou remainest: and [they all] shall wax old as a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them, and they shall be changed.

And to **Psalm 102 (KJV):25** Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. 26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:

He continues, “And if thou wishest to hear of the form of them again, thou shalt hear, “That spreadeth forth the Heaven like a curtain” (δέπριν). And if thou be minded to know further about the back of them, he will tell thee again, “that covereth His upper chambers with waters.” (Ps. civ. 2, 3)”

He refers to **Psalm 103 (Septuagint):2** who dost robe thyself with light as with a garment; spreading out the heaven as a curtain. 3 Who covers his chambers with waters; who makes the clouds his chariot; who walks on the wings of the wind.

And to **Psalm 104 (KJV):2** Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: 3 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:

He continues, “And even here he does not pause, but will likewise discourse with thee on



the breadth and height, and show thee that these are of equal measure. For, “As far as the east,” he says, “is from the west, so far hath He set our iniquities from us. Like as the heaven’s height above the earth, so is the Lord’s mercy upon them that fear Him.” (ib. ciii. 12, 11)”

He refers to **Psalm 102 (Septuagint):**11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, the Lord has [so] increased his mercy toward them that fear him. 12 As far as the east is from the west, [so far] has he removed our transgressions from us.

And to **Psalm 103 (KJV):**11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. 12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

He continues, “But if thou wouldest busy thyself with the foundation of the earth, even this he will not hide from thee, but thou shalt hear him singing and saying, “He hath founded it upon the seas.” (ib. xxiv. 2)”

He refers to **Psalm 23 (Septuagint):**2 He has founded it upon the seas, and prepared it upon the rivers.

And to **Psalm 24 (KJV):**2 For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

He continues, “And if of earthquakes thou art desirous to know, whence they come, he will free thee from this difficulty also, by saying, “That looketh upon the earth, and maketh it tremble.” (ib. civ. 32)”

He refers to **Psalm 103 (Septuagint):**32 who looks upon the earth, and makes it tremble; who touches the mountains, and they smoke.

And to **Psalm 104 (KJV):**32 He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.

He continues, “And if thou enquire the use of the night, this too mayest thou learn, and know from him. For “therein all the beasts of the forest do move.” (ib. 20)”

He refers to **Psalm 104 (KJV):**20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.

He continues, “And in what way the mountains are for use, he will tell thee, “The high mountains are for the stags.” And why there are rocks, “The rocks are a refuge for the porcupines.” (ib. 18) Why are there trees yielding no fruit? learn from him, for “there the sparrows build their nests.” (ib. 17)”

He refers to **Psalm 104 (KJV):**17 Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees are her house. 18 The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies.

He continues, “Why are there fountains in the wildernesses? hear, “that by them the fowls of the heaven dwell, and the wild beasts.” (ib. 12)”

He refers in context to **Psalm 104 (KJV):**10 He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. 11 They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst. 12 By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.

He continues, “Why is there wine? not that thou mayest drink only (for water is of a nature to suffice for this), but that thou mayest be gladdened also, “For wine maketh glad the heart of man.” (ib. 15)”

He refers to **Psalm 104 (KJV):**15 And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil

to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.

He continues, "And by knowing this you will know how far the use of wine is allowable. Whence are the fowls and the wild beasts nourished? thou wilt hear from his words, "All these wait upon Thee, to give them their meat in due season." (ib. 27)"

He refers to **Psalm 104 (KJV):27** These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.

He continues, "If thou sayest, For what purpose are the cattle? he will answer thee, that these also are for thee, "That causeth the grass," he says, "to grow for the cattle, and the green herb for the service (or retinue) of men." (ib. 14)"

He refers to **Psalm 104 (KJV):14** He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth;

He continues, "What is the use of the moon? hear him saying, "He made the moon for seasons." (Ps. civ. 19)"

He refers to **Psalm 104 (KJV):19** He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.

He continues, "And that all things seen and those not seen are made, is a thing that he has also clearly taught us by saying, "Himself spake, and they were made, He commanded, and they were created." (ib. xxxiii. 9)"

He refers to **Psalm 33 (KJV):9** For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.

He continues, "And that there is an end of death, this he also teaches when he says, "God shall deliver my soul from the hand of hell when He shall receive me." (ib. xlix. 15)"

He refers to **Psalm 49 (KJV):15** But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.

He continues, "Whence was our body made? he also tells us; "He remembereth that we are dust" (ib. ciii. 14);"

He refers to **Psalm 103 (KJV):14** For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

He continues, "and again, whither goeth it away? "It shall return to its dust." (ib. civ. 29)"

He refers to **Psalm 104 (KJV):29** Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

He continues, "Why was this universe made? For thee: "For thou crownest him with glory and honor, and settest him over the works of Thy hands." (ib. viii. 5, 6)"

He refers to **Psalm 8 (KJV):5** For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. 6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:

He continues, "Have we men any community with the Angels? This he also tells us, saying as follows, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the Angels." Of the love of God, "Like as a father pitieth his own children, even so is the Lord merciful to them that fear Him." (ib. ciii. 13)"

He refers to **Psalm 103 (KJV):13** Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.

He continues, "And of the things that are to meet us after our present life, and of that undisturbed condition, he teacheth, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul." (ib. cxvi. 7)"

He refers to **Psalm 116 (KJV):7** Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.

He continues, “Why the Heaven is so great, this he will also say. For it is because “the heavens declare the glory of God.” (ib. xix. 1)”

He refers to **Psalm 19 (KJV):1** The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

He continues, “Why day and night were made,—not that they may shine and give us rest only, but also that they may instruct us. “For there are no speeches nor words, the sounds of which (i.e. day and night) are not heard.” (ib. 3)”

He refers to **Psalm 19 (KJV):3** There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

He concludes, “How the sea lies round about the earth, this too thou wilt learn from hence. “The deep as a garment is the envelopment thereof.” For so the Hebrew has it.”

We see Chrysostom’s esteem of the Scriptures here.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XXIX, page 543**

Ver. 16. “That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering (ἰεραργουῦντα) the Gospel of God.”

For after his abundant proof of his statements, he draws his discourse to a more lofty tone, not speaking of mere service, as in the beginning, but of service and priestly ministering (λειτουργίαν καὶ ἰεραργίαν). For to me this is a priesthood, this preaching and declaring. This is the sacrifice I bring. Now no one will find fault with a priest, for being anxious to offer the sacrifice without blemish. And he says this at once to elevate (περῶν) their thoughts, and show them that they are a sacrifice, and in apology for his own part in the matter, because he was appointed to this office. For my knife, he says, is the Gospel, the word of the preaching. And the cause is not that I may be glorified, not that I may appear conspicuous, but that the “offering up (προσφορά) of the Gentiles may be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.”

That is, that the souls of those that are taught by me, may be accepted. For it was not so much to honor me, that God led me to this pitch, as out of a concern for you. And how are they to become acceptable? In the Holy Ghost. For there is need not only of faith, but also of a spiritual way of life, that we may keep the Spirit that was given once for all. For it is not wood and fire, nor altar and knife, but the Spirit that is all in us. For this cause, I take all means to prevent that Fire from being extinguished, as I have been also enjoined to do. Why then do you speak to those that need it not? This is just the reason why I do not teach you, but put you in mind, he replies. As the priest stands by stirring up the fire, so I do, rousing up your ready-mindedness. And observe, he does not say, “that the offering up of” you “may be” etc. but “of the Gentiles.” But when he says of the Gentiles, he means the whole world, the land, and the whole sea, to take down their haughtiness, that they might not disdain to have him for a teacher, who was putting himself forth (τεινόμενον) to the very end of the world. As he said in the beginning, “as among the other Gentiles also, I am a debtor to Greeks, and also to barbarians, to wise, and to foolish.” (Rom. i. 13, 14, see p. 347)

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 16. “That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering (ἰερουροῦντα) the Gospel of God.”

He refers to **Romans 15 (KJV):16** That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

He continues, “For after his abundant proof of his statements, he draws his discourse to a more lofty tone, not speaking of mere service, as in the beginning, but of service and priestly ministering (λειτουργίαν καὶ ἰερουργίαν). For to me this is a priesthood, this preaching and declaring. This is the sacrifice I bring. Now no one will find fault with a priest, for being anxious to offer the sacrifice without blemish. And he says this at once to elevate (πτερῶν) their thoughts, and show them that they are a sacrifice, and in apology for his own part in the matter, because he was appointed to this office. For my knife, he says, is the Gospel, the word of the preaching. And the cause is not that I may be glorified, not that I may appear conspicuous, but that the “offering up (προσφορὰ) of the Gentiles may be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.”

That is, that the souls of those that are taught by me, may be accepted. For it was not so much to honor me, that God led me to this pitch, as out of a concern for you. And how are they to become acceptable? In the Holy Ghost. For there is need not only of faith, but also of a spiritual way of life, that we may keep the Spirit that was given once for all. For it is not wood and fire, nor altar and knife, but the Spirit that is all in us. For this cause, I take all means to prevent that Fire from being extinguished, as I have been also enjoined to do.”

So if the fire be extinguished, the Holy Spirit is no longer in us, and we lose our salvation.

He continues, “Why then do you speak to those that need it not? This is just the reason why I do not teach you, but put you in mind, he replies. As the priest stands by stirring up the fire, so I do, rousing up your ready-mindedness. And observe, he does not say, “that the offering up of” you “may be” etc. but “of the Gentiles.” But when he says of the Gentiles, he means the whole world, the land, and the whole sea, to take down their haughtiness, that they might not disdain to have him for a teacher, who was putting himself forth (τεινόμενον) to the very end of the world. As he said in the beginning, “as among the other Gentiles also, I am a debtor to Greeks, and also to barbarians, to wise, and to foolish.” (Rom. i. 13, 14, see p. 347)”

He refers to **Romans 1 (KJV):13** Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. 14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE FO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIII, page 436-437**

Ver. 11. “But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up our Lord shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

Again, he touches the point of the Resurrection, since this was the most encouraging hope to the hearer, and gave him a security from what had happened unto Christ. Now be not thou afraid because thou art compassed about with a dead body. Let it have the Spirit, and it shall

assuredly rise again. What then, shall the bodies which have not the Spirit not rise? How then must “all stand before the judgment seat of Christ?” (Rom. xiv. 10) or how will the account of hell be trustworthy? For if they that have not the Spirit rise not, there will not be a hell at all. What then is it which is said? All shall rise, yet not all to life, but some to punishment and some to life. (John v. 29) This is why he did not say, shall raise up, but shall quicken. (Dan. xii. 2) And this is a greater thing than resurrection, and is given to the just only. And the cause of this honor he adds in the words, “By His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” And so if while here thou drive away the grace of the Spirit, and do not depart with it still safe, thou wilt assuredly perish, though thou dost rise again. For as He will not endure then, if He see His Spirit shining in thee, to give thee up to punishment, so neither will He allow them, if He see It quenched, to bring thee into the Bride-chamber, even as He admitted not those virgins. (Matt. xxv. 12)

Suffer not thy body then to live in this world, that it may live then! Make it die, that it die not. For if it keep living, it will not live: but if it die, then shall it live. And this is the case with resurrection in general. For it must die first and be buried, and then become immortal. But this has been done in the Font. It has therefore had first its crucifixion and burial, and then been raised. This has also happened with the Lord’s Body. For that also was crucified and buried (7 mss. died) and rose again. This then let us too be doing: let us keep continually mortifying it in its works. I do not mean in its substance—far be it from me—but in its inclinations towards evil doings. For this is a life too, or rather this only is life, undergoing nothing that is common to man, nor being a slave to pleasures. For he who has set himself under the rule of these, has no power even to live through the low spirits, the fears, and the dangers, and the countless throng of ills, that rise from them. For if death must be expected, he hath died, before death, of fear. And if it be disease he dreads, or affront, or poverty, or any of the other ills one cannot anticipate, he is ruined and hath perished. What then can be more miserable than a life of this sort? But far otherwise is he that liveth to the Spirit, for he stands at once above fears and grief and dangers and every kind of change: and that not by undergoing no such thing, but, what is much greater, by thinking scorn of them when they assail him. And how is this to be? It will be if the Spirit dwell in us continually. For he does not speak of any short stay made thereby, but of a continual indwelling. Hence he does not say “the Spirit which” dwelt, but “which dwelleth in us,” so pointing to a continual abiding. He then is most truly alive, who is dead to this life. Hence he says, “The Spirit is life because of righteousness.”

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 11. “But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up our Lord shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):11** But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

He continues, “Again, he touches the point of the Resurrection, since this was the most encouraging hope to the hearer, and gave him a security from what had happened unto Christ. Now be not thou afraid because thou art compassed about with a dead body. Let it have the Spirit, and it shall assuredly rise again. What then, shall the bodies which have not the Spirit not rise? How then must “all stand before the judgment seat of Christ?” (Rom. xiv. 10)”

He refers to **Romans 14 (KJV):10** But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why

dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

But the judgment seat of Christ is only for believers in the first resurrection, as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):5** But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

He continues, “or how will the account of hell be trustworthy? For if they that have not the Spirit rise not, there will not be a hell at all. What then is it which is said? All shall rise, yet not all to life, but some to punishment and some to life. (John v. 29)”

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):29** And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

He continues, “This is why he did not say, shall raise up, but shall quicken. (Dan. xii. 2)”

He refers to **Daniel 12 (KJV):2** And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

And again to **Romans 8 (KJV):11** But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

He continues, “And this is a greater thing than resurrection, and is given to the just only. And the cause of this honor he adds in the words, “By His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” And so if while here thou drive away the grace of the Spirit, and do not depart with it still safe, thou wilt assuredly perish, though thou dost rise again. For as He will not endure then, if He see His Spirit shining in thee, to give thee up to punishment, so neither will He allow them, if He see It quenched, to bring thee into the Bride-chamber, even as He admitted not those virgins. (Matt. xxv. 12)”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):12** But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

So if one drives “away the grace of the Spirit”, and does “not depart with it still safe”, they will “assuredly perish”. In other words, they will lose their salvation.

He continues, “Suffer not thy body then to live in this world, that it may live then! Make it die, that it die not. For if it keep living, it will not live: but if it die, then shall it live. And this is the case with resurrection in general. For it must die first and be buried, and then become immortal. But this has been done in the Font. It has therefore had first its crucifixion and burial, and then been raised. This has also happened with the Lord’s Body. For that also was crucified and buried (7 mss. died) and rose again. This then let us too be doing: let us keep continually mortifying it in its works. I do not mean in its substance—far be it from me—but in its inclinations towards evil doings.”

And we read in **Colossians 3 (KJV):1** If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

If we have been born again, Christ is our life. If Christ is our life, then shall we “also appear with him in glory”.

Chrysostom again refers to “its inclinations towards evil doings”, speaking of the body, or the flesh. But he will not call it a nature.

Chrysostom continues, “For this is a life too, or rather this only is life, undergoing nothing that is common to man, nor being a slave to pleasures. For he who has set himself under the rule of these, has no power even to live through the low spirits, the fears, and the dangers, and the countless throng of ills, that rise from them. For if death must be expected, he hath died, before death, of fear. And if it be disease he dreads, or affront, or poverty, or any of the other ills one cannot anticipate, he is ruined and hath perished. What then can be more miserable than a life of this sort? But far otherwise is he that liveth to the Spirit, for he stands at once above fears and grief and dangers and every kind of change: and that not by undergoing no such thing, but, what is much greater, by thinking scorn of them when they assail him. And how is this to be? It will be if the Spirit dwell in us continually. For he does not speak of any short stay made thereby, but of a continual indwelling. Hence he does not say “the Spirit which” dwelt, but “which dwelleth in us,” so pointing to a continual abiding. He then is most truly alive, who is dead to this life. Hence he says, “The Spirit is life because of righteousness.””

But Jesus says that if we believe in Him, we have passed from death to life, as we read again in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

We are not mostly alive, but actually alive to God in our spirit, the Spirit of God having given birth to our spirit when we believe in Jesus Christ. This life given to us by the Spirit of God is eternal life, as we read again **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

We are not to be “dead to this life”, but dead to sin, as in **Romans 6 (KJV):2** God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

And dead to the law, as in **Romans 7 (KJV):4** Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

And Jesus taught as in **John 10 (KJV):10** The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY L, page 182-183**

These words were spoken indeed to the Jews, but fear there is lest they be suited to us also, that “where He is” we “cannot come” on account of our life being full of sins. For concerning the disciples He saith, “I will that they also be with Me where I am” (c. xvii. 24), but concerning ourselves, I dread lest the contrary be said, that, “Where I am, ye cannot come.” For when we act contrary to the commandments, how can we go to that place? Even in the present life, if any soldier act unworthily towards his king, he will not be able to see the king, but being deprived of his authority will suffer the severest punishment; if therefore we steal, or covet, if we wrong or strike others, if we work not deeds of mercy, we shall not be able to go thither, but shall suffer what happened to the virgins. For where He was, they were not able to enter in, but retired, their lamps having gone out, that is, grace having left them. For we can, if

we will, increase the brightness of that flame which we received straightway (**Schaff Note:** i.e. in baptism.) by the grace of the Spirit; but if we will not do this, we shall lose it, and when that is quenched, there will be nothing else than darkness in our souls; since, as while a lamp is burning the light is strong, so when it is extinguished there is nothing but gloom. Wherefore the Apostle saith, “Quench not the Spirit.” (1 Thess. v. 19) And It is quenched when It hath not oil, when there is any violent gust of wind, when It is cramped and confined, (for so fire is quenched,) and It is cramped by worldly cares, and quenched by evil desires. In addition to the causes we have mentioned, nothing quencheth It so much as inhumanity, cruelty, and rapine. For when, besides having no oil, we pour upon it cold water, (for covetousness is this, which chills with despondency the souls of those we wrong,) whence shall it be kindled again? We shall depart, therefore, carrying dust and ashes with us, and having much smoke to convict us of having had lamps and of having extinguished them; for where there is smoke, there needs must have been fire which hath been quenched. May none of us ever hear that word, “I know you not.” (Matt. xxv. 12) And whence shall we hear that word, but from this, if ever we see a poor man, and are as though we saw him not? If we will not know Christ when He is an hungered, He too will not know us when we entreat His mercy. And with justice; for how shall he who neglects the afflicted, and gives not of that which is his own, how shall he seek to receive of that which is not his own? Wherefore, I entreat you, let us do and contrive everything, so that oil fail not us, but that we may trim our lamps, and enter with the Bridegroom into the bride-chamber. To which may we all attain, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom and with whom, to the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory, now and ever and world without end. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “These words were spoken indeed to the Jews, but fear there is lest they be suited to us also, that “where He is” we “cannot come” on account of our life being full of sins. For concerning the disciples He saith, “I will that they also be with Me where I am” (c. xvii. 24), but concerning ourselves, I dread lest the contrary be said, that, “Where I am, ye cannot come.””

He refers to **John 17 (KJV):24** Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

He continues, “For when we act contrary to the commandments, how can we go to that place? Even in the present life, if any soldier act unworthily towards his king, he will not be able to see the king, but being deprived of his authority will suffer the severest punishment; if therefore we steal, or covet, if we wrong or strike others, if we work not deeds of mercy, we shall not be able to go thither, but shall suffer what happened to the virgins. For where He was, they were not able to enter in, but retired, their lamps having gone out, that is, grace having left them.”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):1** Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their



lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

The point of the parable is that we need to be ready for the Lord's coming. Those virgins who ran out of oil did not commit to being ready for the Lord's coming. That is, they did not commit themselves to the Lord from their heart, but only outwardly. They did not lose grace because they were never born again. We are made ready when we are born again.

Chrysostom continues, "For we can, if we will, increase the brightness of that flame which we received straightway (**Schaff Note:** i.e. in baptism.) by the grace of the Spirit; but if we will not do this, we shall lose it, and when that is quenched, there will be nothing else than darkness in our souls; since, as while a lamp is burning the light is strong, so when it is extinguished there is nothing but gloom. Wherefore the Apostle saith, "Quench not the Spirit." (1 Thess. v. 19)"

He refers in context to **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):**19 Quench not the Spirit. 20 Despise not prophesyings.

What Paul is saying is to not prohibit spiritual manifestation. That is, do not prohibit the exercise of spiritual gifts, such as prophecy. Chrysostom would not have understood this because the gifts of the Spirit were not operational in the Church in his time.

He continues, "And It is quenched when It hath not oil, when there is any violent gust of wind, when It is cramped and confined, (for so fire is quenched,) and It is cramped by worldly cares, and quenched by evil desires."

But the Lord has promised that the Holy Spirit would abide with us forever, as we read in **John 14 (KJV):**16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

We cannot lose the Holy Spirit after we have been born again, for the life of the Holy Spirit is the life of our spirit, being born of the Spirit of God. Once we have been born of the Spirit of God, we have eternal life. And when we are born again, God justifies us, and imputes His righteousness down to our account. So Jesus is the author of eternal salvation for us, as we read in **Hebrews 5 (KJV):**9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

Chrysostom continues, "In addition to the causes we have mentioned, nothing quencheth It so much as inhumanity, cruelty, and rapine. For when, besides having no oil, we pour upon it cold water, (for covetousness is this, which chills with despondency the souls of those we wrong,) whence shall it be kindled again? We shall depart, therefore, carrying dust and ashes with us, and having much smoke to convict us of having had lamps and of having extinguished them; for where there is smoke, there needs must have been fire which hath been quenched. May none of us ever hear that word, "I know you not." (Matt. xxv. 12)"

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):**12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

This is not possible for one who has truly believed. This parable is about being ready for

the Lord's return. We are ready if we have believed in Jesus Christ, and have been born again. Chrysostom imagines that sin takes away the grace of the Spirit, and so if we continue in sin, we will lose the Spirit of God.

Chrysostom continues, "And whence shall we hear that word, but from this, if ever we see a poor man, and are as though we saw him not? If we will not know Christ when He is an hungered, He too will not know us when we entreat His mercy. And with justice; for how shall he who neglects the afflicted, and gives not of that which is his own, how shall he seek to receive of that which is not his own? Wherefore, I entreat you, let us do and contrive everything, so that oil fail not us, but that we may trim our lamps, and enter with the Bridegroom into the bride-chamber. To which may we all attain, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom and with whom, to the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory, now and ever and world without end. Amen."

Let us also remember that it is by grace that we are saved, as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):** 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XXVIII, page 539-540**, he says, "For just as food maintaineth our life, and by this ruleth the body, so if we have good works, we shall have the Spirit; and if we have the Spirit, we shall also have good works. As also, on the other hand, if we have no works, the Spirit flieth away. But if we be deserted by the Spirit, we shall also halt in our works."

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XXIX, page 543**, he says, "For there is need not only of faith, but also of a spiritual way of life, that we may keep the Spirit that was given once for all. For it is not wood and fire, nor altar and knife, but the Spirit that is all in us. For this cause, I take all means to prevent that Fire from being extinguished, as I have been also enjoined to do."

So he is saying that if the fire be extinguished, the Holy Spirit is no longer in us, and we lose our salvation. But when we are born again, the Holy Spirit has given life to our spirit, that is, the Holy Spirit has given us eternal life in our spirit.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE FO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIII, page 436-437**, he says, "And so if while here thou drive away the grace of the Spirit, and do not depart with it still safe, thou wilt assuredly perish, though thou dost rise again."

So if one drives "away the grace of the Spirit", and does "not depart with it still safe", they will "assuredly perish". In other words, they will lose their salvation.

And he says, "For he does not speak of any short stay made thereby, but of a continual indwelling. Hence he does not say "the Spirit which" dwelt, but "which dwelleth in us," so pointing to a continual abiding. He then is most truly alive, who is dead to this life. Hence he says, "The Spirit is life because of righteousness.""

But Jesus says that if we believe in Him, we have passed from death to life, as we read

again in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

We are not “most truly alive”, or mostly alive, but actually alive to God in our spirit, the Spirit of God having given birth to our spirit when we believe in Jesus Christ. This life that is given to us by the Spirit of God is eternal life, as we read again **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

And we are not to be “dead to this life”, but dead to sin, as in **Romans 6 (KJV):2** God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

And dead to the law, as in **Romans 7 (KJV):4** Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

And Jesus taught as in **John 10 (KJV):10** The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY L, page 182-183**, he says, “For when we act contrary to the commandments, how can we go to that place? Even in the present life, if any soldier act unworthily towards his king, he will not be able to see the king, but being deprived of his authority will suffer the severest punishment; if therefore we steal, or covet, if we wrong or strike others, if we work not deeds of mercy, we shall not be able to go thither, but shall suffer what happened to the virgins. For where He was, they were not able to enter in, but retired, their lamps having gone out, that is, grace having left them.”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):1** Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

The point of the parable is that we need to be ready for the Lord’s coming. Those virgins who ran out of oil did not commit to being ready for the Lord’s coming. That is, they did not commit themselves to the Lord from their heart, but only outwardly. They did not lose grace because they were never born again. We are made ready when we are born again.

And he says, “For we can, if we will, increase the brightness of that flame which we received straightway (**Schaff Note:** i.e. in baptism.) by the grace of the Spirit; but if we will not do this, we shall lose it, and when that is quenched, there will be nothing else than darkness in our souls; since, as while a lamp is burning the light is strong, so when it is extinguished there is nothing but gloom. Wherefore the Apostle saith, “Quench not the Spirit.” (1 Thess. v. 19)”

He refers in context to **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):19** Quench not the Spirit. 20 Despise not prophesyings.

What Paul is saying is to not prohibit spiritual manifestation. That is, do not prohibit the exercise of spiritual gifts, such as prophecy. Chrysostom would not have understood this because the gifts of the Spirit were not operational in the Church in his time, for he said they had ceased.

And he says, “And It is quenched when It hath not oil, when there is any violent gust of wind, when It is cramped and confined, (for so fire is quenched,) and It is cramped by worldly

cares, and quenched by evil desires.”

But the Lord has promised that the Holy Spirit would abide with us forever, as we read in **John 14 (KJV):16** And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

We cannot lose the Holy Spirit after we have been born again, for the life of the Holy Spirit is the life of our spirit, being born of the Spirit of God. Then when we are born again, God justifies us, and imputes His righteousness down to our account. So Jesus is the author of eternal salvation for us, as we read in **Hebrews 5 (KJV):9** And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

And he says of those who have quenched the Spirit by “inhumanity, cruelty, and rapine”, and by “covetousness” that it will be for them as in **Matthew 25 (KJV):12** But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

But this is not possible for one who has truly believed. This parable is about being ready for the Lord’s return. We are ready if we have believed in Jesus Christ, and have been born again. Chrysostom imagines that sin takes away the grace of the Spirit, and so if we continue in sin, we will lose the Spirit of God. But when we have faith in Jesus Christ, God imputes His righteousness down to our account, having justified us. And our walk is then a walk by faith. If we believe not He abides faithful, as we read in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):13** If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

But let us make sure that we have truly believed, and that Jesus Christ is in us, as we read in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

## Baptism with the Holy Spirit

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, HOMILY IV, page 25-26

Acts II. 1, 2

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven.”

Dost thou perceive the type? What is this Pentecost? The time when the sickle was to be put to the harvest, and the ingathering was made. See now the reality, when the time was come to put in the sickle of the word: for here, as the sickle, keen-edged, came the Spirit down. For hear the words of Christ: “Lift up your eyes,” He said, “and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest.” (John iv. 35) And again, “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few.” (Matt. ix. 38) But as the first-fruits of this harvest, He himself took [our nature], and bore it up on high. Himself first put in the sickle. Therefore also He calls the Word the Seed. “When,” it says, “the day of Pentecost was fully come” (Luke viii. 5, 11): that is, when at the Pentecost, while about it, in short. For it was essential that the present events likewise should take place during the feast, that those who had witnessed the crucifixion of Christ, might also behold these. “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven.” (v. 2) Why did this not come to pass without sensible tokens? For this reason. If even when the fact was such, men said, “They are full of new wine,” what would they not have said, had it been otherwise? And it is not merely, “there came a sound,” but, “from heaven.” And the suddenness also startled them, and brought all together to the spot. “As of a rushing mighty wind:” this betokens the exceeding vehemence of the Spirit. “And it filled all the house:” insomuch that those present both believed, and (Edd. τούτους) in this manner were shown to be worthy. Nor is this all; but what is more awful still, “And there appeared unto them,” it says, “cloven tongues like as of fire.” (v. 3) Observe how it is always, “like as;” and rightly: that you may have no gross sensible notions of the Spirit. Also, “as it were of a blast:” therefore it was not a wind. “Like as of fire.” For when the Spirit was to be made known to John, then it came upon the head of Christ as in the form of a dove: but now, when a whole multitude was to be converted, it is “like as of fire. And it sat upon each of them.” This means, that it remained and rested upon them.” For the sitting is significant of settledness and continuance.

Was it upon the twelve that it came? Not so; but upon the hundred and twenty. For Peter would not have quoted to no purpose the testimony of the prophet, saying, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord God, I will pour out of My spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” (Joel ii. 28) “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” (v. 4) For, that the effect may not be to frighten only, therefore is it both “with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. And began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Matt. iii. 11) They receive no other sign, but this first; for it was new to them, and there was no need of any other sign. “And it sat upon each of them,” says the writer. Observe now, how there is no longer any occasion for that person to grieve, who was not elected as was Matthias, “And they were all filled,” he says; not merely received the grace of the Spirit, but “were filled. And began

to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” It would not have been said, *All*, the Apostles also being there present, unless the rest also were partakers. For were it not so, having above made mention of the Apostles distinctively and by name, he would not now have put them all in one with the rest. For if, where it was only to be mentioned that they were present, he makes mention of the Apostles apart, much more would he have done so in the case here supposed. (**Schaff Note:** 95 i.e. if the gift descended only upon the Twelve, there would have been specific and distinctive mention of them in this narrative, as there was in the former chapter; and with much more reason here than there. The writer would not have said merely, They were *all* together: it sat upon each one *of them*: they were *all* filled: if he had meant that the Spirit came only upon the Apostles.) Observe, how when one is *continuing in prayer*, when one is in charity, then it is that the Spirit draws near. It put them in mind also of another vision: for as fire did He appear also in the bush. “As the Spirit gave them utterance, ἀποφθέγγεσθαι (Exod. iii. 2) For the things spoken by them were ἀποφθέγματα, profound utterances. “And,” it says, “there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men.” (v. 5) The fact of their dwelling there was a sign of piety: that being of so many nations they should have left country, and home, and relations, and be abiding there. For, it says, “There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded. (v. 6) Since the event had taken place in a house, of course they came together from without. The multitude *was confounded*: was all in commotion. They marvelled; “Because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were amazed,” it says, “and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?” (v. 7–13) They immediately turned their eyes towards the Apostles. “And how” (it follows) “hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene:” mark how they run from east to west: “and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And, they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.” O the excessive folly! O the excessive malignity! Why it was not even the season for that; for it was Pentecost. For this was what made it worse: that when those were confessing—men that were Jews, that were Romans, that were proselytes, yea perhaps that had crucified Him—yet these, after so great signs, say, “They are full of new wine!”

But let us look over what has been said from the beginning. (Recapitulation.) “And when the day of Pentecost,” etc. “It filled,” he says, “the house.” That wind πνοή was a very pool of water. This betokened the copiousness, as the fire did the vehemence. This nowhere happened in the case of the Prophets: for to uninebriated souls such accesses are not attended with much disturbance; but “when they have well drunken,” then indeed it is as here, but with the Prophets it is otherwise. (Ez. iii. 3) The roll of a book is given him, and Ezekiel ate what he was about to utter. “And it became in his mouth,” it is said, “as honey for sweetness.” (And again the hand of God touches the tongue of another Prophet; but here it is the Holy Ghost Himself: (Jer. i. 9) so equal is He in honor with the Father and the Son.) And again, on the other hand, Ezekiel calls it “Lamentations, and mourning, and woe.” (Ez. ii. 10) To them it might well be in the form of a book; for they still needed similitudes. Those had to deal with only one nation, and with their

own people; but these with the whole world, and with men whom they never knew. Also Elisha receives the grace through the medium of a mantle (1 Kings xix. 19-21); another by oil, as David (1 Sam. xvi. 13); and Moses by fire, as we read of him at the bush. (Exod. iii. 2) But in the present case it is not so; for the fire itself sat upon them. (But wherefore did the fire not appear so as to fill the house? Because they would have been terrified.) But the story shows, that it is the same here as there. For you are not to stop at this, that “there appeared unto them cloven tongues,” but note that they were “of fire.” Such a fire as this is able to kindle infinite fuel. Also, it is well said, *Cloven*, for they were from one root; that you may learn, that it was an operation sent from the Comforter.

But observe how those men also were first shown to be worthy, and then received the Spirit as worthy. Thus, for instance, David: what he did among the sheepfolds, the same he did after his victory and trophy; that it might be shown how simple and absolute was his faith. Again, see Moses despising royalty, and forsaking all, and after forty years taking the lead of the people (Exod. ii. 11); and Samuel occupied there in the temple (1 Sam. iii. 3); Elisha leaving all (1 Kings xix. 21); Ezekiel again, made manifest by what happened thereafter. In this manner, you see, did these also leave all that they had. They learnt also what human infirmity is, by what they suffered; they learnt that it was not in vain they had done these good works. (1 Sam. ix. and xi. 6) Even Saul, having first obtained witness that he was good, thereafter received the Spirit. But in the same manner as here did none of them receive. Thus Moses was the greatest of the Prophets, yet he, when others were to receive the Spirit, himself suffered diminution. But here it is not so; but just as fire kindles as many flames as it will, so here the largeness of the Spirit was shown, in that each one received a fountain of the Spirit; as indeed He Himself had foretold, that those who believe in Him, should have “a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” (John iv. 14) And good reason that it should be so. For they did not go forth to argue with Pharaoh, but to wrestle with the devil. But the wonder is this, that when sent they made no objections; they said not, they were “weak in voice, and of a slow tongue.” (Exod. iv. 10) For Moses had taught them better. They said not, they were too young. (Jer. i. 6) Jeremiah had made them wise. And yet they had heard of many fearful things, and much greater than were theirs of old time; but they feared to object.—And because they were angels of light, and ministers of things above [“Suddenly there came from heaven,” etc.] To them of old, no one “from heaven” appears, while they as yet follow after a vocation on earth; but now that Man has gone up on high, the Spirit also descends mightily from on high. “As it were a rushing mighty wind;” making it manifest by this, that nothing shall be able to withstand them, but they shall blow away all adversaries like a heap of dust. “And it filled all the house.” The house also was a symbol of the world. “And it sat upon each of them,” [etc.] and “the multitude came together, and were confounded.” Observe their piety; they pronounce no hasty judgment, but are perplexed: whereas those reckless ones pronounce at once, saying, “These men are full of new wine.” Now it was in order that they might have it in their power, in compliance with the Law, to appear thrice in the year in the Temple, that they dwelt there, these “devout men from all nations.” Observe here, the writer has no intention of flattering them. For he does not say that they pronounced any opinion: but what? “Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded.” And well they might be; for they supposed the matter was now coming to an issue against them, on account of the outrage committed against Christ. Conscience also agitated their souls, the very blood being yet upon their hands, and every thing

alarmed them. “Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?” For indeed this was confessed. [“And how hear we”] so much did the sound alarm them. [“Every man in our own tongue,” etc.] for it found the greater part of the world assembled there. [“Parthians and Medes,” etc.] This nerved the Apostles: for, what it was to speak in the Parthian tongue, they knew not but now learnt from what those said. Here is mention made of nations that were hostile to them, Cretans, Arabians, Egyptians, Persians: and that they would conquer them all was here made manifest. But as to their being in those countries, they were there in captivity, many of them: or else, the doctrines of the Law had become disseminated [among] the Gentiles in those countries. So then the testimony comes from all quarters: from citizens, from foreigners, from proselytes. “We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.” For it was not only that they spoke (in their tongues), but the things they spoke were wonderful. Well then might they be in doubt: for never had the like occurred. Observe the ingenuousness of these men. They were amazed and were in doubt, saying, “What meaneth this?” But “others mocking said, ‘These men are full of new wine’” (John viii. 48), and therefore mocked. O the effrontery! And what wonder is it? Since even of the Lord Himself, when casting out devils, they said that He had a devil! For so it is; wherever impudent assurance exists, it has but one object in view, to speak at all hazards, it cares not what; not that the man should say something real and relevant to the matter of discourse, but that he should speak no matter what. [“They are full of new wine.”] Quite a thing of course (is not it?), that men in the midst of such dangers, and dreading the worst, and in such despondency, have the courage to utter such things! And observe: since this was unlikely; because they would not have been drinking much [at that early hour], they ascribe the whole matter to the quality (of the wine), and say, “They are full” of it. “But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them.” In a former place you saw his provident forethought, here you see his manly courage. For if they were astonished and amazed, was it not as wonderful that he should be able in the midst of such a multitude to find language, he, an unlettered and ignorant man? If a man is troubled when he speaks among friends, much more might he be troubled among enemies and bloodthirsty men. That they are not drunken, he shows immediately by his very voice, that they are not beside themselves, as the soothsayers: and this too, that they were not constrained by some compulsory force. What is meant by, “with the eleven?” They expressed themselves through one common voice, and he was the mouth of all. The eleven stood by as witnesses to what he said. “He lifted up his voice,” it is said. That is, he spoke with great confidence, that they might perceive the grace of the Spirit. He who had not endured the questioning of a poor girl, now in the midst of the people, all breathing murder, discourses with such confidence, that this very thing becomes an unquestionable proof of the Resurrection: in the midst of men who could deride and make a joke of such things as these! What effrontery, think you, must go to that! what impiety, what shamelessness! For wherever the Holy Spirit is present, He makes men of gold out of men of clay. Look, I pray you, at Peter now: examine well that timid one, and devoid of understanding; as Christ said, “Are ye also yet without understanding?” (Matt. xv. 16) the man, who after that marvelous confession was called “Satan.” (Ib. xvi. 23) Consider also the unanimity of the Apostles. They themselves ceded to him the office of speaking; for it was not necessary that all should speak. “And he lifted up his voice,” and spoke out to them with great boldness. Such a thing it is to be a spiritual man! Only let us also bring ourselves into a state meet for the grace from above, and all becomes easy. For as a man of fire falling into the midst



of straw would take no harm, but do it to others: not he could take any harm, but they, in assailing him, destroy themselves. For the case here was just as if one carrying hay should attack one bearing fire: even so did the Apostles encounter these their adversaries with great boldness.

For what did it harm them, though they were so great a multitude? Did they not spend all their rage? did they not turn the distress upon themselves? Of all mankind were ever any so possessed with both rage and terror, as those became possessed? Were they not in an agony, and were dismayed, and trembled? For hear what they say, “Do ye wish to bring this man’s blood upon us?” (Acts v. 28) Did they (the Apostles) not fight against poverty and hunger: against ignominy and infamy (for they were accounted deceivers): did they not fight against ridicule and wrath and mockery?—for in their case the contraries met: some laughed at them, others punished them;—were they not made a mark for the wrathful passions, and for the merriment, of whole cities? exposed to factions and conspiracies: to fire, and sword, and wild beasts? Did not war beset them from every quarter, in ten thousand forms? And were they any more affected in their minds by all these things, than they would have been at seeing them in a dream or in a picture? With bare body they took the field against all the armed, though against them all men had arbitrary power [against them, were]: terrors of rulers, force of arms, in cities and strong walls: without experience, without skill of the tongue, and in the condition of quite ordinary men, matched against juggling conjurors, against impostors, against the whole throng of sophists, of rhetoricians, of philosophers grown mouldy in the Academy and the walks of the Peripatetics, against all these they fought the battle out. And the man whose occupation had been about lakes, so mastered them, as if it cost him not so much ado as even a contest with dumb fishes: for just as if the opponents he had to outwit were indeed more mute than fishes, so easily did he get the better of them! And Plato, that talked a deal of nonsense in his day, is silent now, while this man utters his voice everywhere; not among his own countrymen alone, but also among Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and in India, and in every part of the earth, and to the extremities of the world. Where now is Greece, with her big pretensions? Where the name of Athens? Where the ravings of the philosophers? He of Galilee, he of Bethsaida, he, the uncouth rustic, has overcome them all. Are you not ashamed—confess it—at the very name of the country of him who has defeated you? But if you hear his own name too, and learn that he was called Cephas, much more will you hide your faces. This, this has undone you quite; because you esteem this a reproach, and account glibness of tongue a praise, and want of glibness a disgrace. You have not followed the road you ought to have chosen, but leaving the royal road, so easy, so smooth, you have trodden one rough, and steep, and laborious. And therefore you have not attained unto the kingdom of heaven.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Acts II. 1, 2  
“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven.”

He refers to **Acts 2 (KJV):** 1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

He continues, “Dost thou perceive the type? What is this Pentecost? The time when the sickle was to be put to the harvest, and the ingathering was made. See now the reality, when the

time was come to put in the sickle of the word: for here, as the sickle, keen-edged, came the Spirit down. For hear the words of Christ: "Lift up your eyes," He said, "and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest." (John iv. 35)"

He refers to **John 4 (KJV):35** Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

He continues, "And again, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few." (Matt. ix. 38)"

He refers in context to **Matthew 9 (KJV):37** Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; 38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

He continues, "But as the first-fruits of this harvest, He himself took [our nature], and bore it up on high. Himself first put in the sickle. Therefore also He calls the Word the Seed. "When," it says, "the day of Pentecost was fully come" (Luke viii. 5, 11):"

He refers to **Luke 8 (KJV):5** A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

And to **Luke 8 (KJV):11** Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

He continues, "that is, when at the Pentecost, while about it, in short. For it was essential that the present events likewise should take place during the feast, that those who had witnessed the crucifixion of Christ, might also behold these. "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven." (v. 2)"

He refers in context to **Acts 2 (KJV):1** And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

He continues, "Why did this not come to pass without sensible tokens? For this reason. If even when the fact was such, men said, "They are full of new wine," what would they not have said, had it been otherwise? And it is not merely, "there came a sound," but, "from heaven." And the suddenness also startled them, and brought all together to the spot. "As of a rushing mighty wind:" this betokens the exceeding vehemence of the Spirit. "And it filled all the house:" insomuch that those present both believed, and (Edd. τούτους) in this manner were shown to be worthy. Nor is this all; but what is more awful still, "And there appeared unto them," it says, "cloven tongues like as of fire." (v. 3)"

He refers to **Acts 2 (KJV):3** And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

He continues, "Observe how it is always, "like as;" and rightly: that you may have no gross sensible notions of the Spirit. Also, "as it were of a blast:" therefore it was not a wind. "Like as of fire." For when the Spirit was to be made known to John, then it came upon the head of Christ as in the form of a dove: but now, when a whole multitude was to be converted, it is "like as of fire. And it sat upon each of them." This means, that it remained and rested upon them." For the sitting is significant of settledness and continuance.

Was it upon the twelve that it came? Not so; but upon the hundred and twenty."

He refers to **Acts 1 (KJV):15** And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

He continues, "For Peter would not have quoted to no purpose the testimony of the

prophet, saying, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord God, I will pour out of My spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” (Joel ii. 28)”

He refers to **Acts 2 (KJV):**16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

And to **Joel 2 (KJV):**28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: 29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

He continues, ““And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” (v. 4)”

He refers to **Acts 2 (KJV):**4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

He continues, “For, that the effect may not be to frighten only, therefore is it both “with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. And began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Matt. iii. 11)”

He refers to the prophecy of John the Baptist in **Matthew 3 (KJV):**11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

He continues, “They receive no other sign, but this first; for it was new to them, and there was no need of any other sign. “And it sat upon each of them,” says the writer. Observe now, how there is no longer any occasion for that person to grieve, who was not elected as was Matthias, “And they were all filled,” he says; not merely received the grace of the Spirit, but “were filled. And began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.””

To Chrysostom, one received the “grace of the Spirit” at baptism. In his thinking, when one was born again by baptism, they received the “grace of the Spirit”. He did not understand that, when we are born again, our spirit is born of the Spirit of God, and given a new nature when we believe in Jesus Christ. Baptism is something we do in obedience to the Lord’s command.

He continues, “It would not have been said, *All*, the Apostles also being there present, unless the rest also were partakers. For were it not so, having above made mention of the Apostles distinctively and by name, he would not now have put them all in one with the rest. For if, where it was only to be mentioned that they were present, he makes mention of the Apostles apart, much more would he have done so in the case here supposed. (**Schaff Note:** 95 i.e. if the gift descended only upon the Twelve, there would have been specific and distinctive mention of them in this narrative, as there was in the former chapter; and with much more reason here than there. The writer would not have said merely, They were *all* together: it sat upon each one *of them*: they were *all* filled: if he had meant that the Spirit came only upon the Apostles.)”

And we can agree with Chrysostom here. There were 120 disciples, including the apostles, in the upper room when the Spirit came upon them, and they were all filled with the Spirit.

He continues, “Observe, how when one is *continuing in prayer*, when one is in charity, then it is that the Spirit draws near. It put them in mind also of another vision: for as fire did He appear also in the bush. “As the Spirit gave them utterance, ἀποφθέγγεσθαι (Exod. iii. 2)”

He refers in context to **Exodus 3 (KJV):**1 Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. 2 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. 3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4 And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

He continues, “For the things spoken by them were ἀποφθέγματα, profound utterances. “And,” it says, “there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men.” (v. 5)”

He refers to **Acts 2 (KJV):**5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

He continues, “The fact of their dwelling there was a sign of piety: that being of so many nations they should have left country, and home, and relations, and be abiding there. For, it says, “There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded. (v. 6)”

He refers to **Acts 2 (KJV):**6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

He continues, “Since the event had taken place in a house, of course they came together from without. The multitude *was confounded*: was all in commotion. They marvelled; “Because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were amazed,” it says, “and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?” (v. 7–13)”

He refers to **Acts 2 (KJV):**7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? 8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. 12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? 13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

He continues, “They immediately turned their eyes towards the Apostles. “And how” (it follows) “hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene:” mark how they run from east to west: “and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And, they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.” O the excessive folly! O the excessive malignity! Why it was not even the season for that; for it was Pentecost. For this was what made it worse: that when those were confessing—men that were Jews, that were Romans, that were proselytes, yea perhaps that had crucified Him—yet these, after so great signs, say, “They are full of new wine!”

But let us look over what has been said from the beginning. (Recapitulation.) “And when

the day of Pentecost,” etc. “It filled,” he says, “the house.” That wind πνοή was a very pool of water. This betokened the copiousness, as the fire did the vehemence. This nowhere happened in the case of the Prophets: for to uninebriated souls such accesses are not attended with much disturbance; but “when they have well drunken,” then indeed it is as here, but with the Prophets it is otherwise. (Ez. iii. 3)”

He refers in context to **Ezekiel 3 (KJV)**:1 Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. 2 So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. 3 And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.

He continues, “The roll of a book is given him, and Ezekiel ate what he was about to utter. “And it became in his mouth,” it is said, “as honey for sweetness.” (And again the hand of God touches the tongue of another Prophet; but here it is the Holy Ghost Himself: (Jer. i. 9) so equal is He in honor with the Father and the Son.)”

He refers to **Jeremiah 1 (KJV)**:9 Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

He continues, “And again, on the other hand, Ezekiel calls it “Lamentations, and mourning, and woe.” (Ez. ii. 10)”

He refers to **Ezekiel 2 (KJV)**:10 And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.

He continues, “To them it might well be in the form of a book; for they still needed similitudes. Those had to deal with only one nation, and with their own people; but these with the whole world, and with men whom they never knew. Also Elisha receives the grace through the medium of a mantle (1 Kings xix. 19-21); another by oil, as David (1 Sam. xvi. 13); and Moses by fire, as we read of him at the bush. (Exod. iii. 2)”

He refers to **1 Kings 19 (KJV)**:19 So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. 20 And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee? 21 And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

And to **1 Samuel 16 (KJV)**:13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

And to **Exodus 3 (KJV)**:2 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

He continues, “But in the present case it is not so; for the fire itself sat upon them. (But wherefore did the fire not appear so as to fill the house? Because they would have been terrified.) But the story shows, that it is the same here as there. For you are not to stop at this, that “there appeared unto them cloven tongues,” but note that they were “of fire.” Such a fire as this is able to kindle infinite fuel. Also, it is well said, *Cloven*, for they were from one root; that

you may learn, that it was an operation sent from the Comforter.

But observe how those men also were first shown to be worthy, and then received the Spirit as worthy. Thus, for instance, David: what he did among the sheepfolds, the same he did after his victory and trophy; that it might be shown how simple and absolute was his faith. Again, see Moses despising royalty, and forsaking all, and after forty years taking the lead of the people (Exod. ii. 11);”

He refers to **Exodus 2 (KJV):11** And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren.

And in context to **Acts 7 (KJV):23** And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

He continues, “and Samuel occupied there in the temple (1 Sam. iii. 3); Elisha leaving all (1 Kings xix. 21);”

He refers to **1 Samuel 3 (KJV):3** And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; **4** That the Lord called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I.

And to **1 Kings 19 (KJV):21** And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

He continues, “Ezekiel again, made manifest by what happened thereafter. In this manner, you see, did these also leave all that they had. They learnt also what human infirmity is, by what they suffered; they learnt that it was not in vain they had done these good works. (1 Sam. ix. and xi. 6)”

He refers to **1 Samuel 9 (KJV):27** And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on), but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God.

And in context to **1 Samuel 11 (KJV):6** And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly. **7** And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.

He continues, “Even Saul, having first obtained witness that he was good, thereafter received the Spirit. But in the same manner as here did none of them receive. Thus Moses was the greatest of the Prophets, yet he, when others were to receive the Spirit, himself suffered diminution. But here it is not so; but just as fire kindles as many flames as it will, so here the largeness of the Spirit was shown, in that each one received a fountain of the Spirit; as indeed He Himself had foretold, that those who believe in Him, should have “a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” (John iv. 14)”

He refers to **John 4 (KJV):14** But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

He continues, “And good reason that it should be so. For they did not go forth to argue with Pharaoh, but to wrestle with the devil. But the wonder is this, that when sent they made no objections; they said not, they were “weak in voice, and of a slow tongue.” (Exod. iv. 10)”

He refers to **Exodus 4 (KJV):10** And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

He continues, “For Moses had taught them better. They said not, they were too young. (Jer. i. 6)”

He refers to **Jeremiah 1 (KJV):6** Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

He continues, “Jeremiah had made them wise. And yet they had heard of many fearful things, and much greater than were theirs of old time; but they feared to object.—And because they were angels of light, and ministers of things above [“Suddenly there came from heaven,” etc.] To them of old, no one “from heaven” appears, while they as yet follow after a vocation on earth;”

But we read of the Lord appearing to Abraham in **Genesis 18 (KJV):1** And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; 2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, 3 And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:

And we read of the angel Gabriel appearing to Daniel, in **Daniel 9 (KJV):21** Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. 22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

He continues, “but now that Man has gone up on high, the Spirit also descends mightily from on high. “As it were a rushing mighty wind;” making it manifest by this, that nothing shall be able to withstand them, but they shall blow away all adversaries like a heap of dust. “And it filled all the house.” The house also was a symbol of the world. “And it sat upon each of them,” [etc.] and “the multitude came together, and were confounded.” Observe their piety; they pronounce no hasty judgment, but are perplexed: whereas those reckless ones pronounce at once, saying, “These men are full of new wine.” Now it was in order that they might have it in their power, in compliance with the Law, to appear thrice in the year in the Temple, that they dwelt there, these “devout men from all nations.” Observe here, the writer has no intention of flattering them. For he does not say that they pronounced any opinion: but what? “Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded.” And well they might be; for they supposed the matter was now coming to an issue against them, on account of the outrage committed against Christ. Conscience also agitated their souls, the very blood being yet upon their hands, and every thing alarmed them. “Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?” For indeed this was confessed. [“And how hear we”] so much did the sound alarm them. [“Every man in our own tongue,” etc.] for it found the greater part of the world assembled there. [“Parthians and Medes,” etc.] This nerved the Apostles: for, what it was to speak in the Parthian tongue, they knew not but now learnt from what those said. Here is mention made of nations that were hostile to them, Cretans, Arabians, Egyptians, Persians: and that they would conquer them all was here made manifest. But as to their being in those countries, they were there in captivity, many of them: or else, the doctrines of the Law had become disseminated [among] the Gentiles in those countries. So then the testimony comes from all quarters: from

citizens, from foreigners, from proselytes. “We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.” For it was not only that they spoke (in their tongues), but the things they spoke were wonderful. Well then might they be in doubt: for never had the like occurred. Observe the ingenuousness of these men. They were amazed and were in doubt, saying, “What meaneth this?” But “others mocking said, ‘These men are full of new wine’” (John viii. 48), and therefore mocked. O the effrontery! And what wonder is it? Since even of the Lord Himself, when casting out devils, they said that He had a devil!”

He refers to **John 8 (KJV):48** Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

He continues, “For so it is; wherever impudent assurance exists, it has but one object in view, to speak at all hazards, it cares not what; not that the man should say something real and relevant to the matter of discourse, but that he should speak no matter what. [“They are full of new wine.”] Quite a thing of course (is not it?), that men in the midst of such dangers, and dreading the worst, and in such despondency, have the courage to utter such things! And observe: since this was unlikely; because they would not have been drinking much [at that early hour], they ascribe the whole matter to the quality (of the wine), and say, “They are full” of it. “But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them.””

He refers to **Acts 2 (KJV):14** But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: 15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

He continues, “In a former place you saw his provident forethought, here you see his manly courage. For if they were astonished and amazed, was it not as wonderful that he should be able in the midst of such a multitude to find language, he, an unlettered and ignorant man? If a man is troubled when he speaks among friends, much more might he be troubled among enemies and bloodthirsty men. That they are not drunken, he shows immediately by his very voice, that they are not beside themselves, as the soothsayers: and this too, that they were not constrained by some compulsory force. What is meant by, “with the eleven?” They expressed themselves through one common voice, and he was the mouth of all. The eleven stood by as witnesses to what he said. “He lifted up his voice,” it is said. That is, he spoke with great confidence, that they might perceive the grace of the Spirit. He who had not endured the questioning of a poor girl, now in the midst of the people, all breathing murder, discourses with such confidence, that this very thing becomes an unquestionable proof of the Resurrection: in the midst of men who could deride and make a joke of such things as these! What effrontery, think you, must go to that! what impiety, what shamelessness! For wherever the Holy Spirit is present, He makes men of gold out of men of clay. Look, I pray you, at Peter now: examine well that timid one, and devoid of understanding; as Christ said, “Are ye also yet without understanding?” (Matt. xv. 16) the man, who after that marvelous confession was called “Satan.” (Ib. xvi. 23)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 15 (KJV):15** Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable. 16 And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?

And to **Matthew 16 (KJV):16** And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And in context to **Matthew 16 (KJV):21** From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto



his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. 22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. 23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

He continues, “Consider also the unanimity of the Apostles. They themselves ceded to him the office of speaking; for it was not necessary that all should speak. “And he lifted up his voice,” and spoke out to them with great boldness. Such a thing it is to be a spiritual man! Only let us also bring ourselves into a state meet for the grace from above, and all becomes easy. For as a man of fire falling into the midst of straw would take no harm, but do it to others: not he could take any harm, but they, in assailing him, destroy themselves. For the case here was just as if one carrying hay should attack one bearing fire: even so did the Apostles encounter these their adversaries with great boldness.

For what did it harm them, though they were so great a multitude? Did they not spend all their rage? did they not turn the distress upon themselves? Of all mankind were ever any so possessed with both rage and terror, as those became possessed? Were they not in an agony, and were dismayed, and trembled? For hear what they say, “Do ye wish to bring this man’s blood upon us?” (Acts v. 28)”

He refers to **Acts 5 (KJV):28** Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

He continues, “Did they (the Apostles) not fight against poverty and hunger: against ignominy and infamy (for they were accounted deceivers): did they not fight against ridicule and wrath and mockery?—for in their case the contraries met: some laughed at them, others punished them;—were they not made a mark for the wrathful passions, and for the merriment, of whole cities? exposed to factions and conspiracies: to fire, and sword, and wild beasts? Did not war beset them from every quarter, in ten thousand forms? And were they any more affected in their minds by all these things, than they would have been at seeing them in a dream or in a picture? With bare body they took the field against all the armed, though against them all men had arbitrary power [against them, were]: terrors of rulers, force of arms, in cities and strong walls: without experience, without skill of the tongue, and in the condition of quite ordinary men, matched against juggling conjurors, against impostors, against the whole throng of sophists, of rhetoricians, of philosophers grown mouldy in the Academy and the walks of the Peripatetics, against all these they fought the battle out. And the man whose occupation had been about lakes, so mastered them, as if it cost him not so much ado as even a contest with dumb fishes: for just as if the opponents he had to outwit were indeed more mute than fishes, so easily did he get the better of them! And Plato, that talked a deal of nonsense in his day, is silent now, while this man utters his voice everywhere; not among his own countrymen alone, but also among Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and in India, and in every part of the earth, and to the extremities of the world. Where now is Greece, with her big pretensions? Where the name of Athens? Where the ravings of the philosophers? He of Galilee, he of Bethsaida, he, the uncouth rustic, has overcome them all. Are you not ashamed—confess it—at the very name of the country of him who has defeated you? But if you hear his own name too, and learn that he was called Cephas, much more will you hide your faces. This, this has undone you quite;

because you esteem this a reproach, and account glibness of tongue a praise, and want of glibness a disgrace. You have not followed the road you ought to have chosen, but leaving the royal road, so easy, so smooth, you have trodden one rough, and steep, and laborious. And therefore you have not attained unto the kingdom of heaven.”

Chrysostom’s discourse on the baptism of the Holy Spirit was good on the whole.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, HOMILY IV, page 25-26**, he says, “but now that Man has gone up on high, the Spirit also descends mightily from on high. “As it were a rushing mighty wind;” making it manifest by this, that nothing shall be able to withstand them, but they shall blow away all adversaries like a heap of dust.”

He refers to **Acts 2 (KJV):1** And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

And he says, “Nor is this all; but what is more awful still, “And there appeared unto them,” it says, “cloven tongues like as of fire.” (v. 3)”

He refers to **Acts 2 (KJV):3** And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

And he says, “And it sat upon each of them.” This means, that it remained and rested upon them.” For the sitting is significant of settledness and continuance.

Was it upon the twelve that it came? Not so; but upon the hundred and twenty.”

He refers to **Acts 1 (KJV):15** And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

And he says, “Observe now, how there is no longer any occasion for that person to grieve, who was not elected as was Matthias, “And they were all filled,” he says; not merely received the grace of the Spirit, but “were filled. And began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.””

And he says, “It would not have been said, *All*, the Apostles also being there present, unless the rest also were partakers.”

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is for all believers, as Peter taught in **Acts 2 (KJV):37** Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

## Miracles

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY VI, page 30-33

Ver. 5. "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Seest thou how clearly in every way he hath set forth the vast gain of this "ignorance," and the great loss of this "wisdom?" For the latter made void the Cross, but the former proclaimed the power of God: the latter, besides their failing to discover any of those things which they most needed, set them also upon boasting of themselves; the former, besides their receiving the truth, led them also to pride themselves in God. Again, wisdom would have persuaded many to suspect that the doctrine was of man: this clearly demonstrated it to be divine, and to have come down from heaven. Now when demonstration is made by wisdom of words, even the worse oftentimes overcome the better, having more skill in words; and falsehood outstrips the truth. But in this case it is not so: for neither doth the Spirit enter into an unclean soul, nor, having entered in, can it ever be subdued; even though all possible cleverness of speech assail it. For the demonstration by works and signs is far more evident than that by words.

[4.] But some one may say perhaps, "If the Gospel is to prevail and hath no need of words, lest the Cross be made of none effect; for what reason are signs withholden now?" For what reason? Speakest thou in unbelief and not allowing that they were done even in the times of the Apostles, or dost thou truly seek to know? If in unbelief, I will first make my stand against this. I say then, If signs were not done at that time, how did they, chased, and persecuted, and trembling, and in chains, and having become the common enemies of the world, and exposed to all as a mark for ill usage, and with nothing of their own to allure, neither speech, nor show, nor wealth, nor city, nor nation, nor family, nor pursuit (ἐπιτήδευμα,) nor glory, nor any such like thing; but with all things contrary, ignorance, meanness, poverty, hatred, enmity, and setting themselves against whole commonwealths, and with such a message to declare; how, I say, did they work conviction? For both the precepts brought much labor, and the doctrines many dangers. And they that heard and were to obey, had been brought up in luxury and drunkenness, and in great wickedness. Tell me then, how did they convince? Whence had they their credibility? For, as I have just said, If without signs they wrought conviction, far greater does the wonder appear. Do not then urge the fact that signs are not done now, as a proof that they were not done then. For as then they were usefully wrought; so now are they no longer so wrought.

Nor doth it necessarily follow from discourse being the only instrument of conviction, that now the "preaching" is in "wisdom." For both they who from the beginning sowed the word were unprofessional (ιδιωται) and unlearned, and spake nothing of themselves; but what things they received from God, these they distributed to the world: and we ourselves at this time introduce no inventions of our own; but the things which from them we have received, we speak unto all. And not even now persuade we by argumentation; but from the Divine Scriptures and from the miracles done at that time we produce the proof of what we say. On the other hand, even they at that time persuaded not by signs alone, but also by discoursing. And

the signs and the testimonies out of the Old Scriptures, not the cleverness of the things said, made their words appear more powerful.

[5.] How then, you will say, is it that signs were expedient then, and now inexpedient? Let us suppose a case, (for as yet I am contending against the Greek, and therefore I speak hypothetically of what must certainly come to pass,) let us, I say, suppose a case; and let the unbeliever consent to believe our affirmations, though it be only by way of concession: (κᾶν κατὰ συνδρομήν) for instance, That Christ will come. When then Christ shall come and all the angels with Him, and be manifested as God, and all things made subject unto Him; will not even the Greek believe? It is quite plain that he will also fall down and worship, and confess Him God, though his stubbornness exceed all reckoning. For who, at sight of the heavens opened and Him coming upon the clouds, and all the congregation of the powers above spread around Him, and rivers of fire coming on, and all standing by and trembling, will not fall down before Him, and believe Him God? Tell me, then; shall that adoration and knowledge be accounted unto the Greek for faith? No, on no account. And why not? Because this is not faith. For necessity hath done this, and the evidence of the things seen, and it is not of choice, but by the vastness of the spectacle the powers of the mind are dragged along. It follows that by how much the more evident and overpowering the course of events, by so much is the part of faith abridged. For this reason miracles are not done now.

And that this is the truth, hear what He saith unto Thomas (St. John xx. 29) “Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.” Therefore, in proportion to the evidence wherewith the miracle is set forth is the reward of faith lessened. So that if now also miracles were wrought, the same thing would ensue. For that then we shall no longer know Him by faith, Paul hath shewn, saying, “For now we walk by faith, not by sight.” (2 Cor. v. 7. *vñv* not in the received text.) As at that time, although thou believe, it shall not be imputed unto thee, because the thing is so palpable; so also now, supposing that such miracles were done as were formerly. For when we admit things which in no degree and in no way can be made out by reasoning, then it is faith. It is for this that hell is threatened, but is not shewn: for if it were shewn, the same would again ensue.

[6.] Besides if signs be what thou seekest after, even now thou mayest see signs, although not of the same kind; the numberless predictions and on an endless variety of subject: the conversion of the world, the self-denying (φιλοσοφίαν) course of the Barbarians, the change from savage customs, the greater intenseness of piety. “What predictions?” you will say. “For all the things just mentioned were written after the present state of things had begun.” When? Where? By whom? Tell me. How many years ago? Will you have fifty, or an hundred? They had not then, a hundred years ago, anything written at all. How then did the world retain the doctrines and all the rest, since memory would not be sufficient? How knew they that Peter was crucified? (ἀνεσκολοπίσθη) How could it have entered the minds of men who came after the events had taken place to foretell, for instance, that the Gospel should be preached in every part of the whole world? that the Jewish institutions should cease, and never return again? And they who gave up their lives for the Gospel, how would they have endured to see the Gospel adulterated? And how would the writers have won credit, miracles having ceased? And how could the writings have penetrated to the region of Barbarians, and of Indians, and unto the very bounds of the ocean, if the relators had not been worthy of credit? The writers, too, who were they? When, how, and why, did they write at all? Was it to gain glory to themselves? Why then

inscribed they the books with other men's names? "Why, from a wish to recommend the doctrine." As true, or as false? For if you say, they stuck to it, as being false; their joining it at all was out of all likelihood: but if as being truth, there was no need of inventions such as you speak of. And besides, the prophecies are of such a kind, as that even until now time has been unable to force aside the predicted course of things: (ὡς μὴ δυνάσθαι βιαζέσθαι χρόνῳ τα εἰρημένα) for the destruction indeed of Jerusalem took place many years ago; but there are also other predictions which extend along from that time until His coming; which examine as you please: for instance, this, "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world: (St. Matt. xxviii. 20) and, "Upon this Rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it:" (St. Matt. xvi. 18) and, "This Gospel shall be preached unto all nations:" (St. Matt. xxiv. 14) and that which the woman which was an harlot did: and many others more than these. Whence then the truth of this prediction if indeed it were a forgery? How did "the gates of hell" not "prevail" against "the Church?" How is Christ always "with us?" For had He not been "with us," the Church would not have been victorious. How was the Gospel spread abroad in every part of the world? They also who have spoken against us are enough to testify the antiquity of the books; I mean, such as Celsus (**Schaff Note:** Celsus, the Epicurean philosopher, against whom Origen wrote about A.D. 170), and he of Batanea (**Schaff Note:** Porphyry; so called also by St. Jerome, in the Preface to his *Commentary on Galatians* where the Editor's conjecture is, that the name was that of Porphyry's residence or birth, but that it was also a term of reproach, alluding to the fat bulls of Basan, Ps. xxii. 12. He is commonly called a Tyrian, but they suppose that Batanea, which is in Syria, was a colony of Tyre), who came after him. For they, I suppose, were not speaking against books composed after their time.

[7] And besides, there is the whole world which with one consent hath received the Gospel. Now there could not have been so great agreement from one end of the earth to the other, unless it had been the Grace of the Spirit; but the authors of the forgery would have been quickly found out. Neither could so great excellencies have originated from inventions and falsehoods. Dost thou not see the whole world coming in; error extinguished; the austere wisdom (φιλοσοφίαν) of the old monks shining brighter than the sun; the choirs of the virgins; the piety among Barbarians; all men serving under one yoke? For neither by us alone were these things foretold, but also from the beginning, by the Prophets. For you will not, I trow, cavil at their predictions also: for the books are with their enemies, and through the zeal of certain Greeks they have been transferred into the Greek tongue. Many things then do these also foretell concerning these matters, shewing that it was God who should come among us.

[8] Why then do not all believe now? Because things have degenerated: and for this we are to blame. (For from hence the discourse is addressed unto us also.) For surely not even then did they trust to signs alone, but by the mode of life also many of the converts were attracted. For, "Let your light so shine before men," saith He, "that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (St. Matt. v. 16) And, "They were all of one heart and one soul, neither said any man that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common; and distribution was made unto every man, according as he had need;" (Acts iv. 32, 35) and they lived an angelic life. And if the same were done now, we should convert the whole world, even without miracles. But in the meanwhile, let those who will be saved attend to the Scriptures; for they shall find there both these noble doings, and those which are greater than these. For it may be added that the Teachers themselves surpassed

the deeds of the others; living in hunger, in thirst, and nakedness. But we are desirous of enjoying great luxury, and rest, and ease; not so they: they cried aloud, “Even unto the present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place. (1 Cor. iv. 11) And some ran from Jerusalem unto Illyricum, (Rom. xv. 19) and another unto the country of the Indians, and another unto that of the Moors, and this to one part of the world, that to another. Whereas we have not the courage to depart even out of our own country; but seek for luxurious living and splendid houses and all other superfluities. For which of us ever was famished for the word of God’s sake? Whichever abode in a wilderness? Which ever set out on a distant peregrination? Which of our teachers lived by the labor of his hands to assist others? Which endured death daily? Hence it is that they also who are with us have become slothful. For suppose that one saw soldiers and generals struggling with hunger, and thirst, and death, and with all dreadful things, and bearing cold and dangers and all like lions, and so prospering; then afterwards, relaxing that strictness, and becoming enervated, and fond of wealth, and addicted to business and bargains, and then overcome by their enemies, it were extreme folly to seek for the cause of all this. Now let us reason thus in our own case and that of our ancestors; for we too have become weaker than all, and are nailed down unto this present life.

And if one be found having a vestige of the ancient wisdom, leaving the cities and the market places, and the society of the world, and the ordering of others, he betakes himself to the mountains: and if one ask the reason of that retirement, he invents a plea which cannot meet with allowance. For, saith he, “lest I perish too, and the edge of my goodness be taken off, I start aside.” Now how much better were it for thee to become less keen, and to gain others, than abiding on high to neglect thy perishing brethren?

When, however, the one sort are careless about virtue, and those who do regard it withdraw themselves far from our ranks, how are we to subdue our enemies? For even if miracles were wrought now, who would be persuaded? Or who of those without would give heed unto us, our iniquity being thus prevalent? For so it is, that our upright living seems unto the many the more trustworthy argument of the two: miracles admitting of a bad construction on the part of obstinate bad men: whereas a pure life will have abundant power to stop the mouth of the devil himself.

[9.] These things I say, both to governors and governed; and, before all others, unto myself; to the end that the way of life shown forth in us may be truly admirable, that taking our appropriate stations, we may look down on all things present; may despise wealth, and not despise hell; overlook glory, and not overlook salvation; endure toil and labor here, lest we fall into punishment there. Thus let us wage war with the Greeks; thus let us take them captive with a captivity better than liberty.

But while we say these things without intermission, over and over, they occur very seldom. Howbeit, be they done or not, it is right to remind you of them continually. For if some are engaged in deceiving by their fair speech, so much more is it the duty of those who allure back unto the truth, not to grow weary of speaking what is profitable. Again: if the deceivers make use of so many contrivances—spending as they do money, and applying arguments, and undergoing dangers, and making a parade of their patronage—much more should we, who are winning men from deceit, endure both dangers and deaths, and all things; that we may both gain ourselves and others, and become to our enemies irresistible, and so obtain the promised

blessings, through the grace and lovingkindness, etc.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 5. “That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):5** That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

He continues, “Seest thou how clearly in every way he hath set forth the vast gain of this “ignorance,” and the great loss of this “wisdom?” For the latter made void the Cross, but the former proclaimed the power of God: the latter, besides their failing to discover any of those things which they most needed, set them also upon boasting of themselves; the former, besides their receiving the truth, led them also to pride themselves in God. Again, wisdom would have persuaded many to suspect that the doctrine was of man: this clearly demonstrated it to be divine, and to have come down from heaven. Now when demonstration is made by wisdom of words, even the worse oftentimes overcome the better, having more skill in words; and falsehood outstrips the truth. But in this case it is not so: for neither doth the Spirit enter into an unclean soul, nor, having entered in, can it ever be subdued; even though all possible cleverness of speech assail it. For the demonstration by works and signs is far more evident than that by words.

[4.] But some one may say perhaps, “If the Gospel is to prevail and hath no need of words, lest the Cross be made of none effect; for what reason are signs withholden now?”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):17** For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

He continues, “For what reason? Speakest thou in unbelief and not allowing that they were done even in the times of the Apostles, or dost thou truly seek to know? If in unbelief, I will first make my stand against this. I say then, If signs were not done at that time, how did they, chased, and persecuted, and trembling, and in chains, and having become the common enemies of the world, and exposed to all as a mark for ill usage, and with nothing of their own to allure, neither speech, nor show, nor wealth, nor city, nor nation, nor family, nor pursuit (ἐπιτήδευμα,) nor glory, nor any such like thing; but with all things contrary, ignorance, meanness, poverty, hatred, enmity, and setting themselves against whole commonwealths, and with such a message to declare; how, I say, did they work conviction? For both the precepts brought much labor, and the doctrines many dangers. And they that heard and were to obey, had been brought up in luxury and drunkenness, and in great wickedness. Tell me then, how did they convince? Whence had they their credibility? For, as I have just said, If without signs they wrought conviction, far greater does the wonder appear. Do not then urge the fact that signs are not done now, as a proof that they were not done then. For as then they were usefully wrought; so now are they no longer so wrought.”

It was Chrysostom’s testimony that “signs”, or miracles or manifestations of the Spirit were not being done in the Church in his time.

He continues, “Nor doth it necessarily follow from discourse being the only instrument of conviction, that now the “preaching” is in “wisdom.” For both they who from the beginning sowed the word were unprofessional (ιδιωται) and unlearned, and spake nothing of themselves; but what things they received from God, these they distributed to the world: and we ourselves at this time introduce no inventions of our own; but the things which from them we have received,

we speak unto all. And not even now persuade we by argumentation; but from the Divine Scriptures and from the miracles done at that time we produce the proof of what we say. On the other hand, even they at that time persuaded not by signs alone, but also by discoursing. And the signs and the testimonies out of the Old Scriptures, not the cleverness of the things said, made their words appear more powerful.

[5.] How then, you will say, is it that signs were expedient then, and now inexpedient? Let us suppose a case, (for as yet I am contending against the Greek, and therefore I speak hypothetically of what must certainly come to pass,) let us, I say, suppose a case; and let the unbeliever consent to believe our affirmations, though it be only by way of concession: (κᾶν κατὰ συνδρομήν) for instance, That Christ will come. When then Christ shall come and all the angels with Him, and be manifested as God, and all things made subject unto Him; will not even the Greek believe? It is quite plain that he will also fall down and worship, and confess Him God, though his stubbornness exceed all reckoning. For who, at sight of the heavens opened and Him coming upon the clouds, and all the congregation of the powers above spread around Him, and rivers of fire coming on, and all standing by and trembling, will not fall down before Him, and believe Him God? Tell me, then; shall that adoration and knowledge be accounted unto the Greek for faith? No, on no account. And why not? Because this is not faith. For necessity hath done this, and the evidence of the things seen, and it is not of choice, but by the vastness of the spectacle the powers of the mind are dragged along. It follows that by how much the more evident and overpowering the course of events, by so much is the part of faith abridged. For this reason miracles are not done now.”

But the reason mighty works are not done is because of a lack of faith, as we read in **Mark 6 (KJV):** 1 And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him. 2 And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? 3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. 4 But Jesus, said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. 5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. 6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

He continues, “And that this is the truth, hear what He saith unto Thomas (St. John xx. 29) “Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.””

He refers in context to **John 20 (KJV):** 28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. 29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

He continues, “Therefore, in proportion to the evidence wherewith the miracle is set forth is the reward of faith lessened. So that if now also miracles were wrought, the same thing would ensue. For that then we shall no longer know Him by faith, Paul hath shewn, saying, “For now we walk by faith, not by sight.” (2 Cor. v. 7. *vũv* not in the received text.)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):** 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

He continues, “As at that time, although thou believe, it shall not be imputed unto thee, because the thing is so palpable; so also now, supposing that such miracles were done as were



formerly. For when we admit things which in no degree and in no way can be made out by reasoning, then it is faith. It is for this that hell is threatened, but is not shewn: for if it were shewn, the same would again ensue.

[6.] Besides if signs be what thou seekest after, even now thou mayest see signs, although not of the same kind; the numberless predictions and on an endless variety of subject: the conversion of the world, the self-denying (φιλοσοφίαν) course of the Barbarians, the change from savage customs, the greater intenseness of piety. “What predictions?” you will say. “For all the things just mentioned were written after the present state of things had begun.” When? Where? By whom? Tell me. How many years ago? Will you have fifty, or an hundred? They had not then, a hundred years ago, anything written at all. How then did the world retain the doctrines and all the rest, since memory would not be sufficient? How knew they that Peter was crucified? (ἀνεσκολοπίσθη) How could it have entered the minds of men who came after the events had taken place to foretell, for instance, that the Gospel should be preached in every part of the whole world? that the Jewish institutions should cease, and never return again? And they who gave up their lives for the Gospel, how would they have endured to see the Gospel adulterated? And how would the writers have won credit, miracles having ceased? And how could the writings have penetrated to the region of Barbarians, and of Indians, and unto the very bounds of the ocean, if the relators had not been worthy of credit? The writers, too, who were they? When, how, and why, did they write at all? Was it to gain glory to themselves? Why then inscribed they the books with other men’s names? “Why, from a wish to recommend the doctrine.” As true, or as false? For if you say, they stuck to it, as being false; their joining it at all was out of all likelihood: but if as being truth, there was no need of inventions such as you speak of. And besides, the prophecies are of such a kind, as that even until now time has been unable to force aside the predicted course of things: (ὡς μὴ δύνασθαι βιαζέσθαι χρόνω τα εἰρημένα) for the destruction indeed of Jerusalem took place many years ago; but there are also other predictions which extend along from that time until His coming; which examine as you please: for instance, this, “I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world: (St. Matt. xxviii. 20) and, “Upon this Rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it:” (St. Matt. xvi. 18) and, “This Gospel shall be preached unto all nations:” (St. Matt. xxiv. 14)”

He refers to **Matthew 28 (KJV):20** Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

And to **Matthew 16 (KJV):18** And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

And to **Matthew 24 (KJV):14** And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

He continues, “and that which the woman which was an harlot did:”

He refers to **John 4 (KJV):16** Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. 17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: 18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. 19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

And to **John 4 (KJV):28** The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, 29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? 30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

He continues, “and many others more than these. Whence then the truth of this prediction if indeed it were a forgery? How did “the gates of hell” not “prevail” against “the Church?” How is Christ always “with us?” For had He not been “with us,” the Church would not have been victorious. How was the Gospel spread abroad in every part of the world? They also who have spoken against us are enough to testify the antiquity of the books; I mean, such as Celsus (**Schaff Note:** Celsus, the Epicurean philosopher, against whom Origen wrote about A.D. 170.), and he of Batanea (**Schaff Note:** Porphyry; so called also by St. Jerome, in the Preface to his *Commentary on Galatians* where the Editor’s conjecture is, that the name was that of Porphyry’s residence or birth, but that it was also a term of reproach, alluding to the fat bulls of Basan, Ps. xxii. 12. He is commonly called a Tyrian, but they suppose that Batanea, which is in Syria, was a colony of Tyre), who came after him. For they, I suppose, were not speaking against books composed after their time.

[7] And besides, there is the whole world which with one consent hath received the Gospel. Now there could not have been so great agreement from one end of the earth to the other, unless it had been the Grace of the Spirit; but the authors of the forgery would have been quickly found out. Neither could so great excellencies have originated from inventions and falsehoods. Dost thou not see the whole world coming in; error extinguished; the austere wisdom (φιλοσοφίαν) of the old monks shining brighter than the sun; the choirs of the virgins; the piety among Barbarians; all men serving under one yoke? For neither by us alone were these things foretold, but also from the beginning, by the Prophets. For you will not, I trow, cavil at their predictions also: for the books are with their enemies, and through the zeal of certain Greeks they have been transferred into the Greek tongue. Many things then do these also foretell concerning these matters, shewing that it was God who should come among us.

[8] Why then do not all believe now? Because things have degenerated: and for this we are to blame. (For from hence the discourse is addressed unto us also.) For surely not even then did they trust to signs alone, but by the mode of life also many of the converts were attracted. For, “Let your light so shine before men,” saith He, “that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (St. Matt. v. 16)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):16** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

He continues, “And, “They were all of one heart and one soul, neither said any man that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common; and distribution was made unto every man, according as he had need;” (Acts iv. 32, 35)”

He refers in context to **Acts 4 (KJV):32** And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

He continues, “and they lived an angelic life. And if the same were done now, we should convert the whole world, even without miracles. But in the meanwhile, let those who will be saved attend to the Scriptures; for they shall find there both these noble doings, and those which are greater than these. For it may be added that the Teachers themselves surpassed the deeds of the others; living in hunger, in thirst, and nakedness. But we are desirous of enjoying great luxury, and rest, and ease; not so they: they cried aloud, “Even unto the present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place. (1 Cor. iv. 11)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 4 (KJV):11** Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;

He continues, “And some ran from Jerusalem unto Illyricum, (Rom. xv. 19) and another unto the country of the Indians, and another unto that of the Moors, and this to one part of the world, that to another.”

He refers to **Romans 15 (KJV):19** Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

He continues, “Whereas we have not the courage to depart even out of our own country; but seek for luxurious living and splendid houses and all other superfluities. For which of us ever was famished for the word of God’s sake? Whichever abode in a wilderness? Which ever set out on a distant peregrination?”

The word “peregrination” means, “to travel especially on foot : WALK”. (**Merriam Webster**)

He continues, “Which of our teachers lived by the labor of his hands to assist others? Which endured death daily? Hence it is that they also who are with us have become slothful. For suppose that one saw soldiers and generals struggling with hunger, and thirst, and death, and with all dreadful things, and bearing cold and dangers and all like lions, and so prospering; then afterwards, relaxing that strictness, and becoming enervated, and fond of wealth, and addicted to business and bargains, and then overcome by their enemies, it were extreme folly to seek for the cause of all this. Now let us reason thus in our own case and that of our ancestors; for we too have become weaker than all, and are nailed down unto this present life.

And if one be found having a vestige of the ancient wisdom, leaving the cities and the market places, and the society of the world, and the ordering of others, he betakes himself to the mountains: and if one ask the reason of that retirement, he invents a plea which cannot meet with allowance. For, saith he, “lest I perish too, and the edge of my goodness be taken off, I start aside.” Now how much better were it for thee to become less keen, and to gain others, than abiding on high to neglect thy perishing brethren?

When, however, the one sort are careless about virtue, and those who do regard it withdraw themselves far from our ranks, how are we to subdue our enemies? For even if miracles were wrought now, who would be persuaded? Or who of those without would give heed unto us, our iniquity being thus prevalent? For so it is, that our upright living seems unto the many the more trustworthy argument of the two: miracles admitting of a bad construction on the part of obstinate bad men: whereas a pure life will have abundant power to stop the mouth of the devil himself.

[9.] These things I say, both to governors and governed; and, before all others, unto

myself; to the end that the way of life shown forth in us may be truly admirable, that taking our appropriate stations, we may look down on all things present; may despise wealth, and not despise hell; overlook glory, and not overlook salvation; endure toil and labor here, lest we fall into punishment there. Thus let us wage war with the Greeks; thus let us take them captive with a captivity better than liberty.

But while we say these things without intermission, over and over, they occur very seldom. Howbeit, be they done or not, it is right to remind you of them continually. For if some are engaged in deceiving by their fair speech, so much more is it the duty of those who allure back unto the truth, not to grow weary of speaking what is profitable. Again: if the deceivers make use of so many contrivances—spending as they do money, and applying arguments, and undergoing dangers, and making a parade of their patronage—much more should we, who are winning men from deceit, endure both dangers and deaths, and all things; that we may both gain ourselves and others, and become to our enemies irresistible, and so obtain the promised blessings, through the grace and lovingkindness, etc.”

But let us remember Peter’s words in **Acts 2 (KJV):38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

The same Holy Spirit that did miracles through the apostles is the same Holy Spirit that we have received who have believed in Jesus Christ.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY VI, page 30-33**, he says, “But some one may say perhaps, “If the Gospel is to prevail and hath no need of words, lest the Cross be made of none effect; for what reason are signs withholden now?””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):17** For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

And he says, “Do not then urge the fact that signs are not done now, as a proof that they were not done then. For as then they were usefully wrought; so now are they no longer so wrought.”

It was Chrysostom’s testimony that “signs”, or miracles, or manifestations of the Spirit were not being done in the Church in his time.

And he argues, “It follows that by how much the more evident and overpowering the course of events, by so much is the part of faith abridged. For this reason miracles are not done now.”

The word “abridged” means “to shorten by omission of words without sacrifice of sense : **CONDENSE**”

But the reason mighty works are not done is because of a lack of faith, as we read in **Mark 6 (KJV):5** And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. 6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

And he says, “For so it is, that our upright living seems unto the many the more trustworthy argument of the two: miracles admitting of a bad construction on the part of obstinate bad men: whereas a pure life will have abundant power to stop the mouth of the devil himself.”

But we read in **Matthew 9 (KJV):**27 And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us. 28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. 29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. 30 And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. 31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

In verse 29, Jesus said, “According to your faith be it unto you.”

## Spiritual Gifts

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XXIII, page 168-173**

1 Cor. xii. 1, 2

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that when ye were Gentiles, ye were led away unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led. This whole place is very obscure: but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place. And why do they not happen now? Why look now, the cause too of the obscurity hath produced us again another question: namely, why did they then happen, and now do so no more? This however let us defer to another time, but for the present let us state what things were occurring then. Well: what did happen then? Whoever was baptized he straightway spake with tongues and not with tongues only, but many also prophesied, and some also performed many other wonderful works. For since on their coming over from idols, without any clear knowledge or training in the ancient Scriptures, they at once on their baptism received the Spirit, yet the Spirit they saw not, for It is invisible; therefore God’s grace bestowed some sensible proof of that energy. And one straightway spake in the Persian, another in the Roman, another in the Indian, another in some other such tongue: and this made manifest to them that were without that it is the Spirit in the very person speaking. Wherefore also he so calls it, saying, “But to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given to profit withal;” (v. 7) calling the gifts “a manifestation of the Spirit.” For as the Apostles themselves had received this sign first, so also the faithful went on receiving it, I mean, the gift of tongues; yet not this only but also many others: inasmuch as many used even to raise the dead and to cast out devils and to perform many other such wonders: and they had gifts too, some less, and some more. But more abundant than all was the gift of tongues among them: and this became to them a cause of division; not from its own nature but from the perverseness of them that had received it: in that on the one hand the possessors of the greater gifts were lifted up against them that had the lesser: and these again were grieved, and envied the owners of the greater. And Paul himself as

he proceeds intimates this.

Since then here from they were receiving a fatal blow in the dissolution of their charity, he takes great care to correct it. For this happened indeed in Rome also, but not in the same way. And this is why in the Epistle to the Romans he moots it indeed, but obscurely and briefly, saying thus: “For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office; so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another. And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith; or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry; or he that teacheth to his teaching.” (Rom. xii. 4–8) And that the Romans also were falling into wilfulness hereby, this he intimates in the beginning of that discourse, thus saying: “For I say through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith.” (Rom. xii. 3) With these, however, (for the disease of division and pride had not proceeded to any length,) he thus discoursed: but here with great anxiety; for the distemper had greatly spread.

And this was not the only thing to disturb them, but there were also in the place many soothsayers, inasmuch as the city was more than usually addicted to Grecian customs, and this with the rest was tending to offence and disturbance among them. This is the reason why he begins by first stating the difference between soothsaying and prophecy. For this cause also they received discerning of spirits, so as to discern and know which is he that speaketh by a pure spirit, and which by an impure.

For because it was not possible to supply the evidence of the things uttered from within themselves at the moment; (for prophecy supplies the proof of its own truth not at the time when it is spoken, but at the time of the event;) and it was not easy to distinguish the true prophesier from the pretender; (for the devil himself, accursed as he is, had entered into them that prophesied, [See 1 Kings xxii. 23] bringing in false prophets, as if forsooth they also could foretell things to come;) and further, men were easily deceived, because the things spoken could not for the present be brought to trial, ere yet the events had come to pass concerning which the prophecy was; (for it was the end that proved the false prophet and the true:)—in order that the hearers might not be deceived before the end, he gives them a sign which even before the event served to indicate the one and the other. And hence taking his order and beginning, he thus goes on also to the discourse concerning the gifts and corrects the contentiousness that arose from hence likewise. For the present however he begins the discourse concerning the soothsayers, thus saying,

[2.] “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant;” calling the signs “spiritual,” because they are the works of the Spirit alone, human effort contributing nothing to the working such wonders. And intending to discourse concerning them, first, as I said, he lays down the difference between soothsaying and prophecy, thus saying,

“Ye know that when ye were Gentiles, ye were led away (**Schaff Note:** ἀπαγόμενοι, properly “dragged to prison or execution.”) unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led.” Now what he means is this: “In the idol-temples,” saith he, “if any were at any time possessed by an unclean spirit and began to divine, even as one dragged away, so was he drawn by that spirit in chains: knowing nothing of the things which he utters. For this is peculiar to the soothsayer, to be beside himself, to be under compulsion, to be pushed, to be dragged, to be

haled as a madman. But the prophet not so, but with sober mind and composed temper and knowing what he is saying, he uttereth all things. Therefore even before the event do thou from this distinguish the soothsayer and the prophet. And consider how he frees his discourse of all suspicion; calling themselves to witness who had made trial of the matter. As if he had said, “that I lie not nor rashly traduce the religion of the Gentiles, feigning like an enemy, do ye yourselves bear me witness: knowing as ye do, when ye were Gentiles, how ye were pulled and dragged away then.”

But if any should say that these too are suspected as believers, come, even from them that are without will I make this manifest to you. Hear, for example, Plato saying thus: (Apol. Soc. c. 7) “Even as they who deliver oracles and the soothsayers say many and excellent things, but know nothing of what they utter.” Hear again another, a poet, giving the same intimation. For whereas by certain mystical rites and witchcrafts a certain person had imprisoned a demon in a man, and the man divined, and in his divination was thrown down and torn, and was unable to endure the violence of the demon, but was on the point of perishing in that convulsion; he saith to the persons who were practicing such mystical arts, (**Schaff Note:** These verses are taken from an old Oracle, quoted among others by Porphyry in a *Treatise of the Philosophy of Oracles*, and from him again by Theodoret, on *the Remedies for Gentile Errors*, Disp. x. t. iv. p. 957)

Loose me, I pray you: The mighty God no longer mortal flesh Can hold. And again, Unbind my wreaths, and bathe my feet in drops From the pure stream; erase these mystic lines, (**Schaff Note:** Porphyry’s note on this verse, as quoted by Hales from Eusebius (Evang. Præp. v.) in Savile’s Chrysostom, viii. pt. ii. p. 278, is as follows: “You see, he bids them erase the lines that he may depart: as though these detained him, and not only these, but the other things too about their apparel: because they wore certain portraitures of the deities who were invoked.”) And let me go. For these and such like things, (for one might mention many more,) point out to us both of these facts which follow; the compulsion which holds down the demons and makes them slaves; and the violence to which they submit who have once given themselves up to them, so as to swerve even from their natural reason. And the Pythoness too (**Schaff Note:** See Strabo, ix. 5) (for I am compelled now to bring forward and expose another disgraceful custom of theirs, which it were well to pass by, because it is unseemly for us to mention such things; but that you may more clearly know their shame it is necessary to mention it, that hence at least ye may come to know the madness and exceeding mockery of those that make use of the soothsayers:) this same Pythoness then is said, being a female, to sit at times upon the tripod of Apollo astride, and thus the evil spirit ascending from beneath and entering the lower part of her body, fills the woman with madness, and she with disheveled hair begins to play the bacchanal and to foam at the mouth, and thus being in a frenzy to utter the words of her madness. I know that you are ashamed and blush when you hear these things: but they glory both in the disgrace and in the madness which I have described. These then and all such things. Paul was bringing forward when he said, “Ye know that when ye were Gentiles, ye were led away unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led.”

And because he was discoursing with those who knew well, he states not all things with exact care, not wishing to be troublesome to them, but having reminded them only and brought all into their recollection, he soon quits the point, hastening to the subject before him.

But what is, “unto those dumb idols?” These soothsayers used to be led and dragged unto

them.

But if they be themselves dumb, how did they give responses to others? And wherefore did the demon lead them to the images? As men taken in war, and in chains, and rendering at the same time his deceit plausible. Thus, to keep men from the notion that it was just a dumb stone, they were earnest to rivet the people to the idols that their own style and title might be inscribed upon them. But our rites are not such. He did not however state ours, I mean the prophesyings. For it was well known to them all, and prophecy was exercised among them, as was meet for their condition, with understanding and with entire freedom. Therefore, you see, they had power either to speak or to refrain from speaking. For they were not bound by necessity, but were honored with a privilege. For this cause Jonah fled; (Jonah i. 3) for this cause Ezekiel delayed; (Ezek. iii. 15) for this cause Jeremiah excused himself. (Jer. i. 6) And God thrusts them not on by compulsion, but advising, exhorting, threatening; not darkening their mind; for to cause distraction and madness and great darkness, is the proper work of a demon: but it is God's work to illuminate and with consideration to teach things needful.

[3.] This then is the first difference between a soothsayer and a prophet; but a second and a different one is that which he next states, saying,

Ver. 3. "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking in the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed:" and then another: "and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but in the Holy Ghost."

"When thou seest," saith he, "any one not uttering His name, or anathematizing Him, he is a soothsayer. Again, when thou seest another speaking all things with His Name, understand that he is spiritual." "What then," say you, "must we say concerning the Catechumens? For if, no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost, what must we say of them who name indeed His Name, but are destitute of His Spirit? (**Schaff Note:** So St. Augustin, Tract 11. on The Gospel of St. John: "And as the Catechumens have the sign of the Cross in their forehead, they now belong to the Great House: but let them from servants become sons;" alluding to Gal. iv. 6, 7; ap. Bingham, i. 3. 3.)

But his discourse at this time was not concerning these for there were not at that time Catechumens, but concerning believers and unbelievers. What then, doth no demon call upon God's Name? Did not the demoniacs say, "We know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God? (Mark i. 24) Did they not say to Paul, "these men are the servants of the Most High God? (Acts xvi. 17) They did, but upon scourging, upon compulsion; never of their own will and without being scourged.

But here it is proper to enquire, both why the demon uttered these things and why Paul rebuked him. In imitation of his Teacher; for so Christ did also rebuke: since it was not his will to have testimony from them. And wherefore did the devil also practice this? Intending to confound the order of things, and to seize upon the dignity of the Apostles, and to persuade many to pay attention to them: which had it happened, they would easily have made themselves appear from hence worthy of credit, and have brought in their own designs. That these things then might not be, and the deceit might not have a beginning, he stops their mouths even when speaking the truth, so that in their falsehoods men should not at all give heed unto them, but stop their ears altogether against the things said by them.

[4.] Having therefore made manifest the soothsayers and the prophets both by the first sign and also by the second, he next discourses of the wonders; not passing without reason to



this topic, but so as to remove the dissension which had thence arisen, and to persuade both those that had the less portion not to grieve and those who had the greater not to be elated. Wherefore also he thus began.

Ver. 4. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."

And first he attends on him that had the lesser gift, and was grieved on this account. "For wherefore," saith he, "art thou dejected? because thou hast not received as much as another? Still, consider that it is a free gift and not a debt, and thou wilt be able to soothe thy pain." For this cause he spake thus in the very beginning: "but there are diversities of gifts." And he said not "of signs," nor "of wonders," but of "gifts," by the name of free gifts prevailing on them not only not to grieve but even to be thankful. "And withal consider this also," saith he, "that even if thou art made inferior in the measure of what is given; in that it hath been vouchsafed thee to receive from the same source as the other who hath received more, thou hast equal honor. For certainly thou canst not say that the Spirit bestowed the gift on him, but an angel on thee: since the Spirit bestowed it both on thee and him. Wherefore he added, "but the same Spirit." So that even if there be a difference in the gift, yet is there no difference in the Giver. For from the same Fountain ye are drawing, both thou and he.

Ver. 5. "And there are diversities of ministrations, but the same Lord."

Thus, enriching the consolation, he adds mention of the Son also, and of the Father. And again, he calls these gifts by another name, designing by this also an increase of consolation. Wherefore also he thus said: "there are diversities of ministrations, but the same Lord." For he that hears of "a gift," and hath received a less share, perhaps might grieve; but when we speak of "a ministration," the case is different. For the thing implies labor and sweat. "Why grievest thou then," saith he, "if he hath bidden another labor more, sparing thee?"

Ver. 6. "And there are diversities of workings, but the same God who worketh all things in all."

Ver. 7. "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal."

"And what," saith one, "is a working?" and what "a gift?" and what "a ministration?" They are mere differences of names, since the things are the same. For what "a gift" is, that is "a ministration," that he calls "an operation" also. Thus fulfil thy ministry; (2 Tim. iv. 5 *ministry*) and, "I magnify my ministration:" (Rom. xi. 13. *office*.) and writing to Timothy, he says, "Therefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee. (2 Tim. i. 6) And again, writing to the Galatians, he said, "for he that wrought in Peter to the Apostleship, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles. (Gal. ii. 8) Seest thou that he implies that there is no difference in the gifts of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost? Not confounding the Persons, God forbid! but declaring the equal honor of the Essence. For that which the Spirit bestows, this he saith that God also works; this, that the Son likewise ordains and grants. Yet surely if the one were inferior to the other, or the other to it, he would not have thus set it down nor would this have been his way of consoling the person who was vexed.

[5.] Now after this, he comforts him also in another kind of way; by the consideration that the measure vouchsafed is profitable to him, even though it be not so large. For having said, that it is "the same Spirit," and "the same Lord," and "the same God," and having thereby recovered him, he brings in again another consolation, thus saying, "but to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal." For lest one should say, "what if there be the same Lord, the same Spirit, the same God? yet I have received less:" he saith, that thus it was

profitable.

But he calls miracles a “manifestation of the Spirit,” with evident reason. For to me who am a believer, he that hath the Spirit is manifest from his having been baptized: but to the unbeliever this will in no wise be manifest, except from the miracles: so that hence also again there is no small consolation. For though there be a difference of gifts, yet the evidence is one: since whether thou hast much or little, thou art equally manifest. So that if thou desirest to show this, that thou hast the Spirit, thou hast a sufficient demonstration.

Wherefore, now that both the Giver is one and the thing given a pure favor, and the manifestation takes place thereby, and this is more profitable for thee; grieve not as if despised. For not to dishonor thee hath God done it, nor to declare thee inferior to another, but to spare thee and with a view to thy welfare. To receive more than one has ability to bear, this rather is unprofitable, and injurious, and a fit cause of dejection.

Ver. 8. “For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit;”

Ver. 9. “To another, faith in the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing in the one Spirit.” Seest thou how he every where makes this addition, saying, “through the same Spirit, and according to the same Spirit?” For he knew that the comfort from thence was great.

Ver. 10. “To another working of miracles; to another prophecies; to another discernings of spirits; to another divers kind of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.” Thus, since they boasted themselves in this, therefore he placed it last, and added,

Ver. 11. “But all these worketh one and the same Spirit.”

The universal medicine in which his consolation consists is that out of the same root, out of the same treasures, out of the same streams, they all receive. And accordingly, from time to time dwelling on this expression, he levels the apparent inequality, and consoles them. And above indeed he points out both the Spirit, and the Son, and the Father, as supplying the gifts, but here he was content to make the Spirit, that even hence again thou mayest understand their dignity to be the same.

But what is “the word of wisdom?” That which Paul had, which John had, the son of thunder.

And what is “the word of knowledge?” That which most of the faithful had, possessing indeed knowledge, but not thereupon able to teach nor easily to convey to another what they knew.

“And to another, faith:” not meaning by this faith the faith of doctrines, but the faith of miracles; concerning which Christ saith, “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Remove, and it shall remove.” (S. Matt. xvii. 20) And the Apostles too concerning this besought Him, saying, “Increase our faith:” (S. Luke xvii. 5) for this is the mother of the miracles. But to possess the power of working miracles and gifts of healing, is not the same thing: for he that had a gift of healing used only to do cures: but he that possessed powers for working miracles used to punish also. For a miracle is not the healing only, but the punishing also: even as Paul inflicted blindness: as Peter slew.

“To another prophecies; and to another discernings of spirits.” What is, “discernings of spirits?” the knowing who is spiritual, and who is not: who is a prophet, and who a deceiver: as he said to the Thessalonians, “despise not prophesyings:” (1 Thess. v. 20, 21) but proving all things, hold fast that which is good.” For great was at that time the rush of the false prophets,

the devil striving underhand to substitute falsehood for the truth. "To another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues." For one person knew what he spake himself, but was unable to interpret to another; while another had acquired both these or the other of the two. Now this seemed to be a great gift because both the Apostles received it first, and the most among the Corinthians had obtained it. But the word of teaching not so. Wherefore that he places first, but this last: for this was on account of that, and so indeed were all the rest; both prophecies, and working of miracles, and divers kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues. For none is equal to this. Wherefore also he said, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and in teaching." (1 Tim. v. 17) And to Timothy he wrote, saying, "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to teaching; neglect not the gift that is in thee." (1 Tim. iv. 13, 14) Seest thou how he calls it also a gift?

[6.] Next, the comfort which he before gave, when he said, "the same Spirit," this also he here sets before us, saying, "But all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will." And he not only gives consolation but also stops the mouth of the gainsayer, saying here, "dividing to each one severally even as he will." For it was necessary to bind up also, not to heal only, as he doth also in the Epistle to the Romans, when he saith, "But who art thou that repliest against God? (Rom. ix. 20) So likewise here, "dividing to each one severally as he will."

And that which was of the Father, this he signifieth to be of the Spirit also. For as concerning the Father, he saith, "but it is the same God who worketh all things in all;" so also concerning the Spirit, "but all these things worketh one and the same Spirit." But, (**Schaff Note:** In this and other places of this Homily, S. Chrysostom seems to have had in view the controversy, then recent, with the Macedonians, who denied the Divinity of the Holy Spirit.) it will be said, "He doth it, actuated by God." Nay, he no where said this, but thou feignest it. For when he saith, "who actuateth (ἐνεργῶν "worketh.") all things in all," he saith this concerning men: thou wilt hardly say that among those men he numbers also the Spirit, though thou shouldst be ever so manifold in thy dotting and madness. For because he had said "through the Spirit," that thou mightest not suppose this word, "through," to denote inferiority or the being actuated, he adds, that "the Spirit worketh," not "is worked," and worketh "as he will," not as he is bidden. For as concerning the Father, the Son saith that "He raiseth up the dead and quickeneth;" in like manner also, concerning Himself, that "He quickeneth whom He will:" (S. John v. 21) thus also of the Spirit, in another place, that He doeth all things with authority and that there is nothing that hinders Him; (for the expression, "bloweth where it listeth" [S. John iii. 8] though it be spoken of the wind is apt to establish this;) but here, that "He worketh all things as He will." And from another place to learn that He is not one of the things actuated, but of those that actuate. "For who knoweth," says he, "the things of a man, but the spirit of the man? even so the things of God none knoweth save the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. ii. 11) Now that "the spirit of a man," i.e., the soul, requires not to be actuated that it may know the things of itself, is, I suppose, evident to every one. Therefore neither doth the Holy Ghost, that he may "know the things of God." For his meaning is like this, "the secret things of God" are known to the Holy Spirit as to the soul of man the secret things of herself." But if this be not actuated for that end, much less would That which knoweth the depths of God and needs no actuation for that knowledge, require any actuating Power in order to the giving gifts to the Apostles.

But besides these things, that also, which I before spake of, I will mention again now.

What then is this? That if the Spirit were inferior and of another substance, there would have been no avail in his consolation, nor in our hearing the words, “of the same Spirit.” For he who hath received from the king, I grant, may find it a very soothing circumstance, that he himself gave to him; but if it be from the slave, he is then rather vexed, when one reproaches him with it. So that even hence is it evident, that the Holy Spirit is not of the substance of the servant, but of the King.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “1 Cor. xii. 1, 2

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that when ye were Gentiles, ye were led away unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. 2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

He continues, “This whole place is very obscure: but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place.”

So it is Chrysostom’s testimony that the gifts of the Spirit were no longer taking place.

He continues, “And why do they not happen now? Why look now, the cause too of the obscurity hath produced us again another question: namely, why did they then happen, and now do so no more? This however let us defer to another time, but for the present let us state what things were occurring then. Well: what did happen then? Whoever was baptized he straightway spake with tongues and not with tongues only, but many also prophesied, and some also performed many other wonderful works.”

And we read as in **Acts 19 (KJV):**1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.

Paul baptized these believers, and then laid his hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit. They did not “straightway” speak with tongues and prophesy after water baptism, as Chrysostom has written, but after being baptized with the Holy Spirit.

He continues, “For since on their coming over from idols, without any clear knowledge or training in the ancient Scriptures, they at once on their baptism received the Spirit, yet the Spirit they saw not, for It is invisible; therefore God’s grace bestowed some sensible proof of that energy. And one straightway spake in the Persian, another in the Roman, another in the Indian, another in some other such tongue: and this made manifest to them that were without that it is the Spirit in the very person speaking. Wherefore also he so calls it, saying, “But to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given to profit withal;” (v. 7) calling the gifts “a manifestation of the Spirit.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):7** But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

And he has said correctly that the gifts are a “a manifestation of the Spirit.”

He continues, “For as the Apostles themselves had received this sign first, so also the faithful went on receiving it, I mean, the gift of tongues; yet not this only but also many others: inasmuch as many used even to raise the dead and to cast out devils and to perform many other such wonders: and they had gifts too, some less, and some more. But more abundant than all was the gift of tongues among them: and this became to them a cause of division; not from its own nature but from the perverseness of them that had received it: in that on the one hand the possessors of the greater gifts were lifted up against them that had the lesser: and these again were grieved, and envied the owners of the greater. And Paul himself as he proceeds intimates this.”

But the 120 in the upper room were not all apostles, and the Spirit fell on “each of them”, and they “were all filled”, as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):1** And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. **2** And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. **3** And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. **4** And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

He continues, “Since then herefrom they were receiving a fatal blow in the dissolution of their charity, he takes great care to correct it. For this happened indeed in Rome also, but not in the same way. And this is why in the Epistle to the Romans he moots it indeed, but obscurely and briefly, saying thus: “For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office; so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another. And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith; or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry; or he that teacheth to his teaching.” (Rom. xii. 4–8)”

He refers to **Romans 12 (KJV):4** For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: **5** So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. **6** Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; **7** Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; **8** Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

He continues, “And that the Romans also were falling into wilfulness hereby, this he intimates in the beginning of that discourse, thus saying: “For I say through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith.” (Rom. xii. 3)”

He refers to **Romans 12 (KJV):3** For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

He continues, “With these, however, (for the disease of division and pride had not proceeded to any length,) he thus discoursed: but here with great anxiety; for the distemper had

greatly spread.

And this was not the only thing to disturb them, but there were also in the place many soothsayers, inasmuch as the city was more than usually addicted to Grecian customs, and this with the rest was tending to offence and disturbance among them. This is the reason why he begins by first stating the difference between soothsaying and prophecy.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):1** Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. 2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. 3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

He continues, “For this cause also they received discerning of spirits, so as to discern and know which is he that speaketh by a pure spirit, and which by an impure.”

And so this need of discernment still exists in the Church today. Therefore, the gifts must still be present in the Church, and this is why the Holy Spirit was promised to all that are afar off, as we read again in **Acts 2 (KJV):38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

He continues, “For because it was not possible to supply the evidence of the things uttered from within themselves at the moment; (for prophecy supplies the proof of its own truth not at the time when it is spoken, but at the time of the event;) and it was not easy to distinguish the true prophesier from the pretender; (for the devil himself, accursed as he is, had entered into them that prophesied, [See 1 Kings xxii. 23] bringing in false prophets, as if forsooth they also could foretell things to come;)”

And we read as in **1 Kings 22 (KJV):23** Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee.

He continues, “and further, men were easily deceived, because the things spoken could not for the present be brought to trial, ere yet the events had come to pass concerning which the prophecy was; (for it was the end that proved the false prophet and the true:)—in order that the hearers might not be deceived before the end, he gives them a sign which even before the event served to indicate the one and the other.”

And we read in **Deuteronomy 18 (KJV):21** And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? 22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

In the Old Testament prophecy was almost always having to do with the future. But this is not so in the New Testament. Chrysostom assumed that prophecy was always predictive of future events. But we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):3** But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. 4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

Prophecy edifies or builds up the church by speaking “unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort”.

Chrysostom continues, “And hence taking his order and beginning, he thus goes on also to the discourse concerning the gifts and corrects the contentiousness that arose from hence

likewise. For the present however he begins the discourse concerning the soothsayers, thus saying,

[2.] “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant;” calling the signs “spiritual,” because they are the works of the Spirit alone, human effort contributing nothing to the working such wonders. And intending to discourse concerning them, first, as I said, he lays down the difference between soothsaying and prophecy, thus saying,

“Ye know that when ye were Gentiles, ye were led away (**Schaff Note:** ἀπαγόμενοι, properly “dragged to prison or execution.”) unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led.” Now what he means is this: “In the idol-temples,” saith he, “if any were at any time possessed by an unclean spirit and began to divine, even as one dragged away, so was he drawn by that spirit in chains: knowing nothing of the things which he utters. For this is peculiar to the soothsayer, to be beside himself, to be under compulsion, to be pushed, to be dragged, to be haled as a madman. But the prophet not so, but with sober mind and composed temper and knowing what he is saying, he uttereth all things. Therefore even before the event do thou from this distinguish the soothsayer and the prophet. And consider how he frees his discourse of all suspicion; calling themselves to witness who had made trial of the matter. As if he had said, “that I lie not nor rashly traduce the religion of the Gentiles, feigning like an enemy, do ye yourselves bear me witness: knowing as ye do, when ye were Gentiles, how ye were pulled and dragged away then.””

However, all prophecy must be judged on its agreement with the word of God, as it is in the Old and the New Testaments, as in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):29** Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

Prophets are just those whose main gift is prophesy, for all may prophesy, as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):31** For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

He continues, “But if any should say that these too are suspected as believers, come, even from them that are without will I make this manifest to you. Hear, for example, Plato saying thus: (Apol. Soc. c. 7.) “Even as they who deliver oracles and the soothsayers say many and excellent things, but know nothing of what they utter.” Hear again another, a poet, giving the same intimation. For whereas by certain mystical rites and witchcrafts a certain person had imprisoned a demon in a man, and the man divined, and in his divination was thrown down and torn, and was unable to endure the violence of the demon, but was on the point of perishing in that convulsion; he saith to the persons who were practicing such mystical arts, (**Schaff Note:** These verses are taken from an old Oracle, quoted among others by Porphyry in a *Treatise of the Philosophy of Oracles*, and from him again by Theodoret, on *the Remedies for Gentile Errors*, Disp. x. t. iv. p. 957.)

Loose me, I pray you: The mighty God no longer mortal flesh Can hold. And again, Unbind my wreaths, and bathe my feet in drops From the pure stream; erase these mystic lines, (**Schaff Note:** Porphyry’s note on this verse, as quoted by Hales from Eusebius (Evang. Præp. v.) in Savile’s Chrysostom, viii. pt. ii. p. 278, is as follows: “You see, he bids them erase the lines that he may depart: as though these detained him, and not only these, but the other things too about their apparel: because they wore certain portraitures of the deities who were invoked.”)

Chrysostom continues, “And let me go. For these and such like things, (for one might

mention many more,) point out to us both of these facts which follow; the compulsion which holds down the demons and makes them slaves; and the violence to which they submit who have once given themselves up to them, so as to swerve even from their natural reason. And the Pythoness too (**Schaff Note**: See Strabo, ix. 5.) (for I am compelled now to bring forward and expose another disgraceful custom of theirs, which it were well to pass by, because it is unseemly for us to mention such things; but that you may more clearly know their shame it is necessary to mention it, that hence at least ye may come to know the madness and exceeding mockery of those that make use of the soothsayers:) this same Pythoness then is said, being a female, to sit at times upon the tripod of Apollo astride, and thus the evil spirit ascending from beneath and entering the lower part of her body, fills the woman with madness, and she with disheveled hair begins to play the bacchanal and to foam at the mouth, and thus being in a frenzy to utter the words of her madness. I know that you are ashamed and blush when you hear these things: but they glory both in the disgrace and in the madness which I have described. These then and all such things, Paul was bringing forward when he said, “Ye know that when ye were Gentiles, ye were led away unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):2** Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

Chrysostom has well decribed what was going on in the Greek religions of his day.

He continues, “And because he was discoursing with those who knew well, he states not all things with exact care, not wishing to be troublesome to them, but having reminded them only and brought all into their recollection, he soon quits the point, hastening to the subject before him.

But what is, “unto those dumb idols?” These soothsayers used to be led and dragged unto them.

But if they be themselves dumb, how did they give responses to others? And wherefore did the demon lead them to the images? As men taken in war, and in chains, and rendering at the same time his deceit plausible. Thus, to keep men from the notion that it was just a dumb stone, they were earnest to rivet the people to the idols that their own style and title might be inscribed upon them. But our rites are not such. He did not however state ours, I mean the prophesyings. For it was well known to them all, and prophecy was exercised among them, as was meet for their condition, with understanding and with entire freedom. Therefore, you see, they had power either to speak or to refrain from speaking. For they were not bound by necessity, but were honored with a privilege.”

And he refers to **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):32** And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

He continues, “For this cause Jonah fled; (Jonah i. 3) for this cause Ezekiel delayed; (Ezek. iii. 15) for this cause Jeremiah excused himself. (Jer. i. 6)”

He refers in context to **Jonah 1 (KJV):1** Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. 3 But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

And in context to **Ezekiel 3 (KJV):14** So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me.



15 Then I came to them of the captivity at Telabib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days. 16 And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, 17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

And in context to **Jeremiah 1 (KJV):**4 Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, 5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. 6 Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. 7 But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

He continues, “And God thrusts them not on by compulsion, but advising, exhorting, threatening; not darkening their mind; for to cause distraction and madness and great darkness, is the proper work of a demon: but it is God’s work to illuminate and with consideration to teach things needful.”

The Holy Spirit is given to empower us as we read in **Luke 24 (KJV):**49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

And in **Acts 1 (KJV):**8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

He continues, “[3.] This then is the first difference between a soothsayer and a prophet;”

So Chrysostom is saying that the soothsayer will “cause distraction and madness and great darkness”, which “is the proper work of a demon.” But a true prophet will be doing “God’s work to illuminate and with consideration to teach things needful.”

He continues, “but a second and a different one is that which he next states, saying,

Ver. 3. “Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking in the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed:” and then another: “and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but in the Holy Ghost.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

He continues, ““When thou seest,” saith he, “any one not uttering His name, or anathematizing Him, he is a soothsayer. Again, when thou seest another speaking all things with His Name, understand that he is spiritual.” “What then,” say you, “must we say concerning the Catechumens? For if, no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost, what must we say of them who name indeed His Name, but are destitute of His Spirit? (**Schaff Note:** So St. Augustin, Tract 11. on The Gospel of St. John: “And as the Catechumens have the sign of the Cross in their forehead, they now belong to the Great House: but let them from servants become sons;” alluding to Gal. iv. 6, 7; ap. Bingham, i. 3. 3.)”

He refers to **Galatians 4 (KJV):**6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

The Church in the time of Chrysostom and Augustine did not understand that when one simply believed from their heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and said “that Jesus is the

Lord”, they are born again. But the Church thought that it was through the ritual of baptism that this happened, and that the Catechumens were “destitute of His Spirit” until they were baptized.

Chrysostom continues, “But his discourse at this time was not concerning these for there were not at that time Catechumens, but concerning believers and unbelievers. What then, doth no demon call upon God’s Name? Did not the demoniacs say, “We know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God? (Mark i. 24) Did they not say to Paul, “these men are the servants of the Most High God? (Acts xvi. 17)”

He refers in context to **Mark 1 (KJV):**23 And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, 24 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. 25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. 26 And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. 27 And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

And in context to **Acts 16 (KJV):**16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: 17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. 18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

He continues, “They did, but upon scourging, upon compulsion; never of their own will and without being scourged.

But here it is proper to enquire, both why the demon uttered these things and why Paul rebuked him. In imitation of his Teacher; for so Christ did also rebuke: since it was not his will to have testimony from them. And wherefore did the devil also practice this? Intending to confound the order of things, and to seize upon the dignity of the Apostles, and to persuade many to pay attention to them: which had it happened, they would easily have made themselves appear from hence worthy of credit, and have brought in their own designs. That these things then might not be, and the deceit might not have a beginning, he stops their mouths even when speaking the truth, so that in their falsehoods men should not at all give heed unto them, but stop their ears altogether against the things said by them.”

Chrysostom explains well why the demons were rebuked. So the second sign is as he says, “Again, when thou seest another speaking all things with His Name, understand that he is spiritual.” And again the first sign is as he says, “So he is saying that the soothsayer will “cause distraction and madness and great darkness”, which “is the proper work of a demon:” But a true prophet will be doing “God’s work to illuminate and with consideration to teach things needful.”

He continues, “[4.] Having therefore made manifest the soothsayers and the prophets both by the first sign and also by the second, he next discourses of the wonders; not passing without reason to this topic, but so as to remove the dissension which had thence arisen, and to persuade both those that had the less portion not to grieve and those who had the greater not to be elated. Wherefore also he thus began.

Ver. 4. “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):4** Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

He continues, “And first he attends on him that had the lesser gift, and was grieved on this account. “For wherefore,” saith he, “art thou dejected? because thou hast not received as much as another? Still, consider that it is a free gift and not a debt, and thou wilt be able to soothe thy pain.” For this cause he spake thus in the very beginning: “but there are diversities of gifts.” And he said not “of signs,” nor “of wonders,” but of “gifts,” by the name of free gifts prevailing on them not only not to grieve but even to be thankful. “And withal consider this also,” saith he, “that even if thou art made inferior in the measure of what is given; in that it hath been vouchsafed thee to receive from the same source as the other who hath received more, thou hast equal honor. For certainly thou canst not say that the Spirit bestowed the gift on him, but an angel on thee: since the Spirit bestowed it both on thee and him. Wherefore he added, “but the same Spirit.” So that even if there be a difference in the gift, yet is there no difference in the Giver. For from the same Fountain ye are drawing, both thou and he.

Ver. 5. “And there are diversities of ministrations, but the same Lord.””

And he refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):5** And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

He continues, “Thus, enriching the consolation, he adds mention of the Son also, and of the Father. And again, he calls these gifts by another name, designing by this also an increase of consolation. Wherefore also he thus said: “there are diversities of ministrations, but the same Lord.” For he that hears of “a gift,” and hath received a less share, perhaps might grieve; but when we speak of “a ministration,” the case is different. For the thing implies labor and sweat. “Why grieveest thou then,” saith he, “if he hath bidden another labor more, sparing thee?”

Ver. 6. “And there are diversities of workings, but the same God who worketh all things in all.”

Ver. 7. “But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):6** And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

He continues, ““And what,” saith one, “is a working?” and what “a gift?” and what “a ministration?” They are mere differences of names, since the things are the same. For what “a gift” is, that is “a ministration,” that he calls “an operation” also. Thus fulfil thy ministry; (2 Tim. iv. 5. *ministry*) and, “I magnify my ministration:” (Rom. xi. 13. *office*.) and writing to Timothy, he says, “Therefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee. (2 Tim. i. 6)”

He refers to **2 Timothy 4 (KJV):5** But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

And to **Romans 11 (KJV):13** For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

The word “office” in the Greek is **διακονία** (pronounced de-ä-ko-ne'-ä), from G1249; attendance (as a servant, etc.); figuratively (eleemosynary) aid, (official) service (especially of the Christian teacher, or technically of the diaconate):—(ad-)minister(-ing, -tration, -try), office, relief, service(-ing). **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1248**

This is the same Greek word translated “administrations” in 1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):5, and “ministry” in 2 Timothy 4 (KJV):5.

And he refers to **2 Timothy 1 (KJV):6** Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

The word “gift” in the Greek is **χάρισμα** (pronounced khä'-re-smä), from G5483; a (divine) gratuity, i.e. deliverance (from danger or passion); (specially), a (spiritual) endowment, i.e. (subjectively) religious qualification, or (objectively) miraculous faculty:—(free) gift.

### **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5486**

This is the same Greek word translated “gifts” in 1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):4.

He continues, “And again, writing to the Galatians, he said, “for he that wrought in Peter to the Apostleship, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles. (Gal. ii. 8)”

He refers to **Galatians 2 (KJV):8** (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

He continues, “Seest thou that he implies that there is no difference in the gifts of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost? Not confounding the Persons, God forbid! but declaring the equal honor of the Essence. For that which the Spirit bestows, this he saith that God also works; this, that the Son likewise ordains and grants. Yet surely if the one were inferior to the other, or the other to it, he would not have thus set it down nor would this have been his way of consoling the person who was vexed.

[5.] Now after this, he comforts him also in another kind of way; by the consideration that the measure vouchsafed is profitable to him, even though it be not so large. For having said, that it is “the same Spirit,” and “the same Lord,” and “the same God,” and having thereby recovered him, he brings in again another consolation, thus saying, “but to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal.” For lest one should say, “what if there be the same Lord, the same Spirit, the same God? yet I have received less:” he saith, that thus it was profitable.

But he calls miracles a “manifestation of the Spirit,” with evident reason. For to me who am a believer, he that hath the Spirit is manifest from his having been baptized: but to the unbeliever this will in no wise be manifest, except from the miracles: so that hence also again there is no small consolation. For though there be a difference of gifts, yet the evidence is one: since whether thou hast much or little, thou art equally manifest. So that if thou desirest to show this, that thou hast the Spirit, thou hast a sufficient demonstration.

Wherefore, now that both the Giver is one and the thing given a pure favor, and the manifestation takes place thereby, and this is more profitable for thee; grieve not as if despised. For not to dishonor thee hath God done it, nor to declare thee inferior to another, but to spare thee and with a view to thy welfare. To receive more than one has ability to bear, this rather is unprofitable, and injurious, and a fit cause of dejection.

Ver. 8. “For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit;”

Ver. 9. “To another, faith in the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing in the one Spirit.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):8** For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

He continues, “Seest thou how he every where makes this addition, saying, “through the same Spirit, and according to the same Spirit?” For he knew that the comfort from thence was great.

Ver. 10. “To another working of miracles; to another prophecies; to another discernings of spirits; to another divers kind of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.” Thus, since they boasted themselves in this, therefore he placed it last, and added,

Ver. 11. “But all these worketh one and the same Spirit.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):10** To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

He continues, “The universal medicine in which his consolation consists is that out of the same root, out of the same treasures, out of the same streams, they all receive. And accordingly, from time to time dwelling on this expression, he levels the apparent inequality, and consoles them. And above indeed he points out both the Spirit, and the Son, and the Father, as supplying the gifts, but here he was content to make the Spirit, that even hence again thou mayest understand their dignity to be the same.”

Chrysostom is referring to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):4** Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

He continues, “But what is “the word of wisdom?” That which Paul had, which John had, the son of thunder.

And what is “the word of knowledge?” That which most of the faithful had, possessing indeed knowledge, but not thereupon able to teach nor easily to convey to another what they knew.”

It is evident that Chrysostom had no actual experience of these gifts. We have an example of the word of wisdom in **Acts 9 (KJV):1** And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. 8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

The Lord told Saul in verse 6 to go into the city where it would be told him what he must do. The word of wisdom relates to the plans and purposes of God. This was not something that Saul read out of the Bible. He heard a voice.

We continue to read in **Acts 9 (KJV):10** And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here,

Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. 13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.”

The Lord spoke to Ananias in a vision, and the Lord told him where Saul was, that is, on a street which is called Straight in verse 11. This is a word of knowledge. It is a factoid from God. It is something that we could not have known, but is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit for a specific purpose. The Lord also told Ananias about a vision that Saul had received about “a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight” in verse 12. This is another word of knowledge. And the Lord told Ananias to “Go thy way”, that is, to go lay hands on Saul that he might receive his sight. This was a word of wisdom about the future, that is, what would happen when he did so.

We continue to read in **Acts 9 (KJV):17** And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.”

A man whom Saul did not know came into the house where he was staying and laid his hands on him to heal his sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Ananias told Saul that he had a vision from the Lord Jesus “in the way as thou camest” in verse 17. Ananias could not have known about this vision unless God revealed it to him by the spiritual gift of the word of knowledge. This confirmed the faith of Saul, and the faith of Ananias.

We continue to read in **Acts 9 (KJV):19** And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. 21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? 22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

Saul did a one hundred eighty degree turn around to follow Jesus. All of this was done by revelation gifts of the Holy Spirit to Ananias and to Saul, who is now called Paul.

Chrysostom continues, ““And to another, faith:” not meaning by this faith the faith of doctrines, but the faith of miracles; concerning which Christ saith, “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Remove, and it shall remove.” (S. Matt. xvii. 20)”

He refers to **Matthew 17 (KJV):20** And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

Chrysostom has said correctly that this faith, given by the Holy Spirit, is “the faith of miracles”, that is, the faith by which one may operate in the working of a miracle.

He continues, “And the Apostles too concerning this besought Him, saying, “Increase our faith:” (S. Luke xvii. 5) for this is the mother of the miracles.”

He refers in context to **Luke 17 (KJV):5** And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. 6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

Chrysostom has described the spiritual gift of working of miracles correctly. The gift of faith given by the Holy Spirit is for the purpose of the working of miracles. Usually this works with the gifts of the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge so that we may know what we are to do, and when we are to do it.

He continues, “But to possess the power of working miracles and gifts of healing, is not the same thing: for he that had a gift of healing used only to do cures: but he that possessed powers for working miracles used to punish also. For a miracle is not the healing only, but the punishing also: even as Paul inflicted blindness: as Peter slew.”

He refers to Paul in **Acts 13 (KJV):6** And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: 7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him. 10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

And he refers to Peter in **Acts 5 (KJV):1** But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. 6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. 7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. 9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. 10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

The declaration of Paul, who was “filled with the Holy Ghost” in the moment, in his saying that “now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season”, and the result that, “immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness;

and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand”, in Acts 13:11 above, is an example of the working of miracles, as Chrysostom has written.

In the instance of Peter and “a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife”, just how Ananias was to be judged seems to have been unknown to Peter. It seems to have been more a sovereign working of God. But with Sapphira, the wife of Ananias, Peter seems to have discerned the will of God, and with his declaration that “behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out”, in Acts 5:9 above, and with the result that she fell “down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband”, the working of miracles is evident.

Another instance of Peter and the working of miracles is evident in **Acts 9 (KJV):36** Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. 37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. 38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. 39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. 40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. 41 And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive. 42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

And Peter never claimed that he did anything by his own power, as we read in **Acts 3 (KJV):6** Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God: 10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. 11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. 12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? 13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. 14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; 15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. 16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

An example of the working of miracles is also evident, as we read in **Acts 16 (KJV):16** And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: 17 The same followed Paul and



us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. 18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

The casting out of an evil spirit is done by the spiritual gifts of discerning of spirits and of working of miracles.

Chrysostom continues, ““To another prophecies; and to another discernings of spirits.” What is, “discernings of spirits?” the knowing who is spiritual, and who is not: who is a prophet, and who a deceiver: as he said to the Thessalonians, “despise not prophesyings:” (1 Thess. v. 20, 21) but proving all things, hold fast that which is good.”

He refers to **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):**20 Despise not prophesyings. 21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

However, there is more to the operation of the gift of “discerning of spirits”, as we read in **Mark 9 (KJV):**17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; 18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. 19 He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. 20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. 21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. 22 And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. 23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. 24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. 25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. 26 And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. 27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. 28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? 29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

In verse 25, Jesus named the evil spirit, “saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him”. The discerning of spirits is knowing the presence of an evil spirit. This gift works with the gift of working of miracles in order to cast the evil spirit out.

He continues, “For great was at that time the rush of the false prophets, the devil striving underhand to substitute falsehood for the truth. “To another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.” For one person knew what he spake himself, but was unable to interpret to another; while another had acquired both these or the other of the two. Now this seemed to be a great gift because both the Apostles received it first, and the most among the Corinthians had obtained it.”

The operation of the gift of divers kinds of tongues includes the utterance of a language unknown to the speaker, but known somewhere in the world. And it also includes the utterance of an unknown language to the world of mankind, such as the tongues of angels as we read in **1**

**Corinthians 13 (KJV):**1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

And we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):**2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

This is why the Spirit also gives the gift of the interpretation of tongues, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

Chrysostom continues, “But the word of teaching not so.”

He is referring to the word of knowledge. He is confused here. The word of knowledge relates to the revelation of the Spirit of something hopelessly hidden to men’s minds, in order to accomplish a specific purpose of God. An example of this gift is seen in the revelation to Ananias of where Paul was located, as we read in **Acts 9 (KJV):**10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

It does not relate to teaching. Teaching is a ministry gift. Another example of the spiritual gift of the word of knowledge is in **2 Samuel 12 (KJV):**1 And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. 2 The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: 3 But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. 4 And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

The Lord revealed to Nathan the prophet what David had done, as we read in **2 Samuel 12 (KJV):**7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; 8 And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. 9 Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. 10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

Chrysostom continues, “Wherefore that he places first, but this last: for this was on account of that, and so indeed were all the rest; both prophecies, and working of miracles, and divers kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues. For none is equal to this. Wherefore also he said, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and in teaching.” (1 Tim. v. 17)”

He refers to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):17** Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

Chrysostom taught from his own experience, which did not include spiritual gifts which he said had ceased in the Church. Teaching is a ministry gift, and not a spiritual gift, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):11** And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; **12** For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: **13** Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: **14** That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; **15** But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

And in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):28** And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. **29** Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

We are all as eyes, ears, hands, and feet in the body of Christ, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):14** For the body is not one member, but many. **15** If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? **16** And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? **17** If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? **18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Our place in the body is where God has set us. This relates to our function in the body of Christ. Not all are teachers. A teacher helps saints grow in grace and knowledge that they “henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive”, but “may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ”. A teacher waters, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):5** Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? **6** I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

Chrysostom continues, “And to Timothy he wrote, saying, “Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to teaching; neglect not the gift that is in thee.” (1 Tim. iv. 13, 14)” Seest thou how he calls it also a gift?”

He refers to **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):13** Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. **14** Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

In verse 14, Paul is speaking of a spiritual gift, and not the gift of being a teacher, which is a ministry gift. The Greek word translated gift in this verse is **χάρισμα** (pronounced khä'-re-smä), from G5483; a (divine) gratuity, i.e. deliverance (from danger or passion); (specially), a (spiritual) endowment, i.e. (subjectively) religious qualification, or (objectively) miraculous faculty:—(free) gift. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5486**

This Greek word is derived from **χαρίζομαι** (pronounced khä-re'-zo-mi), middle voice from G5485; to grant as a favor, i.e. gratuitously, in kindness, pardon or rescue:—deliver, (frankly) forgive, (freely) give, grant. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5483**

And this Greek word is derived from **χάρις** (pronounced khä'-res), from G5463; graciousness (as gratifying), of manner or act (abstract or concrete; literal, figurative or spiritual; especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude):—acceptable, benefit, favour, gift, grace(-ious), joy, liberality, pleasure, thank(-s, -worthy). **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5485**

This Greek word is translated “grace” 130 times in the **King James Version**.

Now **G5486** above is the same Greek word translated gifts in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):9** To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

So Paul is telling Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:14 to not neglect the spiritual gift that was given to him “by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery”. We are set in the body of Christ by the Lord when we are born again. Spiritual gifts are given as we grow in grace and knowledge.

He continues, “[6.] Next, the comfort which he before gave, when he said, “the same Spirit,” this also he here sets before us, saying, “But all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will.” And he not only gives consolation but also stops the mouth of the gainsayer, saying here, “dividing to each one severally even as he will.” For it was necessary to bind up also, not to heal only, as he doth also in the Epistle to the Romans, when he saith, “But who art thou that repliest against God? (Rom. ix. 20)”

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):20** Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

He continues, “So likewise here, “dividing to each one severally as he will.”

And that which was of the Father, this he signifieth to be of the Spirit also. For as concerning the Father, he saith, “but it is the same God who worketh all things in all;” so also concerning the Spirit, “but all these things worketh one and the same Spirit.” But, (**Schaff Note:** In this and other places of this Homily, S. Chrysostom seems to have had in view the controversy, then recent, with the Macedonians, who denied the Divinity of the Holy Spirit.) it will be said, “He doth it, actuated by God.” Nay, he no where said this, but thou feignest it. For when he saith, “who actuateth (ἐνεργῶν “worketh.”) all things in all,” he saith this concerning men: thou wilt hardly say that among those men he numbers also the Spirit, though thou shouldst be ever so manifold in thy doting and madness. For because he had said “through the Spirit,” that thou mightest not suppose this word, “through,” to denote inferiority or the being actuated, he adds, that “the Spirit worketh,” not “is worked,” and worketh “as he will,” not as he is bidden. For as concerning the Father, the Son saith that “He raiseth up the dead and quickeneth;” in like manner also, concerning Himself, that “He quickeneth whom He will.” (S. John v. 21)”

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):21** For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

He continues, “thus also of the Spirit, in another place, that He doeth all things with authority and that there is nothing that hinders Him; (for the expression, “bloweth where it listeth” [S. John iii. 8,] though it be spoken of the wind is apt to establish this;)”

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):8** The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

He continues, “but here, that “He worketh all things as He will.” And from another place to learn that He is not one of the things actuated, but of those that actuate. “For who knoweth,” says he, “the things of a man, but the spirit of the man? even so the things of God none knoweth save the Spirit of God.” (1 Cor. ii. 11)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):11** For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

He continues, “Now that “the spirit of a man,” i.e., the soul, requires not to be actuated that it may know the things of itself, is, I suppose, evident to every one.”

To Chrysostom, the spirit of man was the same as the soul of man. That there is a difference is revealed in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

He continues, “Therefore neither doth the Holy Ghost, that he may “know the things of God.” For his meaning is like this, “the secret things of God” are known to the Holy Spirit as to the soul of man the secret things of herself.” But if this be not actuated for that end, much less would That which knoweth the depths of God and needs no actuation for that knowledge, require any actuating Power in order to the giving gifts to the Apostles.

But besides these things, that also, which I before spake of, I will mention again now. What then is this? That if the Spirit were inferior and of another substance, there would have been no avail in his consolation, nor in our hearing the words, “of the same Spirit.” For he who hath received from the king, I grant, may find it a very soothing circumstance, that he himself gave to him; but if it be from the slave, he is then rather vexed, when one reproaches him with it. So that even hence is it evident, that the Holy Spirit is not of the substance of the servant, but of the King.”

The Holy Spirit is God, as we read in **Acts 5 (KJV):3** But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

There is a trinity of persons in the Godhead, but one God.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY XI, page 370-372**

1 Thessalonians v. 19–22

“Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. But prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from every form of evil.”

A thick mist, a darkness and cloud is spread over all the earth. And, showing this, the Apostle said, “For we were once darkness.” (Eph. v. 8) And again, “Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” Since therefore there is, so to speak, a moonless night, and we walk in that night, God hath given us a bright lamp, having kindled in

our souls the grace of the Holy Spirit. But some who have received this light have rendered it more bright and shining, as, for instance, Paul and Peter, and all those Saints; while others have even extinguished it, as the five virgins, as those who have “made shipwreck concerning the faith,” as the fornicator of Corinth, as the Galatians who were perverted.

On this account Paul says, “Quench not the Spirit,” that is, the gift of grace, for it is his custom so to call the gift of the Spirit. But this an impure life extinguishes. For as any one, who has sprinkled both water and dust upon the light of our lamp, extinguishes it, and if he does not this, but only takes out the oil—so it is also with the gift of grace. For if you have cast over it earthly things, and the cares of fluctuating matters, you have quenched the Spirit. And if you have done none of these things, but a temptation coming from some other quarter has vehemently assailed it, as some wind, and if the light be not strong, and it has not much oil, or you have not closed the opening, or have not shut the door, all is undone. But what is the opening? As in the lamp, so is it also in us: it is the eye and the ear. Suffer not a violent blast of wickedness to fall upon these, since it would extinguish the lamp, but close them up with the fear of God. The mouth is the door. Shut it, and fasten it, that it may both give light, and repel the attack from without. For instance, has any one insulted and reviled you? Do you shut the mouth; for if you open it, you add force to the wind. Do you not see in houses, when two doors stand directly opposite, and there is a strong wind, if you shut one, and there is no opposite draught, the wind has no power, but the greater part of its force is abated? So also now, there are two doors, thy mouth, and his who insults and affronts thee; if thou shuttest thy mouth, and dost not allow a draught on the other side, thou hast quenched the whole blast; but if thou openest it, it will not be restrained. Let us not therefore quench it.

And the flame is often liable to be extinguished even when no temptation assails it. When the oil fails, when we do not alms, the Spirit is quenched. For it came to thee as an alms from God. Then He sees this fruit not existing in thee, and he abides not with an unmerciful soul. But the Spirit being quenched, ye know what follows, as many of you as have walked on a road in a moonless night. And if it is difficult to walk by night in a road from land to land, how is it safe in the road that leads from earth to heaven? Know ye not how many demons there are in the intervening space, how many wild beasts, how many spirits of wickedness? If indeed we have that light, they will be able to do us no hurt; but if we extinguish it, they soon take us captive, they soon rob us of everything. Since even robbers first extinguish the lamp, and so plunder us. For they indeed see in this darkness, since they do the works of darkness: but we are unaccustomed to that light. Let us not then extinguish it. All evil doing extinguishes that light, whether reviling, or insolence, or whatever you can mention. For as in the case of fire, everything that is foreign to its nature is destructive of it, but that kindles it which is congenial to it; whatever is dry, whatever is warm, whatever is fiery, kindles the flame of the Spirit. Let us not therefore overlay it with anything cold or damp; for these things are destructive of it.

But there is also another explanation. There were among them many indeed who prophesied truly, but some prophesied falsely. This also he says in the Epistle to the Corinthians, that on this account He gave “the discernings of spirits.” (1 Cor. xii. 10) For the devil, of his vile craft, wished through this gift of grace to subvert everything pertaining to the Church. For since both the demon and the Spirit prophesied concerning the future, the one indeed uttering falsehood, and the other truth, and it was not possible from any quarter to receive a proof of one or the other, but each spoke without being called to account, as Jeremiah

and Ezekiel had done, but when the time came they were convicted, He gave also the “discernings of spirits.” (**Schaff Note:** [When the time of fulfillment or the contrary came, the prophets were convicted, and it was shown which were from the devil. But the power of discerning between good and evil spirits in their predictions would make it unnecessary to wait for the time of fulfillment.—J.A.B.]) Since therefore then also among the Thessalonians many were prophesying, glancing at whom he says, “Neither by word, nor by epistle, as from us, as that the day of the Lord is now present” (2 Thess. ii. 2), he says this here. That is, do not, because there are false prophets among you, on their account prohibit also these, and turn away from them; “quench” them “not,” that is, “despise not prophesyings.”

Seest thou that this is what he means by, “Prove all things”? Because he had said, “Despise not prophesyings,” lest they should think that he opened the pulpit to all, he says, “Prove all things,” that is, such as are really prophecies; “and hold fast that which is good. Abstain from every form of evil”; not from this or that, but from all; that you may by proof distinguish both the true things and the false, and abstain from the latter, and hold fast the former. For thus both the hatred of the one will be vehement and the love of the other arises, when we do all things not carelessly, nor without examination, but with careful investigation.

Ver. 23. “And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Observe the affection of the Teacher. After the admonition he adds a prayer; not only that, but even introduces it in his letter. For we need both counsel and prayer. For this reason we also first giving you counsel, then offer prayers for you. And this the Initiated know. But Paul indeed did this with good reason, having great confidence towards God, whereas we are confounded with shame, and have no freedom of speech. But because we were appointed to this we do it, being unworthy even to stand in His presence, and to hold the place of the lowest disciples. But because grace works even through the unworthy, not for our own sakes but for theirs who are about to be benefited, we contribute our parts. “Sanctify you wholly,” he says, and may “your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” What does he here call the spirit? The gift of grace. (**Schaff Note:** [See his remarks above, on ver. 19. To understand so here is groundless fancy. The Scripture writers sometimes speak of soul and body, sometimes of spirit and body, and occasionally of spirit and soul and body. Some able writers (as Ellicott here) understand this form of expression as teaching an essential psychological distinction between spirit and soul; but it is probable that we have only the Pauline accumulation of terms to make a complete and emphatic statement.—J.A.B.]) For if we depart hence having our lamps bright, we shall enter into the bridechamber. But if they are quenched, it will not be so. For this reason he says “your spirit.” For if that remains pure, the other remains also. “And soul and body,” he says.

For neither the one nor the other then admits anything evil.

Ver. 24. “Faithful is He that calleth you, who will also do it.”

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “1 Thessalonians v. 19–22

“Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. But prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from every form of evil.””

He refers to **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):19** Quench not the Spirit. 20 Despise not prophesyings. 21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. 22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

He continues, “A thick mist, a darkness and cloud is spread over all the earth. And, showing this, the Apostle said, “For we were once darkness.” (Eph. v. 8)”

He refers to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):8** For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

He continues, “And again, “Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.””

He refers to **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):4** But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

He continues, “Since therefore there is, so to speak, a moonless night, and we walk in that night, God hath given us a bright lamp, having kindled in our souls the grace of the Holy Spirit. But some who have received this light have rendered it more bright and shining, as, for instance, Paul and Peter, and all those Saints; while others have even extinguished it, as the five virgins, as those who have “made shipwreck concerning the faith,” as the fornicator of Corinth, as the Galatians who were perverted.”

In the parable the five virgins who took no oil with their lamps were never saved. The oil is symbolic of the life of the Holy Spirit. When we are born again, our lamp is lit so to speak. Our spirit is given eternal life by the Holy Spirit who gave us birth. The five virgins whose lamps went out were never born again, otherwise their lamps would not have gone out. Jesus is encouraging everyone to be ready, that is, to make sure we have been born again.

And the fornicator at Corinth repented, as we read in **2 Corinthians 2 (KJV):6** Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. 7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. 8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. 9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. 10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; 11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

He continues, “On this account Paul says, “Quench not the Spirit,” that is, the gift of grace, for it is his custom so to call the gift of the Spirit.”

In the mind of Chrysostom, when we receive the “gift of the Spirit”, he means “the gift of grace”.

And we read about the gifts of the Spirit in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):4** Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

The Greek word translated gifts is **χάρισμα** (pronounced khä'-re-smä), a (free) gift. And this Greek word is derived from **χάρις** (pronounced khä'-res), grace. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5485**

However, we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):1** Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

The word translated “spiritual gifts” in the Greek is **πνευματικός** (pronounced pnyü-mä-te-ko's), from G4151; non-carnal, i.e. (humanly) ethereal (as opposed to gross), or



(dæmoniacally) a spirit (concretely), or (divinely) supernatural, regenerate, religious:—spiritual.  
**Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4152**

So while the gifts are freely given, they are spiritual gifts given by the Spirit of God. These gifts are divine enablements freely given by the Spirit of God to whom He will. And they are different than ministry gifts. Spiritual gifts are the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus in **Acts 1 (KJV):8** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

And in **Luke 24 (KJV):49** And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Chrysostom continues, “But this an impure life extinguishes. For as any one, who has sprinkled both water and dust upon the light of our lamp, extinguishes it, and if he does not this, but only takes out the oil—so it is also with the gift of grace. For if you have cast over it earthly things, and the cares of fluctuating matters, you have quenched the Spirit. And if you have done none of these things, but a temptation coming from some other quarter has vehemently assailed it, as some wind, and if the light be not strong, and it has not much oil, or you have not closed the opening, or have not shut the door, all is undone. But what is the opening? As in the lamp, so is it also in us: it is the eye and the ear. Suffer not a violent blast of wickedness to fall upon these, since it would extinguish the lamp, but close them up with the fear of God. The mouth is the door. Shut it, and fasten it, that it may both give light, and repel the attack from without. For instance, has any one insulted and reviled you? Do you shut the mouth; for if you open it, you add force to the wind. Do you not see in houses, when two doors stand directly opposite, and there is a strong wind, if you shut one, and there is no opposite draught, the wind has no power, but the greater part of its force is abated? So also now, there are two doors, thy mouth, and his who insults and affronts thee; if thou shuttest thy mouth, and dost not allow a draught on the other side, thou hast quenched the whole blast; but if thou openest it, it will not be restrained. Let us not therefore quench it.”

Chrysostom is saying basically that sin quenches the Spirit, as he says, “this an impure life extinguishes”. In his mind, when we sin we lose the Spirit by quenching it, as he says, we take out the oil, that is “the gift of grace”. But he did not understand the new birth by the Spirit of God. The life that is given to our spirits when we are born again is eternal life. This is what John assures us in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

He continues, “And the flame is often liable to be extinguished even when no temptation assails it. When the oil fails, when we do not alms, the Spirit is quenched. For it came to thee as an alms from God. Then He sees this fruit not existing in thee, and he abides not with an unmerciful soul.”

Again, Chrysostom misinterprets the Scripture. We read again as in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):19** Quench not the Spirit. 20 Despise not prophesyings.

Paul is telling them not to prohibit spiritual gifts from being exercised in the Church. Paul says also in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):39** Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

Quenching the spirit is not allowing spiritual manifestation to occur in the Church.

He continues, “But the Spirit being quenched, ye know what follows, as many of you as have walked on a road in a moonless night. And if it is difficult to walk by night in a road from land to land, how is it safe in the road that leads from earth to heaven? Know ye not how many demons there are in the intervening space, how many wild beasts, how many spirits of wickedness? If indeed we have that light, they will be able to do us no hurt; but if we extinguish it, they soon take us captive, they soon rob us of everything. Since even robbers first extinguish the lamp, and so plunder us. For they indeed see in this darkness, since they do the works of darkness: but we are unaccustomed to that light. Let us not then extinguish it. All evil doing extinguishes that light, whether reviling, or insolence, or whatever you can mention. For as in the case of fire, everything that is foreign to its nature is destructive of it, but that kindles it which is congenial to it; whatever is dry, whatever is warm, whatever is fiery, kindles the flame of the Spirit. Let us not therefore overlay it with anything cold or damp; for these things are destructive of it.”

Chrysostom is encouraging us to let our light shine. He did not understand that our light is our spirit that has been born again by the Spirit of God. Our spirit is the candle of the Lord, as we read in **Proverbs 20 (KJV):27** The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward part of the belly.

We can hide our light, but we cannot extinguish it because it is the eternal flame of eternal life given to us by the Spirit of God. So we are commanded not to grieve the Holy Spirit, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):25** Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil. 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

But the Spirit doesn't leave us if we sin. God will discipline us as a good Father, but He will never leave us, as we read in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):5** Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Chrysostom continues, “But there is also another explanation. There were among them many indeed who prophesied truly, but some prophesied falsely. This also he says in the Epistle to the Corinthians, that on this account He gave “the discernings of spirits.” (1 Cor. xii. 10)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):10** To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

He continues, “For the devil, of his vile craft, wished through this gift of grace to subvert everything pertaining to the Church. For since both the demon and the Spirit prophesied concerning the future, the one indeed uttering falsehood, and the other truth, and it was not possible from any quarter to receive a proof of one or the other, but each spoke without being

called to account, as Jeremiah and Ezekiel had done, but when the time came they were convicted, He gave also the “discernings of spirits.” (**Schaff Note:** [When the time of fulfillment or the contrary came, the prophets were convicted, and it was shown which were from the devil. But the power of discerning between good and evil spirits in their predictions would make it unnecessary to wait for the time of fulfillment.—J.A.B.]) Since therefore then also among the Thessalonians many were prophesying, glancing at whom he says, “Neither by word, nor by epistle, as from us, as that the day of the Lord is now present” (2 Thess. ii. 2), he says this here.”

He refers to **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):2** That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

He continues, “That is, do not, because there are false prophets among you, on their account prohibit also these, and turn away from them; “quench” them “not,” that is, “despise not prophesyings.”

Seest thou that this is what he means by, “Prove all things”? Because he had said, “Despise not prophesyings,” lest they should think that he opened the pulpit to all, he says, “Prove all things,” that is, such as are really prophecies; “and hold fast that which is good. Abstain from every form of evil”; not from this or that, but from all; that you may by proof distinguish both the true things and the false, and abstain from the latter, and hold fast the former. For thus both the hatred of the one will be vehement and the love of the other arises, when we do all things not carelessly, nor without examination, but with careful investigation.

Ver. 23. “And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.””

He refers in context to **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):21** Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. **22** Abstain from all appearance of evil. **23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And we are commanded to judge all prophecy according to the word of God, as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):29** Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

Chrysostom continues, “Observe the affection of the Teacher. After the admonition he adds a prayer; not only that, but even introduces it in his letter. For we need both counsel and prayer. For this reason we also first giving you counsel, then offer prayers for you. And this the Initiated know. But Paul indeed did this with good reason, having great confidence towards God, whereas we are confounded with shame, and have no freedom of speech. But because we were appointed to this we do it, being unworthy even to stand in His presence, and to hold the place of the lowest disciples. But because grace works even through the unworthy, not for our own sakes but for theirs who are about to be benefited, we contribute our parts. “Sanctify you wholly,” he says, and may “your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” What does he here call the spirit? The gift of grace.

**(Schaff Note:** [See his remarks above, on ver. 19. To understand so here is groundless fancy. The Scripture writers sometimes speak of soul and body, sometimes of spirit and body, and occasionally of spirit and soul and body. Some able writers (as Ellicott here) understand this form of expression as teaching an essential psychological distinction between spirit and soul; but it is probable that we have only the Pauline accumulation of terms to make a complete and

emphatic statement.—J.A.B.]”

That we have a spirit is proven as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Our spirit is where we connect with God. Before Christ, we were dead in our trespasses and sins. When we were born again, our spirit was made alive by the Holy Spirit, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):8** The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

We were born of God, as we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

This is an actual event in the believer. It is not just a reception of grace, but a change in the nature of our spirit, as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Having a divine nature in our spirit, we have eternal life, as we read again in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

It is not just grace that is put down to our account as it were, or that fills us. We are born of God when we believe in Jesus Christ.

He continues, “For if we depart hence having our lamps bright, we shall enter into the bridechamber. But if they are quenched, it will not be so. For this reason he says “your spirit.” For if that remains pure, the other remains also. “And soul and body,” he says.”

Once we have been born again, our spirit cannot be quenched. We cannot lose the Spirit. We are not our own. We have been bought with a price, as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

The parable of the virgins in Matthew 25 speaks of those who never made a true commitment to the Lord, and so they were never born again.

Chrysostom concludes, “For neither the one nor the other then admits anything evil.

Ver. 24. “Faithful is He that calleth you, who will also do it.””

He refers to **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):24** Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIV, page 446-447**

Ver. 26. “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities.”

For the one point is thy own, that of patience, but the other comes of the Spirit's furnishings, Who also cherisheth (Gr. anointeth) thee unto this hope, and through it again lighteneth thy labors. Then that thou mightest know that it is not in thy labors only and dangers that this grace standeth by thee, but even in things the most easy seemingly, it worketh with thee, and on all occasions bears its part in the alliance, he proceeds to say,

“For we know not what we should pray for as we ought.”

And this he said to show the Spirit’s great concern about us, and also to instruct them not to think for certainty that those things are desirable which to man’s reasonings appear so. For since it was likely that they, when they were scourged, and driven out, and suffering grievances without number, should be seeking a respite, and ask this favor of God, and think it was advantageous to them, by no means (he says) suppose that what seem blessings to you really are so. For we need the Spirit’s aid even to do this. So feeble is man, and such a nothing by himself. For this is why he says, “For we know not what we should pray for as we ought.” In order that the learner might not feel any shame at his ignorance, he does not say, ye know not, but, “we know not.” And that he did not say this merely to seem moderate, he plainly shows from other passages. For he desired in his prayers unceasingly to see Rome. Yet the time when he obtained it was not at once when he desired it. And for “the thorn” that was given him “in the flesh” (2 Cor. xii. 8), that is the dangers, he often besought God, and was entirely unsuccessful. And so was Moses, who in the Old Testament prays to see Palestine (Deut. iii. 26), and Jeremiah when he made supplication for the Jews (Jer. xv. 1), and Abraham when he interceded for the people of Sodom. “But the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” This statement is not clear, owing to the cessation of many of the wonders which then used to take place. Wherefore I must needs inform you of the state of things at that time, and in this way the rest of the subject will be cleared. What therefore was the state of things then? God did in those days give to all that were baptized certain excellent gifts, and the name that these had was spirits. For “the spirits of the Prophets,” it says, “are subject to the prophets.” (1 Cor. xiv. 32) And one had the gift of prophecy and foretold things to come; and another of wisdom, and taught the many; and another of healings, and cured the sick; and another of miracles, and raised the dead; another of tongues, and spoke different languages. And with all these there was also a gift of prayer, which also was called a spirit, and he that had this prayed for all the people. For since we are ignorant of much that is profitable for us and ask things that are not profitable, the gift of prayer came into some particular person of that day, and what was profitable for all the whole Church alike, he was the appointed person to ask for in behalf of all, and the instructor of the rest. Spirit then is the name that he gives here to the grace of this character, and the soul that receiveth the grace, and intercedeth to God, and groaneth. For he that was counted worthy of such grace as this, standing with much compunction, and with many mental groanings falling before God, asked the things that were profitable for all. And of this the Deacon of the present day is a symbol when he offers up the prayers for the people. This then is what Paul means when he says, “the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.”

Ver. 27. “But He that searcheth the hearts.”

You see that it is not about the Comforter that he is speaking, but about the spiritual heart. Since if this were not so, he ought to have said, “He that searcheth” the Spirit. But that thou mayest learn that the language is meant of a spiritual man, who has the gift of prayer, he proceeds, “And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit,” that is, of the spiritual man.

“Because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

Not (he means) that he informs God as if ignorant, but this is done that we may learn to pray for proper things, and to ask of God what is pleasing to Him. For this is what the

“according to God” is. And so this was with a view to solace those that came to Him, and to yield them excellent instruction. For He that furnished the gifts, and gave besides blessings without number, was the Comforter. Hence it says, “all these things worketh one and the self-same Spirit.” (1 Cor. xii. 11) And it is for our instruction that this takes place, and to show the love of the Spirit, it condescendeth even to this. And it is from this that the person praying getteth heard, because the prayer is made “according to the will of God.”

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 26. “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities.”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):26** Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

He continues, “For the one point is thy own, that of patience, but the other comes of the Spirit’s furnishings, Who also cherisheth (Gr. anointeth) thee unto this hope, and through it again lighteneth thy labors. Then that thou mightest know that it is not in thy labors only and dangers that this grace standeth by thee, but even in things the most easy seemingly, it worketh with thee, and on all occasions bears its part in the alliance, he proceeds to say,

“For we know not what we should pray for as we ought.”

And this he said to show the Spirit’s great concern about us, and also to instruct them not to think for certainty that those things are desirable which to man’s reasonings appear so. For since it was likely that they, when they were scourged, and driven out, and suffering grievances without number, should be seeking a respite, and ask this favor of God, and think it was advantageous to them, by no means (he says) suppose that what seem blessings to you really are so. For we need the Spirit’s aid even to do this. So feeble is man, and such a nothing by himself. For this is why he says, “For we know not what we should pray for as we ought.” In order that the learner might not feel any shame at his ignorance, he does not say, ye know not, but, “we know not.” And that he did not say this merely to seem moderate, he plainly shows from other passages. For he desired in his prayers unceasingly to see Rome. Yet the time when he obtained it was not at once when he desired it. And for “the thorn” that was given him “in the flesh” (2 Cor. xii. 8), that is the dangers, he often besought God, and was entirely unsuccessful.”

He refers in context to **2 Corinthians 12 (KJV):7** And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

But the “thorn” was not “dangers” for which Paul “often besought God”, but was an actual pain inflicted by Satan on the body of Paul. Paul was set free of the thorn for he nowhere else mentions it in the Scriptures.

Chrysostom continues, “And so was Moses, who in the Old Testament prays to see Palestine (Deut. iii. 26), and Jeremiah when he made supplication for the Jews (Jer. xv. 1), and Abraham when he interceded for the people of Sodom. “But the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.””

He refers to **Deuteronomy 3 (KJV):26** But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.

And to **Jeremiah 15 (KJV):1** Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth.

And in **Genesis 18 (KJV):20** And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; 21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. 22 And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the Lord. 23 And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

And in **Genesis 18 (KJV):32** And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake. 33 And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

Chrysostom continues, “This statement is not clear, owing to the cessation of many of the wonders which then used to take place. Wherefore I must needs inform you of the state of things at that time, and in this way the rest of the subject will be cleared. What therefore was the state of things then? God did in those days give to all that were baptized certain excellent gifts, and the name that these had was spirits. For “the spirits of the Prophets,” it says, “are subject to the prophets.” (1 Cor. xiv. 32)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):32** And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

The “spirits” in this verse refer to the spirit of each prophet. Chrysostom did not understand the threefold nature of man, that is, body, soul, and spirit.

And the gifts actually are mentioned in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):1** Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

The word translated “spiritual gifts” in the Greek is **πνευματικός** (pronounced pnyü-mä-te-ko's), from G4151; non-carnal, i.e. (humanly) ethereal (as opposed to gross), or (dæmoniacally) a spirit (concretely), or (divinely) supernatural, regenerate, religious:—spiritual. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4152**

This Greek word is derived from **πνεῦμα** (pronounced pnyü'-mä), from G4154; a current of air, i.e. breath (blast) or a breeze; by analogy or figuratively, a spirit, i.e. (human) the rational soul, (by implication) vital principle, mental disposition, etc., or (superhuman) an angel, demon, or (divine) God, Christ's spirit, the Holy Spirit:—ghost, life, spirit(-ual, -ually), mind. Compare G5590.

The Greek word **πνευματικός** (pronounced pnyü-mä-te-ko's) is neuter, and could be translated as “spiritual things” or according to the context, “spiritual gifts”.

So the gifts are not spirits, but spiritual gifts. The gifts are also referred to in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):4** Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

The word translated “gifts” in Greek here is **χάρισμα** (pronounced khä'-re-smä), from G5483; a (divine) gratuity, i.e. deliverance (from danger or passion); (specially), a

(spiritual) endowment, i.e. (subjectively) religious qualification, or (objectively) miraculous faculty:—(free) gift.

Chrysostom continues, “And one had the gift of prophecy and foretold things to come; and another of wisdom, and taught the many; and another of healings, and cured the sick; and another of miracles, and raised the dead; another of tongues, and spoke different languages.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):7** But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. **8** For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; **9** To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; **10** To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: **11** But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

His definition of the gifts shows his complete unfamiliarity with the manifestations of the Spirit. He says that “one had the gift of prophecy and foretold things to come”. But prophecy in the New Testament is for exhortation, admonition, and comfort, as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):3** But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

The word of wisdom in verse 8 above relates to a revelation concerning the plans and purposes of God. The word of knowledge in verse 8 above relates to the revelation of a fact that is hopelessly hidden from our minds. And example of this would be as we read in **Acts 9 (KJV):10** And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. **11** And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, **12** And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

The Lord revealed to Ananias that Saul had seen in a “vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight”. There is no way Ananias could have known about this vision of Saul, apart from God revealing it to him. Likewise, that Paul was in the house of Judas on a street which is called Straight, Ananias could not have known this without a revelation from God. The word of wisdom was for Ananias to go and lay hands on Paul. It was God’s plan and purpose to heal Paul, and make him a disciple.

Now these revelations must be judged by the word of God. Their purpose is not to add to the word of God, but to build up faith, and to show the imminence of our Creator.

Chrysostom continues, “And with all these there was also a gift of prayer, which also was called a spirit, and he that had this prayed for all the people.”

Prayer is nowhere called a gift, or a spirit in the Scripture. We do read as in **Ephesians 6 (KJV):18** Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Chrysostom continues, “For since we are ignorant of much that is profitable for us and ask things that are not profitable, the gift of prayer came into some particular person of that day, and what was profitable for all the whole Church alike, he was the appointed person to ask for in behalf of all, and the instructor of the rest. Spirit then is the name that he gives here to the grace of this character, and the soul that receiveth the grace, and intercedeth to God, and groaneth. For he that was counted worthy of such grace as this, standing with much



compunction, and with many mental groanings falling before God, asked the things that were profitable for all. And of this the Deacon of the present day is a symbol when he offers up the prayers for the people. This then is what Paul means when he says, “the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.””

He refers again to **Romans 8 (KJV):26** Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

But the Spirit in verse 26 is the same Spirit mentioned in Romans 8 (KJV):11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Paul is not referring to our prayers, “for we know not what we should pray for as we ought”. It is the Spirit of God who makes intercession for us. Paul is not speaking of a soul who is an intercessor here, but of the Spirit of God who helps our infirmities. The Spirit of God does this for all who have received the Spirit of God. But we get a glimpse of the workings in the Church in the time of Chrysostom here, and the emphasis on ritual. Chrysostom is making the Scripture fit with the times of the Church in which he lived.

He continues, “Ver. 27. “But He that searcheth the hearts.””

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):27** And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

He continues, “You see that it is not about the Comforter that he is speaking, but about the spiritual heart. Since if this were not so, he ought to have said, “He that searcheth” the Spirit. But that thou mayest learn that the language is meant of a spiritual man, who has the gift of prayer, he proceeds, “And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit,” that is, of the spiritual man.

But the Scripture itself is clear. The Spirit of God makes intercession for us. He is the one who searcheth the hearts, and knows what is the mind of the Spirit. He is the one who makes “intercession for the saints according to the will of God”, “for we know not what we should pray for as we ought”. And it is the Spirit of God who “maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered”.

Chrysostom continues, ““Because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

Not (he means) that he informs God as if ignorant, but this is done that we may learn to pray for proper things, and to ask of God what is pleasing to Him. For this is what the “according to God” is. And so this was with a view to solace those that came to Him, and to yield them excellent instruction. For He that furnished the gifts, and gave besides blessings without number, was the Comforter. Hence it says, “all these things worketh one and the selfsame Spirit.” (1 Cor. xii. 11)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):11** But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

He continues, “And it is for our instruction that this takes place, and to show the love of the Spirit, it condescendeth even to this. And it is from this that the person praying getteth heard, because the prayer is made “according to the will of God.””

Chrysostom did not understand that it is the Spirit of God who makes intercession, or prays, for us, “with groanings which cannot be uttered”, for He knows our hearts, and He knows

what we really need. This is a blessing from our Lord.

## Commentary Summary

Concerning **Spiritual Gifts**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XXIII, page 168-173**, he says, “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that when ye were Gentiles, ye were led away unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led.” This whole place is very obscure: but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):1** Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. **2** Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

And he says, “And why do they not happen now? Why look now, the cause too of the obscurity hath produced us again another question: namely, why did they then happen, and now do so no more?”

So it is Chrysostom’s testimony that the gifts of the Spirit were no longer taking place. But it is interesting that Chrysostom refers to this Scripture in which Paul says that he would not have us “ignorant” of spiritual things.

And he says, “Wherefore also he so calls it, saying, “But to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given to profit withal;” (v. 7) calling the gifts “a manifestation of the Spirit.””

And he has said correctly that the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 are a “a manifestation of the Spirit.”

He also says, “For as the Apostles themselves had received this sign first, so also the faithful went on receiving it, I mean, the gift of tongues; yet not this only but also many others: inasmuch as many used even to raise the dead and to cast out devils and to perform many other such wonders: and they had gifts too, some less, and some more.”

And Chrysostom has spoken well of the gifts here, for they were for the “faithful”. And we read of Stephen in **Acts 6 (KJV):8** And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

Now Chrysostom thought that prophecy was always having to do with future events. But this had consequences if those who heard the prophecy had to wait until it was fulfilled. And so his method of discerning a true prophet involved two signs.

He notes the first sign, as he says, “So he is saying that the soothsayer will “cause distraction and madness and great darkness”, which “is the proper work of a demon:” But a true prophet will be doing “God’s work to illuminate and with consideration to teach things needful.”

And he notes the second sign, as he says, “Again, when thou seest another speaking all things with His Name, understand that he is spiritual.”

But a simpler method is as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):3** Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

And then all prophecy must be judged according to the word of God, as Paul taught in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):29** Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

And Chrysostom says, “But what is “the word of wisdom?” That which Paul had, which John had, the son of thunder. And what is “the word of knowledge?” That which most of the faithful had, possessing indeed knowledge, but not thereupon able to teach nor easily to convey to another what they knew.”

But the Lord told Saul in Acts 9:6 to go into the city where it would be told him what he must do. The word of wisdom relates to the plans and purposes of God. This was not something that Saul read out of the Bible. He heard a voice.

And the Lord spoke to Ananias in a vision, and the Lord told him where Saul was, that is, on a street which is called Straight in Acts 9:11. This is a word of knowledge. It is, so to speak, a factoid from God. It is something that we could not have known, but is revealed to us by the Spirit for a specific purpose.

But Chrysostom has said correctly that this faith, given by the Holy Spirit, is “the faith of miracles”, that is, the faith by which one may operate in the working of a miracle.

And he says, “But to possess the power of working miracles and gifts of healing, is not the same thing: for he that had a gift of healing used only to do cures: but he that possessed powers for working miracles used to punish also. For a miracle is not the healing only, but the punishing also: even as Paul inflicted blindness: as Peter slew.” He refers to Acts 13:6-12, when Elymas the sorcerer withstood Paul and Barnabas when they preached the Gospel, and Paul spoke blindness upon him for a season. And he refers to Acts 5:1-10 when Ananias and Saphira lied to the Holy Ghost about how much they had sold their land for as a donation, and fell down dead before Peter.

We note that the casting out of an evil spirit is also done by the spiritual gift of working of miracles.

And he asks, “What is, “discernings of spirits?” the knowing who is spiritual, and who is not: who is a prophet, and who a deceiver: as he said to the Thessalonians, “despise not prophesyings:” (1 Thess. v. 20, 21) but proving all things, hold fast that which is good.””

However, there is more to the operation of the gift of “discerning of spirits”, as we read in Mark 9:17-29 when Jesus identified the evil spirit of the son of one in the multitude as the “dumb and deaf” spirit. This was an evil spirit that often “cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him”. Jesus identified him by the gift of discerning of spirits, and cast him out by the gift of working of miracles. Jesus had all the gifts of the Spirit, and so we read in **John 3 (KJV):34** For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

Chrysostom says, ““To another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.” For one person knew what he spake himself, but was unable to interpret to another; while another had acquired both these or the other of the two.”

But the operation of the gift of divers kinds of tongues includes the utterance of a language unknown to the speaker, but known somewhere in the world. And it also includes the utterance of an unknown language to the world of mankind, such as the tongues of angels, as we read in 1 Corinthians 13:1, and implied in 1 Corinthians 14:2. This is why the Spirit also gives the gift of interpretation of tongues, mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:10.

And he says, “But the word of teaching not so.” And in reference to teaching he says, “Wherefore that he places first, but this last: for this was on account of that, and so indeed were all the rest; both prophecies, and working of miracles, and divers kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues. For none is equal to this. Wherefore also he said, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and in teaching.” (1 Tim. v. 17)”

Chrysostom taught from his own experience, which did not include spiritual gifts, which he said had ceased in the Church. But teaching is a ministry gift, and not a spiritual gift. That is, it is a place in the body of Christ, the Church, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):28** And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

Each one is set in the body as it pleased the Lord, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Our function in the body of Christ will relate to our individuality, and where God has set us in the body. As we grow in grace and knowledge, we will discover more about who we are, and what our function is, that is, our ministry gift.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY XI, page 370-372**, he says, “On this account Paul says, “Quench not the Spirit,” that is, the gift of grace, for it is his custom so to call the gift of the Spirit.”

In the mind of Chrysostom, when we receive the “gift of the Spirit”, he means “the gift of grace”.

Chrysostom is saying basically that sin quenches the Spirit, as he says, “this an impure life extinguishes”.

And he says, “And the flame is often liable to be extinguished even when no temptation assails it. When the oil fails, when we do not alms, the Spirit is quenched. For it came to thee as an alms from God. Then He sees this fruit not existing in thee, and he abides not with an unmerciful soul.”

Again, Chrysostom misinterprets the Scripture. We read in context again as in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):19** Quench not the Spirit. 20 Despise not prophesyings.

Paul is saying don't prohibit spiritual gifts from being exercised in the Church. He says also in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):39** Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

Quenching the spirit is not allowing spiritual manifestation to occur in the Church.

Chrysostom is encouraging us to let our light shine. He did not understand that our light is our spirit that has been born again by the Spirit of God. Our spirit is the candle of the Lord, as we read in **Proverbs 20 (KJV):27** The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward part of the belly.

We can hide our light, but we cannot extinguish it because it is the eternal flame of eternal life given to us by the Spirit of God.

We are commanded not to grieve the Holy Spirit, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):30** And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of

redemption.

But the Spirit doesn't leave us if we sin, or grieve Him. God will discipline us as a good Father, but He will never leave us.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIV, page 446-447**, he says, "This statement is not clear, owing to the cessation of many of the wonders which then used to take place. Wherefore I must needs inform you of the state of things at that time, and in this way the rest of the subject will be cleared. What therefore was the state of things then? God did in those days give to all that were baptized certain excellent gifts, and the name that these had was spirits. For "the spirits of the Prophets," it says, "are subject to the prophets." (1 Cor. xiv. 32)"

He refers to **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):32** And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

The "spirits" in this verse refer to the spirit of each prophet. Chrysostom did not understand the threefold nature of man, that is, body, soul, and spirit.

And the gifts actually are mentioned in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):1** Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

And Chrysostom says, "And one had the gift of prophecy and foretold things to come; and another of wisdom, and taught the many; and another of healings, and cured the sick; and another of miracles, and raised the dead; another of tongues, and spoke different languages."

Chrysostom had no experiential knowledge of the gifts of the Spirit. So he misunderstood the operation of these gifts. Knowledge is something we obtain by the illumination of the Holy Spirit as we read His word, and wisdom comes from that knowledge. But the gifts of the Spirit are given by the Spirit in the moment to meet a need.

## Justification

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS,  
HOMILY VIII, page 385-391

Rom. IV. 1, 2

“What shall we then say that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.”

He had said (5 mss. εἶπεν), that the world had become guilty before God, and that all had sinned, and that boasting was excluded, and that it was impossible to be saved otherwise than by faith. He is now intent upon showing that this salvation, so far from being matter of shame, was even the cause of a bright glory, and a greater than that through works. For since the being saved, yet with shame, had somewhat of dejection in it, he next takes away this suspicion too. And indeed he has hinted at the same already, by calling it not barely salvation, but “righteousness. Therein” (he says) “is the righteousness of God revealed.” (Rom. i. 17) For he that is saved as a righteous man has a confidence accompanying his salvation. And he calls it not “righteousness” only, but also the setting forth of the righteousness of God. But God is set forth in things which are glorious and shining, and great. However, he nevertheless draws support for this from what he is at present upon, and carries his discourse forward by the method of question. And this he is always in the habit of doing both for clearness sake, and for the sake of confidence in what is said. Above, for instance, he did it, where he says, “What advantage then hath the Jew?” (ib. iii. 1) and, “What then have we more than they? (ib. 9) and again, “where then is boasting? it is excluded” (Rom. iii. 27): and here, “what then shall we say that Abraham our father?” etc. Now since the Jews kept turning over and over the fact, that the Patriarch, and friend of God, was the first to receive circumcision, he wishes to show, that it was by faith that he too was justified. And this was quite a vantage ground to insist upon (περιουσία νίκης πολλῆς). For for a person who had no works, to be justified by faith, was nothing unlikely. But for a person richly adorned with good deeds, not to be made just from hence, but from faith, this is the thing to cause wonder, and to set the power of faith in a strong light. And this is why he passes by all the others, and leads his discourse back to this man. And he calls him “father, as pertaining to the flesh,” to throw them out of the genuine relationship (συγγενείας γνησίας) to him, and to pave the Gentiles’ way to kinsmanship with him. And then he says, “For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory: but not before God.” After saying that God “justified the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through faith,” and making the same sufficiently sure in what he said before, he now proves it by Abraham more clearly than he promised, and pitches the battle for faith against works, and makes this righteous man the subject of the whole struggle; and that not without special meaning. Wherefore also he sets him up very high by calling him “forefather,” and putting a constraint upon them to comply with him in all points. For, Tell me not, he would say, about the Jews, nor bring this man or that before me. For I will go up to the very head of all, and the source whence circumcision took its rise. For “if Abraham,” he says, “was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory: but not before God.” What is here said is not plain, and so one must make it plainer. For there are two “gloryings,” one of works, and one of faith. After saying then, “if he was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God;” he points out that

he might have whereof to glory from faith also, yea and much greater reason for it. For the great power of Paul is especially displayed in this, that he turns what is objected to the other side, and shows that what seemed rather to be on the side of salvation by works, viz. glorying or boldness of claim (παρρησιάζεσθαι) belonged much more truly to that by faith. For he that glorieth in his works has his own labors to put forward: but he that finds his honor in having faith in God, has a much greater ground for glorying to show, in that it is God that he glorifieth and magnifieth. For those things which the nature of the visible world tells him not of, in receiving these by faith in Him, he at once displays sincere love towards Him, and heralds His power clearly forth. Now this is the character of the noblest soul, and the philosophic spirit, and lofty mind. For to abstain from stealing and murdering is trifling sort of acquirement, but to believe that it is possible for God to do things impossible requires a soul of no mean stature, and earnestly affected towards Him; for this is a sign of sincere love. For he indeed honors God, who fulfils the commandments, but he doth so in a much greater degree who thus followeth wisdom (φιλοσοφῶν) by his faith. The former obeys Him, but the latter receives that opinion of Him which is fitting, and glorifies Him, and feels wonder at Him more than that evinced by works. For that glorying pertains to him that does aright, but this glorifieth God, and lieth wholly in Him. For he glorieth at conceiving great things concerning Him, which redound to His glory. And this is why he speaks of having whereof to glory before God. And not for this only, but also for another reason: for he who is a believer glorieth again, not only because he loveth God in sincerity, but also because he hath enjoyed great honor and love from him. For as he shows his love to Him by having great thoughts about Him, (for this is a proof of love), so doth God also love him, though deserving to suffer for countless sins, not in freeing him from punishment only, but even by making him righteous. He then hath whereof to glory, as having been counted worthy of mighty love.

Ver. 4. "For to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt."

Then is not this last the greatest? he means. By no means: for it is to the believer that it is reckoned. But it would not have been reckoned, unless there were something that he contributed himself. And so he too hath God for his debtor, and debtor too for no common things, but great and high ones. For to show his high-mindedness and spiritual understanding, he does not say "to him that believeth" merely, but

Ver. 5. "To him that believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly."

For reflect how great a thing it is to be persuaded and have full confidence that God is able on a sudden not to free a man who has lived in impiety from punishment only, but even to make him just, and to count him worthy of those immortal honors. Do not then suppose that this one is lowered in that it is not reckoned unto the former of grace. For this is the very thing that makes the believer glorious; the fact of his enjoying so great grace, of his displaying so great faith. And note too that the recompense is greater. For to the former a reward is given, to the latter righteousness. Now righteousness is much greater than a reward. For righteousness is a recompense which most fully comprehends several rewards. Therefore after proving this from Abraham, he introduces David also as giving his suffrage in favor of the statement made. What then doth David say? and whom doth he pronounce blessed? is it him that triumphs in works, or him that hath enjoyed grace? him that hath obtained pardon and a gift? And when I speak of blessedness, I mean the chiefest of all good things; for as righteousness is greater than a reward, so is blessedness greater than righteousness. Having then shown that the righteousness is better,

not owing to Abraham's having received it only but also from reasonings (for he hath whereof to boast, he says, before God); he again uses another mode of showing that it is more dignified, by bringing David in to give his suffrage this way. For he also, he says, pronounces him blessed who is so made righteous, saying,

Ver. 7. "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven."

And he seems to be bringing a testimony beside his purpose. For it does not say, Blessed are they whose faith is reckoned for righteousness. But he does so on purpose, not through inadvertency, to show the greater superiority. For if he be blessed that by grace received forgiveness, much more is he that is made just, and that exhibits faith. For where blessedness is, there all shame is removed, and there is much glory, since blessedness is a greater degree both of reward and of glory. And for this cause what is the advantage of the other he states as unwritten, "Now to him that worketh is the reward reckoned not of grace;" but what the advantage of the faithful is, he brings Scriptural testimony to prove, saying, As David saith, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." What, he means, is it that you say? Is it that "it is not of debt but of grace that he receives forgiveness?" But see it is this person who is pronounced blessed. For he would not have pronounced him so, unless he saw him in the enjoyment of great glory. And he does not say this "forgiveness" then comes upon the circumcision; but what saith he?

Ver. 9. "Cometh this blessedness then" (which is the greater thing) "upon the circumcision or upon the uncircumcision?"

For now the subject of enquiry is, With whom is this good and great thing to be found; is it with the circumcision or with the uncircumcision? And notice its superiority! For he shows that it is so far from shunning the uncircumcision, that it even dwelt gladly with it before the circumcision. For since he that pronounced it blessed was David, who was himself also in a state of circumcision, and he was speaking to those in that state, see how eagerly Paul contends for applying what he said to the uncircumcised. For after joining the ascription of blessedness to righteousness, and showing that they are one and the same thing, he enquires how Abraham came to be righteous. For if the ascription of blessedness belong to the righteous, and Abraham was made righteous, let us see how he was made righteous, as uncircumcised or circumcised? Uncircumcised, he says.

"For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness."

After mentioning the Scripture above (for he said, "What saith the Scripture? Abraham believed in God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness,") here he goes on to secure also the judgment of the speakers, and shows that justification took place in the uncircumcision. Then from these grounds he solves another objection which is starting up. For if when in uncircumcision, one might say he was justified, to what purpose was the circumcision brought in?

Ver. 11. "He received it," he says, "a sign and seal of the righteousness that was by the faith, which he had being yet uncircumcised."

See you how he shows the Jews to be as it were of the class of parasites (i.e. guests), rather than those in uncircumcision, and that these were added to the others? For if he was justified and crowned while in uncircumcision, the Jews came in afterwards, Abraham is then the father first of the uncircumcised, which through faith appertain to him, and then of those in the circumcision. For he is a forefather of two lines. See you faith lightening up? for till it came



the patriarch was not justified. See you the uncircumcision offering no hindrance? for he was uncircumcised, yet was not hindered from being justified. The circumcision therefore is behind the faith. And why wonder that it is behind the faith, when it is even behind the uncircumcision. Nor is it behind faith only, but very far inferior to it, even so far as the sign is to the reality of which it is the sign; for instance, as the seal is to the soldier. (**Schaff Note:** See Hom. iii. on 2 Cor. at the end.) And why, he says, did he want a seal then? He did not want it himself. For what purpose then did he receive it? With a view to his being the father alike of them that believe in uncircumcision and in circumcision. But not of those in circumcision absolutely: wherefore he goes on to say, “To them who are not of the circumcision only.” For if to the uncircumcised, it is not in that he is uncircumcised that he is their father, although justified in uncircumcision; but in that they imitated his faith; much less is it owing to circumcision that he is the forefather of those in the state of circumcision, unless faith also be added. For he says that the reason of his receiving circumcision was that either of us two parties might have him for a forefather, and that those in the uncircumcision might not thrust aside those in the circumcision. See how the former had him for their forefather first. Now if the circumcision be of dignity owing to its preaching righteousness, the uncircumcision even hath no small preeminence in having received it before the circumcision. Then wilt thou be able to have him as a forefather when thou walkest in the steps of that faith, and art not contentious, nor a causer of division in bringing in the Law. What faith? tell me.

Ver. 12. “Which he had being yet uncircumcised.”

Here again he lays low the lofty spirit of the Jews by reminding them of the time of the justification. And he well says, “the steps,” that you as well as Abraham may believe in the resurrection of bodies that are dead. For he also displayed his faith upon this point. And so if you reject the uncircumcision, be informed for certain that the circumcision is of no more use unto you. For if you follow not in the steps of his faith, though you were ten thousand times in a state of circumcision, you will not be Abraham’s offspring. For even he received the circumcision for this end, that the man in a state of uncircumcision might not cast thee off. Do not then demand this of him too. For it was you whom the thing was to be an assistance to, not he. But he calls it a sign of the righteousness. And this also was for thy sake, since now it is not even this: for thou then wert in need of bodily signs, but now there is no need of them. “And was it not possible,” one might say, “from his faith to learn the goodness of his soul?” Yes, it was possible but thou stoodest in need of this addition also. For since thou didst not imitate the goodness of his soul, and wert not able to see it, a sensible circumcision was given thee, that, after having become accustomed to this of the body, thou mightest by little and little be led on to the true love of wisdom in the soul also, and that having with much seriousness received it as a very great privilege, thou mightest be instructed to imitate and revere thine ancestor. This object then had God not only in the circumcision, but in all the other rites, the sacrifices, I mean, and the sabbath, and feasts. Now that it was for thy sake that he received the circumcision, learn from the sequel. For after saying that he received a sign and a seal, he gives the reason also as follows. That he might be the father of the circumcision—to those who received the spiritual circumcision also, since if you have only this (i.e. the carnal), no farther good will come to you. For this is then a sign, when the reality of which it is the sign is found with thee, that is, faith; since if thou have not this, the sign to thee has no longer the power of a sign, for what is it to be the sign of? or what the seal of, when there is nothing to be sealed?

much as if you were to show one a purse with a seal to it, when there was nothing laid up within. And so the circumcision is ridiculous if there be no faith within. For if it be a sign of righteousness, but you have not righteousness, then you have no sign either. For the reason of your receiving a sign was that you might seek diligently for that reality whereof you have the sign: so that if you had been sure of diligently seeking thereafter without it, then you had not needed it. But this is not the only thing that circumcision proclaims, namely righteousness, but righteousness in even an uncircumcised man. Circumcision then does but proclaim, that there is no need of circumcision.

Ver. 14. “For if they which are of the Law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.” (**Schaff Note:** According to vv. 14–17, the promise cannot be through the law because that would annul faith and destroy the promise entirely (14). The principle of law is *quid pro quo* and on that basis alone there is no room for faith and promise. Claim, debt and reward, are the ideas which stand on the plane of law. Justification by law would imply no act of trust, obedience or gracious promise, but would be matter of reward simply. But since man is a sinner, it is inconceivable that he be justified on this basis, and the gospel of a gracious salvation is the only hope. To reject the latter is to exclude the possibility of any salvation whatever. Only by clinging to the Gospel can the Jew find any ground of hope in the ancient promises and covenants.—G.B.S.)

He had shown that faith is necessary, that it is older than circumcision, that it is more mighty than the Law, that it establisheth the Law. For if all sinned, it was necessary: if one being uncircumcised was justified, it is older: if the knowledge of sin is by the Law and yet it was without the Law made evident, it is more mighty: if it has testimony borne to it by the Law, and establisheth the Law, it is not opposed to it, but friendly and allied to it. Again, he shows upon other grounds too that it was not even possible by the Law to attain to the inheritance, and after having matched it with the circumcision, and gained it the victory, he brings it besides into contrast with the Law in these words, “For if they which are of the Law be heirs, faith is made void.” To prevent them anyone from saying that one may have faith and also keep up the Law, he shows this to be impracticable. For he that clings to the Law, as if of saving force, does disparagement to faith’s power; and so he says, “faith is made void,” that is, there is no need of salvation by grace. For then it cannot show forth its own proper power; “and the promise is made of none effect.” This is because the Jew might say, What need have I of faith? If then this held, the things that were promised, would be taken away along with faith. See how in all points he combats with them from the early times and from the Patriarch. For having shown from thence that righteousness and faith went together in the inheritance, he now shows that the promise did likewise. For to prevent the Jew from saying, What matters it to me if Abraham was justified by faith? Paul says, neither can what you are interested with, the promise of the inheritance, come into effect apart from it: which was what scared them most. But what promise is he speaking of? That of his being “the heir of the world,” and that in him all should be blessed. And how does he say that this promise is made of none effect?

Ver. 15. “Because the Law worketh wrath: for where no Law is, there is no transgression.”

Now if it worketh wrath, and renders them liable for transgression, it is plain that it makes them so to a curse also. But they that are liable under a curse, and punishments, and transgression, are not worthy of inheriting, but of being punished and rejected. What then

happens? faith comes, drawing on it the grace, so that the promise comes into effect. For where grace is, there is a remitting, and where remitting is, there is no punishment. Punishment then being removed, and righteousness succeeding from faith, there is no obstacle to our becoming heirs of the promise.

Ver. 16. “Therefore it is of faith,” he says, “that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.”

You see that it is not the Law only that faith establisheth, but the promise of God also that it will not allow to fall to the ground. But the Law, on the other hand, by being kept to unseasonably, makes even the faith of none effect, and hindereth the promise. By this he shows that faith, so far from being superfluous, is even necessary to that degree, that without it there is no being saved. For the Law worketh wrath, as all have transgressed it. But this doth not even suffer wrath to arise at all: for “where no Law is,” he says, “there is no transgression.” Do you see how he not only does away with sin after it has existed, but does not even allow it to be produced? And this is why he says “by grace.” For what end? Not with a view to their being put to shame, but to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed. Here he lays down two blessings, both that the things given are sure, and also that they are to all the seed, so gathering in those of the Gentiles, and showing that the Jews are without, if they contend against the faith. For this is a surer thing than that. For faith doeth thee no hurt (be not contentious), but even now thou art in danger from the Law, it preserves thee. Next having said, “to all the seed,” he defines what seed he meaneth. That which is of faith, he says, so blending with it their relationship to the Gentiles, and showing that they must not be proud of Abraham who do not believe as he did. And see a third thing which faith effected besides. It makes the relationship to that righteous man more definite (ἀκρι βεστέρων), and holds him up as the ancestor of a more numerous issue. And this is why he does not say merely Abraham, but “our father,” ours who believe. Then he also seals what he has said by the testimony—

Ver. 17. “As it is written,” he says, “I have made thee a father of many nations.”

Do you observe that this was ordered by Providence from of old? What then, he means, does He say this on account of the Ishmaelites, or of the Amalekites, or of the Hagarenes? This however, as he goes on he proves more distinctly not to be said of these. But as yet he presses forward to another point, by which means he proves this very thing by defining the mode of the relationship, and establishing it with a vast reach of mind. What then does he say?

“Before (or, answering to, κατέναντι) Him Whom he believed, even God.”

But his meaning is something of this sort, as God is not the God of a part, but the Father of all, so is he also. And again, as God is a father not by way of the relationship of nature, but by way of the affiancing of faith, so is he also inasmuch as it is obedience that makes him father of us all. For since they thought nothing of this relationship, as clinging to that grosser one, he shows that this is the truer relationship by lifting his discourse up to God. And along with this he makes it plain that this was the reward of faith that he received. Consequently, if it were not so, and he were the father of all the dwellers upon earth, the expression before (or answering to) would be out of place, while the gift of God would be curtailed. For the “before,” is equivalent to “alike with.” Since where is the marvel, pray, in a man’s being the father of those sprung from himself? This is what is every man’s lot. But the extraordinary thing is, that those whom by nature he had not, them he received by the gift of God. And so if thou wouldst believe that the patriarch was honored, believe that he is the father of all. But after saying, “before Him

Whom he believed, even God,” he does not pause here, but goes on thus; “Who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were,” so laying beforehand his foundations for discoursing upon the resurrection. And it was serviceable also to his present purpose. For if He could “quicken the dead” and bring in “those things that were not as though they were,” then could He also make those who were not born of him to be his children. And this is why he does not say, bringing in the things which are not, but calling them, so showing the greater ease of it. For as it is easy to us to call the things which are by name, so to Him it is easy, yea, and much easier to give a subsistence to things that are not. But after saying, that the gift of God was great and unspeakable, and having discoursed concerning His power, he shows farther that Abraham’s faith was deserving of the gift, that you may not suppose him to have been honored without reason. And after raising the attention of his hearers to prevent the Jew from clamoring and making doubts, and saying, “And how is it possible for those who are not children to become children?” he passes on to speak of the patriarch, and says,

Ver. 18. “Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.”

How was it that he “believed in hope against hope?” It was against man’s hope, in hope which is of God. (For he is showing the loftiness of the action, and leaving no room for disbelieving what is said.) Things which are contrary to one another, yet faith blends them together. But if he were speaking about such as were from Ishmael, this language would be superfluous: for it was not by faith but by nature that they were begotten. But he bringeth Isaac also before us. For it was not concerning those nations that he believed, but concerning him who was to be from his barren wife. If then it be a reward to be father of many nations, it would be so of those nations clearly of whom he so believed. For that you may know that he is speaking of them, listen to what follows.

Ver. 19. “And being not weak in faith, he considered his own body now dead.”

Do you see how he gives the obstacles, as well as the high spirit of the righteous man which surmounts all? “Against hope,” he says, was that which was promised: this is the first obstacle. For Abraham had no other person who had received a son in this way to look to. They that were after him looked to him, but he to no one, save to God only. And this is why he said, “against hope.” Then, “his body now dead.” This is a second. And, “the deadness of Sarah’s womb.” This is a third, aye and a fourth obstacle.

Ver. 20. “But he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief.”

For God neither gave any proof nor made any sign, but there were only bare words promising such things as nature did not hold out any hopes of. Yet still he says, “he staggered not.” He does not say, “He did not disbelieve,” but, “He staggered not,” that is, he neither doubted nor hesitated though the hindrances were so great. From this we learn, that if God promise even countless impossibilities, and he that heareth doth not receive them, it is not the nature of things that is to blame, but the unreasonableness of him who receiveth them not. “But was strong in faith.” See the pertinacity of Paul. For since this discourse was about them that work and them that believe, he shows that the believer works more than the other, and requires more power, and great strength, and sustains no common degree of labor. For they counted faith worthless, as having no labor in it. Insisting then upon this, he shows that it is not only he that succeeds in temperance, or any other virtue of this sort, but he that displays faith also who requires even greater power. For as the one needs strength to beat off the reasonings of

intemperance, so hath the faithful also need of a soul endued with power, that he may thrust aside the suggestions of unbelief. How then did he become “strong?” By trusting the matter, he replies, to faith and not to reasonings: else he had fallen. But how came he to thrive in faith itself? By giving glory to God, he says.

Ver. 21. “And being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.”

Abstaining then from curious questionings is glorifying God, as indulging in them is transgressing. But if by entering into curious questions, and searching out things below, we fail to glorify Him, much more if we be over curious in the matter of the Lord’s generation, shall we suffer to the utmost for our insolence. For if the type of the resurrection is not to be searched into, much less those unutterable and awestriving subjects. And he does not use the word “believed” merely, but, “being fully persuaded.” For such a thing is faith, it is clearer than the demonstration by reasons, and persuades more fully. For it is not possible for another reasoning succeeding to it to shake it afterwards. He indeed that is persuaded with words may have his persuasion altered too by them. But he that stays himself upon faith, hath henceforward fortified his hearing against words that may do hurt to it. Having said then, that he was justified by faith, he shows that he glorified God by that faith; which is a thing specially belonging to a good life. For, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Which is in heaven.” (Matt. v. 16) But lo! this is shown also to belong to faith! Again, as works need power, so doth faith. For in their case the body often shareth the toil, but in the faith the well-doing belongeth to the soul alone. And so the labor is greater, since it has no one to share the struggles with it. Do you observe how he shows that all that belonged to works attached to faith in a far greater degree, as having whereof to glory before God,—requiring power and labor,—and again, glorifying God? And after saying, that “what He had promised, He is able also to perform,” he seems to me to speak beforehand of things to come. For it is not things present merely that He promises, but also things to come. For the present are a type of the other. It is then a sign of a weak, little, and pitiful mind not to believe. And so when any make faith a charge against us, let us make want of faith a charge against them in return, as pitiful, and little minded, and foolish, and weak, and no better in disposition than asses. For as believing belongs to a lofty and high-born soul, so disbelieving doth to a most unreasonable and worthless one, and such as is sunken drowsily (κατενηνεγμένης) into the senselessness of brutes. Therefore having left these, let us imitate the Patriarch, and glorify God as he gave Him glory. And what does it mean, gave Him glory? He held in mind His majesty, His boundless power. And having formed a just conception of Him, he was also “fully persuaded” about His promises.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Rom. IV. 1, 2

“What shall we then say that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.””

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):1** What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.

He continues, “He had said (5 mss. εἶπεν), that the world had become guilty before God, and that all had sinned, and that boasting was excluded, and that it was impossible to be saved

otherwise than by faith.”

In regards to the fact that “all had sinned”, he refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

In regards to boasting, he refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):27** Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

In regards to the fact that it is “impossible to be saved otherwise than by faith”, he refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):28** Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. 29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: 30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. 31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

He continues, “He is now intent upon showing that this salvation, so far from being matter of shame, was even the cause of a bright glory, and a greater than that through works. For since the being saved, yet with shame, had somewhat of dejection in it, he next takes away this suspicion too. And indeed he has hinted at the same already, by calling it not barely salvation, but “righteousness. Therein” (he says) “is the righteousness of God revealed.” (Rom. i. 17)”

He refers to **Romans 1 (KJV):17** For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Chrysostom is a little unclear here. When he says, “the being saved, yet with shame, had somewhat of dejection in it”, he seems to refer to those who were saved under the law. But the just who lived by faith under the law were also saved by that same faith. But it is true that we who live under grace, and not under the law, have a greater freedom.

He continues, “For he that is saved as a righteous man has a confidence accompanying his salvation. And he calls it not “righteousness” only, but also the setting forth of the righteousness of God. But God is set forth in things which are glorious and shining, and great. However, he nevertheless draws support for this from what he is at present upon, and carries his discourse forward by the method of question. And this he is always in the habit of doing both for clearness sake, and for the sake of confidence in what is said. Above, for instance, he did it, where he says, “What advantage then hath the Jew?” (ib. iii. 1) and, “What then have we more than they? (ib. 9) and again, “where then is boasting? it is excluded” (Rom. iii. 27): and here, “what then shall we say that Abraham our father?” etc.”

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):1** What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?

And to **Romans 3 (KJV):9** What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

And to **Romans 3 (KJV):27** Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

And to **Romans 4 (KJV):1** What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

He continues, “Now since the Jews kept turning over and over the fact, that the Patriarch, and friend of God, was the first to receive circumcision, he wishes to show, that it was by faith that he too was justified. And this was quite a vantage ground to insist upon (περιουσία νίκης πολλῆς). For for a person who had no works, to be justified by faith, was nothing unlikely. But for a person richly adorned with good deeds, not to be made just from hence, but from faith, this is the thing to cause wonder, and to set the power of faith in a strong light. And this is why he passes by all the others, and leads his discourse back to this man. And he calls him “father, as pertaining to the flesh,” to throw them out of the genuine relationship (συγγενείας γνησίας) to him, and to pave the Gentiles’ way to kinsmanship with him. And then he says, “For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory: but not before God.””

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):2** For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.

He continues, “After saying that God “justified the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through faith,” and making the same sufficiently sure in what he said before, he now proves it by Abraham more clearly than he promised, and pitches the battle for faith against works, and makes this righteous man the subject of the whole struggle; and that not without special meaning.”

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):30** Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

He continues, “Wherefore also he sets him up very high by calling him “forefather,” and putting a constraint upon them to comply with him in all points. For, Tell me not, he would say, about the Jews, nor bring this man or that before me. For I will go up to the very head of all, and the source whence circumcision took its rise. For “if Abraham,” he says, “was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory: but not before God.””

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):2** For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.

He continues, “What is here said is not plain, and so one must make it plainer. For there are two “gloryings,” one of works, and one of faith. After saying then, “if he was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God;” he points out that he might have whereof to glory from faith also, yea and much greater reason for it. For the great power of Paul is especially displayed in this, that he turns what is objected to the other side, and shows that what seemed rather to be on the side of salvation by works, viz. glorying or boldness of claim (παρρησιάζεσθαι) belonged much more truly to that by faith. For he that glorieth in his works has his own labors to put forward: but he that finds his honor in having faith in God, has a much greater ground for glorying to show, in that it is God that he glorifieth and magnifieth. For those things which the nature of the visible world tells him not of, in receiving these by faith in Him, he at once displays sincere love towards Him, and heralds His power clearly forth. Now this is the character of the noblest soul, and the philosophic spirit, and lofty mind. For to abstain from stealing and murdering is trifling sort of acquirement, but to believe that it is possible for God to do things impossible requires a soul of no mean stature, and earnestly affected towards Him; for this is a sign of sincere love. For he indeed honors God, who fulfils the commandments, but he doth so in a much greater degree who thus followeth wisdom (φιλοσοφῶν) by his faith.”

But without faith it is impossible to please God, as we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):6** But

without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

He continues, “The former obeys Him, but the latter receives that opinion of Him which is fitting, and glorifies Him, and feels wonder at Him more than that evinced by works. For that glorying pertains to him that does aright, but this glorifieth God, and lieth wholly in Him. For he glorieth at conceiving great things concerning Him, which redound to His glory. And this is why he speaks of having whereof to glory before God. And not for this only, but also for another reason: for he who is a believer glorieth again, not only because he loveth God in sincerity, but also because he hath enjoyed great honor and love from him. For as he shows his love to Him by having great thoughts about Him, (for this is a proof of love), so doth God also love him, though deserving to suffer for countless sins, not in freeing him from punishment only, but even by making him righteous. He then hath whereof to glory, as having been counted worthy of mighty love.

Ver. 4. “For to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.””

He refers in context to **Romans 4 (KJV):3** For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. 4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

He continues, “Then is not this last the greatest? he means. By no means: for it is to the believer that it is reckoned. But it would not have been reckoned, unless there were something that he contributed himself. And so he too hath God for his debtor, and debtor too for no common things, but great and high ones. For to show his high-mindedness and spiritual understanding, he does not say “to him that believeth” merely, but

Ver. 5. “To him that believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly.””

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):5** But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

He continues, “For reflect how great a thing it is to be persuaded and have full confidence that God is able on a sudden not to free a man who has lived in impiety from punishment only, but even to make him just, and to count him worthy of those immortal honors. Do not then suppose that this one is lowered in that it is not reckoned unto the former of grace. For this is the very thing that makes the believer glorious; the fact of his enjoying so great grace, of his displaying so great faith. And note too that the recompense is greater. For to the former a reward is given, to the latter righteousness.”

We will be rewarded for our works of faith, but without faith, our works are worthless, as we read again in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):6** But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

He continues, “Now righteousness is much greater than a reward. For righteousness is a recompense which most fully comprehends several rewards. Therefore after proving this from Abraham, he introduces David also as giving his suffrage in favor of the statement made. What then doth David say? and whom doth he pronounce blessed? is it him that triumphs in works, or him that hath enjoyed grace? him that hath obtained pardon and a gift? And when I speak of blessedness, I mean the chiefest of all good things; for as righteousness is greater than a reward, so is blessedness greater than righteousness. Having then shown that the righteousness is better, not owing to Abraham’s having received it only but also from reasonings (for he hath whereof



to boast, he says, before God); he again uses another mode of showing that it is more dignified, by bringing David in to give his suffrage this way. For he also, he says, pronounces him blessed who is so made righteous, saying,

Ver. 7. "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven."

He refers in context to **Romans 4 (KJV):6** Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

But the Scripture is not saying that "blessedness" is "greater than righteousness", but that the man to whom "God imputeth righteousness without works" is very blessed.

Chrysostom continues, "And he seems to be bringing a testimony beside his purpose. For it does not say, Blessed are they whose faith is reckoned for righteousness. But he does so on purpose, not through inadvertency, to show the greater superiority. For if he be blessed that by grace received forgiveness, much more is he that is made just, and that exhibits faith. For where blessedness is, there all shame is removed, and there is much glory, since blessedness is a greater degree both of reward and of glory. And for this cause what is the advantage of the other he states as unwritten, "Now to him that worketh is the reward reckoned not of grace;" but what the advantage of the faithful is, he brings Scriptural testimony to prove, saying, As David saith, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered."

He refers again to **Romans 4 (KJV):6** Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

And to **Psalms 32 (KJV):1** Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

Chrysostom continues, "What, he means, is it that you say? Is it that "it is not of debt but of grace that he receives forgiveness?" But see it is this person who is pronounced blessed. For he would not have pronounced him so, unless he saw him in the enjoyment of great glory. And he does not say this "forgiveness" then comes upon the circumcision; but what saith he?

Ver. 9. "Cometh this blessedness then" (which is the greater thing) "upon the circumcision or upon the uncircumcision?"

He refers in context to **Romans 4 (KJV):8** Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. 9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

Chrysostom is skipping verses in his discourse. And he left out the word "only" in verse 9.

He continues, "For now the subject of enquiry is, With whom is this good and great thing to be found; is it with the circumcision or with the uncircumcision? And notice its superiority! For he shows that it is so far from shunning the uncircumcision, that it even dwelt gladly with it before the circumcision. For since he that pronounced it blessed was David, who was himself also in a state of circumcision, and he was speaking to those in that state, see how eagerly Paul contends for applying what he said to the uncircumcised. For after joining the ascription of blessedness to righteousness, and showing that they are one and the same thing, he enquires how Abraham came to be righteous. For if the ascription of blessedness belong to the righteous, and Abraham was made righteous, let us see how he was made righteous, as uncircumcised or

circumcised? Uncircumcised, he says.

“For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.”

After mentioning the Scripture above (for he said, “What saith the Scripture? Abraham believed in God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness,”) here he goes on to secure also the judgment of the speakers, and shows that justification took place in the uncircumcision. Then from these grounds he solves another objection which is starting up. For if when in uncircumcision, one might say he was justified, to what purpose was the circumcision brought in?

Ver. 11. “He received it,” he says, “a sign and seal of the righteousness that was by the faith, which he had being yet uncircumcised.””

He refers in context to **Romans 4 (KJV):10** How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

He continues, “See you how he shows the Jews to be as it were of the class of parasites (i.e. guests), rather than those in uncircumcision, and that these were added to the others? For if he was justified and crowned while in uncircumcision, the Jews came in afterwards, Abraham is then the father first of the uncircumcised, which through faith appertain to him, and then of those in the circumcision. For he is a forefather of two lines. See you faith lightening up? for till it came the patriarch was not justified. See you the uncircumcision offering no hindrance? for he was uncircumcised, yet was not hindered from being justified. The circumcision therefore is behind the faith. And why wonder that it is behind the faith, when it is even behind the uncircumcision.”

That is, circumcision is after faith, as it is also after uncircumcision, for Abraham was uncircumcised before he had faith, and he had faith when he was uncircumcised, and before he was circumcised.

Chrysostom continues, “Nor is it behind faith only, but very far inferior to it, even so far as the sign is to the reality of which it is the sign; for instance, as the seal is to the soldier. (Schaff Note: See Hom. iii. on 2 Cor. at the end.) And why, he says, did he want a seal then? He did not want it himself. For what purpose then did he receive it? With a view to his being the father alike of them that believe in uncircumcision and in circumcision. But not of those in circumcision absolutely: wherefore he goes on to say, “To them who are not of the circumcision only.” For if to the uncircumcised, it is not in that he is uncircumcised that he is their father, although justified in uncircumcision; but in that they imitated his faith; much less is it owing to circumcision that he is the forefather of those in the state of circumcision, unless faith also be added.”

Chrysostom understood that circumcision is only a sign of the faith which Abraham had. Yet he could not see that baptism is also only a sign “to the reality of which it is the sign”, that is, that one has had faith. We are only baptized because we believe.

He continues, “For he says that the reason of his receiving circumcision was that either of us two parties might have him for a forefather, and that those in the uncircumcision might not thrust aside those in the circumcision. See how the former had him for their forefather first. Now if the circumcision be of dignity owing to its preaching righteousness, the uncircumcision

even hath no small preeminence in having received it before the circumcision. Then wilt thou be able to have him as a forefather when thou walkest in the steps of that faith, and art not contentious, nor a causer of division in bringing in the Law. What faith? tell me.

Ver. 12. "Which he had being yet uncircumcised."

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):12** And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

He continues, "Here again he lays low the lofty spirit of the Jews by reminding them of the time of the justification. And he well says, "the steps," that you as well as Abraham may believe in the resurrection of bodies that are dead. For he also displayed his faith upon this point."

He refers to **Hebrews 11 (KJV):17** By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Abraham's faith was "displayed" when he, in obedience to God's command, went to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice, "Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead", as in verse 19 above. And the time of his justification was when he had faith, which was when he was uncircumcised, and before his son Isaac was born.

He continues, "And so if you reject the uncircumcision, be informed for certain that the circumcision is of no more use unto you. For if you follow not in the steps of his faith, though you were ten thousand times in a state of circumcision, you will not be Abraham's offspring. For even he received the circumcision for this end, that the man in a state of uncircumcision might not cast thee off. Do not then demand this of him too. For it was you whom the thing was to be an assistance to, not he. But he calls it a sign of the righteousness."

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):11** And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

He continues, "And this also was for thy sake, since now it is not even this: for thou then wert in need of bodily signs, but now there is no need of them. "And was it not possible," one might say, "from his faith to learn the goodness of his soul?" Yes, it was possible but thou stoodest in need of this addition also. For since thou didst not imitate the goodness of his soul, and wert not able to see it, a sensible circumcision was given thee, that, after having become accustomed to this of the body, thou mightest by little and little be led on to the true love of wisdom in the soul also, and that having with much seriousness received it as a very great privilege, thou mightest be instructed to imitate and revere thine ancestor. This object then had God not only in the circumcision, but in all the other rites, the sacrifices, I mean, and the sabbath, and feasts."

Chrysostom understood that there is now "no need" of "bodily signs", such as circumcision. Yet he still saw baptism as the means whereby one was regenerated. He did also see the significance of all of the laws of circumcision, and sacrifice, and sabbath, and feasts. They were all things that would lead us to faith in Christ, as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV):24** Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by

faith.

He continues, “Now that it was for thy sake that he received the circumcision, learn from the sequel. For after saying that he received a sign and a seal, he gives the reason also as follows. That he might be the father of the circumcision—to those who received the spiritual circumcision also, since if you have only this (i.e. the carnal), no farther good will come to you.”

And we read of the “spiritual circumcision” in **Romans 2 (KJV):28** For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

He continues, “For this is then a sign, when the reality of which it is the sign is found with thee, that is, faith; since if thou have not this, the sign to thee has no longer the power of a sign, for what is it to be the sign of? or what the seal of, when there is nothing to be sealed? much as if you were to show one a purse with a seal to it, when there was nothing laid up within. And so the circumcision is ridiculous if there be no faith within. For if it be a sign of righteousness, but you have not righteousness, then you have no sign either.”

Chrysostom understood that circumcision was only to be a sign that one had faith, and therefore one was justified by faith and then had righteousness. But if the circumcised had no faith, they also had no righteousness. There is not doubt that Chrysostom had the “reality”, that is, faith, within him.

He continues, “For the reason of your receiving a sign was that you might seek diligently for that reality whereof you have the sign: so that if you had been sure of diligently seeking thereafter without it, then you had not needed it. But this is not the only thing that circumcision proclaims, namely righteousness, but righteousness in even an uncircumcised man. Circumcision then does but proclaim, that there is no need of circumcision.

Ver. 14. “For if they which are of the Law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.””

He refers in context to **Romans 4 (KJV):13** For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

We continue, “(**Schaff Note:** According to vv. 14–17, the promise cannot be through the law because that would annul faith and destroy the promise entirely (14). The principle of law is *quid pro quo* and on that basis alone there is no room for faith and promise. Claim, debt and reward, are the ideas which stand on the plane of law. Justification by law would imply no act of trust, obedience or gracious promise, but would be matter of reward simply. But since man is a sinner, it is inconceivable that he be justified on this basis, and the gospel of a gracious salvation is the only hope. To reject the latter is to exclude the possibility of any salvation whatever. Only by clinging to the Gospel can the Jew find any ground of hope in the ancient promises and covenants.—G.B.S.)”

Quid pro quo means “something given or received for something else”.  
(**Merriam Webster**)

We can agree with G.B.S. here.

Chrysostom continues, “He had shown that faith is necessary, that it is older than

circumcision, that it is more mighty than the Law, that it establisheth the Law. For if all sinned, it was necessary: if one being uncircumcised was justified, it is older: if the knowledge of sin is by the Law and yet it was without the Law made evident, it is more mighty: if it has testimony borne to it by the Law, and establisheth the Law, it is not opposed to it, but friendly and allied to it. Again, he shows upon other grounds too that it was not even possible by the Law to attain to the inheritance, and after having matched it with the circumcision, and gained it the victory, he brings it besides into contrast with the Law in these words, “For if they which are of the Law be heirs, faith is made void.” To prevent them anyone from saying that one may have faith and also keep up the Law, he shows this to be impracticable. For he that clings to the Law, as if of saving force, does disparagement to faith’s power; and so he says, “faith is made void,” that is, there is no need of salvation by grace.”

Chrysostom has stated correctly that, “he that clings to the Law, as if of saving force, does disparagement to faith’s power”. The true force of the law is to show us our need of grace.

He continues, “For then it cannot show forth its own proper power; “and the promise is made of none effect.” This is because the Jew might say, What need have I of faith? If then this held, the things that were promised, would be taken away along with faith. See how in all points he combats with them from the early times and from the Patriarch. For having shown from thence that righteousness and faith went together in the inheritance, he now shows that the promise did likewise. For to prevent the Jew from saying, What matters it to me if Abraham was justified by faith? Paul says, neither can what you are interested with, the promise of the inheritance, come into effect apart from it: which was what scared them most. But what promise is he speaking of? That of his being “the heir of the world,” and that in him all should be blessed. And how does he say that this promise is made of none effect?

Ver. 15. “Because the Law worketh wrath: for where no Law is, there is no transgression.””

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):15** Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

He continues, “Now if it worketh wrath, and renders them liable for transgression, it is plain that it makes them so to a curse also. But they that are liable under a curse, and punishments, and transgression, are not worthy of inheriting, but of being punished and rejected. What then happens? faith comes, drawing on it the grace, so that the promise comes into effect. For where grace is, there is a remitting, and where remitting is, there is no punishment. Punishment then being removed, and righteousness succeeding from faith, there is no obstacle to our becoming heirs of the promise.

Ver. 16. “Therefore it is of faith,” he says, “that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.””

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):16** Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

He continues, “You see that it is not the Law only that faith establisheth, but the promise of God also that it will not allow to fall to the ground. But the Law, on the other hand, by being kept to unseasonably, makes even the faith of none effect, and hindereth the promise. By this he shows that faith, so far from being superfluous, is even necessary to that degree, that without it there is no being saved.”

And we read again in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):6** But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

He continues, “For the Law worketh wrath, as all have transgressed it. But this doth not even suffer wrath to arise at all: for “where no Law is,” he says, “there is no transgression.” Do you see how he not only does away with sin after it has existed, but does not even allow it to be produced? And this is why he says “by grace.” For what end? Not with a view to their being put to shame, but to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed. Here he lays down two blessings, both that the things given are sure, and also that they are to all the seed, so gathering in those of the Gentiles, and showing that the Jews are without, if they contend against the faith. For this is a surer thing than that. For faith doeth thee no hurt (be not contentious), but even now thou art in danger from the Law, it preserves thee. Next having said, “to all the seed,” he defines what seed he meaneth. That which is of faith, he says, so blending with it their relationship to the Gentiles, and showing that they must not be proud of Abraham who do not believe as he did. And see a third thing which faith effected besides. It makes the relationship to that righteous man more definite (ἀκρι βεστέραν), and holds him up as the ancestor of a more numerous issue. And this is why he does not say merely Abraham, but “our father,” ours who believe. Then he also seals what he has said by the testimony—

Ver. 17. “As it is written,” he says, “I have made thee a father of many nations.””

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):17** (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

He continues, “Do you observe that this was ordered by Providence from of old? What then, he means, does He say this on account of the Ishmaelites, or of the Amalekites, or of the Hagarenes? This however, as he goes on he proves more distinctly not to be said of these. But as yet he presses forward to another point, by which means he proves this very thing by defining the mode of the relationship, and establishing it with a vast reach of mind. What then does he say?

“Before (or, answering to, κατέναντι) Him Whom he believed, even God.”

But his meaning is something of this sort, as God is not the God of a part, but the Father of all, so is he also. And again, as God is a father not by way of the relationship of nature, but by way of the affiancing of faith, so is he also inasmuch as it is obedience that makes him father of us all.”

The word “affiance” means, “to solemnly promise (oneself or another) in marriage : BETROTH”. (**Merriam Webster**)

So we could say that “the affiancing of faith” was the marriage of faith, relating to our commitment to be in relationship with God.

But when he says, “God is a father not by way of the relationship of nature”, we see that he does not understand the Biblical truth about regeneration. It is not just a matter of faith, as if it were like a commitment in marriage, for we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

When we “believe on his name”, we are born of God, and He becomes our Father, for

our spirit is given birth by the Holy Spirit, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):8** The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

We receive eternal life in our spirit by this birth, and we receive a new divine nature by this birth, as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Chrysostom continues, “For since they thought nothing of this relationship, as clinging to that grosser one, he shows that this is the truer relationship by lifting his discourse up to God. And along with this he makes it plain that this was the reward of faith that he received. Consequently, if it were not so, and he were the father of all the dwellers upon earth, the expression before (or answering to) would be out of place, while the gift of God would be curtailed. For the “before,” is equivalent to “alike with.” Since where is the marvel, pray, in a man’s being the father of those sprung from himself? This is what is every man’s lot. But the extraordinary thing is, that those whom by nature he had not, them he received by the gift of God. And so if thou wouldest believe that the patriarch was honored, believe that he is the father of all. But after saying, “before Him Whom he believed, even God,” he does not pause here, but goes on thus; “Who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were,” so laying beforehand his foundations for discoursing upon the resurrection. And it was serviceable also to his present purpose. For if He could “quicken the dead” and bring in “those things that were not as though they were,” then could He also make those who were not born of him to be his children. And this is why he does not say, bringing in the things which are not, but calling them, so showing the greater ease of it. For as it is easy to us to call the things which are by name, so to Him it is easy, yea, and much easier to give a subsistence to things that are not. But after saying, that the gift of God was great and unspeakable, and having discoursed concerning His power, he shows farther that Abraham’s faith was deserving of the gift, that you may not suppose him to have been honored without reason. And after raising the attention of his hearers to prevent the Jew from clamoring and making doubts, and saying, “And how is it possible for those who are not children to become children?” he passes on to speak of the patriarch, and says,

Ver. 18. “Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.””

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):18** Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

He continues, “How was it that he “believed in hope against hope?” It was against man’s hope, in hope which is of God. (For he is showing the loftiness of the action, and leaving no room for disbelieving what is said.) Things which are contrary to one another, yet faith blends them together. But if he were speaking about such as were from Ishmael, this language would be superfluous: for it was not by faith but by nature that they were begotten. But he bringeth Isaac also before us. For it was not concerning those nations that he believed, but concerning him who was to be from his barren wife. If then it be a reward to be father of many nations, it would be so of those nations clearly of whom he so believed. For that you may know that he is speaking of them, listen to what follows.

Ver. 19. “And being not weak in faith, he considered his own body now dead.””

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):19** And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb:

He continues, "Do you see how he gives the obstacles, as well as the high spirit of the righteous man which surmounts all? "Against hope," he says, was that which was promised: this is the first obstacle. For Abraham had no other person who had received a son in this way to look to. They that were after him looked to him, but he to no one, save to God only. And this is why he said, "against hope." Then, "his body now dead." This is a second. And, "the deadness of Sarah's womb." This is a third, aye and a fourth obstacle.

Ver. 20. "But he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief."

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):20** He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

He continues, "For God neither gave any proof nor made any sign, but there were only bare words promising such things as nature did not hold out any hopes of. Yet still he says, "he staggered not." He does not say, "He did not disbelieve," but, "He staggered not," that is, he neither doubted nor hesitated though the hindrances were so great. From this we learn, that if God promise even countless impossibilities, and he that heareth doth not receive them, it is not the nature of things that is to blame, but the unreasonableness of him who receiveth them not. "But was strong in faith." See the pertinacity of Paul. For since this discourse was about them that work and them that believe, he shows that the believer works more than the other, and requires more power, and great strength, and sustains no common degree of labor. For they counted faith worthless, as having no labor in it. Insisting then upon this, he shows that it is not only he that succeeds in temperance, or any other virtue of this sort, but he that displays faith also who requires even greater power. For as the one needs strength to beat off the reasonings of intemperance, so hath the faithful also need of a soul endued with power, that he may thrust aside the suggestions of unbelief. How then did he become "strong?" By trusting the matter, he replies, to faith and not to reasonings: else he had fallen. But how came he to thrive in faith itself? By giving glory to God, he says.

Ver. 21. "And being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform."

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):21** And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

He continues, "Abstaining then from curious questionings is glorifying God, as indulging in them is transgressing. But if by entering into curious questions, and searching out things below, we fail to glorify Him, much more if we be over curious in the matter of the Lord's generation, shall we suffer to the utmost for our insolence. For if the type of the resurrection is not to be searched into, much less those unutterable and awestrking subjects. And he does not use the word "believed" merely, but, "being fully persuaded." For such a thing is faith, it is clearer than the demonstration by reasons, and persuades more fully. For it is not possible for another reasoning succeeding to it to shake it afterwards. He indeed that is persuaded with words may have his persuasion altered too by them. But he that stays himself upon faith, hath henceforward fortified his hearing against words that may do hurt to it. Having said then, that he was justified by faith, he shows that he glorified God by that faith; which is a thing specially belonging to a good life. For, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good



works, and glorify your Father Which is in heaven.” (Matt. v. 16)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):16** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

He continues, “But lo! this is shown also to belong to faith! Again, as works need power, so doth faith. For in their case the body often shareth the toil, but in the faith the well-doing belongeth to the soul alone. And so the labor is greater, since it has no one to share the struggles with it. Do you observe how he shows that all that belonged to works attached to faith in a far greater degree, as having whereof to glory before God,—requiring power and labor,—and again, glorifying God?”

But we must remember that the works that glorify God are the ones He has ordained for us to do, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We are to walk in them, that is, the good works He has ordained for us to do. And we must remember Jesus’ words in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

As we abide in Him, and His words abide in us, we find freedom from the burdens of this life, as we read in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Serving Him is a joyful thing, even in trials, as we read in **James 1 (KJV):2** My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

He continues, “And after saying, that “what He had promised, He is able also to perform,” he seems to me to speak beforehand of things to come. For it is not things present merely that He promises, but also things to come. For the present are a type of the other. It is then a sign of a weak, little, and pitiful mind not to believe. And so when any make faith a charge against us, let us make want of faith a charge against them in return, as pitiful, and little minded, and foolish, and weak, and no better in disposition than asses. For as believing belongs to a lofty and high-born soul, so disbelieving doth to a most unreasonable and worthless one, and such as is sunken drowsily (κατενηνεγμένης) into the senselessness of brutes. Therefore having left these, let us imitate the Patriarch, and glorify God as he gave Him glory. And what does it mean, gave Him glory? He held in mind His majesty, His boundless power. And having formed a just conception of Him, he was also “fully persuaded” about His promises.”

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY IX, page 395-399**

“Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him for righteousness; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.”

After saying many great things of Abraham, and his faith, and righteousness, and honor before God, lest the hearer should say, What is this to us, for it is he that was justified? he places us close to the Patriarch again. So great is the power of spiritual words. For of one of the Gentiles, one who was recently come near, one who had done no work, he not only says that he is in nothing inferior to the Jew who believes (i.e. as a Jew), but not even to the Patriarch, but rather, if one must give utterance to the wondrous truth, even much greater. For so noble is our birth, that his faith is but the type of ours. And he does not say, If it was reckoned unto him, it is probable it will be also to us, that he might not make it matter of syllogism. But he speaks in authentic words of the divine law, and makes the whole a declaration of the Scripture. For why was it written, he says, save to make us see that we also were justified in this way? For it is the same God Whom we have believed, and upon the same matters, if it be not in the case of the same persons. And after speaking of our faith, he also mentions God's unspeakable love towards man, which he ever presents on all sides, bringing the Cross before us. And this he now makes plain by saying,

Ver. 25. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

See how after mentioning the cause of His death, he makes the same cause likewise a demonstration of the resurrection. For why, he means, was He crucified? Not for any sin of His own. And this is plain from the Resurrection. For why, he means, was He crucified? Not for any sin of His own. And this is plain from the Resurrection. For if He were a sinner, how should He have risen? But if He rose, it is quite plain that He was not a sinner. But (**Schaff Note:** If a fresh argument commences here, there is no vicious circle. For there was independent proof of each proposition, and so, when shown to involve one another, they were mutually confirmed.) if He was not a sinner, how came He to be crucified?—For others,—and if for others, then surely he rose again. Now to prevent your saying, How, when liable for so great sins, came we to be justified? he points out One that blotteth out all sins, that both from Abraham's faith, whereby he was justified, and from the Saviour's Passion, whereby we were freed from our sins, he might confirm what he had said. And after mentioning His Death, he speaks also of His Resurrection. For the purpose of His dying was not that He might hold us liable to punishment and in condemnation, but that He might do good unto us. For for this cause He both died and rose again, that He might make us righteous.

Chap. v. ver. 1. "Therefore being justified by faith, let us (**Schaff Note:** So nearly all mss. here; and there is good authority for the reading in the text of the N.T. both from mss., versions, and Fathers. It is accepted by Tregelles: Tischendorf retains the received text "we have." The text of Chrys. adds confirmation to the strongly attested ἔχωμεν (so & A. B. C. D.) as against the reading (ἔχομεν) of the T.R. Strong and clear as is the external evidence here, it is to me very doubtful whether it is not overborne by the internal evidence. There seems to be no appropriateness in an exhortation here. The thought has been developed in a didactic form thus far and we should now expect a didactic conclusion (οὖν). Nor should we expect an exhortation to have peace with God which would be the natural consequence of justification and scarcely the proper object of an exhortation. De Wette, Meyer, Godet and Weiss reject the better authenticated reading ἔχωμεν on these grounds. It is difficult to see how Chrys. can think that the Apostle is here treating of our "Conversation"—when he proceeds at once to enumerate the new comfort, patience and hope which follow from justification.—G.B.S.) have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

What does “Let us have peace” mean? Some say, “Let us not be at variance, through a peevish obstinacy for bringing in the Law.” But to me he seems to be speaking now of our conversation. For after having said much on the subject of faith, he had set it before righteousness which is by works, to prevent any one from supposing what he said was a ground for listlessness, he says, “let us have peace,” that is, let us sin no more, nor go back to our former estate. For this is making war with God. And “how is it possible,” saith one, “to sin no more?” How (**Schaff Note:** 3 mss. If thou wilt consider how, etc.) was the former thing possible? For if when liable for so many sins we were freed from all by Christ, much more shall we be able through Him to abide in the estate wherein we are. For it is not the same thing to receive peace when there had been none, and to keep it when it has been given, since to acquire surely is harder than to keep. Yet nevertheless the more difficult hath been made easy, and carried out into effect. That which is the easier thing then will be what we shall easily succeed in, if we cling to Him who hath wrought even the other for us. But here it is not the easiness only which he seems to me to hint at, but the reasonableness. For if He reconciled us when we were in open war with Him, it is reasonable that we should abide in a state of reconciliation, (**Schaff Note:** Or perhaps “by the terms of reconciliation,” for so the text may be understood. The reading in Savile’s margin, τοῖς καταλλαγεῖσι, seems also to bear the same sense.) and give unto Him this reward for that He may not seem to have reconciled untoward and unfeeling creatures to the Father.

Ver. 2. “By Whom also we have access,” he says, “by faith unto this grace. (**Schaff Note:** 7 mss. add, unto, etc.)

If then He hath brought us near to Himself, when we were far off, much more will He keep us now that we are near. And let me beg you to consider how he everywhere sets down these two points; His part, and our part. On His part, however, there be things varied and numerous and diverse. For He died for us, and farther reconciled us, and brought us to Himself, and gave us grace unspeakable. But we brought faith only as our contribution. And so he says, “by faith, unto this grace.” What grace is this? tell me. It is the being counted worthy of the knowledge of God, the being forced from error, the coming to a knowledge of the Truth, the obtaining of all the blessings that come through Baptism. For the end of His bringing us near was that we might receive these gifts. For it was not only that we might have simple remission of sins, that we were reconciled; but that we might receive also countless benefits. Nor did He even pause at these, but promised others, namely, those unutterable blessings that pass understanding alike and language. And this is why he has set them both down also. For by mentioning grace he clearly points at what we have at present received, but by saying, “And we rejoice in hope of the glory of God,” he unveils the whole of things to come. And he had well said, “wherein also we stand.” For this is the nature of God’s grace. It hath no end, it knows no bound, but evermore is on the advance to greater things, which in human things is not the case. Take an instance of what I mean. A person has acquired rule and glory and authority, yet he does not stand therein continuously, but is speedily cast out of it. Or if man take it not from him, death comes, and is sure to take it from him. But God’s gifts are not of this kind; for neither man, nor occasion, nor crisis of affairs, nor even the Devil, nor death, can come and cast us out of them. But when we are dead we then more strictly speaking have possession of them, and keep going on enjoying more and more. And so if thou feel in doubt about those to come; from those now present, and what thou hast already received, believe in the other also. For this is

why he says, “And we rejoice (καυχώμεθα) in hope of the glory of God,” that you may learn, what kind of soul the faithful ought to have. For it is not only for what hath been given, but for what is to be given, that we ought to be filled with confidingness, as though it were already given. For one “rejoices” in what is already given. Since then the hope of things to come is even as sure and clear as that of what is given, he says that in that too we in like manner “rejoice.” For this cause also he called them glory. For if it contributeth unto God’s glory, come to pass it certainly will, though it do not for our sakes, yet for Him it will. And why am I saying (he means) that the blessings to come are worthy of being gloried in (καυχήσεως)? Why even the very evils of this time present are able to brighten up our countenances, and make us find in them even our repose. Wherefore also he added,

Ver. 3. “And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also.”

Now, consider how great the things to come are, when even at things that seem to be distressful we can be elated; so great is God’s gift, and such a nothing any distastefulness in them! For in the case of external goods, the struggle for them brings trouble and pain and irksomeness along with it; and it is the crowns and rewards that carry the pleasure with them. But in this case it is not so, for the wrestlings have to us no less relish than the rewards.

For since there were sundry temptations in those days, and the kingdom existed in hopes, the terrors were at hand, but the good things in expectation, and this unnerved the feebler sort, even before the crowns he gives them the prize now, by saying that we should “glory even in tribulations.” And what he says is not “you should glory,” but we glory, giving them encouragement in his own person. Next since what he had said had an appearance of being strange and paradoxical, if a person who is struggling in famine, and is in chains and torments, and insulted, and abused, ought to glory, he next goes on to confirm it. And (what is more), he says they are worthy of being gloried in, not only for the sake of those things to come, but for the things present in themselves. For tribulations are in their own selves a goodly thing. How so? It is because they anoint us unto patient abiding. Wherefore after saying we glory in tribulations, he has added the reason, in these words, “Knowing that tribulation worketh patience.” Notice again the argumentative spirit of Paul, how he gives their argument an opposite turn. For since it was tribulations above all that made them give up the hopes of things to come, and which cast them into despondency, he says that these are the very reasons for confidingness, and for not desponding about the things to come, for “tribulation,” he says, “worketh patience.”

Ver. 4, 5. “And patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed.” (**Schaff Note:** The word rendered “patience,” (ὕπομονή) means rather patient endurance, constancy. It is active rather than passive in meaning. Then the endurance which is developed under tribulation helps to form a tried, tested character, Δοκιμή means a tested state—approved character. The R.V. renders “probation,” which is more nearly correct than “experience” (A.V.). We have no word which makes a felicitous translation. The meaning is that steadfastness under trials develops a tested moral manhood, and this kind of character begets hope; it takes away fear for what the future may bring.—G.B.S.)

Tribulations, that is, are so far from confuting these hopes, that they even prove them. For before the things to come are realized, there is a very great fruit which tribulation hath—patience; (**Schaff Note:** We do not see what use patience will be of in a future state, cf. Butler’s *Anal.* part i. c. v. §4) and the making of the man that is tried, experienced. And it contributes in

some degree too to the things to come, (**Schaff Note:** That such is the power of conscience even in a heathen is plain from Plato, *Rep.* 1. §5. Steph. p. 350. e. “For you must know, Socrates,” said he, “that when a man is near the time when he must expect to die, there comes into his mind a fear and anxiety about things that were never so thought of before. For the stories that are told of things in Hades, how a man that has done wrong here must satisfy justice for it there, which have hitherto been laughed at, come then to perplex his soul with alarms that they may be true. And even of himself, whether from the infirmity of age, or in that he is in a manner already nearer to that state, he sees somewhat more of it. However it be, he becomes full of suspicion and alarm; and takes account and considers whether he has at all wronged any one. And then a man who finds a number of guilty actions in his life is often roused by alarm from his sleep, like children, and lives ever in expectation of misery. But one who is conscious in himself of no wrong has a pleasing hope ever with him, as the kind nurse of his old age, as Pindar too says. For beautifully indeed, Socrates, has he expressed this, that whoever has passed his life in justice and holiness, Sweet Hope, best helpmate of the heart, With cheerful tenderness, Soothes his declining years. She whom we mortals trust In many an anxious doubt To sway life’s wavering helm. Well said indeed! one wonders to think how well,” etc.) for it gives hope a vigor within us, since there is nothing that so inclines a man to hope for blessings as a good conscience. Now no man that has lived an upright life is unconfiding about things to come, as of those who have been negligent there are many that, feeling the burden of a bad conscience, wish there were neither judgment nor retribution. What then? do our goods lie in hopes? Yes, in hopes—but not mere human hopes, which often slip away, and put him that hoped to shame; when some one, who was expected to patronize him, dies, or is altered though he lives. No such lot is ours: our hope is sure and unmoveable. For He Who hath made the promise ever liveth, and we that are to be the enjoyers of it, even should we die, shall rise again, and there is absolutely nothing which can put us to shame, as having been elated at random, and to no purpose, upon unsound hopes. Having then sufficiently cleared them of all doubtfulness by these words of his, he does not let his discourse pause at the time present, but urges again the time to come, knowing that there were men of weaker character, who looked too for present advantages, and were not satisfied with these mentioned. And so he offers a proof for them in blessings already given. For lest any should say, But what if God be unwilling to give them to us? For that He can, and that He abideth and liveth, we all know: but how do we know, that He is willing, also, to do it? From the things which have been done already. “What things done?” The Love which He hath shown for us. In doing what? some may say. In giving the Holy Ghost. Wherefore after saying “hope maketh not ashamed,” he goes on to the proof of this, as follows:

“Because the love of God is,” he does not say “given,” but “shed abroad in our hearts,” so showing the profusion of it. That gift then, which is the greatest possible, He hath given; not heaven and earth and sea, but what is more precious than any of these, and hath rendered us Angels from being men, yea sons of God, and brethren of Christ. But what is this gift? The Holy Spirit. Now had He not been willing to present us after our labors with great crowns, He would never have given us such mighty gifts before our labors. But now the warmth of His Love is hence made apparent, that it is not gradually and little by little that He honors us; but He hath shed abroad the full fountain of His blessings, and this too before our struggles. And so, if thou art not exceedingly worthy, despond not, since thou hast that Love of thy Judge as a mighty pleader for thee. For this is why he himself by saying, “hope maketh not ashamed,” has

ascribed everything not to our well-doings, but to God's love. But after mentioning the gift of the Spirit, he again passes to the Cross, speaking as follows:

Ver. 6–8. "For while we were yet without strength, Christ in due time died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. (**Schaff Note:** Meyer and Weiss make no distinction between δικαίου and ἀγαθοῦ here. Most have held (I think, rightly) that the latter expresses more than the former. It comprehends those qualities of benevolence, kindness, etc., which may be considered as the peculiar bonds of friendship and would lead to the greatest sacrifices. Holman, Godet and Weiss (following Jerome) take τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ as neuter. J. Müller supposes it to refer to God. The force of the argument is: For an upright man one would hardly be moved to die, but in the case of a benefactor to whom one owed much, the motives of love and pity might move one strongly enough to lead him to summon up the resolution (τολμῆ) to die, but this would be the highest and a very improbable reach of human love. But Christ died for his *enemies*, etc.—G.B.S.) But God commendeth His love towards us."

Now what he is saying is somewhat of this kind. For if for a virtuous man, no one would hastily choose to die, consider thy Master's love, when it is not for virtuous men, but for sinners and enemies that He is seen to have been crucified—which he says too after this, "In that, if when we were sinners Christ died for us,"

Ver. 9, 10. "Much more then, being now justified by His Blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

And what he has said looks indeed like tautology, but it is not to any one who accurately attends to it. Consider then. He wishes to give them reasons for confidence respecting things to come. And first he gives them a sense of shame from the righteous man's decision, when he says, that he also "was fully persuaded that what God had promised He was able also to perform;" and next from the grace that was given; then from the tribulation, as sufficing to lead us into hopes; and again from the Spirit, whom we have received. Next from death, and from our former viciousness, he maketh this good. And it seems indeed, as I said, that what he had mentioned was one thing, but it is discovered to be two, three, and even many more. First, that "He died:" second, that it was "for the ungodly;" third, that He "reconciled, saved, justified" us, made us immortal, made us sons and heirs. It is not from His Death then only, he says, that we draw strong assertions, but from the gift which was given unto us through His Death. And indeed if He had died only for such creatures as we be, a proof of the greatest love would what He had done be! but when He is seen at once dying, and yielding us a gift, and that such a gift, and to such creatures, what was done casts into shade our highest conceptions, and leads the very dullest on to faith. For there is no one else that will save us, except He Who so loved us when we were sinners, as even to give Himself up for us. Do you see what a ground this topic affords for hope? For before this there were two difficulties in the way of our being saved; our being sinners, and our salvation requiring the Lord's Death, a thing which was quite incredible before it took place, and required exceeding love for it to take place. But now since this hath come about, the other requisites are easier. For we have become friends, and there is no further need of Death. Shall then He who hath so spared his enemies as not to spare His Son, fail to defend them now they are become friends, when He hath no longer any need to give up his Son? For it is either because a person does not wish it, or because though he may wish it

perhaps, (**Schaff Note:** *πολλάκις*, Heind. ad Plat. *Phaed.* p. 140, §12.) yet he is unable to do it, that he does not save. Now none of these things can be said of God. For that He is willing is plain from His having given up His Son. (**Schaff Note:** So Field, from one ms. and Brixius' version: the old reading could only mean "Now none of these things can be said of God, considering He hath given up.") But that He is able also is the very thing He proved likewise, from the very fact of His having justified men who were sinners. What is there then to prevent us any more from obtaining the things to come? Nothing! Then again, lest upon hearing of sinners, and enemies, and strengthless ones, and ungodly, thou shouldest be inclined to feel abashed and blush; hear what he says.

Ver. 11. "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the atonement."

What meaneth the "not only so?" Not only were we saved, he means, but we even glory (**Schaff Note:** Same word as joy. See v. 2, etc) for this very reason, for which some suppose we ought to hide our faces. For, for us who lived in so great wickedness to be saved, was a very great mark of our being exceedingly beloved by Him that saved us. For it was not by angels or archangels, but by His Only-begotten Son Himself, that He saved us. And so the fact of His saving us, and saving us too when we were in such plight, and doing it by means of His Only-begotten, and not merely by His Only-begotten, but by His Blood, weaves for us endless crowns to glory in. For there is not anything that counts so much in the way of glory and confidence, as the being treated as friends (*φιλεῖσθαι*) by God, and finding a Friend (*φιλεῖν*) in Him that loveth (*ἀγαπῶντα*) us. This it is that maketh the angels glorious, and the principalities and powers. This is greater than the Kingdom, and so Paul placed it above the Kingdom. For this also I count the incorporeal powers blessed, because they love Him, and in all things obey Him. And on this score the Prophet also expressed his admiration at them. "Ye that excel in strength, that fulfil His Word." (Ps. ciii. 20) And hence too Isaiah extolleth the Seraphim, setting forth their great excellency from their standing near that glory, which is a sign of the greatest love.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him for righteousness; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead."

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):**23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

He continues, "After saying many great things of Abraham, and his faith, and righteousness, and honor before God, lest the hearer should say, What is this to us, for it is he that was justified? he places us close to the Patriarch again. So great is the power of spiritual words. For of one of the Gentiles, one who was recently come near, one who had done no work, he not only says that he is in nothing inferior to the Jew who believes (i.e. as a Jew), but not even to the Patriarch, but rather, if one must give utterance to the wondrous truth, even much greater. For so noble is our birth, that his faith is but the type of ours. And he does not say, If it was reckoned unto him, it is probable it will be also to us, that he might not make it matter of syllogism."

A "syllogism" is "a deductive scheme of a formal argument consisting of a major and a minor premise and a conclusion (as in "every virtue is laudable; kindness is a virtue;



therefore kindness is laudable"; a subtle, specious, or crafty argument)". (Merriam Webster)

He continues, "But he speaks in authentic words of the divine law, and makes the whole a declaration of the Scripture. For why was it written, he says, save to make us see that we also were justified in this way? For it is the same God Whom we have believed, and upon the same matters, if it be not in the case of the same persons."

And we can say, "Amen". Chrysostom has spoken the truth here.

He continues, "And after speaking of our faith, he also mentions God's unspeakable love towards man, which he ever presents on all sides, bringing the Cross before us. And this he now makes plain by saying,

Ver. 25. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

See how after mentioning the cause of His death, he makes the same cause likewise a demonstration of the resurrection. For why, he means, was He crucified? Not for any sin of His own. And this is plain from the Resurrection. For if He were a sinner, how should He have risen? But if He rose, it is quite plain that He was not a sinner. (**Schaff Note:** If a fresh argument commences here, there is no vicious circle. For there was independent proof of each proposition, and so, when shown to involve one another, they were mutually confirmed.)"

And yes, it is as Chrysostom has shown. The cause of His death, or reason for His death, is the same as the cause of His resurrection, or reason for His resurrection. That is, they were both for "our justification".

Chrysostom continues, "But if He was not a sinner, how came He to be crucified?—For others,—and if for others, then surely he rose again. Now to prevent your saying, How, when liable for so great sins, came we to be justified? he points out One that blotteth out all sins, that both from Abraham's faith, whereby he was justified, and from the Saviour's Passion, whereby we were freed from our sins, he might confirm what he had said. And after mentioning His Death, he speaks also of His Resurrection. For the purpose of His dying was not that He might hold us liable to punishment and in condemnation, but that He might do good unto us. For for this cause He both died and rose again, that He might make us righteous."

And again we can say, "Amen". Jesus "both died and rose again, that He might make us righteous."

He continues, "Chap. v. ver. 1. "Therefore being justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.""

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Schaff now explains that the words of Chrysostom, "let us have peace", as he has written them from this verse in the format of an exhortation, have validity, as we continue, "**(Schaff Note:** So nearly all mss. here; and there is good authority for the reading in the text of the N.T. both from mss., versions, and Fathers. It is accepted by Tregelles: Tischendorf retains the received text "we have." The text of Chrys. adds confirmation to the strongly attested ἔχωμεν (so & A. B. C. D.) as against the reading (ἔχομεν) of the T.R. Strong and clear as is the external evidence here, it is to me very doubtful whether it is not overborne by the internal evidence. There seems to be no appropriateness in an exhortation here. The thought has been developed in a didactic form thus far and we should now expect a didactic conclusion (οὖν). Nor should we expect an exhortation to have peace with God which would be the natural consequence of justification and scarcely the proper object of an exhortation. De Wette, Meyer, Godet and



Weiss reject the better authenticated reading ἔχομενον on these grounds. It is difficult to see how Chrys. can think that the Apostle is here treating of our “Conversation”—when he proceeds at once to enumerate the new comfort, patience and hope which follow from justification.—G.B.S.)

And I agree with G.B.S that the “internal evidence” for the indicative form of the Greek verb (ἔχομεν), meaning “we have”, is compelling, for when we examine the words, “being justified”, as it is translated in the **King James Version**, we note that the actual Greek word is **δικαιοθέντες** (pronounced de-ki-o-thentes), which is a verb in the Aorist, Passive, Plural, Participle, in the Nominative Case, of the Greek word **δικαίω** (pronounced de-ki-o'-o), from G1342; to render (i.e. show or regard as) just or innocent:—free, justify(-ier), be righteous. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1344**

And this Greek word is a derivative of **δίκαιος** (pronounced de'-ki-os), from G1349; equitable (in character or act); by implication, innocent, holy (absolutely or relatively):—just, meet, right(-eous). **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1342**

Therefore the correct translation is as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,...

So we should understand that our justification was not “being” done when we had faith in Jesus Christ, but it has absolutely been done when we believed in Jesus Christ. When God saw our faith, He justified us. That is, He declared us to be righteous, and put His very own righteousness down to our account, as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Now we note that the word translated “Being justified” in Romans 3:24 above, in the Greek, is **δικαιούμενοι** (pronounced de-ki-oo'-men-oi), which is a verb in the Present, Passive, Plural, Participle in the Nominative Case, of the Greek word **δικαίω** (pronounced de-ki-o'-o), from G1342, which is the same Greek verb in Romans 5:1. But in this verse it is in the Present tense. In Romans 5:1 this same Greek word is in the Aorist tense, which is the Past tense in the Greek. So in Romans 5:1 it must be translated “having been justified”, whereas here in Romans 3:24 it should be translated “Being justified”, just as it has been translated in the **King James Version** above. But in Romans 3:24, it refers to the current justification that God was doing when one came to faith in Jesus Christ.

Now we read also in **Titus 3 (KJV):7** That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

The word here translated “being justified” in the Greek is the same Greek word as in Romans 5:1, and in Romans 3:24. But in Romans 3:24 the verb is in the Present tense, whereas here in Titus 3:7, it is in the same Aorist tense as in Romans 5:1, and should be translated as in **Titus 3 (NKJV):7** that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

This again points to the fact that justification by God of the believing sinner happens when we believe in Jesus Christ. This is when God puts His very own righteousness down to the account of the one who believes.

Chrysostom continues, “What does “Let us have peace” mean? Some say, “Let us not be at variance, through a peevish obstinacy for bringing in the Law.” But to me he seems to be speaking now of our conversation. For after having said much on the subject of faith, he had set it before righteousness which is by works, to prevent any one from supposing what he said was a ground for listlessness, he says, “let us have peace,” that is, let us sin no more, nor go back to our former estate. For this is making war with God. And “how is it possible,” saith one, “to sin no more?” How (**Schaff Note:** 3 mss. If thou wilt consider how, etc.) was the former thing possible? For if when liable for so many sins we were freed from all by Christ, much more shall we be able through Him to abide in the estate wherein we are. For it is not the same thing to receive peace when there had been none, and to keep it when it has been given, since to acquire surely is harder than to keep.”

And now we see the significance of the **Schaff Note** above, concerning Romans 5:1, about the “appropriateness” of “an exhortation” here. While some Greek manuscripts might have the verb form in the hortatory subjunctive making it an exhortation, the “internal evidence” for the indicative outweighs this verb form. We also read as in **Romans 5 (NKJV):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The **New King James Version** also has a Footnote about the word “peace” in verse 1 which says, “Some ancient mss. *let us have*”.

But it is because we have been justified, that we have peace with God. We have a standing as righteous ones. This, and the fact that when we are born again we receive a new divine nature in our spirit, is the basis of our peace with God. Our state, which is the condition of our soul at any given point in time, is a work in progress. Our soul, which is our mind, will, heart, emotions, and conscience, is being progressively sanctified. Chrysostom did not have this understanding.

Chrysostom continues, “Yet nevertheless the more difficult hath been made easy, and carried out into effect. That which is the easier thing then will be what we shall easily succeed in, if we cling to Him who hath wrought even the other for us. But here it is not the easiness only which he seems to me to hint at, but the reasonableness. For if He reconciled us when we were in open war with Him, it is reasonable that we should abide in a state of reconciliation, (**Schaff Note:** Or perhaps “by the terms of reconciliation,” for so the text may be understood. The reading in Savile’s margin, τοῖς καταλλαγεῖσι, seems also to bear the same sense.) and give unto Him this reward for that He may not seem to have reconciled untoward and unfeeling creatures to the Father.”

Actually, it is even more “reasonable that we should abide in” our standing “of reconciliation” rather than in “a state of reconciliation”, as Chrysostom puts it. Our state, that is, the condition of our soul at any given point in time, is constantly changing. But once we have faith in Jesus Christ, our standing does not change. As our mind, which is in our soul, is being renewed, we are transformed, as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The knowledge of the word of God renews our minds.

Chrysostom continues, “Ver. 2. “By Whom also we have access,” he says, “by faith unto this grace. (**Schaff Note:** 7 mss. add, unto, etc.)”

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):2** By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

He continues, “If then He hath brought us near to Himself, when we were far off, much more will He keep us now that we are near.”

And we can say, “Amen”. We are not our own, but we have been bought with a price.

He continues, “And let me beg you to consider how he everywhere sets down these two points; His part, and our part. On His part, however, there be things varied and numerous and diverse. For He died for us, and farther reconciled us, and brought us to Himself, and gave us grace unspeakable. But we brought faith only as our contribution.”

But we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Faith is “the gift of God”. Our part is to surrender to Him, and to receive Him, and to walk in the light of His word.

He continues, “And so he says,” “by faith, unto this grace.” What grace is this? tell me. It is the being counted worthy of the knowledge of God, the being forced from error, the coming to a knowledge of the Truth, the obtaining of all the blessings that come through Baptism.”

He has just mentioned that in Romans 5:2, Paul, “says,” “by faith, unto this grace.” And yet he still refers to “all the blessings that come through Baptism”. The “blessings” he refers to, such as regeneration, actually come from faith. He did not realize that Abraham was not baptized, but Abraham had faith, and was regenerated, and became an heir of the promises. And the grace in which we stand in Romans 5:2 refers back to the standing of righteousness that was given to us when God justified us in Romans 5:1.

Chrysostom continues, “For the end of His bringing us near was that we might receive these gifts. For it was not only that we might have simple remission of sins, that we were reconciled; but that we might receive also countless benefits. Nor did He even pause at these, but promised others, namely, those unutterable blessings that pass understanding alike and language. And this is why he has set them both down also. For by mentioning grace he clearly points at what we have at present received, but by saying, “And we rejoice in hope of the glory of God,” he unveils the whole of things to come. And he had well said, “wherein also we stand.” For this is the nature of God’s grace. It hath no end, it knows no bound, but evermore is on the advance to greater things, which in human things is not the case. Take an instance of what I mean. A person has acquired rule and glory and authority, yet he does not stand therein continuously, but is speedily cast out of it. Or if man take it not from him, death comes, and is sure to take it from him. But God’s gifts are not of this kind; for neither man, nor occasion, nor crisis of affairs, nor even the Devil, nor death, can come and cast us out of them. But when we are dead we then more strictly speaking have possession of them, and keep going on enjoying more and more. And so if thou feel in doubt about those to come; from those now present, and what thou hast already received, believe in the other also. For this is why he says, “And we rejoice (καυχώμεθα) in hope of the glory of God,” that you may learn, what kind of soul the faithful ought to have. For it is not only for what hath been given, but for what is to be given,

that we ought to be filled with confidingness, as though it were already given.”

The word “confidingness” means “tending to confide : TRUSTFUL”. (**Merriam Webster**)

He continues, “For one “rejoices” in what is already given. Since then the hope of things to come is even as sure and clear as that of what is given, he says that in that too we in like manner “rejoice.” For this cause also he called them glory. For if it contributeth unto God’s glory, come to pass it certainly will, though it do not for our sakes, yet for Him it will. And why am I saying (he means) that the blessings to come are worthy of being gloried in (καυχήσεως)? Why even the very evils of this time present are able to brighten up our countenances, and make us find in them even our repose. Wherefore also he added,

Ver. 3. “And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also.””

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):3** And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

He continues, “Now, consider how great the things to come are, when even at things that seem to be distressful we can be elated; so great is God’s gift, and such a nothing any distastefulness in them! For in the case of external goods, the struggle for them brings trouble and pain and irksomeness along with it; and it is the crowns and rewards that carry the pleasure with them. But in this case it is not so, for the wrestlings have to us no less relish than the rewards.

For since there were sundry temptations in those days, and the kingdom existed in hopes, the terrors were at hand, but the good things in expectation, and this unnerved the feebler sort, even before the crowns he gives them the prize now, by saying that we should “glory even in tribulations.” And what he says is not “you should glory,” but we glory, giving them encouragement in his own person. Next since what he had said had an appearance of being strange and paradoxical, if a person who is struggling in famine, and is in chains and torments, and insulted, and abused, ought to glory, he next goes on to confirm it. And (what is more), he says they are worthy of being gloried in, not only for the sake of those things to come, but for the things present in themselves. For tribulations are in their own selves a goodly thing. How so? It is because they anoint us unto patient abiding. Wherefore after saying we glory in tribulations, he has added the reason, in these words, “Knowing that tribulation worketh patience.” Notice again the argumentative spirit of Paul, how he gives their argument an opposite turn. For since it was tribulations above all that made them give up the hopes of things to come, and which cast them into despondency, he says that these are the very reasons for confidingness, and for not desponding about the things to come, for “tribulation,” he says, “worketh patience.”

Ver. 4, 5. “And patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed.” (**Schaff Note:** The word rendered “patience,” (ὑπομονή) means rather patient endurance, constancy. It is active rather than passive in meaning. Then the endurance which is developed under tribulation helps to form a tried, tested character, Δοκιμή means a tested state—approved character. The R.V. renders “probation,” which is more nearly correct than “experience” (A.V.). We have no word which makes a felicitous translation. The meaning is that steadfastness under trials develops a tested moral manhood, and this kind of character begets hope; it takes away fear for what the future may bring.—G.B.S.)”

He refers in context to **Romans 5 (KJV):** 3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

And so we read in context in **Romans 5 (NKJV):**3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

He continues, “Tribulations, that is, are so far from confuting these hopes, that they even prove them. For before the things to come are realized, there is a very great fruit which tribulation hath—patience; (**Schaff Note:** We do not see what use patience will be of in a future state, cf. Butler’s *Anal.* part i. c. v. §4)”

This **Schaff Note** is questionable. Chrysostom said, “For before the things to come are realized, there is a very great fruit which tribulation hath—patience”. He is not talking about a future state, but the state “before the things to come are realized”.

Chrysostom continues, “and the making of the man that is tried, experienced. And it contributes in some degree too to the things to come, (**Schaff Note:** That such is the power of conscience even in a heathen is plain from Plato, *Rep.* 1. §5. Steph. p. 350. e. “For you must know, Socrates,” said he, “that when a man is near the time when he must expect to die, there comes into his mind a fear and anxiety about things that were never so thought of before. For the stories that are told of things in Hades, how a man that has done wrong here must satisfy justice for it there, which have hitherto been laughed at, come then to perplex his soul with alarms that they may be true. And even of himself, whether from the infirmity of age, or in that he is in a manner already nearer to that state, he sees somewhat more of it. However it be, he becomes full of suspicion and alarm; and takes account and considers whether he has at all wronged any one. And then a man who finds a number of guilty actions in his life is often roused by alarm from his sleep, like children, and lives ever in expectation of misery. But one who is conscious in himself of no wrong has a pleasing hope ever with him, as the kind nurse of his old age, as Pindar too says. For beautifully indeed, Socrates, has he expressed this, that whoever has passed his life in justice and holiness, Sweet Hope, best helpmate of the heart, With cheerful tenderness, Soothes his declining years. She whom we mortals trust In many an anxious doubt To sway life’s wavering helm. Well said indeed! one wonders to think how well,” etc.)

Chrysostom continues, “for it gives hope a vigor within us, since there is nothing that so inclines a man to hope for blessings as a good conscience. Now no man that has lived an upright life is unconfiding about things to come, as of those who have been negligent there are many that, feeling the burden of a bad conscience, wish there were neither judgment nor retribution. What then? do our goods lie in hopes? Yes, in hopes—but not mere human hopes, which often slip away, and put him that hoped to shame; when some one, who was expected to patronize him, dies, or is altered though he lives. No such lot is ours: our hope is sure and unmoveable. For He Who hath made the promise ever liveth, and we that are to be the enjoyers of it, even should we die, shall rise again, and there is absolutely nothing which can put us to shame, as having been elated at random, and to no purpose, upon unsound hopes. Having then sufficiently cleared them of all doubtfulness by these words of his, he does not let his discourse

pause at the time present, but urges again the time to come, knowing that there were men of weaker character, who looked too for present advantages, and were not satisfied with these mentioned. And so he offers a proof for them in blessings already given. For lest any should say, But what if God be unwilling to give them to us? For that He can, and that He abideth and liveth, we all know: but how do we know, that He is willing, also, to do it? From the things which have been done already. “What things done?” The Love which He hath shown for us. In doing what? some may say. In giving the Holy Ghost. Wherefore after saying “hope maketh not ashamed,” he goes on to the proof of this, as follows:

“Because the love of God is,” he does not say “given,” but “shed abroad in our hearts,” so showing the profusion of it. That gift then, which is the greatest possible, He hath given; not heaven and earth and sea, but what is more precious than any of these, and hath rendered us Angels from being men, yea sons of God, and brethren of Christ. But what is this gift? The Holy Spirit. Now had He not been willing to present us after our labors with great crowns, He would never have given us such mighty gifts before our labors. But now the warmth of His Love is hence made apparent, that it is not gradually and little by little that He honors us; but He hath shed abroad the full fountain of His blessings, and this too before our struggles. And so, if thou art not exceedingly worthy, despond not, since thou hast that Love of thy Judge as a mighty pleader for thee. For this is why he himself by saying, “hope maketh not ashamed,” has ascribed everything not to our well-doings, but to God’s love. But after mentioning the gift of the Spirit, he again passes to the Cross, speaking as follows:

Ver. 6–8. “For while we were yet without strength, Christ in due time died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.”

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):6** For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

We note that “δικαίου” means righteous and “ἀγαθοῦ” means good, as we continue, “(Schaff Note: Meyer and Weiss make no distinction between δικαίου and ἀγαθοῦ here. Most have held (I think, rightly) that the latter expresses more than the former. It comprehends those qualities of benevolence, kindness, etc., which may be considered as the peculiar bonds of friendship and would lead to the greatest sacrifices. Holman, Godet and Weiss (following Jerome) take τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ as neuter. J. Müller supposes it to refer to God. The force of the argument is: For an upright man one would hardly be moved to die, but in the case of a benefactor to whom one owed much, the motives of love and pity might move one strongly enough to lead him to summon up the resolution (τολμᾶ) to die, but this would be the highest and a very improbable reach of human love. But Christ died for his *enemies*, etc.—G.B.S.)”

Chrysostom continues, “But God commendeth His love towards us.”

Now what he is saying is somewhat of this kind. For if for a virtuous man, no one would hastily choose to die, consider thy Master’s love, when it is not for virtuous men, but for sinners and enemies that He is seen to have been crucified—which he says too after this, “In that, if when we were sinners Christ died for us,”

Ver. 9, 10. “Much more then, being now justified by His Blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death

of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.””

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):9** Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

But a better translation is as we read in **Romans 5 (NKJV):9** Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

The words translated “having now been justified” in the Greek are **Δικαιοθέντες νῦν** (pronounced de-ki-o-thentes noon). The verb is **Δικαιοθέντες** which is correctly translated as “having been justified” in the **New King James Version** because it is in the Aorist, Passive, Plural, Participle, Nominative Case, of the Greek word **δικαίω** (pronounced de-ki-o'-o), from G1342; to render (i.e. show or regard as) just or innocent:—free, justify(-ier), be righteous. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1344**

The words translated as “having been reconciled” in verse 10, in the Greek, are in the same tense, that is, Aorist, Passive, Plural, Participle, Nominative Case, of the Greek word **καταλλαγέντες** (pronounced kā-tāl-lā-gen'-tes), from G2596 and G236; to change mutually, i.e. (figuratively) to compound a difference:—reconcile. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2644**

The Aorist tense in Greek is the past tense.

Chrysostom continues, “And what he has said looks indeed like tautology, but it is not to any one who accurately attends to it.”

The word “tautology” means “needless repetition of an idea, statement, or word”.  
(**Merriam Webster**)

He continues, “Consider then. He wishes to give them reasons for confidence respecting things to come. And first he gives them a sense of shame from the righteous man’s decision, when he says, that he also “was fully persuaded that what God had promised He was able also to perform;” and next from the grace that was given; then from the tribulation, as sufficing to lead us into hopes; and again from the Spirit, whom we have received. Next from death, and from our former viciousness, he maketh this good. And it seems indeed, as I said, that what he had mentioned was one thing, but it is discovered to be two, three, and even many more. First, that “He died:” second, that it was “for the ungodly;” third, that He “reconciled, saved, justified” us, made us immortal, made us sons and heirs. It is not from His Death then only, he says, that we draw strong assertions, but from the gift which was given unto us through His Death. And indeed if He had died only for such creatures as we be, a proof of the greatest love would what He had done be! but when He is seen at once dying, and yielding us a gift, and that such a gift, and to such creatures, what was done casts into shade our highest conceptions, and leads the very dullest on to faith. For there is no one else that will save us, except He Who so loved us when we were sinners, as even to give Himself up for us.”

And we read in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

He continues, “Do you see what a ground this topic affords for hope? For before this there were two difficulties in the way of our being saved; our being sinners, and our salvation requiring the Lord’s Death, a thing which was quite incredible before it took place, and required



exceeding love for it to take place. But now since this hath come about, the other requisites are easier. For we have become friends, and there is no further need of Death. Shall then He who hath so spared his enemies as not to spare His Son, fail to defend them now they are become friends, when He hath no longer any need to give up his Son? For it is either because a person does not wish it, or because though he may wish it perhaps, (**Schaff Note:** *πολλάκις*, Heind. ad Plat. *Phæd.* p. 140, §12.) yet he is unable to do it, that he does not save. Now none of these things can be said of God. For that He is willing is plain from His having given up His Son. (**Schaff Note:** So Field, from one ms. and Brixius' version: the old reading could only mean "Now none of these things can be said of God, considering He hath given up.") But that He is able also is the very thing He proved likewise, from the very fact of His having justified men who were sinners. What is there then to prevent us any more from obtaining the things to come? Nothing! Then again, lest upon hearing of sinners, and enemies, and strengthless ones, and ungodly, thou shouldest be inclined to feel abashed and blush; hear what he says.

Ver. 11. "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the atonement."

And he refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):11** And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

And also to **Romans 5 (NKJV):11** And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

He continues, "What meaneth the "not only so?" Not only were we saved, he means, but we even glory (**Schaff Note:** Same word as joy. See v. 2, etc) for this very reason, for which some suppose we ought to hide our faces. For, for us who lived in so great wickedness to be saved, was a very great mark of our being exceedingly beloved by Him that saved us. For it was not by angels or archangels, but by His Only-begotten Son Himself, that He saved us. And so the fact of His saving us, and saving us too when we were in such plight, and doing it by means of His Only-begotten, and not merely by His Only-begotten, but by His Blood, weaves for us endless crowns to glory in. For there is not anything that counts so much in the way of glory and confidence, as the being treated as friends (*φιλεῖσθαι*) by God, and finding a Friend (*φιλεῖν*) in Him that loveth (*ἀγαπῶντα*) us. This it is that maketh the angels glorious, and the principalities and powers. This is greater than the Kingdom, and so Paul placed it above the Kingdom. For this also I count the incorporeal powers blessed, because they love Him, and in all things obey Him. And on this score the Prophet also expressed his admiration at them. "Ye that excel in strength, that fulfil His Word." (Ps. ciii. 20) And hence too Isaiah extolleth the Seraphim, setting forth their great excellency from their standing near that glory, which is a sign of the greatest love."

He refers to **Psalms 103 (KJV):20** Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.

And to **Isaiah 6 (KJV):1** In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. 2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.



**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS,  
HOMILY XIV, page 445-446**

Ver. 23. "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves."

That is, having had a taste of the things to come. For even if any should be quite stone hard, he means what has been given already is enough to raise him up, and draw him off from things present, and to wing him after things to come in two ways, both by the greatness of the things that are given, and by the fact that, great and numerous as they are, they are but first-fruits. For if the first-fruits be so great that we are thereby freed even from our sins, and attain to righteousness and sanctification, and that those of that time both drove out devils, and raised the dead by their shadow (Acts v. 15), or garments (ib. xix. 12), consider how great the whole must be. And if the creation, devoid as it is of mind and reason, and though in ignorance of these things, yet groaneth, much more should we. Next, that he may give the heretics no handle, or seem to be disparaging our present world, we groan, he says, not as finding fault with the present system, but through a desire of those greater things. And this he shows in the words, "Waiting for the adoption." What dost thou say, let me hear? Thou didst insist on it at every turn, and didst cry aloud, that we were already made sons, and now dost thou place this good thing among hopes, writing that we must needs wait for it? Now it is to set this right by the sequel that he says, "to wit, the redemption of our body." That is, the perfect glory. Our lot indeed is at present uncertainty to our last breath, since many of us that were sons have become dogs and prisoners. But if we decease with a good hope, then is the gift unmovable, and clearer, and greater, having no longer any change to fear from death and sin. Then therefore will the grace be secure, when our body shall be freed from death and its countless ailments (or passions). For this is full redemption (*ἀπολύτρωσις*), not a redemption only, but such, that we shall never again return to our former captivity. For that thou mayest not be perplexed at hearing so much of glory without getting any distinct knowledge of it, he partially exposes to thy view the things to come, setting before thee the change of thy body (Gr. changing thy body), and along with it the change of the whole creation. And this he has put in a clearer light in another passage, where he says, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious Body." (Phil. iii. 21) And in another place again he writes and says, "But when this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Cor. xv. 54) But to show, that with the corruption of the body the constitution of the things of this life will also come to an end, he wrote again elsewhere, "For the fashion of this world passeth away." (1 Cor. vii. 31)

Ver. 24. "For we are saved by hope," he says.

Now since he had dwelt upon the promise of the things to come, and this seemed to pain the weaker hearer, if the blessings are all matter of hope; after proving before that they are surer than things present and visible, and discoursing at large on the gifts already given, and showing that we have received the first fruits of those good things, lest we should seek our all in this world, and be traitors to the nobility that faith gives us, he says, "For we are (Gr. were) saved by hope." And this is about what he means. We are not to seek our all in this life, but to have hope also. For this is the only gift that we brought in to God, believing Him in what He promised shall come, and it was by this way alone we were saved. If then we lose this hope, we

have lost all that was of our own contributing. For I put you this question, he would say, Wert thou not liable for countless sins? wert thou not in despair? wert thou not under sentence? were not all out of heart about thy salvation? What then saved thee? It was thy hoping in God alone, and trusting to Him about His promises and gifts, and nothing besides hadst thou to bring in. If it was this then that saved thee, hold it fast now also. For that which afforded thee so great blessings, to a certainty will not deceive thee in regard to things to come. For in that it found thee dead, and ruined, and a prisoner, and an enemy, and yet made thee a friend, and a son, and a freeman, and righteous, and a joint-heir, and yielded such great things as no one ever expected even, how, after such munificence and attachment, will it betray thee in what is to follow? Say not to me, hopes again! expectations again! faith again! For it is in this way thou wert saved from the beginning, and this dowry was the only one that thou didst bring in to the Bridegroom. Hold it then fast and keep it: for if thou demandest to have everything in this world, thou hast lost that well-doing of thine, through which thou didst become bright, and this is why he proceeds to say, “But hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?”

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 23. “And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves.”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):23** And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

He continues, “That is, having had a taste of the things to come. For even if any should be quite stone hard, he means what has been given already is enough to raise him up, and draw him off from things present, and to wing him after things to come in two ways, both by the greatness of the things that are given, and by the fact that, great and numerous as they are, they are but first-fruits. For if the first-fruits be so great that we are thereby freed even from our sins, and attain to righteousness and sanctification, and that those of that time both drove out devils, and raised the dead by their shadow (Acts v. 15), or garments (ib. xix. 12), consider how great the whole must be.”

He refers in context to **Acts 5 (KJV):14** And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) 15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. 16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

And to **Acts 19 (KJV):11** And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

And in regards to our having attained “to righteousness and sanctification”, we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NKJV):11** And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

He continues, “And if the creation, devoid as it is of mind and reason, and though in ignorance of these things, yet groaneth, much more should we. Next, that he may give the heretics no handle, or seem to be disparaging our present world, we groan, he says, not as

finding fault with the present system, but through a desire of those greater things. And this he shows in the words, "Waiting for the adoption." What dost thou say, let me hear? Thou didst insist on it at every turn, and didst cry aloud, that we were already made sons, and now dost thou place this good thing among hopes, writing that we must needs wait for it? Now it is to set this right by the sequel that he says, "to wit, the redemption of our body." That is, the perfect glory. Our lot indeed is at present uncertainty to our last breath, since many of us that were sons have become dogs and prisoners. But if we decease with a good hope, then is the gift unmovable, and clearer, and greater, having no longer any change to fear from death and sin. Then therefore will the grace be secure, when our body shall be freed from death and its countless ailments (or passions). For this is full redemption (ἀπολύτρωσις), not a redemption only, but such, that we shall never again return to our former captivity. For that thou mayest not be perplexed at hearing so much of glory without getting any distinct knowledge of it, he partially exposes to thy view the things to come, setting before thee the change of thy body (Gr. changing thy body), and along with it the change of the whole creation. And this he has put in a clearer light in another passage, where he says, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious Body." (Phil. iii. 21)"

He refers to **Philippians 3 (KJV):21** Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Chrysostom understood the resurrection.

He continues, "And in another place again he writes and says, "But when this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Cor. xv. 54)"

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):54** So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

He continues, "But to show, that with the corruption of the body the constitution of the things of this life will also come to an end, he wrote again elsewhere, "For the fashion of this world passeth away." (1 Cor. vii. 31)"

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):31** And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

He continues, "Ver. 24. "For we are saved by hope," he says."

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):24** For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

And to **Romans 8 (NKJV):24** For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?

He continues, "Now since he had dwelt upon the promise of the things to come, and this seemed to pain the weaker hearer, if the blessings are all matter of hope; after proving before that they are surer than things present and visible, and discoursing at large on the gifts already given, and showing that we have received the first fruits of those good things, lest we should seek our all in this world, and be traitors to the nobility that faith gives us, he says, "For we are (Gr. were) saved by hope." And this is about what he means. We are not to seek our all in this life, but to have hope also. For this is the only gift that we brought in to God, believing Him in what He promised shall come, and it was by this way alone we were saved. If then we lose this

hope, we have lost all that was of our own contributing. For I put you this question, he would say, Wert thou not liable for countless sins? wert thou not in despair? wert thou not under sentence? were not all out of heart about thy salvation? What then saved thee? It was thy hoping in God alone, and trusting to Him about His promises and gifts, and nothing besides hadst thou to bring in. If it was this then that saved thee, hold it fast now also. For that which afforded thee so great blessings, to a certainty will not deceive thee in regard to things to come. For in that it found thee dead, and ruined, and a prisoner, and an enemy, and yet made thee a friend, and a son, and a freeman, and righteous, and a joint-heir, and yielded such great things as no one ever expected even, how, after such munificence and attachment, will it betray thee in what is to follow? Say not to me, hopes again! expectations again! faith again! For it is in this way thou wert saved from the beginning, and this dowry was the only one that thou didst bring in to the Bridegroom. Hold it then fast and keep it: for if thou demandest to have everything in this world, thou hast lost that well-doing of thine, through which thou didst become bright, and this is why he proceeds to say, “But hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?””

We are saved by hope, for we are waiting for the redemption of our body. Our spirit has been made new by being born of the Spirit of God. But when we see Him we will be like Him, that is, like His glorious body, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. **3** And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XV, page 453**

Ver. 30. “Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified.”

Now He justified them by the regeneration of the laver. “And whom He justified, them He also glorified” by the gift, by the adoption.

Ver. 31. “What shall we then say to these things?”

As if he should say, Let me then hear no more about the dangers and the malicious devices from every quarter. For even if some disbelieve the things to come, still they have not a word to say against the good things that have already taken place; as, for instance, the friendship of God towards thee from the first, the justifying, the glory. And yet these things He gave thee by means seemingly distressing. And those things which you thought to be disgracing, the Cross, scourges, bonds, these are what have set the whole world aright. As then by what Himself suffered, though of aspect forbidding in man’s eye, even by these He effected the liberty and salvation of the whole race; so also is He wont to do in regard to those things which thou endurest, turning thy sufferings unto glory and renown for thee. “If God be for us, who can be against us?”

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 30. “Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified.”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):30** Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also

called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

He continues, “Now He justified them by the regeneration of the laver. “And whom He justified, them He also glorified” by the gift, by the adoption.

Chrysostom did not understand that it is by faith that we are justified, as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...

It has nothing to do with the laver. Water baptism is only a step of obedience to the Lord’s command, and it only shows that we have believed.

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### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY VII, page 379-380**

Ver. 28. “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law.”

When he had shown that by faith they were superior to the Jews, then he goes on with great confidence to discourse upon it also, and what seemed therein to annoy he again heals up. For these two things were what confused the Jews; one, if it were possible for men, who with works were not saved, to be saved without them, and another, if it were just for the uncircumcised to enjoy the same blessings with those, who had during so long a period been nurtured in the Law; which last confused them more by far than the former. And on this ground having proved the former, he goes on to the other next, which perplexed the Jews so far, that they even complained on account of this position against Peter after they believed. What does he say then? “Therefore we conclude, that by faith a man is justified.” He does not say, a Jew, or one under the Law, but after leading forth his discourse into a large room, and opening the doors of faith to the world, he says “a man,” the name common to our race. And then having taken occasion from this, he meets an objection not set down. For since it was likely that the Jews, upon hearing that faith justifieth every man, would take it ill and feel offended, he goes on,

Ver. 29. “Is He the God of the Jews only?”

As if he said, On what foot does it then seem to you amiss that every man should be

saved? Is God partial? So showing from this, that in wishing to flout the Gentiles, they are rather offering an insult to God's glory, if, that is, they would not allow Him to be the God of all. But if He is of all, then He taketh care of all; and if He care for all, then He saveth all alike by faith. And this is why he says, "Is He the God of the Jews only? is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also." For He is not partial as the fables of the Gentiles (cf. Ov. Tr. I. ii. 5. sqq) are, but common to all, and One. And this is why he goes on,

Ver. 30. "Seeing it is one God."

That is, the same is the Master of both these and those. But if you tell me of the ancient state of things, then too the dealings of Providence were shared by both, although in diverse ways. For as to thee was given the written law, so to them was the natural; and they came short in nothing, if, that is, only they were willing, but were even able to surpass thee. And so he proceeds, with an allusion to this very thing, "Who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith," so reminding them of what he said before about uncircumcision and circumcision, whereby he showed that there was no difference. But if then there was no difference, much less is there any now. And this accordingly he now establishes upon still clearer grounds, and so demonstrates, that either of them stand alike in need of faith.

Ver. 31. "Do we then," he says, "make void the Law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the Law."

Do you see his varied and unspeakable judgment? For the bare use of the word "establish" shows that it was not then standing, but was worn out (*καταλελυμένον*). And note also Paul's exceeding power, and how superabundantly he maintains what he wishes. For here he shows that the faith, so far from doing any disparagement to the "Law," even assists it, as it on the other hand paved the way for the faith. For as the Law itself before bore witness to it (for he saith, "being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets"), so here this establisheth that, now that it is unnerved. And how did it establish? he would say. What was the object of the Law and what the scope of all its enactments? Why, to make man righteous. But this it had no power to do. "For all," it says, "have sinned:" but faith when it came accomplished it. For when a man is once a believer, he is straightway justified. The intention then of the Law it did establish, and what all its enactments aim after, this hath it brought to a consummation. Consequently it has not disannulled, but perfected it. Here then three points he has demonstrated; first, that without the Law it is possible to be justified; next, that this the Law could not effect; and, that faith is not opposed to the Law. For since the chief cause of perplexity to the Jews was this, that the faith seemed to be in opposition to it, he shows more than the Jew wishes, that so far from being contrary, it is even in close alliance and coöperation with it, which was what they especially longed to hear proved.

But since after this grace, whereby we were justified, there is need also of a life suited to it, let us show an earnestness worthy the gift. And show it we shall, if we keep with earnestness charity, the mother of good deeds. Now charity is not bare words, or mere ways of speaking (*προσρήσεις*) to men, but a taking care (*προστασία*) of them, and a putting forth of itself by works, as, for instance, by relieving poverty, lending one's aid to the sick, rescuing from dangers, to stand by them that be in difficulties, to weep with them that weep, and to rejoice with them that rejoice. (Rom. xii. 15)

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, "Ver. 28. "Therefore we conclude that a man is

justified by faith without the deeds of the Law.”

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):28** Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

He continues, “When he had shown that by faith they were superior to the Jews, then he goes on with great confidence to discourse upon it also, and what seemed therein to annoy he again heals up. For these two things were what confused the Jews; one, if it were possible for men, who with works were not saved, to be saved without them, and another, if it were just for the uncircumcised to enjoy the same blessings with those, who had during so long a period been nurtured in the Law; which last confused them more by far than the former. And on this ground having proved the former, he goes on to the other next, which perplexed the Jews so far, that they even complained on account of this position against Peter after they believed. What does he say then? “Therefore we conclude, that by faith a man is justified.” He does not say, a Jew, or one under the Law, but after leading forth his discourse into a large room, and opening the doors of faith to the world, he says “a man,” the name common to our race. And then having taken occasion from this, he meets an objection not set down. For since it was likely that the Jews, upon hearing that faith justifieth every man, would take it ill and feel offended, he goes on,

Ver. 29. “Is He the God of the Jews only?””

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):29** Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

He continues, “As if he said, On what foot does it then seem to you amiss that every man should be saved? Is God partial? So showing from this, that in wishing to flout the Gentiles, they are rather offering an insult to God’s glory, if, that is, they would not allow Him to be the God of all. But if He is of all, then He taketh care of all; and if He care for all, then He saveth all alike by faith. And this is why he says, “Is He the God of the Jews only? is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also.” For He is not partial as the fables of the Gentiles (cf. Ov. Tr. I. ii. 5. sqq) are, but common to all, and One. And this is why he goes on,

Ver. 30. “Seeing it is one God.””

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):30** Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

He continues, “That is, the same is the Master of both these and those. But if you tell me of the ancient state of things, then too the dealings of Providence were shared by both, although in diverse ways. For as to thee was given the written law, so to them was the natural; and they came short in nothing, if, that is, only they were willing, but were even able to surpass thee. And so he proceeds, with an allusion to this very thing, “Who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith,” so reminding them of what he said before about uncircumcision and circumcision, whereby he showed that there was no difference. But if then there was no difference, much less is there any now. And this accordingly he now establishes upon still clearer grounds, and so demonstrates, that either of them stand alike in need of faith.

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He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Chrysostom understood in part that once one is a believer, he is “straightway justified”, but he still included water baptism as the time when one truly believes.

He continues, “The intention then of the Law it did establish, and what all its enactments aim after, this hath it brought to a consummation. Consequently it has not disannulled, but perfected it. Here then three points he has demonstrated; first, that without the Law it is possible to be justified; next, that this the Law could not effect; and, that faith is not opposed to the Law. For since the chief cause of perplexity to the Jews was this, that the faith seemed to be in opposition to it, he shows more than the Jew wishes, that so far from being contrary, it is even in close alliance and coöperation with it, which was what they especially longed to hear proved.

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So in Chrysostom’s thinking, after we are justified, we still need good works to show a “life suited to it” to be saved.

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He refers to **Romans 12 (KJV):15** Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY VIII, page 385-391**, he says, “See you how he shows the Jews to be as it were of the class of parasites (i.e. guests), rather than those in uncircumcision, and that these were added to the others? For if he was justified and crowned while in uncircumcision, the Jews came in afterwards, Abraham is then the father first of the uncircumcised, which through faith appertain to him, and then of those in the circumcision. For he is a forefather of two lines. See you faith lightening up? for till it came the patriarch was not justified. The circumcision therefore is behind the faith. And why wonder that it is behind the faith, when it is even behind the



uncircumcision. Nor is it behind faith only, but very far inferior to it, even so far as the sign is to the reality of which it is the sign; for instance, as the seal is to the soldier.”

That is, circumcision is after faith, as it is also after uncircumcision, for Abraham was uncircumcised before he had faith, and he had faith when he was uncircumcised, and before he was circumcised.

And he says, “For if to the uncircumcised, it is not in that he is uncircumcised that he is their father, although justified in uncircumcision; but in that they imitated his faith; much less is it owing to circumcision that he is the forefather of those in the state of circumcision, unless faith also be added.”

Chrysostom understood that there is now “no need” of “bodily signs”, such as circumcision. Yet he still saw baptism as the means whereby one was regenerated. He also saw the significance of all of the laws of circumcision, and sacrifice, and sabbath, and feasts. They were all things that would lead us to faith in Christ, as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV):24** Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

And Chrysostom understood that circumcision is only a sign of the faith which Abraham had. Yet he could not see that baptism is also only a sign “to the reality of which it is the sign”, that is, that one has had faith. We are only baptized because we believe, that is, because we have faith.

And he says, “For if you follow not in the steps of his faith, though you were ten thousand times in a state of circumcision, you will not be Abraham’s offspring.”

And so it is with baptism, but Chrysostom did not realize this.

And speaking of circumcision, he says, “For this is then a sign, when the reality of which it is the sign is found with thee, that is, faith; since if thou have not this, the sign to thee has no longer the power of a sign, for what is it to be the sign of? or what the seal of, when there is nothing to be sealed? much as if you were to show one a purse with a seal to it, when there was nothing laid up within. And so the circumcision is ridiculous if there be no faith within.”

Chrysostom understood that circumcision was only to be a sign that one had faith, and therefore was justified by faith and had righteousness. But if the circumcised had no faith, they also had not been justified, and therefore had no righteousness. There is not doubt that Chrysostom had the “reality”, that is, faith, within himself.

Chrysostom also understood that the time of Abraham’s justification was when he was uncircumcised, that is, when he had faith.

He says, “For he that clings to the Law, as if of saving force, does disparagement to faith’s power; and so he says, “faith is made void,” that is, there is no need of salvation by grace.”

Chrysostom has stated correctly that, “he that clings to the Law, as if of saving force, does disparagement to faith’s power”. The true force of the law is to show us our need of grace.

And he says, “You see that it is not the Law only that faith establisheth, but the promise of God also that it will not allow to fall to the ground. But the Law, on the other hand, by being kept to unseasonably, makes even the faith of none effect, and hindereth the promise. By this he shows that faith, so far from being superfluous, is even necessary to that degree, that without it there is no being saved.”

And so we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):6** But without faith it is impossible to please him:

for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

And he says, “And again, as God is a father not by way of the relationship of nature, but by way of the affiancing of faith, so is he also inasmuch as it is obedience that makes him father of us all.”

He is correct in that he speaks of the nature of the flesh. The uncircumcised are not literally children of Abraham by their flesh. But when he says, “God is a father not by way of the relationship of nature”, we must understand that he did not understand the Biblical truth about regeneration. It is not just a matter of faith, as if it were like a commitment in marriage, for we are born of God when we believe in Jesus Christ. We also receive eternal life in our spirit by this birth, and we also receive a new divine nature in our spirit by this birth.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY IX, page 395-399**, he says, “After saying many great things of Abraham, and his faith, and righteousness, and honor before God, lest the hearer should say, What is this to us, for it is he that was justified? he places us close to the Patriarch again.”

And comparing us to Abraham, he says, “But he speaks in authentic words of the divine law, and makes the whole a declaration of the Scripture. For why was it written, he says, save to make us see that we also were justified in this way? For it is the same God Whom we have believed, and upon the same matters, if it be not in the case of the same persons.”

And he says, “For that He is willing is plain from His having given up His Son. But that He is able also is the very thing He proved likewise, from the very fact of His having justified men who were sinners. What is there then to prevent us any more from obtaining the things to come? Nothing!”

And yes, it is as Chrysostom has shown. The cause of His death, or reason for His death, is the same as the cause of His resurrection, or reason for His resurrection. That is, they were both for “our justification”.

And he says, referring to Romans 5:1, “Therefore being justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.””

But we read as in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,...

So we should understand that our justification was not in the process of being done when we had faith in Jesus Christ, but it was absolutely done when we believed in Jesus Christ. When God saw our faith, He justified us. That is, He declared us to be righteous, and put His very own righteousness down to our account.

And he says, “For if He reconciled us when we were in open war with Him, it is reasonable that we should abide in a state of reconciliation, and give unto Him this reward for that He may not seem to have reconciled untoward and unfeeling creatures to the Father.”

Actually, it is even more “reasonable that we should abide in” our standing “of reconciliation” than our “state of reconciliation”, as Chrysostom puts it. Our state, that is, the condition of our soul at any given point in time, is constantly changing. But once we have faith, our standing of righteousness does not change.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIV, page 445-446**, he says, “For if the first-fruits be so great that we are thereby freed even from our sins, and attain to righteousness and sanctification, and that those of that

time both drove out devils, and raised the dead by their shadow (Acts v. 15), or garments (ib. xix. 12), consider how great the whole must be.”

And in regards to our having attained “to righteousness and sanctification”, we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NKJV):11** And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

And Chrysostom understands what will happen at the resurrection, as he says, “For that thou mayest not be perplexed at hearing so much of glory without getting any distinct knowledge of it, he partially exposes to thy view the things to come, setting before thee the change of thy body (Gr. changing thy body), and along with it the change of the whole creation. And this he has put in a clearer light in another passage, where he says, “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious Body.” (Phil. iii. 21)”

And he says, “For this is the only gift that we brought in to God, believing Him in what He promised shall come, and it was by this way alone we were saved. If then we lose this hope, we have lost all that was of our own contributing. For I put you this question, he would say, Wert thou not liable for countless sins? wert thou not in despair? wert thou not under sentence? were not all out of heart about thy salvation? What then saved thee? It was thy hoping in God alone, and trusting to Him about His promises and gifts, and nothing besides hadst thou to bring in. If it was this then that saved thee, hold it fast now also. For that which afforded thee so great blessings, to a certainty will not deceive thee in regard to things to come. For in that it found thee dead, and ruined, and a prisoner, and an enemy, and yet made thee a friend, and a son, and a freeman, and righteous, and a joint-heir, and yielded such great things as no one ever expected even, how, after such munificence and attachment, will it betray thee in what is to follow?”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XV, page 453**, he says, ““Now He justified them by the regeneration of the laver. “And whom He justified, them He also glorified” by the gift, by the adoption.

Chrysostom did not understand that it is by faith that we are justified, as we read in **Romans 5 (NKJV):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...

It has nothing to do with the laver. Water baptism is only a step of faith in obedience to the Lord’s command to be baptized, and it only shows that we have believed.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY VII, page 379-380**, he refers to Romans 3:28, as he asks, “What does he say then? “Therefore we conclude, that by faith a man is justified.” He does not say, a Jew, or one under the Law, but after leading forth his discourse into a large room, and opening the doors of faith to the world, he says “a man,” the name common to our race.”

And he says, “What was the object of the Law and what the scope of all its enactments? Why, to make man righteous. But this it had no power to do. “For all,” it says, “have sinned.” but faith when it came accomplished it. For when a man is once a believer, he is straightway justified.”

Chrysostom understood in part that once one is a believer, he is “straightway justified”, but he still included water baptism as the time when one truly believes.

And he says, “But since after this grace, whereby we were justified, there is need also of a life suited to it, let us show an earnestness worthy the gift.”

So in Chrysostom’s thinking, after we are justified, we still need good works to show a

“life suited to it” to be saved.

## Grace

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY X, page 403

Ver. 17. “For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift and (**Schaff Note:** so Field with most mss.) of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”

What he says, amounts to this nearly. What armed death against the world? The one man’s eating from the tree only. If then death attained so great power from one offence, when it is found that certain received a grace and righteousness out of all proportion to that sin, how shall they still be liable to death? And for this cause, he does not here say “grace,” but “superabundance of grace.” For it was not as much as we must have to do away the sin only, that we received of His grace, but even far more. For we were at once freed from punishment, and put off all iniquity, and were also born again from above (John iii. 3) and rose again with the old man buried, and were redeemed, justified, led up to adoption, sanctified, made brothers of the Only-begotten, and joint heirs and of one Body with Him, and counted for His Flesh, and even as a Body with the Head, so were we united unto Him! All these things then Paul calls a “superabundance” of grace, showing that what we received was not a medicine only to countervail the wound, but even health, and comeliness, and honor, and glory and dignities far transcending our natural state. And of these each in itself was enough to do away with death, but when all manifestly run together in one, there is not the least vestige of it left, nor can a shadow of it be seen, so entirely is it done away. As then if any one were to cast a person who owed ten mites (ὀβολοῦς) into prison, and not the man himself only, but wife and children and servants for his sake; and another were to come and not to pay down the ten mites only, but to give also ten thousand talents of gold, and to lead the prisoner into the king’s courts, and to the throne of the highest power, and were to make him partaker of the highest honor and every kind of magnificence, the creditor would not be able to remember the ten mites; so hath our case been. For Christ hath paid down far more than we owe, yea as much more as the illimitable ocean is than a little drop. Do not then, O man, hesitate as thou seest so great a store of blessings, nor enquire how that mere spark of death and sin was done away, when such a sea of gifts was brought in upon it. For this is what Paul intimated by saying that “they who have received the abundance of the grace and righteousness shall reign in life.” And as he had now clearly demonstrated this, he again makes use of his former argument, clenching it by taking up the same word afresh, and saying that if for that offence all were punished, then they may be justified too by these means. And so he says,

Ver. 18. “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 17. “For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift and (**Schaff Note:** so Field with most mss.) of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.””

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):17** For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

And to **Romans 5 (NKJV):17** For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)

He continues, "What he says, amounts to this nearly. What armed death against the world? The one man's eating from the tree only. If then death attained so great power from one offence, when it is found that certain received a grace and righteousness out of all proportion to that sin, how shall they still be liable to death? And for this cause, he does not here say "grace," but "superabundance of grace." For it was not as much as we must have to do away the sin only, that we received of His grace, but even far more. For we were at once freed from punishment, and put off all iniquity, and were also born again from above (John iii. 3) and rose again with the old man buried, and were redeemed, justified, led up to adoption, sanctified, made brothers of the Only-begotten, and joint heirs and of one Body with Him, and counted for His Flesh, and even as a Body with the Head, so were we united unto Him!"

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):3** Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

The word in the Greek translated "again" is **ἄνωθεν** (pronounced ä'-no-then), from G507; from above; by analogy, from the first; by implication, anew:—from above, again, from the beginning (very first), the top. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G509**

And relating to what Chrysostom said above, that "we were at once freed from punishment, and put off all iniquity, and were also born again", we read as in **1 Corinthians 6 (NKJV):11** And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

He continues, "All these things then Paul calls a "superabundance" of grace, showing that what we received was not a medicine only to countervail the wound, but even health, and comeliness, and honor, and glory and dignities far transcending our natural state."

And this is true. But Chrysostom did not understand what happened to our spirit when we were born again. He did not understand that our spirit received a new nature, being born of the Spirit of God. He confused the soul with the spirit, and thought that they were the same. In his thinking and understanding, the soul merely received the grace of the Spirit when one is born again in the ritual of baptism.

He continues, "And of these each in itself was enough to do away with death, but when all manifestly run together in one, there is not the least vestige of it left, nor can a shadow of it be seen, so entirely is it done away. As then if any one were to cast a person who owed ten mites (ὀβόλους) into prison, and not the man himself only, but wife and children and servants for his sake; and another were to come and not to pay down the ten mites only, but to give also ten thousand talents of gold, and to lead the prisoner into the king's courts, and to the throne of the highest power, and were to make him partaker of the highest honor and every kind of magnificence, the creditor would not be able to remember the ten mites; so hath our case been. For Christ hath paid down far more than we owe, yea as much more as the illimitable ocean is than a little drop. Do not then, O man, hesitate as thou seest so great a store of blessings, nor enquire how that mere spark of death and sin was done away, when such a sea of gifts was

brought in upon it. For this is what Paul intimated by saying that “they who have received the abundance of the grace and righteousness shall reign in life.” And as he had now clearly demonstrated this, he again makes use of his former argument, clenching it by taking up the same word afresh, and saying that if for that offence all were punished, then they may be justified too by these means. And so he says,

Ver. 18. “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.””

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):18** Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY X, page 403**, he calls the “abundance of grace”, mentioned in Romans 5:17, the “superabundance of grace”.

And relating to this, he says, “For it was not as much as we must have to do away the sin only, that we received of His grace, but even far more. For we were at once freed from punishment, and put off all iniquity, and were also born again from above (John iii. 3) and rose again with the old man buried, and were redeemed, justified, led up to adoption, sanctified, made brothers of the Only-begotten, and joint heirs and of one Body with Him, and counted for His Flesh, and even as a Body with the Head, so were we united unto Him!”

And he is correct here. When we believed in Jesus Christ, all of these benefits are ours. And we could add that we were saved.

He says, “All these things then Paul calls a “superabundance” of grace, showing that what we received was not a medicine only to countervail the wound, but even health, and comeliness, and honor, and glory and dignities far transcending our natural state.”

And he says, “For Christ hath paid down far more than we owe, yea as much more as the illimitable ocean is than a little drop.”

Although Chrysostom rightly speaks of grace here, in his mind, it was possible to lose grace, as he says under the chapter **Losing the Holy Spirit**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON ST. JOHN, HOMILY L, page 182-183**, he says, “For when we act contrary to the commandments, how can we go to that place? Even in the present life, if any soldier act unworthily towards his king, he will not be able to see the king, but being deprived of his authority will suffer the severest punishment; if therefore we steal, or covet, if we wrong or strike others, if we work not deeds of mercy, we shall not be able to go thither, but shall suffer what happened to the virgins. For where He was, they were not able to enter in, but retired, their lamps having gone out, that is, grace having left them.”

And under the chapter **Justification**, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY VII, page 379-380**, he says, “But since after this grace, whereby we were justified, there is need also of a life suited to it, let us show an earnestness worthy the gift.”

In Chrysotom's thinking about grace, it was something that was showered on us with the presence of the Holy Spirit at baptism. But if one sinned, grace "left them". In other words, they lost their salvation. But it is freely by His grace that we are justified, as we read again in **Romans 3 (NKJV):**21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Having been justified by faith in Jesus, we stand in grace, and we have a standing of righteousness. Who is there to condemn us? And so we read in **Romans 8 (NKJV):**31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." 37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.



## The Resurrection

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XLII, page 255-257

1 Cor. xv. 47

The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.

Having said that “the natural was first,” and “the spiritual afterward,” he again states another difference, speaking of “the earthy” and “the heavenly.” For the first difference was between the present life and that which is to come: but this between that before grace and that after grace. And he stated it with a view to the most excellent way of life, saying,—(for to hinder men, as I said, from such confidence in the resurrection as would make them neglectful of their practice and of perfection, from this topic also again he renders them anxious and exhorts to virtue, saying,)—“The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven:” calling the whole by the name of “man,” (**Schaff Note:** i.e., embodying as it were the whole of the two states of being which he is describing in the personal appellation of Man: as in the phrase, Old Man and New Man: &c.) and naming the one from the better, and the other from the worst part.

Ver. 48. “As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy:” so shall they perish and have an end. “As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly:” so shall they abide immortal and glorious.

What then? Did not This Man too die? He died indeed, but received no injury there from, yea rather by this He put an end to death. Seest thou how on this part of his subject also, he makes use of death to establish the doctrine of the resurrection? “For having, as I said before, the beginning and the head,” so he speaks, “doubt not of the whole body.”

Moreover also he frames hereby his advice concerning the best way of living, proposing standards of a lofty and severe life and of that which is not such, and bringing forward the principles of both these, of the one Christ, but of the other Adam. Therefore neither did he simply say, “of the earth,” but “earthy,” i.e., “gross, nailed down to things present:” and again with respect to Christ the reverse, “the Lord from heaven.”

[2.] But if any should say, “therefore the Lord hath not a body (**Schaff Note:** As the Manichees did, and before them the Gnostic sects.) because He is said to be “from heaven,” although what is said before is enough to stop their mouths: yet nothing hinders our silencing them from this consideration also: viz. what is, “the Lord from heaven?” Doth he speak of His nature, or His most perfect life? It is I suppose evident to every one that he speaks of His life. Wherefore also he adds,

Ver. 49. “As we have borne the image of the earthy,” i.e., as we have done evil, “let us also bear (**Schaff Note:** φορέσωμεν. This reading is supported, according to Scholz, by the Alexandrian and six other uncial mss. It is found in several versions, and has the authority of Irenæus, Origen, Basil, Tertullian, Cyprian, and other Fathers. In favor of the reading in our text, φορέσωμεν, is the Vatican mss. with others of less authority. Theodoret’s words are remarkable; “φορέσωμεν, He used the expression prophetically not hortatively.” [Chrysostom’s reading is adopted by nearly all recent editors, but given only in the margin by the Rev. Ver.

The external evidence is decidedly in its favor, but not the internal. C.]) the image of the heavenly,” i.e., let us practice all goodness.

But besides this, I would fain ask thee, is it of nature that it is said, “he that is of the earth, earthy,” and, “the Lord from heaven?” “Yea,” saith one. What then? Was Adam only “earthy,” or had he also another kind of substance congenial with heavenly and incorporeal beings, which the Scripture calls “soul,” and “spirit?” Every one sees that he had this also. Therefore neither was the Lord from above only although He is said to be “from heaven,” but He had also assumed our flesh. But Paul’s meaning is such as this: “as we have borne the image of the earthy,” i.e., evil deeds, “let us also bear the image of the heavenly,” the manner of life which is in the heavens. Whereas if he were speaking of nature, the thing needed not exhortation nor advice. So that hence also it is evident that the expression relates to our manner of life.

Wherefore also he introduces the saying in the manner of advice and calls it an “image,” here too again showing that he is speaking of conduct, not of nature. For therefore are we become earthy, because we have done evil: not because we were originally formed “earthy,” but because we sinned. For sin came first, and then death and then the sentence, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” (Gen. iii. 19) Then also entered in the swarm of the passions. For it is not simply the being born “of earth” that makes a man “earthy,” (since the Lord also was of this mass and lump,) but the doing earthly things, even as also he is made “heavenly” by performing things meet for heaven.

But enough: for why need I labor overmuch in the proof of this, when the apostle himself goes on to unfold the thought to us, thus saying,

Ver. 50. “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”

Seest thou how he explains himself again, relieving us of the trouble? which he often doth: for by flesh he here denotes men’s evil deeds, which he hath done also elsewhere; as when he saith, “But ye are not in the flesh:” and again, “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Rom. viii. 8, 9) So that when he saith, “Now this I say,” he means nothing else than this: “therefore said I these things that thou mayest learn that evil deeds conduct not to a kingdom.” Thus from the resurrection he straightway introduced also the doctrine of the kingdom also; wherefore also he adds, “neither doth corruption inherit incorruption,” i.e., neither shall wickedness inherit that glory and the enjoyment of the things incorruptible. For in many other places he calls wickedness by this name, saying, “He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption.” (Gal. vi. 8) Now if he were speaking of the body and not of evil doing, he would not have said “corruption.” For he nowhere calls the body “corruption,” since neither is it corruption, but a thing corruptible: wherefore proceeding to discourse also of it, he calls it not “corruption,” but “corruptible,” saying, “for this corruptible must put on incorruption.”

[3.] Next, having completed his advice concerning our manner of life, according to his constant custom blending closely subject with subject, he passes again to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body: as follows:

Ver. 51. “Behold, I tell you a mystery.”

It is something awful and ineffable and which all know not, which he is about to speak of: which also indicates the greatness of the honor he confers on them; I mean, his speaking mysteries to them. But what is this?

“We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” He means as follows: “we shall not all die, ‘but we shall all be changed,’” even those who die not. For they too are mortal. “Do not thou therefore because thou diest, on this account fear,” saith he, “as if thou shouldst not rise again: for there are, there are some who shall even escape this, and yet this suffices them not for that resurrection, but even those bodies which die not must be changed and be transformed into incorruption.”

Ver. 52. “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.”

After he had discoursed much of the resurrection, then opportunely he points out also its very marvelous character. As thus: “not this only,” saith he, “is wonderful that our bodies first turn to corruption, and then are raised; nor that the bodies which rise again after their corruption are better than these present ones; nor that they pass on to a much better state, nor that each receives back his own and none that of another; but that things so many and so great, and surpassing all man’s reason and conception, are done “in a moment,” i.e., in an instant of time: and to show this more clearly, “in the twinkling of an eye,” saith he, “while one can wink an eyelid.” Further, because he had said a great thing and full of astonishment; that so many and so great results should take place so quickly; he alleges, to prove it, the credibility of Him who performs it; as follows, “For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” The expression, “we,” he uses not of himself, but of them that are then found alive.

Ver. 53. “For this corruptible must put on incorruption.”

Thus lest any, hearing that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” should suppose that our bodies do not rise again; he adds, “this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” Now the body is “corruptible,” the body is “mortal:” so that the body indeed remains, for it is the body which is put on; but its mortality and corruption vanish away, when immortality and incorruption come upon it. Do not thou therefore question hereafter how it shall live an endless life, now that thou hast heard of its becoming incorruptible.

[4.] Ver. 54. “But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

Thus, since he was speaking of great and secret things, he again takes prophecy (Hosea xiii. 14) to confirm his word. “Death is swallowed up in victory:” i.e., utterly; not so much as a fragment of it remains nor a hope of returning, incorruption having consumed corruption.

Ver. 55. “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

Seest thou his noble soul? how even as one who is offering sacrifices for victory, having become inspired and seeing already things future as things past, he leaps and tramples upon death fallen at his feet, and shouts a cry of triumph over its head where it lies, exclaiming mightily and saying, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” It is clean gone, it is perished, it is utterly vanished away, and in vain hast thou done all those former things. For He not only disarmed death and vanquished it, but even destroyed it, and made it quite cease from being.

Ver. 56. “Now the sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law.”

Seest thou how the discourse is of the death of the body? therefore also of the resurrection of the body. For if these bodies do not rise again, how is death “swallowed up?”

And not this only, but how is “the law the power of sin?” For that “sin” indeed is “the sting of death,” and more bitter than it, and by it hath its power, is evident; but how is “the law also the power” thereof? Because without the law sin was weak, being practiced indeed, but not able so entirely to condemn: since although the evil took place, it was not so clearly pointed out. So that it was no small change which the law brought in, first causing us to know sin better, and then enhancing the punishment. And if meaning to check sin it did but develop it more fearfully, this is no charge against the physician, but against the abuse of the remedy. Since even the presence of Christ made the Jews’ burden heavier, yet must we not therefore blame it, but while we the more admire it, we must hate them the more, for having been injured by things which ought to have profited them? Yea, to show that it was not the law of itself which gives strength to sin, Christ Himself fulfilled it all and was without sin.

But I would have thee consider how from this topic also he confirms the resurrection. For if this were the cause of death, viz. our committing sin, and if Christ came and took away sin, and delivered us from it through baptism, and together with sin put an end also to the law in the transgression of which sin consists, why doubtest thou any more of the resurrection? For whence, after all this, is death to prevail? Through the law? Nay, it is done away. Through sin? Nay, it is clean destroyed.

Ver. 57. “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

For the trophy He Himself erected, but the crowns He hath caused us also to partake of. And this not of debt, but of mere mercy.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “1 Cor. xv. 47

The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):47** The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.

He continues, “Having said that “the natural was first,” and “the spiritual afterward,” he again states another difference, speaking of “the earthy” and “the heavenly.” For the first difference was between the present life and that which is to come: but this between that before grace and that after grace. And he stated it with a view to the most excellent way of life, saying,—(for to hinder men, as I said, from such confidence in the resurrection as would make them neglectful of their practice and of perfection, from this topic also again he renders them anxious and exhorts to virtue, saying,)—“The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven:” calling the whole by the name of “man,” (**Schaff Note:** i.e., embodying as it were the whole of the two states of being which he is describing in the personal appellation of Man: as in the phrase, Old Man and New Man: &c.) and naming the one from the better, and the other from the worst part.

Ver. 48. “As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy:” so shall they perish and have an end. “As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly:” so shall they abide immortal and glorious.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):48** As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

He continues, “What then? Did not This Man too die? He died indeed, but received no injury there from, yea rather by this He put an end to death. Seest thou how on this part of his

subject also, he makes use of death to establish the doctrine of the resurrection? “For having, as I said before, the beginning and the head,” so he speaks, “doubt not of the whole body.”

Moreover also he frames hereby his advice concerning the best way of living, proposing standards of a lofty and severe life and of that which is not such, and bringing forward the principles of both these, of the one Christ, but of the other Adam. Therefore neither did he simply say, “of the earth,” but “earthy,” i.e., “gross, nailed down to things present:” and again with respect to Christ the reverse, “the Lord from heaven.”

[2.] But if any should say, “therefore the Lord hath not a body (**Schaff Note:** As the Manichees did, and before them the Gnostic sects.) because He is said to be “from heaven,” although what is said before is enough to stop their mouths: yet nothing hinders our silencing them from this consideration also: viz. what is, “the Lord from heaven?” Doth he speak of His nature, or His most perfect life? It is I suppose evident to every one that he speaks of His life. Wherefore also he adds,

Ver. 49. “As we have borne the image of the earthy,” i.e., as we have done evil, “let us also bear (**Schaff Note:** φορέσωμεν. This reading is supported, according to Scholz, by the Alexandrian and six other uncial mss. It is found in several versions, and has the authority of Irenæus, Origen, Basil, Tertullian, Cyprian, and other Fathers. In favor of the reading in our text, φορέσομεν, is the Vatican mss. with others of less authority. Theodoret’s words are remarkable; “φορέσομεν, He used the expression prophetically not hortatively.” [Chrysostom’s reading is adopted by nearly all recent editors, but given only in the margin by the Rev. Ver. The external evidence is decidedly in its favor, but not the internal. C.]) the image of the heavenly,” i.e., let us practice all goodness.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):49** And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

The **Schaff Note** is referring to how Chrysostom has translated this verse as “let us also bear”, referring to “the image of the heavenly”. In the **King James Version**, the word translated “we shall bear” in the Greek is **φορέσομεν** (pronounced pho-ray-so-men), and it is in the first person, plural, future, indicative tense, from G5411; to have a burden, i.e. (by analogy) to wear as clothing or a constant accompaniment:—bear, wear.

This verb is not hortative, that is encouraging, as Chrysostom has translated it, but prophetic of the time when we shall be resurrected. That is the time when our bodies will be changed to be imperishable, or incorruptible, as we read in the very next verse, as in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):50** Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Chrysostom continues, “But besides this, I would fain ask thee, is it of nature that it is said, “he that is of the earth, earthy,” and, “the Lord from heaven?” “Yea,” saith one. What then? Was Adam only “earthy,” or had he also another kind of substance congenial with heavenly and incorporeal beings, which the Scripture calls “soul,” and “spirit?” Every one sees

that he had this also. Therefore neither was the Lord from above only although He is said to be “from heaven,” but He had also assumed our flesh. But Paul’s meaning is such as this: “as we have borne the image of the earthy,” i.e., evil deeds, “let us also bear the image of the heavenly,” the manner of life which is in the heavens. Whereas if he were speaking of nature, the thing needed not exhortation nor advice. So that hence also it is evident that the expression relates to our manner of life.”

Chrysostom completely misinterprets this chapter. Paul is speaking about the resurrection, and what kind of body we will have after we are resurrected, as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):35** But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?”

Paul says in verse 50 above, “that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption”. Our bodies are mortal. At the resurrection, they will become immortal. He is not saying anything about “evil deeds” here. He is talking about the kind of bodies that will be raised, or resurrected.

Chrysostom continues, “Wherefore also he introduces the saying in the manner of advice and calls it an “image,” here too again showing that he is speaking of conduct, not of nature. For therefore are we become earthy, because we have done evil: not because we were originally formed “earthy,” but because we sinned. For sin came first, and then death and then the sentence, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” (Gen. iii. 19)”

He refers to **Genesis 3 (KJV):19** In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

He continues, “Then also entered in the swarm of the passions. For it is not simply the being born “of earth” that makes a man “earthy,” (since the Lord also was of this mass and lump,) but the doing earthly things, even as also he is made “heavenly” by performing things meet for heaven.

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Ver. 50. “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):50** Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

He continues, “Seest thou how he explains himself again, relieving us of the trouble? which he often doth: for by flesh he here denotes men’s evil deeds, which he hath done also elsewhere; as when he saith, “But ye are not in the flesh:” and again, “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Rom. viii. 8, 9)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):8** So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Paul does not mention blood in these verses, but only flesh. But in 1 Corinthians 15:50, he does mention “flesh and blood”. Again, he misinterprets verse 50 in 1 Corinthians 15. Paul is talking about the kind of body that can go to heaven, like the body of Jesus when He was resurrected and ascended into heaven.

He continues, “So that when he saith, “Now this I say,” he means nothing else than this:

“therefore said I these things that thou mayest learn that evil deeds conduct not to a kingdom.” Thus from the resurrection he straightway introduced also the doctrine of the kingdom also; wherefore also he adds, “neither doth corruption inherit incorruption,” i.e., neither shall wickedness inherit that glory and the enjoyment of the things incorruptible. For in many other places he calls wickedness by this name, saying, “He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption.” (Gal. vi. 8)”

He refers to **Galatians 6 (KJV):8** For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

But 1 Corinthians, chapter 15 is not talking about sowing to the flesh, but about the resurrection of our body after death, and what body we will have when we are resurrected.

Chrysostom continues, “Now if he were speaking of the body and not of evil doing, he would not have said “corruption.” For he nowhere calls the body “corruption,” since neither is it corruption, but a thing corruptible: wherefore proceeding to discourse also of it, he calls it not “corruption,” but “corruptible,” saying, “for this corruptible must put on incorruption.””

By corruptible, Paul means mortal as we read in Genesis 3:19 that dust we are, and to dust we shall return. And Paul then explains the resurrection, as we read in context in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):50** Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Chrysostom continues, “[3.] Next, having completed his advice concerning our manner of life, according to his constant custom blending closely subject with subject, he passes again to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body: as follows:”

Chrysostom will now make the Scripture pass from talking about walking in the flesh, to “the doctrine of the resurrection of the body”. But Paul has not been talking about “walking in the flesh”, or “men’s evil deeds”. His whole discourse in this chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians is about the “resurrection of the body”, as in the beginning of the chapter where we read as in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):12** Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

Chrysostom continues, “Ver. 51. “Behold, I tell you a mystery.”

It is something awful and ineffable and which all know not, which he is about to speak of: which also indicates the greatness of the honor he confers on them; I mean, his speaking mysteries to them. But what is this?

“We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” He means as follows: “we shall not all die, ‘but we shall all be changed,’” even those who die not. For they too are mortal. “Do not thou therefore because thou diest, on this account fear,” saith he, “as if thou shouldst not rise

again: for there are, there are some who shall even escape this, and yet this suffices them not for that resurrection, but even those bodies which die not must be changed and be transformed into incorruption.”

Ver. 52. “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.”

After he had discoursed much of the resurrection, then opportunely he points out also its very marvelous character. As thus: “not this only,” saith he, “is wonderful that our bodies first turn to corruption, and then are raised; nor that the bodies which rise again after their corruption are better than these present ones; nor that they pass on to a much better state, nor that each receives back his own and none that of another; but that things so many and so great, and surpassing all man’s reason and conception, are done “in a moment,” i.e., in an instant of time: and to show this more clearly, “in the twinkling of an eye,” saith he, “while one can wink an eyelid.” Further, because he had said a great thing and full of astonishment; that so many and so great results should take place so quickly; he alleges, to prove it, the credibility of Him who performs it; as follows, “For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” The expression, “we,” he uses not of himself, but of them that are then found alive.”

Yes, those who are changed are those who are found alive when He comes.

He continues, “Ver. 53. “For this corruptible must put on incorruption.””

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):50** Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

He continues, “Thus lest any, hearing that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” should suppose that our bodies do not rise again; he adds, “this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” Now the body is “corruptible,” the body is “mortal:” so that the body indeed remains, for it is the body which is put on; but its mortality and corruption vanish away, when immortality and incorruption come upon it. Do not thou therefore question hereafter how it shall live an endless life, now that thou hast heard of its becoming incorruptible.”

And here he has explained well that the “body indeed remains” when “its mortality and corruption vanish away, when immortality and incorruption come upon it”.

He continues, “[4.] Ver. 54. “But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):54** So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

He continues, “Thus, since he was speaking of great and secret things, he again takes prophecy (Hosea xiii. 14) to confirm his word. “Death is swallowed up in victory:” i.e., utterly; not so much as a fragment of it remains nor a hope of returning, incorruption having consumed corruption.”

He refers to **Hosea 13 (KJV):14** I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will



redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

He continues, “Ver. 55. “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):55** O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

He continues, “Seest thou his noble soul? how even as one who is offering sacrifices for victory, having become inspired and seeing already things future as things past, he leaps and tramples upon death fallen at his feet, and shouts a cry of triumph over its head where it lies, exclaiming mightily and saying, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” It is clean gone, it is perished, it is utterly vanished away, and in vain hast thou done all those former things. For He not only disarmed death and vanquished it, but even destroyed it, and made it quite cease from being.

Ver. 56. “Now the sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):56** The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

He continues, “Seest thou how the discourse is of the death of the body? therefore also of the resurrection of the body. For if these bodies do not rise again, how is death “swallowed up?” And not this only, but how is “the law the power of sin?” For that “sin” indeed is “the sting of death,” and more bitter than it, and by it hath its power, is evident; but how is “the law also the power” thereof? Because without the law sin was weak, being practiced indeed, but not able so entirely to condemn: since although the evil took place, it was not so clearly pointed out. So that it was no small change which the law brought in, first causing us to know sin better, and then enhancing the punishment. And if meaning to check sin it did but develop it more fearfully, this is no charge against the physician, but against the abuse of the remedy. Since even the presence of Christ made the Jews’ burden heavier, yet must we not therefore blame it, but while we the more admire it, we must hate them the more, for having been injured by things which ought to have profited them? Yea, to show that it was not the law of itself which gives strength to sin, Christ Himself fulfilled it all and was without sin.”

But we are not to hate the Jews.

He continues, “But I would have thee consider how from this topic also he confirms the resurrection. For if this were the cause of death, viz. our committing sin, and if Christ came and took away sin, and delivered us from it through baptism, and together with sin put an end also to the law in the transgression of which sin consists, why doubtst thou any more of the resurrection? For whence, after all this, is death to prevail? Through the law? Nay, it is done away. Through sin? Nay, it is clean destroyed.

Ver. 57. “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.””

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):57** But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. **58** Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

He concludes, “For the trophy He Himself erected, but the crowns He hath caused us also to partake of. And this not of debt, but of mere mercy.”

Chrysostom finishes well in speaking of the resurrection. But 1 Corinthians, chapter 15,

does not speak about evil deeds, or walking after the flesh. It speaks solely of the resurrection, and what type of body we shall have.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY VI, page 355-356**

1 Thessalonians iv. 15–17

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in nowise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

The Prophets indeed, wishing to show the credibility of the things said by them, before all other things say this, “The vision which Isaiah saw” (Isa. i. 1); and again, “The word of the Lord which came to Jeremiah” (Jer. i. 1, Sept); and again, “Thus saith the Lord”; with many such expressions. And many of them even saw God sitting, as far as it was possible for them to see Him. But Paul not having seen Him sitting, but having Christ speaking in himself, instead of Thus saith the Lord, said, “Do ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me?” (2 Cor. xiii. 3) And again, “Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ.” For the “Apostle” speaks the things of Him who sent him; showing that nothing is of himself. And again, “I think that I also have the Spirit of God.” (1 Cor. vii. 40) All those things therefore he spake by the Spirit, but this, which he now says, he heard even expressly from God. As also that which he had said discoursing to the Elders of Ephesus, “It is more blessed to give than to receive,” he heard among things not recorded. **(Schaff Note:** [The saying was probably in circulation among the Christians, for Paul bids the elders “remember the words.”—J.A.B.]) (Acts xx. 35)

Let us then see what he now also says. “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in nowise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the last trump.” For then, he saith, “The powers of the heavens shall be shaken.” (Matt. xxiv. 29) But wherefore with the trumpet? For we see this on Mount Sinai too, and Angels there also. But what means the voice of the Archangel? As he said in the parable of the Virgins, Arise! “The Bridegroom cometh.” (From Matt. xxv. 6) Either it means this, or that as in the case of a king, so also shall it then be, Angels ministering at the Resurrection. For He says, let the dead rise, and the work is done, the Angels not having power to do this, but His word. As if upon a king’s commanding and saying it, those who were shut up should go forth, and the servants should lead them out, yet they do this not from their own power, but from that Voice. This also Christ says in another place: “He shall send forth his Angels with a great trumpet, and they shall gather together his Elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (Matt. xxiv. 31) And everywhere you see the Angels running to and fro. The Archangel therefore I think is he, who is set over those who are sent forth, and who shouts thus: “Make all men ready, for the Judge is at hand.” And what is “at the last trumpet”? **(Schaff Note:** [The N.T. text is, without variation, “with the trump of God.” Chrys. mingles in his recollection this and the kindred passage in 1 Cor. xv. 53. The quotation at the head of the

Homily is correct.—J.A.B.]) Here he implies that there are many trumpets, and that at the last the Judge descends. “And the dead,” he says, “in Christ shall rise first. Then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

Ver. 18. “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

If He is about to descend, on what account shall we be caught up? For the sake of honor. For when a king drives into a city, those who are in honor go out to meet him; but the condemned await the judge within. And upon the coming of an affectionate father, his children indeed, and those who are worthy to be his children, are taken out in a chariot, that they may see and kiss him; but those of the domestics who have offended remain within. We are carried upon the chariot of our Father. For He received Him up in the clouds, and “we shall be caught up in the clouds.” (Acts i. 9) Seest thou how great is the honor? and as He descends, we go forth to meet Him, and, what is more blessed than all, so we shall be with Him.

“Who shall speak of the mightinesses of the Lord, and make all His praises to be heard?” (Ps. cvi. 2, Sept.) How many blessings has He vouchsafed to the human race! Those who are dead are raised first, and thus the meeting takes place together. Abel who died before all shall then meet Him together with those who are alive. So that they in this respect will have no advantage, but he who is corrupted, and has been so many years in the earth, shall meet Him with them, and so all the others. For if they awaited us, that we might be crowned, as elsewhere he says in an Epistle, “God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect” (Heb. xi. 40), much more shall we also await them; or rather, they indeed awaited, but we not at all. For the Resurrection takes place “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.”

But as to the saying, that they are gathered together; they arise indeed everywhere, but are gathered together by the Angels. The former therefore is the work of the power of God commanding the earth to give up its deposit, and there is no one who ministers in it, as He then called Lazarus, “Lazarus, come forth” (John xi. 43); but the gathering is the work of ministers. But if Angels gather them together, and run to and fro, how are they caught up here? They are caught up after the descent, after that they are gathered together. For this is also done without any one being aware. (**Schaff Note:** He seems to allude to Matt. xxiv. 36) For when they see the earth agitated, the dust mingling, the bodies rising perchance (**Schaff Note:** ἴσως, which has been translated “equally.”) on every side, no one ministering to this, but the “shout” being sufficient, the whole earth filled (for consider how great a thing it is that all the men from Adam unto His coming shall then stand with wives and children),—when they see so great a tumult upon the earth,—then they shall know. As therefore in the Dispensation that was in the Flesh, they had foreseen nothing of it, so also will it then be.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “1 Thessalonians iv. 15–17

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in nowise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

He refers to **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):15** For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

He continues, “The Prophets indeed, wishing to show the credibility of the things said by them, before all other things say this, “The vision which Isaiah saw” (Isa. i. 1);”

He refers to **Isaiah 1 (KJV):1** The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

He continues, “and again, “The word of the Lord which came to Jeremiah” (Jer. i. 1, Sept);”

He refers to **Jeremiah 1 (Septuagint):1** The word of God which came to Jeremias the [son] of Chelcias, of the priests, who dwelt in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin:

And to **Jeremiah 1 (KJV):1** The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin:

He continues, “and again, “Thus saith the Lord”; with many such expressions.”

He refers to **Exodus 4 (KJV):22** And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn:

He continues, “And many of them even saw God sitting, as far as it was possible for them to see Him.”

And we read in **Isaiah 6 (KJV):1** In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!”

He continues, “But Paul not having seen Him sitting, but having Christ speaking in himself, instead of Thus saith the Lord, said, “Do ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me?” (2 Cor. xiii. 3)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):3** Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.

He continues, “And again, “Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ.” For the “Apostle” speaks the things of Him who sent him; showing that nothing is of himself. And again, “I think that I also have the Spirit of God.” (1 Cor. vii. 40)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 1 (KJV):1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:

And to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):40** But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

He continues, “All those things therefore he spake by the Spirit, but this, which he now says, he heard even expressly from God. As also that which he had said discoursing to the Elders of Ephesus, “It is more blessed to give than to receive,” he heard among things not recorded. (**Schaff Note:** [The saying was probably in circulation among the Christians, for Paul

bids the elders “remember the words.”—J.A.B.]) (Acts xx. 35)”

He refers to **Acts 20 (KJV):17** And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

And to **Acts 20 (KJV):35** I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

He continues, “Let us then see what he now also says. “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in nowise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the last trump.” For then, he saith, “The powers of the heavens shall be shaken.” (Matt. xxiv. 29)”

Chrysostom says “the last trump” here, but we read in context again in **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):15** For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. **16** For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: **17** Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Note that he inserts “last” before “trump” into verse 16 above. In a related Scripture we do read as in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):52** In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

And note that Chrysostom quoted it correctly at the beginning of this homily, as we read above, “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God”.

He also refers to **Matthew 24 (KJV):29** Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

Note that he places the timing of 1 Thessalonians 4:17 to be after the tribulation. We shall explain shortly how this cannot be.

He continues, “But wherefore with the trumpet? For we see this on Mount Sinai too, and Angels there also.”

He may refer in part to **Exodus 19 (KJV):17** And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. **18** And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. **19** And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. **20** And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.

He continues, “But what means the voice of the Archangel? As he said in the parable of the Virgins, Arise! “The Bridegroom cometh.” (From Matt. xxv. 6)”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):6** And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

He continues, “Either it means this, or that as in the case of a king, so also shall it then be,

Angels ministering at the Resurrection. For He says, let the dead rise, and the work is done, the Angels not having power to do this, but His word. As if upon a king's commanding and saying it, those who were shut up should go forth, and the servants should lead them out, yet they do this not from their own power, but from that Voice. This also Christ says in another place: "He shall send forth his Angels with a great trumpet, and they shall gather together his Elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matt. xxiv. 31)"

He refers to **Matthew 24 (KJV):31** And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

He continues, "And everywhere you see the Angels running to and fro. The Archangel therefore I think is he, who is set over those who are sent forth, and who shouts thus: "Make all men ready, for the Judge is at hand." And what is "at the last trumpet"? (**Schaff Note**: [The N.T. text is, without variation, "with the trump of God." Chrys. mingles in his recollection this and the kindred passage in 1 Cor. xv. 53. The quotation at the head of the Homily is correct.— J.A.B.]")

We can agree with the **Schaff Note**, as we also noted above that Chrysostom inserts "last" in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, probably referring to 1 Corinthians 15:53.

He continues, "Here he implies that there are many trumpets, and that at the last the Judge descends. "And the dead," he says, "in Christ shall rise first. Then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

He refers again to **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):15** For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

He continues, "Ver. 18. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words.""

He refers to **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):18** Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

He continues, "If He is about to descend, on what account shall we be caught up? For the sake of honor. For when a king drives into a city, those who are in honor go out to meet him; but the condemned await the judge within. And upon the coming of an affectionate father, his children indeed, and those who are worthy to be his children, are taken out in a chariot, that they may see and kiss him; but those of the domestics who have offended remain within. We are carried upon the chariot of our Father. For He received Him up in the clouds, and "we shall be caught up in the clouds." (Acts i. 9)"

He refers in context to **Acts 1 (KJV):9** And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

And to **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):17** Then we which are alive and remain shall be

caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

He continues, “Seest thou how great is the honor? and as He descends, we go forth to meet Him, and, what is more blessed than all, so we shall be with Him.”

Chrysostom imagines that we will meet Him after His descent to earth, and then, with Him, we will be caught up together in the clouds. But let us read again, in context, in **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):13** But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. **14** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

Paul is talking about those who “have fallen asleep” in Jesus, that is, those who have died in the Lord. And “God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus”. So God is going to bring with Him the spirits of those who have died in the Lord, and have been waiting in heaven with Him for the resurrection.

We continue to read in **1 Thessalonians 4 (NKJV):15** For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

That is, whoever is alive when He comes will not be raised before those who have already died in the Lord.

We continue to read in **1 Thessalonians 4 (NKJV):16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. **17** Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. **18** Therefore comfort one another with these words.

So all who are alive when He comes will be caught up together “with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air”. We will not meet the Lord on earth at this time, but “in the air”. Then things will continue to happen on earth according to the Lord’s timetable. We will discuss this timetable shortly.

Chrysostom continues, ““Who shall speak of the mightinesses of the Lord, and make all His praises to be heard?” (Ps. cvi. 2, Sept.)”

He refers to **Psalms 105 (Septuagint):2** Who shall tell the mighty acts of the Lord? [who] shall cause all his praises to be heard?

And to **Psalms 106 (KJV):2** Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can shew forth all his praise?

He continues, “How many blessings has He vouchsafed to the human race! Those who are dead are raised first, and thus the meeting takes place together. Abel who died before all shall then meet Him together with those who are alive. So that they in this respect will have no advantage, but he who is corrupted, and has been so many years in the earth, shall meet Him with them, and so all the others. For if they awaited us, that we might be crowned, as elsewhere he says in an Epistle, “God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect” (Heb. xi. 40), much more shall we also await them; or rather, they indeed awaited, but we not at all.”

He refers to **Hebrews 11 (KJV):40** God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

He continues, “For the Resurrection takes place “in a moment, in the twinkling of an

eye.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):**51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

He continues, “But as to the saying, that they are gathered together; they arise indeed everywhere, but are gathered together by the Angels. The former therefore is the work of the power of God commanding the earth to give up its deposit, and there is no one who ministers in it, as He then called Lazarus, “Lazarus, come forth” (John xi. 43);”

He refers in context to **John 11 (KJV):**43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

He continues, “but the gathering is the work of ministers. But if Angels gather them together, and run to and fro, how are they caught up here? They are caught up after the descent, after that they are gathered together.”

However, the Scripture does not say that they “are caught up after the descent”, but that they are caught up “to meet the Lord in the air”, as we read again in **1 Thessalonians 4 (NKJV):**16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

This refers to the rapture. The dead in Christ “will rise first”, before the tribulation begins. Then also “we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air”. The angels are not mentioned here. The meeting will happen in the air.

But Chrysostom is referring to **Matthew 24 (KJV):**29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Now before this, Israel was led away captive to all nations, as we read in **Luke 21 (KJV):**24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

And this was prophesied in **Ezekiel 36 (KJV):**17 Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. 18 Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: 19 And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them.



But the gathering of Israel is also prophesied in **Ezekiel 36 (KJV):22** Therefore say unto the house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. 23 And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. 24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.

So this gathering together of “his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other”, mentioned in Matthew 24:31, refers to Israel, as we read also in **Mark 13 (KJV):26** And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

This gathering will happen “Immediately after the tribulation of those days”, as we read in Matthew 24:29 above. But the rapture will precede the tribulation period so that the final week of the seventy weeks in Daniel 9:24-27 may fulfilled for Israel. We will explain the “seventy weeks” in Daniel shortly.

Chrysostom continues, “For this is also done without any one being aware. (**Schaff Note:** He seems to allude to Matt. xxiv. 36)”

He refers to **Matthew 24 (KJV):36** But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

He continues, “For when they see the earth agitated, the dust mingling, the bodies rising perchance (**Schaff Note:** ἴσως, which has been translated “equally.”) on every side, no one ministering to this, but the “shout” being sufficient, the whole earth filled (for consider how great a thing it is that all the men from Adam unto His coming shall then stand with wives and children),—when they see so great a tumult upon the earth,—then they shall know. As therefore in the Dispensation that was in the Flesh, they had foreseen nothing of it, so also will it then be.

He refers to the days of the flood, as we read in **Luke 17 (KJV):26** And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. 27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

And in **Matthew 24 (KJV):37** But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, 39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

But at the rapture, the saints will not be gathered on earth, standing “with wives and children”. In the rapture, the saints, both the living and the dead, will be “caught up together” in order “to meet the Lord in the air”, as in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 above.

Now Chrysostom and the Church in his time believed that there would be one great resurrection of all the dead, both of the righteous and of the unrighteous. But that there are two resurrections was revealed by Jesus in **John 5 (KJV):29** And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of

damnation.

Chrysostom did not understand that there will be a thousand year interval between the first resurrection, the resurrection of the righteous, and the second resurrection of the unrighteous. This is revealed in **Revelation 20 (KJV):4** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

And Chrysostom did not understand the sequence of the events of the second coming of Christ which would lead up to this thousand year reign of Christ.

In order to understand this sequence, we need to read Daniel's prophecy in **Daniel 9 (KJV):24** Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

Daniel had prayed to the Lord about what would happen to his people, the Jews, who were in a state of dispersion to Babylon because of idolatry. Jeremiah had prophesied that this would last for seventy years, and Daniel knew that the time was almost completed for these seventy years to be over.

Now the seventy weeks above in Daniel 9:24 are actually seventy sevens, that is, 490 years, as we continue to read in **Daniel 9 (KJV):25** Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

So after "seven weeks" plus "threescore and two weeks", that is, sixty-nine weeks, Messiah was cut off. There is therefore only one week left of the seventy. The "people of the prince that shall come" were the Romans, who destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D. under the Roman general Titus. The "prince that shall come" refers to the antichrist.

The destruction of Jerusalem was also foretold by Jesus in **Luke 21 (KJV):20** And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. 22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

So the Jews "shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled".

Right away we see a gap between the sixty-nine weeks and the seventieth week, when God will again deal with Israel. This gap will last until the “times of the Gentiles” are fulfilled, as Jesus revealed in Luke 21:24 above. Now the “times of the Gentiles” is also the time of the Church age. In order for God to again deal with Israel, the Church will have to be taken out of the way. This will be done in the rapture, as we read in **1 Thessalonians 4 (NKJV):16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Now at the rapture, the “one who restrains” will be “taken out of the way”, as we read in **2 Thessalonians 2 (NKJV):6** And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The “He who now restrains” so that “he may be revealed in his own time” is the Holy Spirit. The one who is “revealed in his own time” is “the lawless one”, that is, the antichrist. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church today restrains lawlessness and the working of Satan. When the Church is raptured, that is, caught up to meet the Lord in the air, the presence of the Holy Spirit will no longer be on the earth. One can only imagine the tribulation that will follow. All hell will break loose.

Now also the Church at Philadelphia received a prophecy as in **Revelation 3 (KJV):10** Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

The Church at Philadelphia is representative of the whole Church which will be present on the earth at the time of the rapture. So the Church will be kept “from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth”, and be raptured before this final week of tribulation concerning Israel.

Now concerning this final week, we continue to read in **Daniel 9 (KJV):27** And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

The antichrist shall “confirm the covenant” with Israel for one week. But in the middle of the week, he will set himself up in the temple and declare himself to be God. This is referred to in **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):1** Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and

exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

This is the “abomination of desolation” spoken of in **Matthew 24 (KJV):15** When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Daniel spoke of this in **Daniel 9 (KJV):27** And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

This will occur in the middle of the tribulation week. So for the last 3 and 1/2 years, Israel will be divinely protected, as we read in **Revelation 12 (KJV):13** And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. 14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

That the woman is Israel is revealed in **Revelation 12 (KJV):1** And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: 2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. 3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. 4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

The interpretation of the symbolism of the sun, the moon, and the crown of twelve stars is revealed in Joseph’s dream in **Genesis 37 (KJV):9** And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. 10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

So the “man child” in Revelation 12:13 above is Christ, who was born of Mary, an Israelite maiden, as we read in **Revelation 12 (KJV):5** And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

Now the time of the tribulation is known as “the time of Jacob’s trouble” as we read in **Jeremiah 30 (KJV):5** For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

Now during this tribulation, many will be slain for the word of God, and resurrected, as we read **Revelation 7 (KJV):9** After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 And cried with a

loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. 13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The first resurrection is pictured as a great harvest beginning at the rapture, which will include all of the Old and New Testament saints. This resurrection will take place before the tribulation, and continues with gleanings during the tribulation. Subsequent to the rapture, and the tribulation, this harvest will also include saints who die during the thousand year reign of Christ. In Chrysostom's thinking, there was just one great harvest.

Christ will descend, and we will meet Him in the air, and return with Him to heaven until the tribulation period of seven years is at an end. Then Christ will return with the armies of heaven to the battle of Armageddon, as we read in **Revelation 19 (KJV)**: 11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords. 17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. 19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

After this battle, there will be the judgment of the nations, as we read in **Matthew 25 (KJV)**: 31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed

me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

This judgment is to determine which nations will enter the Kingdom of one thousand years in which Christ will reign with the righteous. The basis of this judgment is how a nation treated the Jews during the tribulation period. Any individuals in a nation who have believed in Jesus Christ will be saved, but the nation will be judged by how they treated the Jews during the tribulation.

Chrysostom did not understand the sequence of events in the second coming, and the first resurrection, which is mentioned in **Revelation 20 (KJV):4** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

This hindered his interpretation of the Scriptures. The “first resurrection” relates to the righteous dead. The “rest of the dead” relates to the unrighteous dead who will not be raised until the White Throne Judgment, which is mentioned in **Revelation 20 (KJV):11** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 12, HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS, HOMILY XLII, page 255-257**, he says, referring to 1 Corinthians 15:48, “What then? Did not This Man too die? He died indeed, but received no injury there from, yea

rather by this He put an end to death. Seest thou how on this part of his subject also, he makes use of death to establish the doctrine of the resurrection? “For having, as I said before, the beginning and the head,” so he speaks, “doubt not of the whole body.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):48** As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

And he says, “Ver. 49. “As we have borne the image of the earthy,” i.e., as we have done evil, “let us also bear the image of the heavenly,” i.e., let us practice all goodness.”

But he is referring to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):49** And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Although many Church Fathers refer to it in this way, as the **Schaff Note** indicates, such as “Irenæus, Origen, Basil, Tertullian, Cyprian, and other Fathers”, the exhortation, “let us bear”, does not fit the context of 1 Corinthians, chapter 15. And yet Chrysostom seems to make it fit, as he asserts, “But Paul’s meaning is such as this: “as we have borne the image of the earthy,” i.e., evil deeds, “let us also bear the image of the heavenly,” the manner of life which is in the heavens. Whereas if he were speaking of nature, the thing needed not exhortation nor advice. So that hence also it is evident that the expression relates to our manner of life.”

He argues that Paul “calls it an “image” here too again showing that he is speaking of conduct, not of nature”, referring to verse 49 above.

Chrysostom then refers to “Ver. 50. “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God””, and he then says that “by flesh he here denotes men’s evil deeds”.

But Paul is talking about the kind of body that can go to heaven, like the body of Jesus when He was resurrected and ascended into heaven.

But then Chrysostom switches topics, as he says, “Next, having completed his advice concerning our manner of life, according to his constant custom blending closely subject with subject, he passes again to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body: as follows:

Ver. 51. “Behold, I tell you a mystery.””

And then he says, “But what is this? “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” He means as follows: “we shall not all die, “but we shall all be changed,” even those who die not. For they too are mortal.”

But Paul has not been talking about “walking in the flesh”, or “men’s evil deeds”. His whole discourse is about the “resurrection of the body” in this chapter of 1 Corinthians, as we read near the beginning of the chapter in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):12** Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

But Chrysostom explains well the actual resurrection of the body, as he says, “Thus lest any, hearing that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” should suppose that our bodies do not rise again; he adds, “this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” Now the body is “corruptible,” the body is “mortal:” so that the body indeed remains, for it is the body which is put on; but its mortality and corruption vanish away,

when immortality and incorruption come upon it. Do not thou therefore question hereafter how it shall live an endless life, now that thou hast heard of its becoming incorruptible.”

And he says, “For He not only disarmed death and vanquished it, but even destroyed it, and made it quite cease from being.”

And he says, “Seest thou how the discourse is of the death of the body? therefore also of the resurrection of the body. For if these bodies do not rise again, how is death “swallowed up?””

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY VI, page 355-356**, he says, ““For the Resurrection takes place “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.”

And he says, ““but the gathering is the work of ministers. But if Angels gather them together, and run to and fro, how are they caught up here? They are caught up after the descent, after that they are gathered together.”

And he says, “For when they see the earth agitated, the dust mingling, the bodies rising perchance (**Schaff Note:** ἴσως, which has been translated “equally.”) on every side, no one ministering to this, but the “shout” being sufficient, the whole earth filled (for consider how great a thing it is that all the men from Adam unto His coming shall then stand with wives and children),—when they see so great a tumult upon the earth,—then they shall know.”

But at the rapture, the saints will not be gathered on earth, standing “with wives and children”. In the rapture, the saints, both the living and the dead, will be “caught up together” in order “to meet the Lord in the air”, as in 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

Now Chrysostom and the Church in his time believed that there would be one great resurrection of all the dead, both of the righteous and of the unrighteous. But in Revelation 20:4-5, the first resurrection is mentioned of the righteous. The unrighteous dead must wait another one thousand years for the White Throne judgment in Revelation 20:11-15.

Chrysostom did not understand the sequence of the events of the second coming of Christ which would lead up to this thousand year reign of Christ.

## Hell

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY VI, page 356-360**

When these things then are done, then also will be the voice of the Archangel shouting and commanding the Angels, and the trumpets, or rather the sound of the trumpet. What trembling then, what fear will possess those that remain upon the earth. For one woman is caught up and another is left behind, and one man is taken, and another is passed over. (Matt. xxiv. 40, 41; Luke xvii. 34, 35) What will be the state of their souls, when they see some indeed taken up, but themselves left behind? Will not these things be able to shake their souls more terribly than any hell? Let us represent then in word that this is now present. For if sudden death, or earthquakes in cities, and threatenings thus terrify our souls; when we see the earth breaking up, and crowded with all these, when we hear the trumpets, and the voice of the Archangel louder than any trumpet, when we perceive the heaven shriveled up, and God the



King of all himself coming nigh—what then will be our souls? Let us shudder, I beseech you, and be frightened as if these things were now taking place. Let us not comfort ourselves by the delay. For when it must certainly happen, the delay profits us nothing.

How great will then be the fear and trembling! Have you ever seen men led away to death? What do you think is the state of their souls, as they are going on the way to the gate? is it not worse than many deaths? What would they not choose both to do and to suffer, so that they might be delivered from that cloud of darkness? I have heard many say, who have been recalled by the mercy of the king (Emperor), after having been led away, that they did not even see men as men, their souls being so troubled, so horror-struck, and beside themselves. If then the death of the body thus frightens us, when eternal death approaches, what will be our feelings? And why do I speak of those who are led away? A crowd then stands around, the greater part not even knowing them. If any one looked into their souls, no one is so cruel, no one so hard-hearted, no one so firm, as not to have his soul dejected, and relaxed with fear and despair. And if when others are taken off by this death, which differs nothing from sleep, those who are not concerned in it are thus affected; when we ourselves fall into greater evils, what then will be our state? It is not, believe me, it is not possible to represent the suffering by words. Nay, you say, but God is full of love to man, and none of these things will happen! Then it is written in vain! No, you say, but only as a threat, that we may become wise! If then we are not wise, but continue evil, will He not, tell me, inflict the punishment? Will He not then recompense the good either with rewards? Yes, you say, for that is becoming to Him, to do good even beyond desert. So that those things indeed are true and will certainly be, while the punishments will not be at all, but are only for the purpose of a threat, and of terror! By what means I shall persuade you, I know not. If I say, that “the worm will not die, and the fire will not be quenched” (Mark ix. 44); if I say, that “they shall go away into everlasting fire” (Matt. xxv. 41, 46); if I set before you the rich man already suffering punishment, you will say that it is all a matter of threatening. Whence then shall I persuade you? For this is a Satanic reasoning, indulging you with a favor that will not profit, and causing you to be slothful.

How then can we banish it? Whatever things we say from Scripture, you will say, are for the purpose of threatening. But with respect to future things this indeed might be said, but not so concerning things that have happened, and have had an end. You have heard of the deluge. And were those things also said by way of threat? Did they not actually happen? Those men too said many such things, and for a hundred years while the ark was building, and the wood was being wrought, and the righteous man was calling aloud, there was no one who believed. But because they did not believe the threat in words, they suffered the punishment in very deed. And this will be our fate too, if we shall not have believed. On this account it is that He compares His coming with the days of Noah, because as some disbelieved in that deluge, so will they in the deluge of hell. Were these things a threat? were they not a fact? Then will not He, who then brought punishment upon them so suddenly, much more inflict it now also? For the things that are committed now are not less than the offenses of that time. How?—because then, it says, “the sons of God went in unto the daughters of men” (Gen. vi. 4), and those mixtures were the great offense. But now there is no form of wickedness, which is unattempted. Do you then believe that the deluge took place? Or does it seem to you a fable? And yet even the mountains where the ark rested, bear witness; I speak of those in Armenia.

But, even superabundantly, I will turn my discourse to another thing more evident than

that. Has any one of you ever traveled in Palestine? For I will no longer mention report, but facts, and yet the other were clearer than facts. For whatever things the Scripture says, are more to be trusted than things we see. Has any one of you then ever traveled in Palestine? I suppose so. What then? Bear witness then for me, ye who have seen the places, to those who have not been there. For above Ascalon and Gaza up to the very end of the river Jordan there is a country wide and fruitful—or rather there was—for it is not now. This then is that which was as a garden. For it is said, “Lot beheld all the plain (**Schaff Note:** [Properly “the region around Jordan,” and denoting the deep and rather wide valley through which it flows. Chrys. makes it include all of central Judea, and applies to that whole district what he had heard of the desolate country between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, the N.T. “wilderness of Judea.”—J.A.B.] ) of Jordan—and it was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the Lord.” (Gen. xiii. 10) This, therefore, that was so flourishing, and that rivaled all countries, which for thrivingness exceeded the Paradise of God, is now more desolate than any wilderness. And there stand trees, indeed, and they bear fruit. But the fruit is a monument of the wrath of God. For there stand pomegranates, I speak both of the tree and the fruit, having a very fine appearance, and to the ignorant man holding out great hopes. But if they are taken into the hand, being broken open they display no fruit indeed, but much dust and ashes stored up within. Such also is the whole land. If you find a stone, you will find it full of ashes. And why do I speak of stone and wood and earth, where the air and water partake of the calamity? For as when a body is burnt and consumed, the shape remains, and the outline in the appearance of the fire, and the bulk and the proportion, but the power is no more, so truly there you may see earth, which yet has nothing of earth about it, but all ashes; trees and fruit, but nothing of trees and fruit about them; air and water, but nothing of water nor of air about them, for even these are turned to ashes. And yet how could air ever have been burnt, or water, whilst it remained water? For wood and stones indeed it is possible to burn, but air and water it is altogether impossible. Impossible to us, but possible to Him who did these things. Therefore the air is nothing else than a furnace, the water is a furnace. All things are unfruitful, all unproductive, all for vengeance; images of wrath that has gone before, and proofs of that which is to come.

Are these too but threatening words? Are these but the sound of words? For to me indeed the former things were not incredible, but things not seen were equally credible with things that were seen. But even to the unbeliever these are sufficient to produce faith. If any one disbelieves hell, let him consider Sodom, let him reflect upon Gomorrah, the vengeance that has been inflicted, and which yet remains. This is a proof of the eternity of punishment. Are these things grievous? And is it not grievous, when you say that there is no hell, but that God has merely threatened it? when you slack the hands of the people? (**Schaff Note:** See Heb. xii. 12; Jer. xxxviii) It is thou who disbelievest that compellest me to say these things; it is thou that hast drawn me out into these words. If thou believedst the words of Christ I should not be compelled to bring forward facts to induce belief. But since you have evaded them, you shall be persuaded henceforth, whether willing or unwilling. For what have you to say concerning Sodom? Would you wish also to know the cause, for which these things were then done? It was one sin, a grievous and accursed one certainly, yet but one. The men of that time had a passion for boys, and on that account they suffered this punishment. But now ten thousand sins equal and even more grievous than these are committed. Then He who for one sin poured forth so much anger, and neither regarded the supplication of Abraham, nor yet Lot who dwelt among

them, the man who from honor to His servants offered his own daughters to insult, will He spare, when there are so many sins? These things truly are ridiculous, trifling, delusion, and diabolical deceit!

Do you wish that I should also bring forward another? You have certainly heard of Pharaoh, king of the Egyptians; you know therefore the punishment also which he suffered, how even with his whole host, chariots and horses and all, he was engulfed in the Erythræan sea. Would you hear also other examples? he perhaps was an impious man, or rather not perhaps, but certainly he was an impious man. Would you see those also punished, who were of the number of believers, and who held fast to God, but were not of upright life? Hear Paul saying, “Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us murmur, as some of them murmured, and perished by the destroyer. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted, and perished by the serpents.” (1 Cor. x. 8–10) And if fornication, and if murmuring had such power, what will not be the effect of our sins?

And if thou dost not now pay the penalty, do not wonder. For they knew not of a hell, therefore they were visited with punishments following close at their heels. But thou, whatever sins thou commit, though thou shouldst escape present penalty, wilt pay for it all There. Did he so punish those who were nearly in the state of children, and who did not sin so greatly—and will He spare us? It would not be reasonable. For if we commit the same sins with them, we shall deserve a greater punishment than they did. Wherefore? Because we have enjoyed more grace. But when our offenses are numerous, and more heinous than theirs, what vengeance shall we not undergo? They—and let no one think I say it as admiring them, or excusing them; far be it: for when God punishes, he who passes a contrary sentence, does it at the suggestion of the devil; I say this therefore, not praising them nor excusing them, but showing our wickedness—they therefore, although they murmured, were, however, traveling a wilderness road: but we murmur though we have a country, and are in our own houses. They, although they committed fornication, yet it was just after they came out of the evils of Egypt, and had hardly heard of such a law. But we do it, having previously received from our forefathers the doctrine of salvation, so that we are deserving of greater punishment.

Would you hear also of other things? what were their sufferings in Palestine, famines, pestilences, wars, captivities, under the Babylonians, and under the Assyrians, and their miseries from the Macedonians, and those under Hadrian and Vespasian? I have something that I wish, beloved, to relate to thee; nay, do not run away! (**Schaff Note:** μὴ ἀποπηδήσης, perhaps only “turn away.”) Or rather I will tell thee another thing before it. There was once a famine, it says, and the king was walking upon the wall; then a woman came to him and uttered these words: “O king, this woman said to me, Let us roast thy son to-day, and eat him—tomorrow mine. And we roasted and ate, and now she does not give me hers.” (From 2 Kings vi. 28) What can be more dreadful than this calamity? Again, in another place the Prophet says, “The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children.” (Lam. iv. 10) The Jews then suffered such punishment, and shall we not much rather suffer?

Would you also hear other calamities of theirs? Read over Josephus, and you will learn that whole tragedy, if perchance we may persuade you from these things, that there is a hell. For consider, if they were punished, why are we not punished? or how is it reasonable that we are not now punished, who sin more grievously than they? Is it not manifest that it is, because the

punishment is kept in store for us? And, if you please, I will tell you in the person of every individual how they were punished. Cain murdered his brother. A horrible sin indeed, who can deny it? But he suffered punishment; and a heavy one, equivalent to ten thousand deaths, for he would rather have died ten thousand times. For hear him saying, "If Thou castest me out from the land, and I shall be hidden from Thy face, then it will happen that every one who findeth me will slay me." (Gen. iv. 14, Sept.) Tell me then, do not many even now do the same things that he did? For when thou slayest not thy brother according to the flesh, but thy spiritual brother, dost thou not do the same? For what, though not by the sword? yet by some other means; when being able to relieve his hunger, thou neglectest him. What then? Has no one now envied his brother? has no one plunged him into dangers? But here they have not suffered punishment, yet they will suffer it. Then he, who never heard the written laws, nor the prophets, nor saw great miracles suffered such great vengeance; and shall he who has done the same things in another way, and was not rendered wise by so many examples, shall he go unpunished? Where then is the justice of God, and where His goodness?

Again, a certain one for having gathered sticks on the Sabbath was stoned, and yet this was a small commandment, and less weighty than circumcision. He then who gathered sticks on the Sabbath was stoned; but those who often commit ten thousand things contrary to the Law have gone off unpunished! If then there be not a hell, where is His justice, where His impartiality, that respects not persons? And yet He lays to their charge many such things, that they did not observe the Sabbath.

Again, another, Charmi, ([This is an error in the documents, or a slip of memory in the preacher, for he means Achan the son of Carmi, Josh. vii. 1.—J.A.B.]) having stolen a devoted thing, was stoned with all his family. What then? Has no one from that time committed sacrilege? Saul, again, having spared contrary to the command of God, suffered so great punishment. Has no one from that time spared? Would indeed that it were so! Have we not, worse than wild beasts, devoured one another contrary to the command of God, and yet no one has fallen in war? (**Schaff Note:** [No one of us has been punished for it, as Saul was, by falling in battle.—J.A.B.]) Again, the sons of Eli, because they ate before the incense was offered, suffered the most severe punishment together with their father. Has no father then been neglectful with respect to his children? and are there no wicked sons? But no one has suffered punishment. Where will they suffer it then, if there be no hell?

Again, numberless instances one might enumerate. What? Ananias and Sapphira were immediately punished, because they stole part of what they had offered. Has no one then since that time been guilty of this? How was it then that they did not suffer the same punishment?

Do we then persuade you that there is a hell, or do you need more examples? Therefore we will proceed also to things that are unwritten, such as now take place in life. For it is necessary that this idea should be gathered by us from every quarter, that we may not, by vainly gratifying ourselves, do ourselves harm. Do you not see many visited by calamities, maimed in their bodies, suffering infinite troubles, but others in good repute? For what reason do some suffer punishment for murders, and others not? Hear Paul saying, "Some men's sins are evident,...and some men they follow after." (1 Tim. v. 24) How many murderers have escaped! how many violators of the tombs! But let these things pass. How many do you not see visited with the severest punishment? Some have been delivered to a long disease, others to continued tortures, and others to numberless other ills. When therefore you see one who has been guilty of

the same things as they, or even much worse—and yet not suffering punishment, will you not suspect, even against your will, that there is a hell? Reckon those here who before you have been severely punished, consider that God is no respecter of persons, and that though you have done numberless wickednesses, you have suffered no such thing, and you will have the idea of hell. For God has so implanted that idea within us, that no one can ever be ignorant of it. For poets and philosophers and fabulists, and in short all men, have philosophized concerning the retribution that is there, and have said that the greater number are punished in Hades. And if those things are fables, yet what we have received are not so.

I say not these things as wishing to frighten you, nor to lay a burden on your souls, but to make them wise, and render them easier. I could wish also myself that there were no punishment—yes, myself most of all men. And why so? Because whilst each of you fears for his own soul, I have to answer for this office also in which I preside over you. So that most of all it is impossible for me to escape. But it cannot be that there is not punishment and a hell. What can I do? Where then, they say, is the kindness of God to men? In many places. But on this subject I will rather discourse at some other season, that we may not confuse the discourses concerning hell. In the meantime let not that slip, which we have gained. For it is no small advantage to be persuaded concerning hell. For the recollection of such discourses, like some bitter medicine, will be able to clear off every vice, if it be constantly settled in your mind. Let us therefore use it, that having a pure heart, we may so be thought worthy to see those things, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man. Which may we all obtain by the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom, &c.

**Commentary:** We continue in the next paragraph from the previous section, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY VI, page 356-360**, as we begin on page 356 where he says, “When these things then are done, then also will be the voice of the Archangel shouting and commanding the Angels, and the trumpets, or rather the sound of the trumpet. What trembling then, what fear will possess those that remain upon the earth. For one woman is caught up and another is left behind, and one man is taken, and another is passed over. (Matt. xxiv. 40, 41; Luke xvii. 34, 35)”

He refers to **Matthew 24 (KJV):40** Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

And in context to **Luke 17 (KJV):34** I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. 35 Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 36 Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 37 And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

The Lord will come as a thief, as we continue to read in **Matthew 24 (KJV):42** Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. 44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

He continues, “What will be the state of their souls, when they see some indeed taken up, but themselves left behind? Will not these things be able to shake their souls more terribly

than any hell? Let us represent then in word that this is now present. For if sudden death, or earthquakes in cities, and threatenings thus terrify our souls; when we see the earth breaking up, and crowded with all these, when we hear the trumpets, and the voice of the Archangel louder than any trumpet, when we perceive the heaven shriveled up, and God the King of all himself coming nigh—what then will be our souls? Let us shudder, I beseech you, and be frightened as if these things were now taking place. Let us not comfort ourselves by the delay. For when it must certainly happen, the delay profits us nothing.”

And we read of this time in **Daniel 12 (KJV):1** And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

And in **Matthew 24 (KJV):21** For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

He continues, “How great will then be the fear and trembling! Have you ever seen men led away to death? What do you think is the state of their souls, as they are going on the way to the gate? is it not worse than many deaths? What would they not choose both to do and to suffer, so that they might be delivered from that cloud of darkness? I have heard many say, who have been recalled by the mercy of the king (Emperor), after having been led away, that they did not even see men as men, their souls being so troubled, so horror-struck, and beside themselves. If then the death of the body thus frightens us, when eternal death approaches, what will be our feelings? And why do I speak of those who are led away? A crowd then stands around, the greater part not even knowing them. If any one looked into their souls, no one is so cruel, no one so hard-hearted, no one so firm, as not to have his soul dejected, and relaxed with fear and despair. And if when others are taken off by this death, which differs nothing from sleep, those who are not concerned in it are thus affected; when we ourselves fall into greater evils, what then will be our state? It is not, believe me, it is not possible to represent the suffering by words.”

And we read in **Luke 21 (KJV):25** And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. 27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

He continues, “Nay, you say, but God is full of love to man, and none of these things will happen! Then it is written in vain! No, you say, but only as a threat, that we may become wise! If then we are not wise, but continue evil, will He not, tell me, inflict the punishment? Will He not then recompense the good either with rewards? Yes, you say, for that is becoming to Him, to do good even beyond desert. So that those things indeed are true and will certainly be, while the punishments will not be at all, but are only for the purpose of a threat, and of terror! By what means I shall persuade you, I know not. If I say, that “the worm will not die, and the fire will not be quenched” (Mark ix. 44); if I say, that “they shall go away into everlasting fire” (Matt. xxv. 41, 46);”

He refers to **Mark 9 (KJV):44** Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

And to **Matthew 25 (KJV):41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

And to **Matthew 25 (KJV):46** And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

The fire in hell will never be quenched, as we read in **Mark 9 (KJV):43** And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that shall be quenched:

And Chrysostom is right to teach the Biblical truth about hell, that it is everlasting where the fire is not quenched.

He continues, “if I set before you the rich man already suffering punishment, you will say that it is all a matter of threatening.”

He refers to **Luke 16 (KJV):22** And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

There are no second chances. We must accept Jesus Christ in this life, or perish forever in hell.

Chrysostom continues, “Whence then shall I persuade you? For this is a Satanic reasoning, indulging you with a favor that will not profit, and causing you to be slothful.

How then can we banish it? Whatever things we say from Scripture, you will say, are for the purpose of threatening. But with respect to future things this indeed might be said, but not so concerning things that have happened, and have had an end. You have heard of the deluge. And were those things also said by way of threat? Did they not actually happen? Those men too said many such things, and for a hundred years while the ark was building, and the wood was being wrought, and the righteous man was calling aloud, there was no one who believed. But because they did not believe the threat in words, they suffered the punishment in very deed. And this will be our fate too, if we shall not have believed. On this account it is that He compares His coming with the days of Noah, because as some disbelieved in that deluge, so will they in the deluge of hell. Were these things a threat? were they not a fact? Then will not He, who then brought punishment upon them so suddenly, much more inflict it now also? For the things that are committed now are not less than the offenses of that time. How?—because then, it says, “the sons of God went in unto the daughters of men” (Gen. vi. 4), and those mixtures were the great offense.”

He refers to **Genesis 6 (KJV):4** There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

This refers to the angels, who are also mentioned in **Jude 1 (KJV):6** And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

He continues, “But now there is no form of wickedness, which is unattempted. Do you then believe that the deluge took place? Or does it seem to you a fable? And yet even the mountains where the ark rested, bear witness; I speak of those in Armenia.

But, even superabundantly, I will turn my discourse to another thing more evident than that. Has any one of you ever traveled in Palestine? For I will no longer mention report, but

facts, and yet the other were clearer than facts. For whatever things the Scripture says, are more to be trusted than things we see. Has any one of you then ever traveled in Palestine? I suppose so. What then? Bear witness then for me, ye who have seen the places, to those who have not been there. For above Ascalon and Gaza up to the very end of the river Jordan there is a country wide and fruitful—or rather there was—for it is not now. This then is that which was as a garden. For it is said, “Lot beheld all the plain (**Schaff Note:** [Properly “the region around Jordan,” and denoting the deep and rather wide valley through which it flows. Chrys. makes it include all of central Judea, and applies to that whole district what he had heard of the desolate country between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, the N.T. “wilderness of Judea.”—J.A.B.] ) of Jordan—and it was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the Lord.” (Gen. xiii. 10)”

He refers to **Genesis 13 (KJV):10** And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.

He continues, “This, therefore, that was so flourishing, and that rivaled all countries, which for thrivingness exceeded the Paradise of God, is now more desolate than any wilderness. And there stand trees, indeed, and they bear fruit. But the fruit is a monument of the wrath of God. For there stand pomegranates, I speak both of the tree and the fruit, having a very fine appearance, and to the ignorant man holding out great hopes. But if they are taken into the hand, being broken open they display no fruit indeed, but much dust and ashes stored up within. Such also is the whole land. If you find a stone, you will find it full of ashes. And why do I speak of stone and wood and earth, where the air and water partake of the calamity? For as when a body is burnt and consumed, the shape remains, and the outline in the appearance of the fire, and the bulk and the proportion, but the power is no more, so truly there you may see earth, which yet has nothing of earth about it, but all ashes; trees and fruit, but nothing of trees and fruit about them; air and water, but nothing of water nor of air about them, for even these are turned to ashes. And yet how could air ever have been burnt, or water, whilst it remained water? For wood and stones indeed it is possible to burn, but air and water it is altogether impossible. Impossible to us, but possible to Him who did these things. Therefore the air is nothing else than a furnace, the water is a furnace. All things are unfruitful, all unproductive, all for vengeance; images of wrath that has gone before, and proofs of that which is to come.”

Chrysostom makes a good point. If the judgments of the past made by God have come to pass, we should be even more careful in the future to be ready for Him when He comes. That is, we must believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, and confess Him as Lord, as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; **9** That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. **10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

He continues, “Are these too but threatening words? Are these but the sound of words? For to me indeed the former things were not incredible, but things not seen were equally credible with things that were seen. But even to the unbeliever these are sufficient to produce faith. If any one disbelieves hell, let him consider Sodom, let him reflect upon Gomorrah, the vengeance that has been inflicted, and which yet remains. This is a proof of the eternity of punishment. Are these things grievous? And is it not grievous, when you say that there is no



hell, but that God has merely threatened it? when you slack the hands of the people? (**Schaff Note:** See Heb. xii. 12; Jer. xxxviii. 4)”

He refers to **Hebrews 12 (KJV):12** Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

And to **Jeremiah 38 (KJV):4** Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt.

The princes in verse 4 wanted to put Jeremiah to death.

Chrysostom continues, “It is thou who disbelievest that compellest me to say these things; it is thou that hast drawn me out into these words. If thou believedst the words of Christ I should not be compelled to bring forward facts to induce belief. But since you have evaded them, you shall be persuaded henceforth, whether willing or unwilling. For what have you to say concerning Sodom? Would you wish also to know the cause, for which these things were then done? It was one sin, a grievous and accursed one certainly, yet but one. The men of that time had a passion for boys, and on that account they suffered this punishment. But now ten thousand sins equal and even more grievous than these are committed.”

And we read in **Genesis 19 (KJV):1** And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; **2** And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. **3** And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat. **4** But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: **5** And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. **6** And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, **7** And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. **8** Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.

Chrysostom continues, “Then He who for one sin poured forth so much anger, and neither regarded the supplication of Abraham, nor yet Lot who dwelt among them, the man who from honor to His servants offered his own daughters to insult, will He spare, when there are so many sins? These things truly are ridiculous, trifling, delusion, and diabolical deceit!”

And we must agree with Chrysostom here. And the denial of hell, or denial of just the eternity of hell, is asserted by some even today.

He continues, “Do you wish that I should also bring forward another? You have certainly heard of Pharaoh, king of the Egyptians; you know therefore the punishment also which he suffered, how even with his whole host, chariots and horses and all, he was engulfed in the Erythræan sea. Would you hear also other examples? he perhaps was an impious man, or rather not perhaps, but certainly he was an impious man. Would you see those also punished, who were of the number of believers, and who held fast to God, but were not of upright life? Hear Paul saying, “Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day

three and twenty thousand. Neither let us murmur, as some of them murmured, and perished by the destroyer. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted, and perished by the serpents.” (1 Cor. x. 8–10) And if fornication, and if murmuring had such power, what will not be the effect of our sins?”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):**8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. 9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. 10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

And we read in **Numbers 21 (KJV):**5 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. 6 And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. 7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. 8 And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. 9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

He continues, “And if thou dost not now pay the penalty, do not wonder. For they knew not of a hell, therefore they were visited with punishments following close at their heels. But thou, whatever sins thou commit, though thou shouldst escape present penalty, wilt pay for it all There. Did he so punish those who were nearly in the state of children, and who did not sin so greatly—and will He spare us? It would not be reasonable. For if we commit the same sins with them, we shall deserve a greater punishment than they did. Wherefore? Because we have enjoyed more grace. But when our offenses are numerous, and more heinous than theirs, what vengeance shall we not undergo? They—and let no one think I say it as admiring them, or excusing them; far be it: for when God punishes, he who passes a contrary sentence, does it at the suggestion of the devil; I say this therefore, not praising them nor excusing them, but showing our wickedness—they therefore, although they murmured, were, however, traveling a wilderness road: but we murmur though we have a country, and are in our own houses. They, although they committed fornication, yet it was just after they came out of the evils of Egypt, and had hardly heard of such a law. But we do it, having previously received from our forefathers the doctrine of salvation, so that we are deserving of greater punishment.

Would you hear also of other things? what were their sufferings in Palestine, famines, pestilences, wars, captivities, under the Babylonians, and under the Assyrians, and their miseries from the Macedonians, and those under Hadrian and Vespasian? I have something that I wish, beloved, to relate to thee; nay, do not run away! (**Schaff Note:** μη ἀποπηδήσης, perhaps only “turn away.”) Or rather I will tell thee another thing before it. There was once a famine, it says, and the king was walking upon the wall; then a woman came to him and uttered these words: “O king, this woman said to me, Let us roast thy son today, and eat him—tomorrow mine. And we roasted and ate, and now she does not give me hers.” (From 2 Kings vi. 28) What can be more dreadful than this calamity? Again, in another place the Prophet says, “The hands

of the pitiful women have sodden their own children.” (Lam. iv. 10) The Jews then suffered such punishment, and shall we not much rather suffer?”

He refers in context to **2 Kings 6 (KJV):28** And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son tomorrow. 29 So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son.

And to **Lamentations 4 (KJV):10** The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.

He continues, “Would you also hear other calamities of theirs? Read over Josephus, and you will learn that whole tragedy, if perchance we may persuade you from these things, that there is a hell. For consider, if they were punished, why are we not punished? or how is it reasonable that we are not now punished, who sin more grievously than they? Is it not manifest that it is, because the punishment is kept in store for us? And, if you please, I will tell you in the person of every individual how they were punished. Cain murdered his brother. A horrible sin indeed, who can deny it? But he suffered punishment; and a heavy one, equivalent to ten thousand deaths, for he would rather have died ten thousand times. For hear him saying, “If Thou castest me out from the land, and I shall be hidden from Thy face, then it will happen that every one who findeth me will slay me.” (Gen. iv. 14, Sept.)”

He refers to **Genesis 4 (Septuagint):14** If thou castest me out this day from the face of the earth, and I shall be hidden from thy presence, and I shall be groaning and trembling upon the earth, then it will be that any one that finds me shall slay me.

And to **Genesis 4 (KJV):14** Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.

He continues, “Tell me then, do not many even now do the same things that he did? For when thou slayest not thy brother according to the flesh, but thy spiritual brother, dost thou not do the same? For what, though not by the sword? yet by some other means; when being able to relieve his hunger, thou neglectest him. What then? Has no one now envied his brother? has no one plunged him into dangers? But here they have not suffered punishment, yet they will suffer it. Then he, who never heard the written laws, nor the prophets, nor saw great miracles suffered such great vengeance; and shall he who has done the same things in another way, and was not rendered wise by so many examples, shall he go unpunished? Where then is the justice of God, and where His goodness?”

Again, a certain one for having gathered sticks on the Sabbath was stoned, and yet this was a small commandment, and less weighty than circumcision. He then who gathered sticks on the Sabbath was stoned; but those who often commit ten thousand things contrary to the Law have gone off unpunished! If then there be not a hell, where is His justice, where His impartiality, that respects not persons? And yet He lays to their charge many such things, that they did not observe the Sabbath.

Again, another, Charmi, (**Schaff Note:** [This is an error in the documents, or a slip of memory in the preacher, for he means Achan the son of Carmi, Josh. vii. 1.—J.A.B.]) having stolen a devoted thing, was stoned with all his family.”

He refers to **Joshua 7 (KJV):1** But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of

Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel.

And to **Joshua 7 (KJV)**:16 So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken: 17 And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarhites: and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man; and Zabdi was taken: 18 And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. 19 And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. 20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: 21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. 22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. 23 And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord. 24 And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. 25 And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. 26 And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

Chrysostom continues, “What then? Has no one from that time committed sacrilege?” Saul, again, having spared contrary to the command of God, suffered so great punishment. Has no one from that time spared?”

He refers to **1 Samuel 15 (KJV)**:1 Samuel also said unto Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord. 2 Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. 3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

And to **1 Samuel 15 (KJV)**:7 And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt. 8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

And to **1 Samuel 15 (KJV)**:22 And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

And after Samuel died, Saul sought the Lord, but the Lord did not answer him, so Saul

sought out a medium, as we read in **1 Samuel 28 (KJV):7** Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.

When the medium brought up Samuel, as Saul had requested, Samuel responded, as in **1 Samuel 28 (KJV):19** Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

Saul committed the sin unto death, but he was still saved, though as by fire. Samuel promised him that he and his sons would be with Samuel when the Philistines killed them, as he said, “tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me”.

And we read in **1 Chronicles 10 (KJV):13** So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it;

Chrysostom continues, “Would indeed that it were so! Have we not, worse than wild beasts, devoured one another contrary to the command of God, and yet no one has fallen in war? (**Schaff Note:** [No one of us has been punished for it, as Saul was, by falling in battle.— J.A.B.]) Again, the sons of Eli, because they ate before the incense was offered, suffered the most severe punishment together with their father.”

He refers to **1 Samuel 2 (KJV):22** Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 23 And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. 24 Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress. 25 If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them.

And to **1 Samuel 4 (KJV):15** Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see. 16 And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son? 17 And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken. 18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

Chrysostom continues, “Has no father then been neglectful with respect to his children? and are there no wicked sons? But no one has suffered punishment. Where will they suffer it then, if there be no hell?”

Again, numberless instances one might enumerate. What? Ananias and Sapphira were immediately punished, because they stole part of what they had offered.”

He refers to **Acts 5 (KJV):1** But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And

Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. 6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. 7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. 9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. 10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

Ananias and Sapphira were believers who had been baptized. But they sinned the sin unto death, as did Saul. This sin is mentioned in **1 John 5 (KJV):16** If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

Some had committed this sin by eating the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner, as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):28** But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Chrysostom and the Church in his time did not have knowledge of this.

He continues, "Has no one then since that time been guilty of this? How was it then that they did not suffer the same punishment?"

Do we then persuade you that there is a hell, or do you need more examples? Therefore we will proceed also to things that are unwritten, such as now take place in life. For it is necessary that this idea should be gathered by us from every quarter, that we may not, by vainly gratifying ourselves, do ourselves harm. Do you not see many visited by calamities, maimed in their bodies, suffering infinite troubles, but others in good repute? For what reason do some suffer punishment for murders, and others not? Hear Paul saying, "Some men's sins are evident,...and some men they follow after." (1 Tim. v. 24)"

He refers to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):24** Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.

He continues, "How many murderers have escaped! how many violators of the tombs! But let these things pass. How many do you not see visited with the severest punishment? Some have been delivered to a long disease, others to continued tortures, and others to numberless other ills. When therefore you see one who has been guilty of the same things as they, or even much worse—and yet not suffering punishment, will you not suspect, even against your will, that there is a hell? Reckon those here who before you have been severely punished, consider that God is no respecter of persons, and that though you have done numberless wickednesses, you have suffered no such thing, and you will have the idea of hell. For God has so implanted that idea within us, that no one can ever be ignorant of it. For poets and philosophers and fabulists, and in short all men, have philosophized concerning the retribution that is there, and have said that the greater number are punished in Hades. And if those things are fables, yet

what we have received are not so.

I say not these things as wishing to frighten you, nor to lay a burden on your souls, but to make them wise, and render them easier. I could wish also myself that there were no punishment—yes, myself most of all men. And why so? Because whilst each of you fears for his own soul, I have to answer for this office also in which I preside over you. So that most of all it is impossible for me to escape. But it cannot be that there is not punishment and a hell. What can I do? Where then, they say, is the kindness of God to men? In many places. But on this subject I will rather discourse at some other season, that we may not confuse the discourses concerning hell. In the meantime let not that slip, which we have gained. For it is no small advantage to be persuaded concerning hell. For the recollection of such discourses, like some bitter medicine, will be able to clear off every vice, if it be constantly settled in your mind. Let us therefore use it, that having a pure heart, we may so be thought worthy to see those things, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man. Which may we all obtain by the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom, &c.”

And he refers to **1 Corinthians 2 (NKJV):9** But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”

And we read in **Deuteronomy 29 (NKJV):29** “The secret *things belong* to the Lord our God, but those *things which are revealed belong* to us and to our children forever, that *we may do all the words of this law.*”

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY XXXI, page 508-509**

[7.] Seest thou how many excellent [effects] are produced from the remembrance of our sins? Let us then write them in our minds. I know that the soul does not endure a recollection which is so bitter: but let us constrain and force it. It is better that it should be gnawed with the remembrance now, than at that time with vengeance.

Now, if thou remember them, and continually present them before God (see p. 448), and pray for them, thou wilt speedily blot them out; but if thou forget them now, thou wilt then be reminded of them even against thy will, when they are brought out publicly before the whole world, displayed before all, both friends and enemies, and Angels. For surely He did not say to David only, “What thou didst secretly, I will make manifest to” (2 Sam. xii. 12) all, but even to us all. Thou wert afraid of men (he said) and respected them more than God; and God seeing thee, thou caredst not, but wert ashamed before men. For it says, “the eyes of men, this is their fear.” Therefore thou shalt suffer punishment in that very point; for I will reprove thee, setting thy sins before the eyes of all. For that this is true, and that in that day the sins of us all are [to be] publicly displayed, unless we now do them away by continual remembrance, hear how cruelty and inhumanity are publicly exposed, “I was an hungered” (He says) “and ye gave Me no meat.” (Matt. xxv. 42) When are these things said? Is it in a corner? Is it in a secret place? By no means. When then? “When the Son of Man shall come in His glory” (Matt. xxv. 31, 32), and “all the nations” are gathered together, when He has separated the one from the other, then will He speak in the audience of all, and will “set” them “on His right hand” and “on” His “left” (Matt. xxv. 33): “I was an hungered and ye gave Me no meat.”

See again the five virgins also, hearing before all, "I know you not." (Matt. xxv. 12) For the five and five do not set forth the number of five only, but those virgins who are wicked and cruel and inhuman, and those who are not such. So also he that buried his one talent, heard before all, even of those who had brought the five and the two, "Thou wicked and slothful servant." (Matt. xxv. 26) But not by words alone, but by deeds also does He then convict them: even as the Evangelist also says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced." (John xix. 37) For the resurrection shall be of all at the same time, of sinners and of the righteous. At the same time shall He be present to all in the judgment.

[8.] Consider therefore who they are who shall then be in dismay, who in grief, who dragged away to the fire, while the others are crowned. "Come" (He says), "ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom which hath been prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matt. xxv. 34) And again, "Depart from Me into the fire which hath been prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. xxv. 41)

Let us not merely hear the words but write them also before our sight, and let us imagine Him to be now present and saying these things, and that we are led away to that fire. What heart shall we have? What consolation? And what, when we are cut asunder? And what when we are accused of rapacity? What excuse shall we have to utter? What specious argument? None: but of necessity bound, bending down, we must be dragged to the mouths of the furnace, to the river of fire, to the darkness, to then ever dying punishments, and entreat no one. For it is not, it is not possible, He says, to pass across from this side to that: for "there is a great gulf betwixt us and you" (Luke xvi. 26), and it is not possible even for those who wish it to go across, and stretch out a helping hand: but we must needs burn continually, no one aiding us, even should it be father or mother, or any whosoever, yea though he have much boldness toward God. For, it says, "A brother doth not redeem; shall man redeem?" (Ps. xlix. 7)

Since then it is not possible to have one's hopes of salvation in another, but [it must be] in one's self after the lovingkindness of God, let us do all things, I entreat you, so that our conduct may be pure, and our course of life the best, and that it may not receive any stain even from the beginning. But if not, at all events, let us not sleep after the stain, but continue always washing away the pollution by repentance, by tears, by prayers, by works of mercy.

What then, you say, if I cannot do works of mercy? But thou hast "a cup of cold water" (Matt. x. 42), however poor thou art. But thou hast "two mites" (Mark xii. 42), in whatever poverty thou art; but thou hast feet, so as to visit the sick, so as to enter into a prison; but thou hast a roof, so as to receive strangers. For there is no pardon, no, none for him who does not do works of mercy.

These things we say to you continually, that we may effect if it be but a little by the continued repetition: these things we say, not caring so much for those who receive the benefits, as for yourselves. For ye give to them indeed things here, but in return you receive heavenly things: which may we all obtain, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father be glory, together with the Holy Ghost, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, "[7.] Seest thou how many excellent [effects] are produced from the remembrance of our sins? Let us then write them in our minds. I know that the soul does not endure a recollection which is so bitter: but let us constrain and force it. It is better that it should be gnawed with the remembrance now, than at that time with vengeance."



In the mind of Chrysostom, it was possible to lose the grace of God after Baptism, and if they did not repent, they were destined to go to hell. And so he encourages us to remember our sins. He did not understand the security of the believer. One only has to confess their sins, and God is faithful to forgive us, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

He continues, “Now, if thou remember them, and continually present them before God (see p. 448), and pray for them, thou wilt speedily blot them out; but if thou forget them now, thou wilt then be reminded of them even against thy will, when they are brought out publicly before the whole world, displayed before all, both friends and enemies, and Angels. For surely He did not say to David only, “What thou didst secretly, I will make manifest to” (2 Sam. xii. 12) all, but even to us all.”

He refers in context to **2 Samuel 12 (KJV):9** Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. 10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. 11 Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. 12 For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. 13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

He continues, “Thou wert afraid of men (he said) and respected them more than God; and God seeing thee, thou caredst not, but wert ashamed before men. For it says, “the eyes of men, this is their fear.” Therefore thou shalt suffer punishment in that very point; for I will reprove thee, setting thy sins before the eyes of all. For that this is true, and that in that day the sins of us all are [to be] publicly displayed, unless we now do them away by continual remembrance, hear how cruelty and inhumanity are publicly exposed, “I was an hungered” (He says) “and ye gave Me no meat.” (Matt. xxv. 42)”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):42** For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

He continues, “When are these things said? Is it in a corner? Is it in a secret place? By no means. When then? “When the Son of Man shall come in His glory” (Matt. xxv. 31, 32), and “all the nations” are gathered together, when He has separated the one from the other, then will He speak in the audience of all, and will “set” them “on His right hand” and “on” His “left” (Matt. xxv. 33): “I was an hungered and ye gave Me no meat.””

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):31** When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

And to **Matthew 25 (KJV):41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

He continues, “See again the five virgins also, hearing before all, “I know you not.” (Matt. xxv. 12) For the five and five do not set forth the number of five only, but those virgins

who are wicked and cruel and inhuman, and those who are not such.”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):1** Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

And to **Matthew 25 (KJV):11** Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

He continues, “So also he that buried his one talent, heard before all, even of those who had brought the five and the two, “Thou wicked and slothful servant.” (Matt. xxv. 26)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 25 (KJV):24** Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. 26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

He continues, “But not by words alone, but by deeds also does He then convict them: even as the Evangelist also says, “They shall look on Him whom they pierced.” (John xix. 37)”

He refers to **John 19 (KJV):37** And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

He continues, “For the resurrection shall be of all at the same time, of sinners and of the righteous. At the same time shall He be present to all in the judgment.”

And this was the thinking in the Church in the time of Chrysostom. But that there are two resurrections, we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):4** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

After the thousand years are completed, we then read of the second resurrection in **Revelation 20 (KJV):7** And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

The second resurrection is at the “great white throne”, as we continue in **Revelation 20 (KJV):11** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their

works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

This judgment is “unto the resurrection of damnation”, which Jesus spoke of in **John 5 (KJV):29** And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Chrysostom continues, “[8.] Consider therefore who they are who shall then be in dismay, who in grief, who dragged away to the fire, while the others are crowned. “Come” (He says), “ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom which hath been prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Matt. xxv. 34) And again, “Depart from Me into the fire which hath been prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matt. xxv. 41)

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

And to **Matthew 25 (KJV):41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

But this relates to the judgment of the nations, as we read in **Matthew 25 (KJV):31** When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

This judgment is on earth, just after the great tribulation, and relates to which nations will go into the kingdom of one thousand years, as Jesus taught in **Matthew 25 (KJV):34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

This judgment is based on the treatment of Christ’s brethren, the Jews, during the tribulation.

Chrysostom continues, “Let us not merely hear the words but write them also before our sight, and let us imagine Him to be now present and saying these things, and that we are led away to that fire. What heart shall we have? What consolation? And what, when we are cut asunder? And what when we are accused of rapacity? What excuse shall we have to utter? What specious argument? None: but of necessity bound, bending down, we must be dragged to the mouths of the furnace, to the river of fire, to the darkness, to then ever dying punishments, and entreat no one. For it is not, it is not possible, He says, to pass across from this side to that: for “there is a great gulf betwixt us and you” (Luke xvi. 26), and it is not possible even for those who wish it to go across, and stretch out a helping hand:”

He refers in context to **Luke 16 (KJV):22** And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

He continues, “but we must needs burn continually, no one aiding us, even should it be father or mother, or any whosoever, yea though he have much boldness toward God. For, it says, “A brother doth not redeem; shall man redeem?” (Ps. xlix. 7)”

He refers to **Psalm 49 (KJV):7** None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:

He continues, “Since then it is not possible to have one’s hopes of salvation in another, but [it must be] in one’s self after the lovingkindness of God, let us do all things, I entreat you, so that our conduct may be pure, and our course of life the best, and that it may not receive any stain even from the beginning.”

But our trust is not in our self but in Jesus Christ. It is not what we can do, but what He has done for us. He is to us as in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

He continues, “But if not, at all events, let us not sleep after the stain, but continue always washing away the pollution by repentance, by tears, by prayers, by works of mercy.

What then, you say, if I cannot do works of mercy? But thou hast “a cup of cold water” (Matt. x. 42), however poor thou art.”

He refers to **Matthew 10 (KJV):42** And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

He continues, “But thou hast “two mites” (Mark xii. 42), in whatever poverty thou art;”

He refers to **Mark 12 (KJV):42** And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

He continues, “but thou hast feet, so as to visit the sick, so as to enter into a prison; but thou hast a roof, so as to receive strangers. For there is no pardon, no, none for him who does not do works of mercy.”

We can only do good works after we have been born again. These are works God has ordained for us to do, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

The works that “God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” do not save us. But we will be rewarded for them at the judgment seat of Christ. This is what we read of in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):12** Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

He continues, “These things we say to you continually, that we may effect if it be but a little by the continued repetition: these things we say, not caring so much for those who receive the benefits, as for yourselves. For ye give to them indeed things here, but in return you receive heavenly things: which may we all obtain, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father be glory, together with the Holy Ghost, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.”

## Commentary Summary:

Concerning Hell, in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY VI, page 356-360**, he says, “If any one disbelieves hell, let him consider Sodom, let him reflect upon Gomorrah, the vengeance that has been inflicted, and which yet remains. This is a proof of the eternity of punishment.”

And he says, “But it cannot be that there is not punishment and a hell.”

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY XXXI, page 508-509**, he says, “For the resurrection shall be of all at the same time, of sinners and of the righteous. At the same time shall He be present to all in the judgment.”

And this was the thinking of the Church in the time of Chrysostom. But according to Scripture, there are two resurrections, the resurrection of life, and the resurrection of damnation, as we read in **John 5 (KJV):29** And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

The first is mentioned in **Revelation 20 (KJV):4** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

After the thousand years are completed, there will be a second resurrection at the great white throne judgment for the wicked dead in Revelation 20:11-15.

And Chrysostom says, “For it is not, it is not possible, He says, to pass across from this side to that: for “there is a great gulf betwixt us and you” (Luke xvi. 26), and it is not possible even for those who wish it to go across, and stretch out a helping hand: but we must needs burn continually, no one aiding us, even should it be father or mother, or any whosoever, yea though he have much boldness toward God. For, it says, “A brother doth not redeem; shall man redeem?” (Ps. xlix. 7)”

And that this fire is eternal, we read in **Mark 9 (KJV):43** And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

And in **Mark 9 (KJV):45** And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

## Israel Will Be Saved

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS,  
HOMILY XIX, page 488-489**

Ver. 11. "I say then, Have they stumbled, that they should fall? God forbid."

When he has shown that they were liable to evils without number, then he devises an allayment. And consider the judgment of Paul. The accusation he had introduced from the prophets, but the allayment he makes come from himself. For that they had sinned greatly, he would say, none will gainsay. But let us see if the fall is of such kind as to be incurable, and quite preclude their being set up again. But of such kind it is not. You see how he is attacking them again, and under the expectation of some allayment he proves them guilty of confessed sins. But let us see what even by way of allayment he does devise for them. Now what is the allayment? "When the fulness of the Gentiles," he says, "shall have come in, then shall all Israel be saved," at the time of his second coming, and the end of the world. Yet this he does not say at once. But since he had made a hard onset upon them, and linked accusations to accusations, bringing prophets in after prophets crying aloud against them, Isaiah, Elijah, David, Moses, Hosea, not once or twice, but several times; lest in this way he should both by driving these into despair, make a wall to bar their access to the faith, and should further make such of the Gentiles as believed unreasonably elated, and they also by being puffed up should take harm in matter of their faith, he further solaces them by saying, "But rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles." But we must not take what is here said literally, but get acquainted with the spirit and object of the speaker, and what he aimed to compass. Which thing I ever entreat of your love. For if with this in our minds we take up what is here said, we shall not find a difficulty in any part of it. For his present anxiety is to remove from those of the Gentiles the haughtiness which might spring in them from what he had said. For in this way they too were more likely to continue unshaken in the faith, when they had learnt to be reasonable, as also those of the Jews were, when quit of despair, more likely to come with readiness to grace. Having regard then to this object of his, let us so listen to all that is said on this passage. What does he say then? And whence does he show that their fall was not irremediable, nor their rejection final? He argues from the Gentiles, saying as follows:

"Through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy."

This language is not his own only, but in the Gospels too the parables mean this. For He who made a marriage feast for His Son, when the guests would not come, called those in the highways. (Matt. xxii. 9). And He who planted the Vineyard, when the husbandmen slew the Heir, let out His Vineyard to others. (ib. xxi. 38, etc.) And without any parable, He Himself said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel." (ib. xv. 24) And to the Syrophœnician woman, when she persevered, He said somewhat further besides. "It is not meet," He says, "to take the children's bread, and cast it to the dogs." (ib. xv. 26) And Paul to those of the Jews that raised a sedition, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you: but seeing ye judge yourselves unworthy, lo, we turn unto the Gentiles." (Acts xiii. 46) And throughout it is clear that the natural course of things was this, that they should be the first to come in, and then those of the Gentiles; but since they

disbelieved, the order was reversed; and their unbelief and fall caused these to be brought in first. Hence it is that he says, “through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.” But if he mentions what the course of things issued in, as if the chief design of Providence, do not feel surprised. For he wishes to solace their down-stricken souls, and his meaning is about this. Jesus came to them; they did not receive Him, though He did countless miracles, but crucified Him. Hence He drew the Gentiles to Him, that the honor they had, by cutting them to the heart for their insensibility might at least out of a moroseness against others persuade them to come over. For they ought to have been first admitted, and then we. And this was why he said, “For it is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.” (Rom. i. 16) But as they had started off, we the last became first. See then how great honors he gathers for them even from this. One that he says, we were then called, when they were not willing; a second that he says, the reason of our being called was not that we only might be saved, but that they also, growing jealous at our salvation, might become better. What does he say then? that if it were not for the Jews’ sake, we should not have been called and saved at all? We should not before them, but in the regular order. Wherefore also when He was speaking to the disciples, He did not say barely, “Go to the lost sheep of the House of Israel” (Matt. x. 6), but, “Go rather to the sheep,” to show that to those parts also they must come after these. And Paul again saith not, “It was necessary that the word of God should have been spoken unto you,” but “should first have been spoken unto you” (Acts xiii. 46), to show that in the second place it must be to us also. And this was both done and said, that they might not be able, shameless though they were, to pretend that they were overlooked, and that was why they did not believe. This then was why Christ, though he knew all things before, yet came to them first.

**(Schaff Note:** 1512 The following paraphrase of the apostle’s argument in vv. 16–24 by which he would show that the Jews’ rejection is but temporary may be serviceable in connection with the exposition of Chrysostom: granting then that the Jews have sadly stumbled, have they done so in order that (ἵνα, according to a providential intention) they may fall (completely away from God and be lost to all hope)? No. There is a providential purpose in this sad lapse. God has overruled it for the salvation of the Gentiles. When the Jews rejected Christianity, then the gospel turned from them and went to the Gentiles, so that the rejection of the Jews facilitated the conversion of the heathen. And the acceptance of the Gentiles reacted again in favor of the Jews because it provoked them to jealousy and so stimulated them to accept the blessings which the Gentiles were receiving. Thus their fall has a twofold beneficial effect, (a) on the Gentiles, (b) through them on themselves. (vv. 11–12) Now, if so much good can come out of their fall, how much more out of their restoration! If their fault, by which they come so far short of their ideal mission, could be such an (indirect) blessing to the Gentiles, how much greater a blessing will the repairing of that defect prove? (vv. 13–16) I say the return of the Jews will be a great blessing to you, my Gentile Christian brethren, and I urge this point with you. It is all to be to your advantage. In hoping and laboring for the conversion of my own people, I am still laboring in the line of my mission as apostle to the Gentiles. If I can save any of the Jews and stimulate their jealousy so that they will be desirous of availing themselves of the blessings of the gospel, I shall be doing the greatest possible good to the Gentile world. Why? (15) Because if their rejection is the “reconciliation of the world”—the means of securing salvation to the Gentiles,

their reception back again shall be a veritable “resurrection from the dead,”—from it shall flow streams of spiritual life, compared with which that indirect blessing which sprang from their rejection is as nothing (16). And such is the divine, final destination of the Jewish people. They are still holy unto the Lord, a peculiar possession, and cannot be finally and utterly cast away. (vv. 17–24) Hence you Gentiles have no ground of glorying over the Jews, either in the fact that some of them have been cut off or that you have been grafted in. Israel is still the stock. At most you are but branches and that wild-olive branches! If now you seize upon what was said (in vv. 11–12) and maintain that the Jews were rejected to make place for you (19), I reply that there is another to the matter (20). From the point of view of the divine providence this is true, but from the point of view of the Jews’ own action, unbelief explains their rejection. You have nothing to do with God’s providential purposes in the case. What you have to do is to be obedient and faithful. If you draw an assurance from the one view, I shall draw a warning from the other and that too from the side with which you have to do and for which you are responsible. “Be not high minded but fear.” God will deal with you on the same principles upon which he has dealt with the Jews (21). These dispensations reveal the two sides of God’s nature—his severity toward disobedience and his goodness to all who continue in relation to his goodness (22). Those portions of the nation which have been cut off shall be grafted in again unless they persist in unbelief (23). And if the branches from a wild-olive tree were grafted into the genuine olive tree, contrary to their nature, how much more natural to suppose that the branches which originally belonged to the true olive stock shall be returned and grafted again into that stock to which they naturally belong (24). There is no good ground for the opinion of Chrys. (11) that the salvation of Israel is to occur at the second coming and the end of the world.—G.B.S.)

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 11. “I say then, Have they stumbled, that they should fall? God forbid.””

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):** 11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

He continues, “When he has shown that they were liable to evils without number, then he devises an allayment. And consider the judgment of Paul. The accusation he had introduced from the prophets, but the allayment he makes come from himself. For that they had sinned greatly, he would say, none will gainsay. But let us see if the fall is of such kind as to be incurable, and quite preclude their being set up again. But of such kind it is not. You see how he is attacking them again, and under the expectation of some allayment he proves them guilty of confessed sins. But let us see what even by way of allayment he does devise for them. Now what is the allayment? “When the fulness of the Gentiles,” he says, “shall have come in, then shall all Israel be saved,” at the time of his second coming, and the end of the world. Yet this he does not say at once. But since he had made a hard onset upon them, and linked accusations to accusations, bringing prophets in after prophets crying aloud against them, Isaiah, Elijah, David, Moses, Hosea, not once or twice, but several times; lest in this way he should both by driving these into despair, make a wall to bar their access to the faith, and should further make such of the Gentiles as believed unreasonably elated, and they also by being puffed up should take harm in matter of their faith, he further solaces them by saying, “But rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles.” But we must not take what is here said literally, but



get acquainted with the spirit and object of the speaker, and what he aimed to compass. Which thing I ever entreat of your love. For if with this in our minds we take up what is here said, we shall not find a difficulty in any part of it. For his present anxiety is to remove from those of the Gentiles the haughtiness which might spring in them from what he had said. For in this way they too were more likely to continue unshaken in the faith, when they had learnt to be reasonable, as also those of the Jews were, when quit of despair, more likely to come with readiness to grace. Having regard then to this object of his, let us so listen to all that is said on this passage. What does he say then? And whence does he show that their fall was not irremediable, nor their rejection final? He argues from the Gentiles, saying as follows:

“Through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.”

This language is not his own only, but in the Gospels too the parables mean this. For He who made a marriage feast for His Son, when the guests would not come, called those in the highways. (Matt. xxii. 9.)”

He refers to **Matthew 22 (KJV):9** Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

He continues, “And He who planted the Vineyard, when the husbandmen slew the Heir, let out His Vineyard to others. (ib. xxi. 38, etc.)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 21 (KJV):38** But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. 39 And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. 40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? 41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. 42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. 44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. 45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. 46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

Chrysostom continues, “And without any parable, He Himself said, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel.” (ib. xv. 24)”

He refers to **Matthew 15 (KJV):24** But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

And we read in **Matthew 13 (KJV):34** All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:

He continues, “And to the Syrophœnician woman, when she persevered, He said somewhat further besides. “It is not meet,” He says, “to take the children’s bread, and cast it to the dogs.” (ib. xv. 26)”

He refers to **Matthew 15 (KJV):26** But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

He continues, “And Paul to those of the Jews that raised a sedition, “It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you: but seeing ye judge yourselves unworthy, lo, we turn unto the Gentiles.” (Acts xiii. 46)”

He refers in context to **Acts 13 (KJV):45** But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

He continues, “And throughout it is clear that the natural course of things was this, that they should be the first to come in, and then those of the Gentiles; but since they disbelieved, the order was reversed; and their unbelief and fall caused these to be brought in first. Hence it is that he says, “through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.” But if he mentions what the course of things issued in, as if the chief design of Providence, do not feel surprised. For he wishes to solace their down-stricken souls, and his meaning is about this. Jesus came to them; they did not receive Him, though He did countless miracles, but crucified Him. Hence He drew the Gentiles to Him, that the honor they had, by cutting them to the heart for their insensibility might at least out of a moroseness against others persuade them to come over. For they ought to have been first admitted, and then we. And this was why he said, “For it is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.” (Rom. i. 16)”

He refers to **Romans 1 (KJV):16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

He continues, “But as they had started off, we the last became first. See then how great honors he gathers for them even from this. One that he says, we were then called, when they were not willing; a second that he says, the reason of our being called was not that we only might be saved, but that they also, growing jealous at our salvation, might become better. What does he say then? that if it were not for the Jews’ sake, we should not have been called and saved at all? We should not before them, but in the regular order. Wherefore also when He was speaking to the disciples, He did not say barely, “Go to the lost sheep of the House of Israel” (Matt. x. 6), but, “Go rather to the sheep,” to show that to those parts also they must come after these.”

He refers in context to **Matthew 10 (KJV):5** These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

He continues, “And Paul again saith not, “It was necessary that the word of God should have been spoken unto you,” but “should first have been spoken unto you” (Acts xiii. 46), to show that in the second place it must be to us also.”

He refers to **Acts 13 (KJV):46** Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

He continues, “And this was both done and said, that they might not be able, shameless though they were, to pretend that they were overlooked, and that was why they did not believe. This then was why Christ, though he knew all things before, yet came to them first.”

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 11, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, HOMILY XIX, page 488-489**, he says, “But let us see what even by way of allayment he does devise for them. Now what is the allayment? “When the fulness of the Gentiles,” he says, “shall have come in, then shall all Israel be saved,” at the time of his second coming, and the end of the world.”

And he says, “And throughout it is clear that the natural course of things was this, that they should be the first to come in, and then those of the Gentiles; but since they disbelieved, the order was reversed; and their unbelief and fall caused these to be brought in first. Hence it is that he says, “through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.”

There is still one week of the seventy to be fulfilled for Israel, as we read in **Daniel 9 (KJV):24** Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

The seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks, or 69 weeks, have been fulfilled when Messiah was “cut off”, as we read in verse 26. Messiah was “cut off” when He died on the cross. The final week when Antichrist will come, is still to come to pass. But first, the times of the Gentiles must be fulfilled, as we read in **Luke 21 (KJV):22** For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Israel shall be melted, as we read in **Jeremiah 9 (KJV):7** Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter of my people?

And in **Ezekiel 22 (KJV):22** As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you.

This will be the time of Jacob’s trouble, as we read in **Jeremiah 30 (KJV):4** And these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. 5 For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his

loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

This will be at the end of the great tribulation, and at the battle of Armageddon, at the second coming of Christ, but not at the end of the world. The thousand year reign of Christ will begin after the great tribulation.

And Israel will be saved at the second coming, as we read in **Zechariah 12 (KJV)**:8 In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. 9 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Israel will be born again in a single day, as we read in **Isaiah 66 (KJV)**:7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. 8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. 9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God. 10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: 11 That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. 12 For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. 13 As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

# Mary

## Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER I, page 13

Ver. 19. "But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother."

See what great friends he was with Peter especially; on his account he left his home, and with him he tarried. This I frequently repeat, and desire you to remember, that no one, when he hears what this Apostle seems to have spoken against Peter, may conceive a suspicion of him. He premises this, that when he says, "I resisted Peter," no one may suppose that these words imply enmity and contention; for he honored and loved his person more than all and took this journey for his sake only, not for any of the others. "But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James." "I saw him merely, I did not learn from him," he means. But observe how honorably he mentions him, he says not "James" merely, but adds this illustrious title, so free is he from all envy. Had he only wished to point out whom he meant, he might have shown this by another appellation, and called him the son of Cleophas, as the Evangelist does. (**Schaff Note:** [Compare John xix. 25 with Matt. xxvii. 56. But see Lightfoot's learned and exhaustive essay on "The Brethren of the Lord," *Com. on Gal.* pp. 88–127, and Schaff, *Church History*, I, 272–275.—G.A.]) Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. Matthew 27:56 Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedees children. Matthew 13:55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?) But as he considered that he had a share in the august titles of the Apostles, he exalts himself by honoring James; and this he does by calling him "the Lord's brother," although he was not by birth His brother, but only so reputed. Yet this did not deter him from giving the title; and in many other instances he displays towards all the Apostles that noble disposition, which beseemed him.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, "Ver. 19. "But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother.""

He refers in context to **Galatians 1 (KJV):18** Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. 19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

He continues, "See what great friends he was with Peter especially; on his account he left his home, and with him he tarried. This I frequently repeat, and desire you to remember, that no one, when he hears what this Apostle seems to have spoken against Peter, may conceive a suspicion of him. He premises this, that when he says, "I resisted Peter," no one may suppose that these words imply enmity and contention; for he honored and loved his person more than all and took this journey for his sake only, not for any of the others."

He refers to **Galatians 2 (KJV):11** But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14 But when I saw that

they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

He continues, ““But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James.” “I saw him merely, I did not learn from him,” he means. But observe how honorably he mentions him, he says not “James” merely, but adds this illustrious title, so free is he from all envy. Had he only wished to point out whom he meant, he might have shown this by another appellation, and called him the son of Cleophas, as the Evangelist does. (**Schaff Note:** [Compare John xix. 25 with Matt. xxvii. 56. But see Lightfoot’s learned and exhaustive essay on “The Brethren of the Lord,” *Com. on Gal.* pp. 88–127, and Schaff, *Church History*, I, 272–275.—G.A.]”

He refers to **John 19 (KJV):25** Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

And to **Matthew 27 (KJV):56** Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedees children.

And we read in context in **Matthew 13 (KJV):53** And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence. 54 And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? 55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

He continues, “But as he considered that he had a share in the august titles of the Apostles, he exalts himself by honoring James; and this he does by calling him “the Lord’s brother,” although he was not by birth His brother, but only so reputed. Yet this did not deter him from giving the title; and in many other instances he displays towards all the Apostles that noble disposition, which beseemed him.”

Chrysostom, as also the early Church, did not believe that Mary had any other children besides Jesus. They believed that she was a perpetual virgin. But this is proven false by Matthew 13:55 above, and by what we read in **Matthew 1 (KJV):18** Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. 24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

He “knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son”. And we read again in context in **Matthew 13 (KJV):55** Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? 56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? 57 And they were offended in him. But

Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. 58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

These were people in his home town who knew Him to be the son of Joseph, who was a carpenter, and His mother Mary. They also knew His brothers and sisters.

## **Commentary Summary**

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS, CHAPTER I, page 13**, he says, “But as he considered that he had a share in the august titles of the Apostles, he exalts himself by honoring James; and this he does by calling him “the Lord’s brother,” although he was not by birth His brother, but only so reputed. Yet this did not deter him from giving the title; and in many other instances he displays towards all the Apostles that noble disposition, which beseemed him.”

But as we read in Matthew 13:55-58, the people in Jesus’ hometown knew his father, mother, brothers, and sisters. But the early Church in the time of Augustine and Chrysostom could not believe that Mary, the mother of Jesus, could have had other children, and not have remained a virgin. But the Scripture says in **Matthew 1 (KJV):24** Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

## Against Heresy

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILIPPIANS, HOMILY VI, page 206-210

Philippians ii. 5–8

“Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.”

Our Lord Jesus Christ, when exhorting His disciples to great actions, places before them Himself, and the Father, and the Prophets, as examples; as when He says, “For thus they did unto the Prophets which were before you” (Matt. v. 12; Luke vi. 23); and again, “If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (John xv. 20); and, “Learn of me, for I am meek” (Matt. xi. 29); and again, “Be ye merciful, as your Father which is in heaven is merciful.” (Luke vi. 36) This too the blessed Paul did; in exhorting them to humility, he brought forward Christ. And he does so not here only, but also when he discourses of love towards the poor, he speaks in this wise. “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor.” (2 Cor. viii. 9) Nothing rouses a great and philosophic soul to the performance of good works, so much as learning that in this it is likened to God. What encouragement is equal to this? None. This Paul well knowing, when he would exhort them to humility, first beseeches and supplicates them, then to awe (**Schaff Note:** ἐντριπτικῶς, usually to “shame,” here rather to “make serious,” i.e. by representing to them the presence of the Holy Spirit. See Philip. ii. 12, 13) then he says, “That ye stand fast in one Spirit”; he says also, that it “is for them an evident token of perdition, but of your salvation.” (Philip. i. 27, 28) And last of all he says this, “Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking upon Him the form of a servant.” (Philip. ii. 5–7) Attend, I entreat you, and rouse yourselves. For as a sharp twoedged sword, wheresoever it falls, though it be among ten thousand phalanxes, easily cuts through and destroys, because it is sharp on every side, and nought can bear its edge; so are the words of the Spirit. (Heb. iv. 12; Rev. i. 16) For by these words he has laid low the followers of Arius of Alexandria, of Paul of Samosata, of Marcellus the Galatian, of Sabellius the Libyan, of Marcion that was of Pontus, of Valentinus, of Manes, of Apollinarius of Laodicea, of Photinus, of Sophronius, and, in one word, all the heresies. Rouse yourselves then to behold so great a spectacle, so many armies falling by one stroke, lest the pleasure of such a sight should escape you. For if when chariots contend in the horse race there is nothing so pleasing as when one of them dashes against and overthrows whole chariots with their drivers, and after throwing down many with the charioteers that stood thereon, drives by alone towards the goal, and the end of the course, and amid the applause and clamor which rises on all sides to heaven, with coursers winged as it were by that joy and that applause, sweeps over the whole ground; how much greater will the pleasure be here, when by the grace of God we overthrow at once and in a body the combinations and devilish machinations of all these heresies together with their charioteers?



And if it seem good to you, we will first arrange the heresies themselves in order. Would you have them in the order of their impiety, or of their dates? In the order of time, for it is difficult to judge of the order of their impiety. First then let Sabellius the Libyan come forward. What does he assert? that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are mere names given to one Person. Marcion of Pontus says, that God the Creator of all things is not good, nor the Father of the good Christ, but another righteous one, and that he did not take flesh for us. Marcellus, and Photinus, and Sophronius assert, that the Word is an energy, and that it was this energy that dwelt in Him who was of the seed of David, and not a personal substance.

Arius confesses indeed the Son, but only in word; he says that He is a creature, and much inferior to the Father. And others say that He has not a soul. Seest thou the chariots standing? See then their fall, how he overthrows them all together, and with a single stroke. How? "Have the same mind in you," he says, "which was in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God." And Paul of Samosata has fallen, and Marcellus, and Sabellius. For he says, "Being in the form of God." If "in the form" how sayest thou, O wicked one, that He took His origin from Mary, and was not before? and how dost thou say that He was an energy? For it is written, "The form of God took the form of a servant." "The form of a servant," is it the energy of a servant, or the nature of a servant? By all means, I fancy, the nature of a servant. Thus too the form of God, is the nature of God, and therefore not an energy. Behold also Marcellus of Galatia, Sophronius and Photinus have fallen.

Behold Sabellius too. It is written, "He counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God." Now equality is not predicated, where there is but one person, for that which is equal hath somewhat to which it is equal. Seest thou not the substance of two Persons, and not empty names without things? Hearest thou not the eternal pre-existence of the Only-begotten?

Lastly, What shall we say against Arius, who asserts the Son is of a different substance? Tell me now, what means, "He took the form of a servant"? It means, He became man. Wherefore "being in the form of God," He was God. For one "form" and another "form" is named; if the one be true, the other is also. "The form of a servant" means, Man by nature, wherefore "the form of God" means, God by nature. And he not only bears record of this, but of His equality too, as John also doth, that he is no way inferior to the Father, for he saith, "He thought it not a thing to seize, (**Schaff Note:** [Rev. Ver. "a prize," a thing seized, or a thing to be seized.—J.A.B.]) to be equal with God." Now what is their wise reasoning? Nay, say they, he proves the very contrary; for he says, that, "being in the form of God, He seized not equality with God." How if He were God, how was He able "to seize upon it"? and is not this without meaning? Who would say that one, being a man, seized not on being a man? for how would any one seize on that which he is? No, say they, but he means that being a little God, He seized not upon being equal to the great God, Who was greater than He. Is there a great and a little God? And do ye bring in the doctrines of the Greeks upon those of the Church? With them there is a great and a little God. If it be so with you, I know not. For you will find it nowhere in the Scriptures: there you will find a great God throughout, a little one nowhere. If He were little, how would he also be God? If man is not little and great, but one nature, and if that which is not of this one nature is not man, how can there be a little God and a great one?

He who is not of that nature is not God. For He is everywhere called great in Scripture; "Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised." (Ps. xlviii. 1) This is said of the Son also, for it always calls Him Lord. "Thou art great, and doest wondrous things. Thou art God alone." (Ps.

lxxxvi. 10) And again, “Great is our Lord, and great is His power, and of His greatness there is no end.” (Ps. cxlv. 3)

But the Son, he says, is little. But it is thou that sayest this, for the Scripture says the contrary: as of the Father, so it speaks of the Son; for listen to Paul, saying, “Looking for the blessed hope, and appearing of the glory of our great God.” (Tit. ii. 13) But can he have said “appearing” of the Father? Nay, that he may the more convince you, he has added with reference to the appearing “of the great God.” Is it then not said of the Father? By no means. For the sequel suffers it not which says, “The appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.” See, the Son is great also. How then speakest thou of small and great?

Listen to the Prophet too, calling him “The Messenger (**Schaff Note:** See also Jer. xxxii. 18. Some copies of LXX omit the latter part of Isa. ix. 6, probably because it was not understood.) of great counsel.” (Isa. ix. 6) “The Messenger of great counsel,” is He not great Himself? “The mighty God,” is He small and not great? What mean then these shameless and reckless men when they say, that being little He is a God? I repeat oftentimes what they say, that ye may the more avoid them. He being a lesser God seized not for Himself to be like the greater God! Tell me now (but think not that these words are mine), if he were little, as they say, and far inferior to the Father in power, how could He possibly have seized to Himself equality with God? For an inferior nature could not seize for himself admission into that which is great; for example, a man could not seize on becoming equal to an angel in nature; a horse could not, though he wished it, seize on being equal to a man in nature. But besides all that, I will say this too. What does Paul wish to establish by this example? Surely, to lead the Philippians to humility. To what purpose then did he bring forward this example? For no one who would exhort to humility speaks thus; “Be thou humble, and think less of thyself than of thine equals in honor, for such an one who is a slave has not risen against his master; do thou imitate him.” This, any one would say, is not humility, but arrogance. (**Schaff Note:** *πovοίας*. He means either that calling it humility were arrogance, or “this is not a question of humility, but of presumption.”) Learn ye what humility is, ye who have a devilish pride! What then is humility? To be lowly minded. And he is lowly minded who humbles himself, not he who is lowly by necessity. To explain what I say; and do ye attend; he who is lowly minded, when he has it in his power to be high minded, is humble, but he who is so because he is not able to be high minded, is no longer humble. For instance, If a King subjects himself to his own officer, he is humble, for he descends from his high estate; but if an officer does so, he will not be lowly minded; for how? he has not humbled himself from any high estate. It is not possible to show humble-mindedness except it be in our power to do otherwise. For if it is necessary for us to be humble even against our will, that excellency comes not from the spirit or the will, but from necessity. This virtue is called humble-mindedness, because it is the humbling of the mind.

If he who has it not in his power to snatch at another’s goods, continues in the possession of his own; should we praise him, think you, for his justice? I trow not, and why? The praise of free choice is taken away by the necessity. If he, who has it not in his power to usurp and be a king, remains a private citizen, should we praise him for his quietness? I trow not. The same rule applies here. For praise, O ye most senseless ones, is not given for abstaining from these things, but for the performance of good deeds; for the former is free indeed from blame, but partakes not yet of praise, while eulogy of the other is meet. Observe accordingly that Christ gives praise on this principle, when He says, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the

kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink.” (Matt. xxv. 34, 35) He did not say, Because ye have not been covetous, because ye have not robbed; these are slight things; but because “ye saw Me an hungered, and fed Me.” Who ever praised either his friends or his enemies in this sort? No one ever praised even Paul. Why say Paul? no one ever praised even a common man, as thou dost praise Christ, because he did not take that rule which was not his due. To admire for such things as this, is to give evidence of much evil. And why? because with evil men this is a matter of praise, as of one that stealeth, if he steal no more; but it is otherwise among good men. (Eph. iv. 28) Because a man has not seized on a rule and an honor which was not his due, is he praiseworthy? What folly is this?

Attend, I entreat you, for the reasoning is long. Again, who would ever exhort to humility from such grounds as this? Examples ought to be much greater than the subject, to which we are exhorting, for no one will be moved by what is foreign to the subject. For instance, when Christ would lead us to do good to our enemies, He brought a great example, even that of His Father, “For He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.” (Matt. v. 45) When He would lead to endurance of wrong He brought an example, “Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.” (Matt. xi. 29) And again, “If I your Lord and Master do these things, how much more should ye”? (John xiii. 14) Seest thou how these examples are not distant, for there is no need they should be so distant, for indeed we also do these things, especially as in this case the example is not even near. And how? If He be a servant, He is inferior, and subject to Him that is greater; but this is not lowliness of mind. It was requisite to show the contrary, namely, that the greater person subjected himself to the lesser. But since he found not this distinction in the case of God, between greater and lesser, he made at least an equality. Now if the Son were inferior, this were not a sufficient example to lead us to humility. And why? because it is not humility, for the lesser not to rise against the greater, not to snatch at rule, and to be “obedient unto death.”

Again, consider what he says after the example, “In lowliness of mind, each counting other better than themselves.” (Philip. ii. 3) He says, “counting,” for as ye are one in substance, and in the honor which cometh of God, it follows that the matter is one of estimation. Now in the case of those who are greater and lesser, he would not have said “counting,” but honor them that are better than yourselves, as he says in another place, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them.” (Heb. xiii. 17) In that instance subjection is the result of the nature of the case, in this of our own judgment. “In lowliness of mind,” he says, “each counting other better than themselves,” as Christ also did.

Thus are their explanations overthrown. It remains that I speak of our own after I have first spoken of theirs summarily. When exhorting to lowliness of mind, Paul would never have brought forward a lesser one, as obedient to a greater. If he were exhorting servants to obey their masters, he might have done so with propriety, but when exhorting the free to obey the free, to what purpose could he bring forward the subjection of a servant to a master? of a lesser to a greater? He says not, “Let the lesser be subject to the greater,” but ye who are of equal honor with each other be ye subject, “each counting other better than themselves.” Why then did he not bring forward even the obedience of the wife, and say, As the wife obeys her husband, so do ye also obey. Now if he did not bring forward that state in which there is equality and liberty, since in that the subjection is but slight, how much less would he have

brought forward the subjection of a slave? I said above, that no one so praises a man for abstaining from evil, nor even mentions him at all; no one who desires to praise a man for continence would say, he has not committed adultery, but, he has abstained from his own wife; for we do not consider abstinence from evil as a matter of praise at all, it would be ridiculous.

I said that the “form of a servant” was a true form, and nothing less. Therefore “the form of God” also is perfect, and no less. Why says he not, “being made in the form of God,” but “being in the form of God”? This is the same as the saying, “I am that I am.” (Ex. iii. 14) “Form” implies unchangeableness, so far as it is form. It is not possible that things of one substance should have the form of another, as no man has the form of an angel, neither has a beast the form of a man. How then should the Son?

Now in our own case, since we men are of a compound nature, form pertains to the body, but in the case of a simple and altogether uncompounded nature it is of the substance. But if thou contendest that he speaks not of the Father, because the word is used without the article, in many places this is meant, though the word be used without the article. Why say I, in many places? for in this very place he says, “He counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God,” using the word without the article, though speaking of God the Father.

I would add our own explanation, but I fear that I shall overwhelm your minds. Meanwhile remember what has been said for their refutation; meanwhile let us root out the thorns, and then we will scatter the good seed after that the thorns have been rooted out, and a little rest has been given to the land; that when rid of all the evil thence contracted, it may receive the divine seed with full virtue.

Let us give thanks to God for what has been spoken; let us entreat Him to grant us the guarding and safe keeping thereof, that both we and ye may rejoice, and the heretics may be put to shame. Let us beseech Him to open our mouth for what follows, that we may with the same earnestness lay down our own views. Let us supplicate Him to vouchsafe us a life worthy of the faith, that we may live to His glory, and that His name may not be blasphemed through us. For, “woe unto you,” it is written, “through whom the name of God is blasphemed.” (Isa. lii. 5, LXX nearly) For if, when we have a son, (and what is there more our own than a son,) if therefore when we have a son, and are blasphemed through him, we publicly renounce him, turn away from him, and will not receive him; how much more will God, when He has ungrateful servants who blaspheme and insult Him, turn away from them and hate them? And who will take up him whom God hates and turns away from, but the Devil and the demons? And whomsoever the demons take, what hope of salvation is left for him? what consolation in life?

As long as we are in the hand of God, “no one is able to pluck us out” (John x. 28), for that hand is strong; but when we fall away from that hand and that help, then are we lost, then are we exposed, ready to be snatched away, as a “bowing wall, and a tottering fence” (Ps. lxii. 3); when the wall is weak, it will be easy for all to surmount. Think not this which I am about to say refers to Jerusalem alone, but to all men. And what was spoken of Jerusalem? “Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching His vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill, and I made a fence about it, and surrounded it with a dike, and planted it with the vine of Sorech, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also dug a wine press in it, and I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth thorns. And now, O men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, judge between Me and My vineyard. What should have been done to My vineyard, that I have not done to it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should

bring forth grapes, brought it forth thorns? Now therefore I will tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be for a prey, and I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down. And I will leave My vineyard, and it shall not be pruned or digged, but thorns shall come up upon it, as upon a desert land. I will also command the clouds, that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of Sabaoth is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant. I looked that it should do judgment, but it did iniquity, and a cry instead of righteousness.” (Isa. v. 1–7, LXX) This is spoken also of every soul. For when God who loveth man hath done all that is needful and man then bringeth forth thorns instead of grapes, He will take away the fence, and break down the wall, and we shall be for a prey. For hear what another prophet speaks in his lamentations: “Why hast thou broken down her fences, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth ravage it, and the wild beasts of the field feed on it.” (Ps. lxxx. 12, 13) In the former place He speaks of the Mede and the Babylonian, here nought is said of them, but “the boar,” and “the solitary beast” is the Devil and all his host, because of the ferocity and impurity of his disposition. For when it would show us his rapacity, it saith, “As a roaring lion he walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. v. 8): when his poisonous, his deadly, his destructive nature, it calleth him a snake, and a scorpion; “For tread,” saith He, “upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy” (Luke x. 19): when it would represent his strength as well as his venom, it calleth him a dragon; as when it says, This dragon “whom thou hast formed to take his pastime therein.” (Ps. civ. 26) Scripture everywhere calleth him a dragon, and a crooked serpent, and an adder (Ps. lxxiv. 13, 14); he is a beast of many folds, and varied in his devices, and his strength is great, he moves all things, he disturbs all things, he turns all things up and down. (Isa. xxvii. 1; li. 9; Ezek. xxix. 3; xxxii. 2) But fear not, neither be afraid; watch only, and he will be as a sparrow; “for,” saith He, “tread upon serpents and scorpions.” If we will, He causes him to be trodden down under our feet.

See now what scorn is it, yea, what misery, to see him standing over our heads, who has been given to us to tread down. And whence is this? it is of ourselves. If we choose, he becomes great; and if we choose, he becomes of small power. If we take heed to ourselves, and take up our stand with Him who is our King, he draws himself in, and will be no better than a little child in his warfare against us. Whensoever we stand apart from Him, he puffeth himself up greatly, he uttereth terrible sounds, he grindeth his teeth, because he finds us without our greatest help. For he will not approach to us, except God permit him; for if he dared not to enter into the herd of swine, except by God’s permission, how much less into men’s souls. But God does permit him, either chastening or punishing us, or making us more approved, as in the case of Job. Seest thou that he came not to him, neither dared to be near him, but trembled and quaked? Why speak I of Job? When he leaped upon Judas, he dared not to seize on him wholly, and to enter into him, until Christ had severed him from the sacred band. He attacked him indeed from without, but he dared not enter in, but when he saw him cut off from that holy flock, he leaped upon him with more than wolfish vehemence, and left him not till he had slain him with a double death.

These things are written for our admonition. What gain have we from knowing that one of the twelve was a traitor? what profit? what advantage? Much. For, when we know whence it was that he arrived at this deadly counsel, we are on our guard that we too suffer not the like. Whence came he to this? From the love of money. He was a thief. For thirty pieces of silver he

betrayed his Lord. So drunken was he with the passion, he betrayed the Lord of the world for thirty pieces of silver. What can be worse than this madness? Him to whom nothing is equivalent, nothing is equal, “before whom the nations are as nothing” (Isa. xl. 15), Him did he betray for thirty pieces of silver. A grievous tyrant indeed is the love of gold, and terrible in putting the soul beside itself. A man is not so beside himself through drunkenness as through love of money, not so much from madness and insanity as from love of money.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Philippians ii. 5–8

“Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.””

He refers to **Philippians 2 (KJV):5** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

He continues, “Our Lord Jesus Christ, when exhorting His disciples to great actions, places before them Himself, and the Father, and the Prophets, as examples; as when He says, “For thus they did unto the Prophets which were before you” (Matt. v. 12; Luke vi. 23); and again, “If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (John xv. 20); and, “Learn of me, for I am meek” (Matt. xi. 29); and again, “Be ye merciful, as your Father which is in heaven is merciful.” (Luke vi. 36)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):12** Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

And to **Luke 6 (KJV):23** Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

And to **John 15 (KJV):20** Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

And to **Matthew 11 (KJV):29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

And to **Luke 6 (KJV):36** Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

He continues, “This too the blessed Paul did; in exhorting them to humility, he brought forward Christ. And he does so not here only, but also when he discourses of love towards the poor, he speaks in this wise. “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor.” (2 Cor. viii. 9)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 8 (KJV):9** For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

He continues, “Nothing rouses a great and philosophic soul to the performance of good works, so much as learning that in this it is likened to God. What encouragement is equal to this? None. This Paul well knowing, when he would exhort them to humility, first beseeches and supplicates them, then to awe (**Schaff Note:** ἐντροπικῶς, usually to “shame,” here rather to

“make serious,” i.e. by representing to them the presence of the Holy Spirit. See Philip. ii. 12, 13) them he says, “That ye stand fast in one Spirit”; he says also, that it “is for them an evident token of perdition, but of your salvation.” (Philip. i. 27, 28)”

He refers to **Philippians 1 (KJV):27** Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; 28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

He continues, “And last of all he says this, “Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking upon Him the form of a servant.” (Philip. ii. 5–7)”

He refers to **Philippians 2 (KJV):5** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

He continues, “Attend, I entreat you, and rouse yourselves. For as a sharp twoedged sword, wheresoever it falls, though it be among ten thousand phalanxes, easily cuts through and destroys, because it is sharp on every side, and nought can bear its edge; so are the words of the Spirit. (Heb. iv. 12; Rev. i. 16)”

He refers to **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

And to **Revelation 1 (KJV):16** And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

He continues, “For by these words he has laid low the followers of Arius of Alexandria, of Paul of Samosata, of Marcellus the Galatian, of Sabellius the Libyan, of Marcion that was of Pontus, of Valentinus, of Manes, of Apollinarius of Laodicea, of Photinus, of Sophronius, and, in one word, all the heresies.”

He has made a list of the heretics here.

Chrysostom continues, “Rouse yourselves then to behold so great a spectacle, so many armies falling by one stroke, lest the pleasure of such a sight should escape you. For if when chariots contend in the horse race there is nothing so pleasing as when one of them dashes against and overthrows whole chariots with their drivers, and after throwing down many with the charioteers that stood thereon, drives by alone towards the goal, and the end of the course, and amid the applause and clamor which rises on all sides to heaven, with coursers winged as it were by that joy and that applause, sweeps over the whole ground; how much greater will the pleasure be here, when by the grace of God we overthrow at once and in a body the combinations and devilish machinations of all these heresies together with their charioteers?

And if it seem good to you, we will first arrange the heresies themselves in order. Would you have them in the order of their impiety, or of their dates? In the order of time, for it is difficult to judge of the order of their impiety.”

Chrysostom now lists the heretics with their heresies.

He continues, “First then let Sabellius the Libyan come forward. What does he assert?

that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are mere names given to one Person.”

He continues, “Marcion of Pontus says, that God the Creator of all things is not good, nor the Father of the good Christ, but another righteous one, and that he did not take flesh for us.”

He continues, “Marcellus, and Photinus, and Sophronius assert, that the Word is an energy, and that it was this energy that dwelt in Him who was of the seed of David, and not a personal substance.”

He continues, “Arius confesses indeed the Son, but only in word; he says that He is a creature, and much inferior to the Father. And others say that He has not a soul.”

He continues, “Seest thou the chariots standing? See then their fall, how he overthrows them all together, and with a single stroke. How? “Have the same mind in you,” he says, “which was in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God.”

He then rebukes them, as he continues, “And Paul of Samosata has fallen, and Marcellus, and Sabellius. For he says, “Being in the form of God.” If “in the form” how sayest thou, O wicked one, that He took His origin from Mary, and was not before? and how dost thou say that He was an energy? For it is written, “The form of God took the form of a servant.” “The form of a servant,” is it the energy of a servant, or the nature of a servant? By all means, I fancy, the nature of a servant. Thus too the form of God, is the nature of God, and therefore not an energy. Behold also Marcellus of Galatia, Sophronius and Photinus have fallen.”

We can agree heartily with Chrysostom here.

He continues, “Behold Sabellius too. It is written, “He counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God.” Now equality is not predicated, where there is but one person, for that which is equal hath somewhat to which it is equal. Seest thou not the substance of two Persons, and not empty names without things? Hearest thou not the eternal pre-existence of the Only-begotten?

Again, we agree heartily with Chrysostom here.

He continues, as he argues, “Lastly, What shall we say against Arius, who asserts the Son is of a different substance? Tell me now, what means, “He took the form of a servant”? It means, He became man. Wherefore “being in the form of God,” He was God. For one “form” and another “form” is named; if the one be true, the other is also. “The form of a servant” means, Man by nature, wherefore “the form of God” means, God by nature. And he not only bears record of this, but of His equality too, as John also doth, that he is no way inferior to the Father, for he saith, “He thought it not a thing to seize, (**Schaff Note:** [Rev. Ver. “a prize,” a thing seized, or a thing to be seized.—J.A.B.]) to be equal with God.” Now what is their wise reasoning? Nay, say they, he proves the very contrary; for he says, that, “being in the form of God, He seized not equality with God.” How if He were God, how was He able “to seize upon it”? and is not this without meaning? Who would say that one, being a man, seized not on being a man? for how would any one seize on that which he is? No, say they, but he means that being a little God, He seized not upon being equal to the great God, Who was greater than He. Is there a great and a little God? And do ye bring in the doctrines of the Greeks upon those of the Church? With them there is a great and a little God. If it be so with you, I know not. For you will find it nowhere in the Scriptures: there you will find a great God throughout, a little one nowhere. If He were little, how would he also be God? If man is not little and great, but one nature, and if that which is not of this one nature is not man, how can there be a little God and a



great one?

Again, we agree heartily with Chrysostom. He has explained well the deity of the Son.

He continues, “He who is not of that nature is not God. For He is everywhere called great in Scripture; “Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised.” (Ps. xlviii. 1)”

He refers to **Psalm 48 (KJV):1** Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.

He continues, “This is said of the Son also, for it always calls Him Lord. “Thou art great, and doest wondrous things. Thou art God alone.” (Ps. lxxxvi. 10)”

He refers to **Psalm 86 (KJV):10** For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.

He continues, “And again, “Great is our Lord, and great is His power, and of His greatness there is no end.” (Ps. cxlv. 3)”

He refers to **Psalm 145 (KJV):3** Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.

He continues, “But the Son, he says, is little. But it is thou that sayest this, for the Scripture says the contrary: as of the Father, so it speaks of the Son; for listen to Paul, saying, “Looking for the blessed hope, and appearing of the glory of our great God.” (Tit. ii. 13)”

He refers to **Titus 2 (KJV):13** Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

He continues, “But can he have said “appearing” of the Father? Nay, that he may the more convince you, he has added with reference to the appearing “of the great God.” Is it then not said of the Father? By no means. For the sequel suffers it not which says, “The appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.” See, the Son is great also. How then speakest thou of small and great?

Listen to the Prophet too, calling him “The Messenger (**Schaff Note:** See also Jer. xxxii. 18. Some copies of LXX omit the latter part of Isa. ix. 6, probably because it was not understood) of great counsel.” (Isa. ix. 6)”

He refers to **Isaiah 9 (Septuagint):6** For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us, whose government is upon his shoulder, and his name is called the messenger of great counsel, < wonderful counsellor, mighty God, potentate, prince of peace, father of the age to come >\*: for I will bring peace upon the princes, and health to him.

And **Isaiah 9 (KJV):6** For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

He continues, ““The Messenger of great counsel,” is He not great Himself? “The mighty God,” is He small and not great? What mean then these shameless and reckless men when they say, that being little He is a God? I repeat oftentimes what they say, that ye may the more avoid them. He being a lesser God seized not for Himself to be like the greater God! Tell me now (but think not that these words are mine), if he were little, as they say, and far inferior to the Father in power, how could He possibly have seized to Himself equality with God? For an inferior nature could not seize for himself admission into that which is great; for example, a man could not seize on becoming equal to an angel in nature; a horse could not, though he wished it, seize on being equal to a man in nature. But besides all that, I will say this too. What does Paul wish to establish by this example? Surely, to lead the Philippians to humility. To what purpose then

did he bring forward this example? For no one who would exhort to humility speaks thus; “Be thou humble, and think less of thyself than of thine equals in honor, for such an one who is a slave has not risen against his master; do thou imitate him.” This, any one would say, is not humility, but arrogance. (**Schaff Note:** *πονοίας*. He means either that calling it humility were arrogance, or “this is not a question of humility, but of presumption.”) Learn ye what humility is, ye who have a devilish pride! What then is humility? To be lowly minded. And he is lowly minded who humbles himself, not he who is lowly by necessity. To explain what I say; and do ye attend; he who is lowly minded, when he has it in his power to be high minded, is humble, but he who is so because he is not able to be high minded, is no longer humble. For instance, If a King subjects himself to his own officer, he is humble, for he descends from his high estate; but if an officer does so, he will not be lowly minded; for how? he has not humbled himself from any high estate. It is not possible to show humble-mindedness except it be in our power to do otherwise. For if it is necessary for us to be humble even against our will, that excellency comes not from the spirit or the will, but from necessity. This virtue is called humblemindedness, because it is the humbling of the mind.

If he who has it not in his power to snatch at another’s goods, continues in the possession of his own; should we praise him, think you, for his justice? I trow not, and why? The praise of free choice is taken away by the necessity. If he, who has it not in his power to usurp and be a king, remains a private citizen, should we praise him for his quietness? I trow not. The same rule applies here. For praise, O ye most senseless ones, is not given for abstaining from these things, but for the performance of good deeds; for the former is free indeed from blame, but partakes not yet of praise, while eulogy of the other is meet. Observe accordingly that Christ gives praise on this principle, when He says, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink.” (Matt. xxv. 34, 35)”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):**34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

He continues, “He did not say, Because ye have not been covetous, because ye have not robbed; these are slight things; but because “ye saw Me an hungered, and fed Me.” Who ever praised either his friends or his enemies in this sort? No one ever praised even Paul. Why say Paul? no one ever praised even a common man, as thou dost praise Christ, because he did not take that rule which was not his due. To admire for such things as this, is to give evidence of much evil. And why? because with evil men this is a matter of praise, as of one that stealeth, if he steal no more; but it is otherwise among good men. (Eph. iv. 28)”

He refers to **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

He continues, “Because a man has not seized on a rule and an honor which was not his due, is he praiseworthy? What folly is this?”

Attend, I entreat you, for the reasoning is long. Again, who would ever exhort to humility from such grounds as this? Examples ought to be much greater than the subject, to which we are exhorting, for no one will be moved by what is foreign to the subject. For instance, when Christ

would lead us to do good to our enemies, He brought a great example, even that of His Father, “For He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.” (Matt. v. 45)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):45** That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

He continues, “When He would lead to endurance of wrong He brought an example, “Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.” (Matt. xi. 29)”

He refers to **Matthew 11 (KJV):29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

He continues, “And again, “If I your Lord and Master do these things, how much more should ye”? (John xiii. 14)”

He refers in context to **John 13 (KJV):14** If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

He continues, “Seest thou how these examples are not distant, for there is no need they should be so distant, for indeed we also do these things, especially as in this case the example is not even near. And how? If He be a servant, He is inferior, and subject to Him that is greater; but this is not lowliness of mind. It was requisite to show the contrary, namely, that the greater person subjected himself to the lesser. But since he found not this distinction in the case of God, between greater and lesser, he made at least an equality. Now if the Son were inferior, this were not a sufficient example to lead us to humility. And why? because it is not humility, for the lesser not to rise against the greater, not to snatch at rule, and to be “obedient unto death.”

Again, consider what he says after the example, “In lowliness of mind, each counting other better than themselves.” (Philip. ii. 3)”

He refers to **Philippians 2 (KJV):3** Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

He continues, “He says, “counting,” for as ye are one in substance, and in the honor which cometh of God, it follows that the matter is one of estimation. Now in the case of those who are greater and lesser, he would not have said “counting,” but honor them that are better than yourselves, as he says in another place, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them.” (Heb. xiii. 17)”

He refers to **Hebrews 13 (KJV):17** Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

He continues, “In that instance subjection is the result of the nature of the case, in this of our own judgment. “In lowliness of mind,” he says, “each counting other better than themselves,” as Christ also did.

Thus are their explanations overthrown. It remains that I speak of our own after I have first spoken of theirs summarily. When exhorting to lowliness of mind, Paul would never have brought forward a lesser one, as obedient to a greater. If he were exhorting servants to obey their masters, he might have done so with propriety, but when exhorting the free to obey the free, to what purpose could he bring forward the subjection of a servant to a master? of a lesser to a greater? He says not, “Let the lesser be subject to the greater,” but ye who are of equal

honor with each other be ye subject, “each counting other better than themselves.” Why then did he not bring forward even the obedience of the wife, and say, As the wife obeys her husband, so do ye also obey. Now if he did not bring forward that state in which there is equality and liberty, since in that the subjection is but slight, how much less would he have brought forward the subjection of a slave? I said above, that no one so praises a man for abstaining from evil, nor even mentions him at all; no one who desires to praise a man for continence would say, he has not committed adultery, but, he has abstained from his own wife; for we do not consider abstinence from evil as a matter of praise at all, it would be ridiculous.

I said that the “form of a servant” was a true form, and nothing less. Therefore “the form of God” also is perfect, and no less. Why says he not, “being made in the form of God,” but “being in the form of God”? This is the same as the saying, “I am that I am.” (Ex. iii. 14)”

He refers to **Exodus 3 (KJV):14** And God said unto Moses, I Am That I Am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you.

He continues, ““Form” implies unchangeableness, so far as it is form. It is not possible that things of one substance should have the form of another, as no man has the form of an angel, neither has a beast the form of a man. How then should the Son?”

Now in our own case, since we men are of a compound nature, form pertains to the body, but in the case of a simple and altogether uncompounded nature it is of the substance. But if thou contendest that he speaks not of the Father, because the word is used without the article, in many places this is meant, though the word be used without the article. Why say I, in many places? for in this very place he says, “He counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God,” using the word without the article, though speaking of God the Father.

I would add our own explanation, but I fear that I shall overwhelm your minds. Meanwhile remember what has been said for their refutation; meanwhile let us root out the thorns, and then we will scatter the good seed after that the thorns have been rooted out, and a little rest has been given to the land; that when rid of all the evil thence contracted, it may receive the divine seed with full virtue.

Let us give thanks to God for what has been spoken; let us entreat Him to grant us the guarding and safe keeping thereof, that both we and ye may rejoice, and the heretics may be put to shame. Let us beseech Him to open our mouth for what follows, that we may with the same earnestness lay down our own views. Let us supplicate Him to vouchsafe us a life worthy of the faith, that we may live to His glory, and that His name may not be blasphemed through us. For, “woe unto you,” it is written, “through whom the name of God is blasphemed.” (Isa. lii. 5, LXX nearly.)”

He refers to **Isaiah 52 (Septuagint):5** And now why are ye here? Thus saith the Lord, Because my people was taken for nothing, wonder ye and howl. Thus saith the Lord, On account of you my name is continually blasphemed among the Gentiles.

And to **Isaiah 52 (KJV):5** Now therefore, what have I here, saith the Lord, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the Lord; and my name continually every day is blasphemed.

He continues, “For if, when we have a son, (and what is there more our own than a son,) if therefore when we have a son, and are blasphemed through him, we publicly renounce him, turn away from him, and will not receive him; how much more will God, when He has ungrateful servants who blaspheme and insult Him, turn away from them and hate them? And

who will take up him whom God hates and turns away from, but the Devil and the demons? And whomsoever the demons take, what hope of salvation is left for him? what consolation in life?

As long as we are in the hand of God, “no one is able to pluck us out” (John x. 28), for that hand is strong;”

He refers to **John 10 (KJV):28** And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Chrysostom continues, “but when we fall away from that hand and that help, then are we lost, then are we exposed, ready to be snatched away, as a “bowing wall, and a tottering fence” (Ps. lxii. 3);”

He refers to **Psalms 62 (KJV):3** How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.

But Jesus said above that they “shall never perish”. Even we ourselves can’t jump out of His hand.

Chrysostom continues, “when the wall is weak, it will be easy for all to surmount. Think not this which I am about to say refers to Jerusalem alone, but to all men. And what was spoken of Jerusalem? “Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching His vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill, and I made a fence about it, and surrounded it with a dike, and planted it with the vine of Sorech, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also dug a wine press in it, and I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth thorns. And now, O men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, judge between Me and My vineyard. What should have been done to My vineyard, that I have not done to it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth thorns? Now therefore I will tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be for a prey, and I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down. And I will leave My vineyard, and it shall not be pruned or digged, but thorns shall come up upon it, as upon a desert land. I will also command the clouds, that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of Sabaoth is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant. I looked that it should do judgment, but it did iniquity, and a cry instead of righteousness.” (Isa. v. 1–7, LXX)”

He refers to **Isaiah 5 (Septuagint):1** Now I will sing to [my] beloved a song of my beloved concerning my vineyard. [My] beloved had a vineyard on a high hill in a fertile place. 2 And I made a hedge round it, and dug a trench, and planted a choice vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and dug a place for the wine-vat in it: and I waited [for it] to bring forth grapes, and it brought forth thorns. 3 And now, ye dwellers in Jerusalem, and [every] man of Juda, judge between me and my vineyard. 4 What shall I do any more to my vineyard, that I have not done to it? Whereas I expected [it] to bring forth grapes, but it has brought forth thorns. 5 And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it shall be for a spoil; and I will pull down its walls, and it shall be [left] to be trodden down. 6 And I will forsake my vineyard; and it shall not be pruned, nor dug, and thorns shall come up upon it as on barren land; and I will command the clouds to rain no rain upon it. 7 For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Juda [his] beloved plant: I expected [it] to bring forth judgment, and it brought forth iniquity; and not righteousness, but a cry.

And to **Isaiah 5 (KJV):1** Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved

touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: 2 And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. 3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. 4 What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? 5 And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: 6 And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. 7 For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

He continues, “This is spoken also of every soul. For when God who loveth man hath done all that is needful and man then bringeth forth thorns instead of grapes, He will take away the fence, and break down the wall, and we shall be for a prey. For hear what another prophet speaks in his lamentations: “Why hast thou broken down her fences, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth ravage it, and the wild beasts of the field feed on it.” (Ps. lxxx. 12, 13)”

He refers to **Psalm 80 (KJV):**12 Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? 13 The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.

He continues, “In the former place He speaks of the Mede and the Babylonian, here nought is said of them, but “the boar,” and “the solitary beast” is the Devil and all his host, because of the ferocity and impurity of his disposition. For when it would show us his rapacity, it saith, “As a roaring lion he walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. v. 8):”

He refers to **1 Peter 5 (KJV):**8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

He continues, “when his poisonous, his deadly, his destructive nature, it calleth him a snake, and a scorpion; “For tread,” saith He, “upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy” (Luke x. 19):”

He refers to **Luke 10 (KJV):**19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

He continues, “when it would represent his strength as well as his venom, it calleth him a dragon; as when it says, This dragon “whom thou hast formed to take his pastime therein.” (Ps. civ. 26)”

He refers to **Psalm 103 (Septuagint):**26 here go the ships; [and] this dragon whom thou hast made to play in it.

And to **Psalm 104 (KJV):**26 There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.

He continues, “Scripture everywhere calleth him a dragon, and a crooked serpent, and an adder (Ps. lxxiv. 13, 14):”

He refers to **Psalm 74 (KJV):**13 Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters. 14 Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and

gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.

He continues, “he is a beast of many folds, and varied in his devices, and his strength is great, he moves all things, he disturbs all things, he turns all things up and down. (Isa. xxvii. 1; li. 9; Ezek. xxix. 3; xxxii. 2)”

He refers to **Isaiah 27 (KJV):1** In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

And to **Isaiah 51 (KJV):9** Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?

And to **Ezekiel 29 (KJV):3** Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself.

And to **Ezekiel 32 (KJV):2** Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say unto him, Thou art like a young lion of the nations, and thou art as a whale in the seas: and thou camest forth with thy rivers, and troubledst the waters with thy feet, and fouledst their rivers.

He continues, “But fear not, neither be afraid; watch only, and he will be as a sparrow; “for,” saith He, “tread upon serpents and scorpions.” If we will, He causes him to be trodden down under our feet.

See now what scorn is it, yea, what misery, to see him standing over our heads, who has been given to us to tread down. And whence is this? it is of ourselves. If we choose, he becomes great; and if we choose, he becomes of small power. If we take heed to ourselves, and take up our stand with Him who is our King, he draws himself in, and will be no better than a little child in his warfare against us. Whensoever we stand apart from Him, he puffeth himself up greatly, he uttereth terrible sounds, he grindeth his teeth, because he finds us without our greatest help. For he will not approach to us, except God permit him; for if he dared not to enter into the herd of swine, except by God’s permission, how much less into men’s souls. But God does permit him, either chastening or punishing us, or making us more approved, as in the case of Job. Seest thou that he came not to him, neither dared to be near him, but trembled and quaked? Why speak I of Job? When he leaped upon Judas, he dared not to seize on him wholly, and to enter into him, until Christ had severed him from the sacred band. He attacked him indeed from without, but he dared not enter in, but when he saw him cut off from that holy flock, he leaped upon him with more than wolfish vehemence, and left him not till he had slain him with a double death.”

He refers to **Luke 22 (KJV):1** Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. 2 And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people. 3 Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. 4 And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. 5 And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. 6 And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.

He continues, “These things are written for our admonition. What gain have we from knowing that one of the twelve was a traitor? what profit? what advantage? Much. For, when we know whence it was that he arrived at this deadly counsel, we are on our guard that we too

suffer not the like. Whence came he to this? From the love of money. He was a thief. For thirty pieces of silver he betrayed his Lord. So drunken was he with the passion, he betrayed the Lord of the world for thirty pieces of silver. What can be worse than this madness?"

And we read in **Mark 14 (KJV):21** The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

He continues, "Him to whom nothing is equivalent, nothing is equal, "before whom the nations are as nothing" (Isa. xl. 15), Him did he betray for thirty pieces of silver."

He refers to **Isaiah 40 (KJV):15** Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

He concludes, "A grievous tyrant indeed is the love of gold, and terrible in putting the soul beside itself. A man is not so beside himself through drunkenness as through love of money, not so much from madness and insanity as from love of money."

And we must be discerning, as we read in **1 John 4 (KJV):1** Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. **2** Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: **3** And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. **4** Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. **5** They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. **6** We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILIPPIANS, HOMILY VII, page 212-216**

Philippians ii. 5-11

"Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God; but emptied Himself, taking upon Him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave Him the Name which is above every name: that in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

I have stated the views of the heretics. It is befitting that I now speak of what is our own. They say that the words, "He counted it not a prize," are of wrongfully seizing. (**Schaff Note:** Meaning, "He thought it not a robbery for himself to commit." The phrase being always used in the sense of "a gain." Our language does not seem capable of expressing it exactly.) We have proved, that this is altogether vapid and impertinent, for no man would exhort another to humility on such grounds, nor in this sort does he praise God, or even man. What is it then, beloved? Give heed to what I now say. Since many men think, that, when they are lowly, they are deprived of their proper right, and debased, Paul, to take away this fear, and to show that we



must not be affected thus, says that God, the only begotten, who was in the form of God, who was no whit inferior to the Father, who was equal to Him, “counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God.”

Now learn what this meaneth. Whatsoever a man robs, and takes contrary to his right, he dares not lay aside, from fear lest it perish, and fall from his possession, but he keeps hold of it continually. He who possesses some dignity which is natural to him, fears not to descend from that dignity, being assured that nothing of this sort will happen to him. As for example, Absalom usurped the government, and dared not afterwards to lay it aside. We will go to another example, but if example cannot present the whole matter to you, take it not amiss, for this is the nature of examples, they leave the greater part for the imagination to reason out. A man rebels against his sovereign, and usurps the kingdom: he dares not lay aside and hide the matter, for if he once hide it, straightway it is gone. Let us also take another example; if a man takes anything violently, he keeps firm hold of it continually, for if he lay it down, he straightway loses it. And generally speaking, they who have aught by rapine are afraid to lay it by, or hide it, or not to keep constantly in that state which they have assumed. Not so they, who have possessions not procured by rapine, as Man, who possesses the dignity of being a reasonable being. But here examples fail me, for there is no natural preeminence amongst us, for no good thing is naturally our own; but they are inherent in the nature of God. What does one say then? That the Son of God feared not to descend from His right, for He thought not Deity a prize seized. He was not afraid that any would strip Him of that nature or that right, Wherefore He laid it (**Schaff Note:** The word is neuter, and refers only to “right” (ἄξιωμα). Some copies omit “nature.”) aside, being confident that He should take it up again. He hid it, knowing that He was not made inferior by so doing. For this cause, Paul says not, “He seized not,” but, “He counted it not a prize”; He possessed not that estate by seizure, but it was natural, not conferred, (**Schaff Note:** δεδομένην, which would imply an “act” of giving.) it was enduring and safe. Wherefore he refused not to take the form of an inferior. (**Schaff Note:** ὑπασπιστῶν, a soldier of the ranks, who attended on an officer. Herod. v. 111. Xen. Anab. iv. 2, 21) The tyrant fears to lay aside the purple robe in war, while the king does it with much safety. Why so? because he holds his power not as a matter of seizure. He did not refuse to lay it aside, as one who had usurped it, but since He had it as His own by nature, since it could never be parted from Him, He hid it.

This equality with God He had not by seizure, but as his own by nature. Wherefore “He emptied Himself.” Where be they who affirm, that He underwent constraint, that He was subjected? Scripture says, “He emptied Himself, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death.” How did He empty Himself? By taking “the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man.” It is written, “He emptied Himself” in reference to the text, “each counting other better than himself.” Since had He been subjected, had He not chosen it of His own accord, and of His own free will, it would not have been an act of humility. For if He knew not that so it must be, He would have been imperfect. If, not knowing it, He had waited for the time of action, then would He not have known the season. But if He both knew that so it must be, and when it must be, wherefore should He submit to be subjected? To show, they say, the superiority of the Father. But this shows not the superiority of the Father, but His own inferiority. For is not the name of the Father sufficient to show the priority of the Father? For apart from Him, the son has all the same things. For this honor is not

capable of passing from the Father to the Son.

What then say the heretics? See, say they, He did not become man. The Marcionites, I mean. But why? He was “made in the likeness of man.” But how can one be “made in the likeness of men”? by putting on a shadow? But this is a phantom, and no longer the likeness of a man, for the likeness of a man is another man. And what wilt thou answer to John, when he says, “The Word became flesh”? (John i. 14) But this same blessed one himself also says in another place, “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” (Rom. viii. 3)

“And being found in fashion as a man.” See, they say, both “in fashion,” and “as a man.” To be as a man, and to be a man in fashion, is not to be a man indeed. To be a man in fashion is not to be a man by nature. See with what ingenuousness I lay down what our enemies say, for that is a brilliant victory, and amply gained, when we do not conceal what seem to be their strong points. For this is deceit rather than victory. What then do they say? let me repeat their argument. To be a man in fashion is not to be a man by nature; and to be as a man, and in the fashion of a man, this is not to be a man. So then to take the form of a servant, is not to take the form of a servant. Here then is an inconsistency; and wherefore do you not first of all solve this difficulty? For as you think that this contradicts us, so do we say that the other contradicts you. He says not, “as the form of a servant,” nor “in the likeness of the form of a servant,” nor “in the fashion of the form of a servant,” but “He took the form of a servant.” What then is this? for there is a contradiction. There is no contradiction. God forbid! it is a cold and ridiculous argument of theirs. He took, say they, the form of a servant, when He girded Himself with a towel, and washed the feet of His disciples. Is this the form of a servant? Nay, this is not the form, but the work of a servant. It is one thing that there should be the work of a servant, and another to take the form of a servant. Why did he not say, He did the work of a servant, which were clearer? But nowhere in Scripture is “form” put for “work,” for the difference is great: the one is the result of nature, the other of action. In common speaking, too, we never use “form” for “work.” Besides, according to them, He did not even take the work of a servant, nor even gird Himself. For if all was a mere shadow, (**Schaff Note:** [He refers to the various Docetic theories, that the body of Christ was only an appearance.—J.A.B.]) there was no reality. If He had not real hands, how did He wash their feet? If He had not real loins, how did He gird Himself with a towel? and what kind of garments did he take? for Scripture says, “He took His garments.” (John xiii. 12) So then not even the work is found to have really taken place, but it was all a deception, nor did He even wash the disciples. For if that incorporeal nature did not appear, it (**Schaff Note:** Or He. The sense is difficult. Old Lat. “For if He was an incorporeal being, He was not seen, He was not in a body.” Ben. Lat. omits the first “not,” and has “and was not,” but without Greek authority.) was not in a body. Who then washed the disciples’ feet?

Again, what in opposition to Paul of Samosata? for what did he affirm? The very same. But it is no emptying of Himself, that one who is of human nature, and a mere man, should wash his fellow servants. For what we said against the Arians, we must repeat against these too, for they differ not from one another, save by a little space of time; both the one and the other affirm the Son of God to be a creature. What then shall we say to them? If He being a man washed man, He emptied not, He humbled not Himself. If He being a man seized not on being equal with God, He is not deserving of praise. That God should become man, is great, unspeakable, inexpressible humility; but what humility is there in that one, who was a man should do the works of men? And where is the work of God ever called “the form of God”? for

if he were a mere man, and was called the form of God by reason of His works, why do we not do the same of Peter, for he wrought greater deeds than Christ Himself? Why say you not of Paul, that he had the form of God? Why did not Paul give an example of himself, for he wrought a thousand servile works, and did not even refuse to say, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." (2 Cor. iv. 5)

These are absurdities and trifles! Scripture says, He "emptied Himself." How did He empty Himself? tell me. What was His emptying? what His humiliation? was it because He wrought wonders? This both Paul and Peter did, so that this was not peculiar to the Son. What then means, "Being made in the likeness of men"? He had many things belonging to us, and many He had not; for instance, He was not born of wedlock. He did no sin. These things had He which no man has. He was not what he seemed only, but He was God also; He seemed to be a man, but He was not like the mass of men. For He was like them in flesh. He means then, that He was not a mere man. Wherefore he says, "in the likeness of men." For we indeed are soul and body, but He was God, and soul and body, wherefore he says, "in the likeness." For lest when you hear that He emptied Himself, you should think that some change, and degeneracy, and loss is here; he says, whilst He remained what He was, He took that which He was not, and being made flesh He remained God, in that He was the Word. (John i. 14)

In this then He was like man, and for this cause Paul says, "and in fashion." Not that His nature degenerated, nor that any confusion arose, but He became man in fashion. For when He had said that "He took the form of a servant," he made bold to say this also, seeing that the first would silence all objectors; since when he says, "In the likeness of sinful flesh," he says not that He had not flesh, but that that flesh sinned not, but was like to sinful flesh. Like in what? in nature, not in sin, therefore was His like a sinful soul. As then in the former case the term similarity was used, because He was not equal in everything, so here also there is similarity, because He is not equal in everything, as His not being born of wedlock, His being without sin, His being not a mere man. And he well said "as a man," for He was not one of the many, but "as" one of the many. The Word who was God did not degenerate into man, nor was His substance changed, but he appeared as a man; not to delude us with a phantom, but to instruct us in humility. When therefore he says, "as a man," this is what He means; since he calls Him a man elsewhere also, when he says, "there is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. ii. 5)

Thus much against these heretics. I must now speak against such as deny that He took a soul. If "the form of God" is "perfect God," then the "form of a servant" is "a perfect servant." Again, against the Arians. Here concerning His divinity, we no longer find "He became," "He took," but "He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men"; here concerning his humanity we find "He took, He became." He became the latter, He took the latter; He was the former. Let us not then confound nor divide the natures. There is one God, there is one Christ, the Son of God; when I say "One," I mean a union, not a confusion; the one Nature did not degenerate into the other, but was united with it.

"He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross." See, says one, He voluntarily became obedient; he was not equal to Him whom He obeyed. O ye obstinate ones and unwise! This doth not at all lower Him. For we too become obedient to our friends, yet this has no effect. He became obedient as a Son to His Father; He fell not thus into a servile state, but by this very act above all others guarded his wondrous Sonship, by thus greatly

honoring the Father. He honored the Father, not that thou shouldest dishonor Him, but that thou shouldest the rather admire Him, and learn from this act, that He is a true Son, in honoring His Father more than all besides. No one hath thus honored God. As was His height, such was the correspondent humiliation which He underwent. As He is greater than all, and no one is equal to Him, so in honoring His Father, He surpassed all, not by necessity, nor unwillingly, but this too is part of His excellence; yea, words fail me. Truly it is a great and unspeakable thing, that He became a servant; that He underwent death, is far greater; but there is something still greater, and more strange; why? All deaths are not alike; His death seemed to be the most ignominious of all, to be full of shame, to be accursed; for it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (Deut. xxi. 23; Gal. iii. 13) For this cause the Jews also eagerly desired to slay Him in this manner, to make Him a reproach, that if no one fell away from Him by reason of His death, yet they might from the manner of His death. For this cause two robbers were crucified with Him, and He in the midst, that He might share their ill repute, and that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "And he was numbered with the transgressors." (Isa. liii. 12) Yet so much the more doth truth shine forth, so much the more doth it become bright; for when His enemies plot such things against His glory, and it yet shines forth, so much the greater does the matter seem. Not by slaying Him, but by slaying Him in such sort did they think to make Him abominable, to prove Him more abominable than all men, but they availed nothing. And both the robbers also were such impious ones, (for it was afterward that the one repented,) that, even when on the cross, they reviled Him; neither the consciousness of their own sins, nor their present punishment, nor their suffering the same things themselves, restrained their madness. Wherefore the one spake to the other, and silenced him by saying, "Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" (Luke xxiii. 40) So great was their wickedness. Wherefore it is written, "God also highly exalted Him, and gave Him the Name which is above every name." When the blessed Paul hath made mention of the flesh, he fearlessly speaks of all His humiliation. For until he had mentioned that He took the form of a servant, and while he was speaking of His Divinity, behold how loftily he doth it, (loftily, I say, according to his power; for he speaks not according to His own worthiness, seeing that he is not able). "Being in the form of God, He counted it not a prize to be equal with God." But when he had said, that He became Man, henceforth he fearlessly discourseth of His low estate, being confident that the mention of His low estate would not harm His Divinity, since His flesh admitted this.

Ver. 9–11. "Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave Him the Name which is above every name: that in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Let us say against the heretics, If this is spoken of one who was not incarnate, if of God the Word, how did He highly exalt Him? Was it as if He gave Him something more than He had before? He would then have been imperfect in this point, and would have been made perfect for our sakes. For if He had not done good deeds to us, He would not have obtained that honor! "And gave Him the Name." See, He had not even a name, as you say! But how, if He received it as His due, is He found here to have received it by grace, and as a gift? And that "the Name which is above every name": and of what kind, let us see, is the Name? "That at the Name of Jesus," saith He, "every knee should bow." They (the heretics) explain name by glory. This glory then is above all glory, and this glory is in short that

all worship Him! But ye hold yourselves far off from the greatness of God, who think that ye know God, as He knoweth Himself, and from this it is plain, how far off ye are from right thoughts of God. And this is plain from hence. Is this, tell me, glory? Therefore before men were created, before the angels or the archangels, He was not in glory. If this be the glory which is above every glory, (for this is the name that is “above every name,”) though He were in glory before, yet was He in glory inferior to this. It was for this then that He made the things that are, that He might be raised to glory, not from His own goodness, but because He required glory from us! See ye not their folly? see ye not their impiety?

Now if they had said this of Him that was incarnate, there had been reason, for God the Word allows that this be said of His flesh. It touches not His divine nature, but has to do altogether with the dispensation. What means “of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth”? It means the whole world, and angels, and men, and demons; or that both the just and the living and sinners,

“And every tongue,” should “confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” That is, that all should say so; and this is glory to the Father. Seest thou how wherever the Son is glorified, the Father is also glorified? Thus too when the Son is dishonored, the Father is dishonored also. If this be so with us, where the difference is great between fathers and sons, much more in respect of God, where there is no difference, doth honor and insult pass on to Him. If the world be subjected to the Son, this is glory to the Father. And so when we say that He is perfect, wanting nothing, and not inferior to the Father, this is glory to the Father, that he begat such a one. This is a great proof of His power also, and goodness, and wisdom, that He begat one no whit inferior, neither in wisdom nor in goodness. When I say that He is wise as the Father, and no whit inferior, this is a proof of the great wisdom of the Father; when I say that He is powerful as the Father, this is a proof of the Father’s power. When I say that He is good as the Father, this is the greatest evidence of His goodness, that He begat such (a Son), in no whit less or inferior to Himself. When I say that He begat Him not inferior in substance but equal, and not of another substance, in this I again wonder at God, His power, and goodness, and wisdom, that He hath manifested to us another, of Himself, such as Himself, except in His not being the Father. Thus whatsoever great things I say of the Son, pass on to the Father. Now if this small and light matter (for it is but a light thing to God’s glory that the world should worship Him) is to the glory of God, how much more so are all those other things?

Let us then believe to His glory, let us live to His glory, for one is no use without the other; when we glorify Him rightly, but live not rightly, then do we especially insult Him, because we are enrolled under Him as a Master and Teacher, and yet despise Him, and stand in no dread of that fearful judgment seat. It is no wonder that the heathen live impurely; this merits not such condemnation. But that Christians, who partake in such great mysteries, who enjoy so great glory, that they should live thus impurely, this is worst of all, and unbearable. For tell me; He was obedient to the uttermost, wherefore He received the honor which is on high. He became a servant, wherefore He is Lord of all, both of Angels, and of all other. Let us too not suppose then that we descend from what is our due, when we humble ourselves. For thus may we be more highly exalted; and with reason; then do we especially become admirable. For that the lofty man is really low, and that the lowly man is exalted, the sentence of Christ sufficiently declares. Let us however examine the matter itself. What is it to be humbled? Is it not to be blamed, to be accused, and calumniated? What is it to be exalted? It is to be honored, to be

praised, to be glorified. Well. Let us see how the matter is. Satan was an angel, he exalted himself. What then? was he not humbled beyond all other? has he not the earth as his place? is he not condemned and accused by all? Paul was a man, and humbled himself. What then? is he not admired? is he not praised? is he not lauded? is he not the friend of Christ? Wrought he not greater things than Christ? did he not oftentimes command the devil as a captive slave? did he not carry him about as an executioner? did he not hold him up to scorn? held he not his head bruised under his feet? did he not with much boldness beg of God that others too might do the same? Why am I saying? Absalom exalted himself, David humbled himself; which of the twain was raised up, which became glorious? For what could be a more evident proof of humility than these words which that blessed Prophet spoke of Shimei, "Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him." (2 Sam. xvi. 11) And if you please, we will examine the very cases themselves. The Publican humbled himself, although the case can hardly be called humility; but how? He answered in a right-minded manner. The Pharisee exalted himself. What then? let us also examine the matters. Let there be two men, both rich, and highly honored, and elevated by wisdom and power, and other worldly advantages; then let one of them seek honor from all, let him be angry if he receive it not, let him require more than is due and exalt himself; let the other despise the whole matter, bear himself unkindly towards no one on this account, and evade honor when offered to him. For it is not possible to obtain glory any other way than by fleeing from glory, for as long as we pursue it, it flies from us, but when we flee from it, then it pursues us. If thou wouldest be glorious, do not desire glory. If thou wouldest be lofty, do not make thyself lofty. And further, all honor him who does not grasp at honor, but spurn him who seeks it. For the human race somehow or other is fond of contention, and leans to contrary feeling. Let us therefore despise glory, for thus we shall be enabled to become lowly, or rather to become exalted. Exalt not thyself, that thou mayest be exalted by another; he that is exalted by himself is not exalted by others, he who is humbled by himself is not humbled by others. Haughtiness is a great evil, it is better to be a fool than haughty; for in the one case, the folly is only a perversion of intellect, but in the other case it is still worse, and is folly joined with madness: the fool is an evil to himself; but the haughty man is a plague to others too. This misery comes of senselessness. One cannot be haughty-minded without being a fool; and he that is brimful of folly is haughty.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, "Philippians ii. 5–11

"Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God; but emptied Himself, taking upon Him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave Him the Name which is above every name: that in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

He refers to **Philippians 2 (KJV):** 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him,

and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

He continues, "I have stated the views of the heretics. It is befitting that I now speak of what is our own. They say that the words, "He counted it not a prize," are of wrongfully seizing. (**Schaff Note:** Meaning, "He thought it not a robbery for himself to commit." The phrase being always used in the sense of "a gain." Our language does not seem capable of expressing it exactly.) We have proved, that this is altogether vapid and impertinent, for no man would exhort another to humility on such grounds, nor in this sort does he praise God, or even man. What is it then, beloved? Give heed to what I now say. Since many men think, that, when they are lowly, they are deprived of their proper right, and debased, Paul, to take away this fear, and to show that we must not be affected thus, says that God, the only begotten, who was in the form of God, who was no whit inferior to the Father, who was equal to Him, "counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God.""

Chrysostom upheld the Biblical truth of the deity of the Son.

He continues, "Now learn what this meaneth. Whatsoever a man robs, and takes contrary to his right, he dares not lay aside, from fear lest it perish, and fall from his possession, but he keeps hold of it continually. He who possesses some dignity which is natural to him, fears not to descend from that dignity, being assured that nothing of this sort will happen to him. As for example, Absalom usurped the government, and dared not afterwards to lay it aside. We will go to another example, but if example cannot present the whole matter to you, take it not amiss, for this is the nature of examples, they leave the greater part for the imagination to reason out. A man rebels against his sovereign, and usurps the kingdom: he dares not lay aside and hide the matter, for if he once hide it, straightway it is gone. Let us also take another example; if a man takes anything violently, he keeps firm hold of it continually, for if he lay it down, he straightway loses it. And generally speaking, they who have aught by rapine are afraid to lay it by, or hide it, or not to keep constantly in that state which they have assumed. Not so they, who have possessions not procured by rapine, as Man, who possesses the dignity of being a reasonable being. But here examples fail me, for there is no natural preeminence amongst us, for no good thing is naturally our own; but they are inherent in the nature of God. What does one say then? That the Son of God feared not to descend from His right, for He thought not Deity a prize seized. He was not afraid that any would strip Him of that nature or that right, Wherefore He laid it (**Schaff Note:** The word is neuter, and refers only to "right" (ἀξίωμα). Some copies omit "nature.") aside, being confident that He should take it up again. He hid it, knowing that He was not made inferior by so doing. For this cause, Paul says not, "He seized not," but, "He counted it not a prize"; He possessed not that estate by seizure, but it was natural, not conferred, (**Schaff Note:** δεδομένην, which would imply an "act" of giving.) it was enduring and safe. Wherefore he refused not to take the form of an inferior. (**Schaff Note:** ὑπασπιστῶν, a soldier of the ranks, who attended on an officer. Herod. v. 111. Xen. Anab. iv. 2, 21) The tyrant fears to lay aside the purple robe in war, while the king does it with much safety. Why so? because he holds his power not as a matter of seizure. He did not refuse to lay it aside, as one who had usurped it, but since He had it as His own by nature, since it could never be parted from Him, He hid it.

This equality with God He had not by seizure, but as his own by nature. Wherefore "He

emptied Himself.” Where be they who affirm, that He underwent constraint, that He was subjected? Scripture says, “He emptied Himself, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death.” How did He empty Himself? By taking “the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man.” It is written, “He emptied Himself” in reference to the text, “each counting other better than himself.” Since had He been subjected, had He not chosen it of His own accord, and of His own free will, it would not have been an act of humility. For if He knew not that so it must be, He would have been imperfect. If, not knowing it, He had waited for the time of action, then would He not have known the season. But if He both knew that so it must be, and when it must be, wherefore should He submit to be subjected? To show, they say, the superiority of the Father. But this shows not the superiority of the Father, but His own inferiority. For is not the name of the Father sufficient to show the priority of the Father? For apart from Him, the son has all the same things. For this honor is not capable of passing from the Father to the Son.

What then say the heretics? See, say they, He did not become man. The Marcionites, I mean. But why? He was “made in the likeness of man.” But how can one be “made in the likeness of men”? by putting on a shadow? But this is a phantom, and no longer the likeness of a man, for the likeness of a man is another man. And what wilt thou answer to John, when he says, “The Word became flesh”? (John i. 14)”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):14** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

He continues, “But this same blessed one himself also says in another place, “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” (Rom. viii. 3)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):3** For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

He continues, ““And being found in fashion as a man.” See, they say, both “in fashion,” and “as a man.” To be as a man, and to be a man in fashion, is not to be a man indeed. To be a man in fashion is not to be a man by nature. See with what ingenuousness I lay down what our enemies say, for that is a brilliant victory, and amply gained, when we do not conceal what seem to be their strong points. For this is deceit rather than victory. What then do they say? let me repeat their argument. To be a man in fashion is not to be a man by nature; and to be as a man, and in the fashion of a man, this is not to be a man. So then to take the form of a servant, is not to take the form of a servant. Here then is an inconsistency; and wherefore do you not first of all solve this difficulty? For as you think that this contradicts us, so do we say that the other contradicts you. He says not, “as the form of a servant,” nor “in the likeness of the form of a servant,” nor “in the fashion of the form of a servant,” but “He took the form of a servant.” What then is this? for there is a contradiction. There is no contradiction. God forbid! it is a cold and ridiculous argument of theirs. He took, say they, the form of a servant, when He girded Himself with a towel, and washed the feet of His disciples. Is this the form of a servant? Nay, this is not the form, but the work of a servant. It is one thing that there should be the work of a servant, and another to take the form of a servant. Why did he not say, He did the work of a servant, which were clearer? But nowhere in Scripture is “form” put for “work,” for the difference is great: the one is the result of nature, the other of action. In common speaking, too, we never use “form” for “work.” Besides, according to them, He did not even take the work of



a servant, nor even gird Himself. For if all was a mere shadow, (**Schaff Note:** [He refers to the various Docetic theories, that the body of Christ was only an appearance.—J.A.B.] there was no reality. If He had not real hands, how did He wash their feet? If He had not real loins, how did He gird Himself with a towel? and what kind of garments did he take? for Scripture says, “He took His garments.” (John xiii. 12)”

He refers to **John 13 (KJV):12** So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

He continues, “So then not even the work is found to have really taken place, but it was all a deception, nor did He even wash the disciples. For if that incorporeal nature did not appear, it (**Schaff Note:** Or He. The sense is difficult. Old Lat. “For if He was an incorporeal being, He was not seen, He was not in a body.” Ben. Lat. omits the first “not,” and has “and was not,” but without Greek authority.) was not in a body. Who then washed the disciples’ feet?

Again, what in opposition to Paul of Samosata? for what did he affirm? The very same. But it is no emptying of Himself, that one who is of human nature, and a mere man, should wash his fellow servants. For what we said against the Arians, we must repeat against these too, for they differ not from one another, save by a little space of time; both the one and the other affirm the Son of God to be a creature. What then shall we say to them? If He being a man washed man, He emptied not, He humbled not Himself. If He being a man seized not on being equal with God, He is not deserving of praise. That God should become man, is great, unspeakable, inexpressible humility; but what humility is there in that one, who was a man should do the works of men? And where is the work of God ever called “the form of God”? for if he were a mere man, and was called the form of God by reason of His works, why do we not do the same of Peter, for he wrought greater deeds than Christ Himself? Why say you not of Paul, that he had the form of God? Why did not Paul give an example of himself, for he wrought a thousand servile works, and did not even refuse to say, “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.” (2 Cor. iv. 5)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):5** For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

He continues, “These are absurdities and trifles! Scripture says, He “emptied Himself.” How did He empty Himself? tell me. What was His emptying? what His humiliation? was it because He wrought wonders? This both Paul and Peter did, so that this was not peculiar to the Son. What then means, “Being made in the likeness of men”? He had many things belonging to us, and many He had not; for instance, He was not born of wedlock. He did no sin. These things had He which no man has. He was not what he seemed only, but He was God also; He seemed to be a man, but He was not like the mass of men. For He was like them in flesh. He means then, that He was not a mere man. Wherefore he says, “in the likeness of men.” For we indeed are soul and body, but He was God, and soul and body, wherefore he says, “in the likeness.” For lest when you hear that He emptied Himself, you should think that some change, and degeneracy, and loss is here; he says, whilst He remained what He was, He took that which He was not, and being made flesh He remained God, in that He was the Word. (John i. 14)”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):14** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

And in context to **John 1 (KJV):**1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Chrysostom's defense of the deity of Christ is very good here.

He continues, "In this then He was like man, and for this cause Paul says, "and in fashion." Not that His nature degenerated, nor that any confusion arose, but He became man in fashion. For when He had said that "He took the form of a servant," he made bold to say this also, seeing that the first would silence all objectors; since when he says, "In the likeness of sinful flesh," he says not that He had not flesh, but that that flesh sinned not, but was like to sinful flesh."

And we read in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):**21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

He continues, "Like in what? in nature, not in sin, therefore was His like a sinful soul. As then in the former case the term similarity was used, because He was not equal in everything, so here also there is similarity, because He is not equal in everything, as His not being born of wedlock, His being without sin, His being not a mere man. And he well said "as a man," for He was not one of the many, but "as" one of the many. The Word who was God did not degenerate into man, nor was His substance changed, but he appeared as a man; not to delude us with a phantom, but to instruct us in humility. When therefore he says, "as a man," this is what He means; since he calls Him a man elsewhere also, when he says, "there is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. ii. 5)"

He refers to **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):**5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

He continues, "Thus much against these heretics. I must now speak against such as deny that He took a soul. If "the form of God" is "perfect God," then the "form of a servant" is "a perfect servant." Again, against the Arians. Here concerning His divinity, we no longer find "He became," "He took," but "He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men"; here concerning his humanity we find "He took, He became." He became the latter, He took the latter; He was the former. Let us not then confound nor divide the natures. There is one God, there is one Christ, the Son of God; when I say "One," I mean a union, not a confusion; the one Nature did not degenerate into the other, but was united with it."

We can applaud Chrysostom here. He has upheld the Scriptures.

"He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross." See, says one, He voluntarily became obedient; he was not equal to Him whom He obeyed. O ye obstinate ones and unwise! This doth not at all lower Him. For we too become obedient to our friends, yet this has no effect. He became obedient as a Son to His Father; He fell not thus into a servile state, but by this very act above all others guarded his wondrous Sonship, by thus greatly honoring the Father. He honored the Father, not that thou shouldst dishonor Him, but that thou shouldst the rather admire Him, and learn from this act, that He is a true Son, in honoring His Father more than all besides. No one hath thus honored God. As was His height, such was the correspondent humiliation which He underwent. As He is greater than all, and no one is equal to Him, so in honoring His Father, He surpassed all, not by necessity, nor unwillingly, but this too is part of His excellence; yea, words fail me. Truly it is a great and unspeakable thing, that He

became a servant; that He underwent death, is far greater; but there is something still greater, and more strange; why? All deaths are not alike; His death seemed to be the most ignominious of all, to be full of shame, to be accursed; for it is written, “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” (Deut. xxi. 23; Gal. iii. 13)”

He refers to **Deuteronomy 21 (KJV):23** His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

And to **Galatians 3 (KJV):13** Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

He continues, “For this cause the Jews also eagerly desired to slay Him in this manner, to make Him a reproach, that if no one fell away from Him by reason of His death, yet they might from the manner of His death. For this cause two robbers were crucified with Him, and He in the midst, that He might share their ill repute, and that the Scripture might be fulfilled, “And he was numbered with the transgressors.” (Isa. liii. 12)”

He refers to **Isaiah 53 (KJV):12** Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

He continues, “Yet so much the more doth truth shine forth, so much the more doth it become bright; for when His enemies plot such things against His glory, and it yet shines forth, so much the greater does the matter seem. Not by slaying Him, but by slaying Him in such sort did they think to make Him abominable, to prove Him more abominable than all men, but they availed nothing. And both the robbers also were such impious ones, (for it was afterward that the one repented,) that, even when on the cross, they reviled Him; neither the consciousness of their own sins, nor their present punishment, nor their suffering the same things themselves, restrained their madness. Wherefore the one spake to the other, and silenced him by saying, “Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?” (Luke xxiii. 40)”

He refers in context to **Luke 23 (KJV):39** And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

He continues, “So great was their wickedness. Wherefore it is written, “God also highly exalted Him, and gave Him the Name which is above every name.” When the blessed Paul hath made mention of the flesh, he fearlessly speaks of all His humiliation. For until he had mentioned that He took the form of a servant, and while he was speaking of His Divinity, behold how loftily he doth it, (loftily, I say, according to his power; for he speaks not according to His own worthiness, seeing that he is not able). “Being in the form of God, He counted it not a prize to be equal with God.” But when he had said, that He became Man, henceforth he fearlessly discourseth of His low estate, being confident that the mention of His low estate would not harm His Divinity, since His flesh admitted this.

Ver. 9–11. “Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave Him the Name which is above every name: that in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.””

He refers to **Philippians 2 (KJV):9** Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

He continues, "Let us say against the heretics, If this is spoken of one who was not incarnate, if of God the Word, how did He highly exalt Him? Was it as if He gave Him something more than He had before? He would then have been imperfect in this point, and would have been made perfect for our sakes. For if He had not done good deeds to us, He would not have obtained that honor! "And gave Him the Name." See, He had not even a name, as you say! But how, if He received it as His due, is He found here to have received it by grace, and as a gift? And that "the Name which is above every name": and of what kind, let us see, is the Name? "That at the Name of Jesus," saith He, "every knee should bow." They (the heretics) explain name by glory. This glory then is above all glory, and this glory is in short that all worship Him!"

And we read in **Hebrews 1 (KJV):6** And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

He continues, "But ye hold yourselves far off from the greatness of God, who think that ye know God, as He knoweth Himself, and from this it is plain, how far off ye are from right thoughts of God. And this is plain from hence. Is this, tell me, glory? Therefore before men were created, before the angels or the archangels, He was not in glory. If this be the glory which is above every glory, (for this is the name that is "above every name,") though He were in glory before, yet was He in glory inferior to this. It was for this then that He made the things that are, that He might be raised to glory, not from His own goodness, but because He required glory from us! See ye not their folly? see ye not their impiety?"

Now if they had said this of Him that was incarnate, there had been reason, for God the Word allows that this be said of His flesh. It touches not His divine nature, but has to do altogether with the dispensation. What means "of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth"? It means the whole world, and angels, and men, and demons; or that both the just and the living and sinners,

"And every tongue," should "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." That is, that all should say so; and this is glory to the Father. Seest thou how wherever the Son is glorified, the Father is also glorified? Thus too when the Son is dishonored, the Father is dishonored also. If this be so with us, where the difference is great between fathers and sons, much more in respect of God, where there is no difference, doth honor and insult pass on to Him. If the world be subjected to the Son, this is glory to the Father. And so when we say that He is perfect, wanting nothing, and not inferior to the Father, this is glory to the Father, that he begat such a one. This is a great proof of His power also, and goodness, and wisdom, that He begat one no whit inferior, neither in wisdom nor in goodness. When I say that He is wise as the Father, and no whit inferior, this is a proof of the great wisdom of the Father; when I say that He is powerful as the Father, this is a proof of the Father's power. When I say that He is good as the Father, this is the greatest evidence of His goodness, that He begat such (a Son), in no whit less or inferior to Himself. When I say that He begat Him not inferior in substance but equal, and not of another substance, in this I again wonder at God, His power, and goodness, and wisdom, that He hath manifested to us another, of Himself, such as Himself, except in His

not being the Father. Thus whatsoever great things I say of the Son, pass on to the Father. Now if this small and light matter (for it is but a light thing to God's glory that the world should worship Him) is to the glory of God, how much more so are all those other things?

Let us then believe to His glory, let us live to His glory, for one is no use without the other; when we glorify Him rightly, but live not rightly, then do we especially insult Him, because we are enrolled under Him as a Master and Teacher, and yet despise Him, and stand in no dread of that fearful judgment seat. It is no wonder that the heathen live impurely; this merits not such condemnation. But that Christians, who partake in such great mysteries, who enjoy so great glory, that they should live thus impurely, this is worst of all, and unbearable. For tell me; He was obedient to the uttermost, wherefore He received the honor which is on high. He became a servant, wherefore He is Lord of all, both of Angels, and of all other. Let us too not suppose then that we descend from what is our due, when we humble ourselves. For thus may we be more highly exalted; and with reason; then do we especially become admirable. For that the lofty man is really low, and that the lowly man is exalted, the sentence of Christ sufficiently declares. Let us however examine the matter itself. What is it to be humbled? Is it not to be blamed, to be accused, and calumniated? What is it to be exalted? It is to be honored, to be praised, to be glorified. Well. Let us see how the matter is. Satan was an angel, he exalted himself. What then? was he not humbled beyond all other? has he not the earth as his place? is he not condemned and accused by all? Paul was a man, and humbled himself. What then? is he not admired? is he not praised? is he not lauded? is he not the friend of Christ? Wrought he not greater things than Christ? did he not oftentimes command the devil as a captive slave? did he not carry him about as an executioner? did he not hold him up to scorn? held he not his head bruised under his feet? did he not with much boldness beg of God that others too might do the same? Why am I saying? Absalom exalted himself, David humbled himself; which of the twain was raised up, which became glorious? For what could be a more evident proof of humility than these words which that blessed Prophet spoke of Shimei, "Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him." (2 Sam. xvi. 11)"

He refers in context to **2 Samuel 16 (KJV):7** And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial: 8 The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man. 9 Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head. 10 And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so? 11 And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him. 12 It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day. 13 And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.

He continues, "And if you please, we will examine the very cases themselves. The Publican humbled himself, although the case can hardly be called humility; but how? He answered in a right-minded manner. The Pharisee exalted himself. What then? let us also

examine the matters. Let there be two men, both rich, and highly honored, and elevated by wisdom and power, and other worldly advantages; then let one of them seek honor from all, let him be angry if he receive it not, let him require more than is due and exalt himself; let the other despise the whole matter, bear himself unkindly towards no one on this account, and evade honor when offered to him. For it is not possible to obtain glory any other way than by fleeing from glory, for as long as we pursue it, it flies from us, but when we flee from it, then it pursues us. If thou wouldest be glorious, do not desire glory. If thou wouldest be lofty, do not make thyself lofty. And further, all honor him who does not grasp at honor, but spurn him who seeks it. For the human race somehow or other is fond of contention, and leans to contrary feeling. Let us therefore despise glory, for thus we shall be enabled to become lowly, or rather to become exalted. Exalt not thyself, that thou mayest be exalted by another; he that is exalted by himself is not exalted by others, he who is humbled by himself is not humbled by others. Haughtiness is a great evil, it is better to be a fool than haughty; for in the one case, the folly is only a perversion of intellect, but in the other case it is still worse, and is folly joined with madness: the fool is an evil to himself; but the haughty man is a plague to others too. This misery comes of senselessness. One cannot be haughty-minded without being a fool; and he that is brimful of folly is haughty.”

Chrysostom has defended the faith here against the heresy of his time.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILIPPIANS, HOMILY VI, page 206-210**, he says, ““First then let Sabellius the Libyan come forward. What does he assert? that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are mere names given to one Person. Marcion of Pontus says, that God the Creator of all things is not good, nor the Father of the good Christ, but another righteous one, and that he did not take flesh for us. Marcellus, and Photinus, and Sophronius assert, that the Word is an energy, and that it was this energy that dwelt in Him who was of the seed of David, and not a personal substance. Arius confesses indeed the Son, but only in word; he says that He is a creature, and much inferior to the Father. And others say that He has not a soul.”

He then rebukes them, as he says, “And Paul of Samosata has fallen, and Marcellus, and Sabellius. For he says, “Being in the form of God.” If “in the form” how sayest thou, O wicked one, that He took His origin from Mary, and was not before? and how dost thou say that He was an energy? For it is written, “The form of God took the form of a servant.” “The form of a servant,” is it the energy of a servant, or the nature of a servant? By all means, I fancy, the nature of a servant. Thus too the form of God, is the nature of God, and therefore not an energy. Behold also Marcellus of Galatia, Sophronius and Photinus have fallen.”

We can agree heartily with Chrysostom here.

He says, “Behold Sabellius too. It is written, “He counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God.” Now equality is not predicated, where there is but one person, for that which is equal hath somewhat to which it is equal. Seest thou not the substance of two Persons, and not empty names without things? Hearst thou not the eternal pre-existence of the Only-begotten?”

And remember that Sabellius asserted “that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are mere names given to one Person”.

And he concludes, “Lastly, What shall we say against Arius, who asserts the Son is of a different substance? Tell me now, what means, “He took the form of a servant”? It means, He became man. Wherefore “being in the form of God,” He was God. For one “form” and another “form” is named; if the one be true, the other is also. “The form of a servant” means, Man by nature, wherefore “the form of God” means, God by nature. And he not only bears record of this, but of His equality too, as John also doth, that he is no way inferior to the Father, for he saith, “He thought it not a thing to seize, (**Schaff Note:** [Rev. Ver. “a prize,” a thing seized, or a thing to be seized.—J.A.B.]) to be equal with God.” Now what is their wise reasoning? Nay, say they, he proves the very contrary; for he says, that, “being in the form of God, He seized not equality with God.” How if He were God, how was He able “to seize upon it”? and is not this without meaning? Who would say that one, being a man, seized not on being a man? for how would any one seize on that which he is? No, say they, but he means that being a little God, He seized not upon being equal to the great God, Who was greater than He. Is there a great and a little God? And do ye bring in the doctrines of the Greeks upon those of the Church? With them there is a great and a little God. If it be so with you, I know not. For you will find it nowhere in the Scriptures: there you will find a great God throughout, a little one nowhere. If He were little, how would he also be God? If man is not little and great, but one nature, and if that which is not of this one nature is not man, how can there be a little God and a great one?”

Again, we agree heartily with Chrysostom. He has explained well the Biblical truth of the deity of the Son, and defended the faith.

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON PHILIPPIANS, HOMILY VII, page 212-216**, he says, “Give heed to what I now say. Since many men think, that, when they are lowly, they are deprived of their proper right, and debased, Paul, to take away this fear, and to show that we must not be affected thus, says that God, the only begotten, who was in the form of God, who was no whit inferior to the Father, who was equal to Him, “counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God.”

And he says, “What does one say then? That the Son of God feared not to descend from His right, for He thought not Deity a prize seized. He was not afraid that any would strip Him of that nature or that right, Wherefore He laid it (**Schaff Note:** The word is neuter, and refers only to “right” (ἄξιωμα). Some copies omit “nature.”) aside, being confident that He should take it up again. He hid it, knowing that He was not made inferior by so doing.”

And he says, “This equality with God He had not by seizure, but as his own by nature. Wherefore “He emptied Himself.””

And he says, “What then say the heretics? See, say they, He did not become man. The Marcionites, I mean. But why? He was “made in the likeness of man.” But how can one be “made in the likeness of men”? by putting on a shadow? But this is a phantom, and no longer the likeness of a man, for the likeness of a man is another man. And what wilt thou answer to John, when he says, “The Word became flesh”? (John i. 14)”

And he says, ““And being found in fashion as a man.” See, they say, both “in fashion,” and “as a man.” To be as a man, and to be a man in fashion, is not to be a man indeed. To be a man in fashion is not to be a man by nature. See with what ingenuousness I lay down what our enemies say, for that is a brilliant victory, and amply gained, when we do not conceal what

seem to be their strong points. For this is deceit rather than victory.”

And he says, “He took, say they, the form of a servant, when He girded Himself with a towel, and washed the feet of His disciples. Is this the form of a servant? Nay, this is not the form, but the work of a servant. It is one thing that there should be the work of a servant, and another to take the form of a servant. Why did he not say, He did the work of a servant, which were clearer? But nowhere in Scripture is “form” put for “work,” for the difference is great: the one is the result of nature, the other of action.”

And he says, “For if all was a mere shadow, (**Schaff Note:** [He refers to the various Docetic theories, that the body of Christ was only an appearance.—J.A.B.]) there was no reality. If He had not real hands, how did He wash their feet? If He had not real loins, how did He gird Himself with a towel? and what kind of garments did he take? for Scripture says, “He took His garments.” (John xiii. 12)”

And he says, “Again, what in opposition to Paul of Samosata? for what did he affirm? The very same.”

And he says, “For what we said against the Arians, we must repeat against these too, for they differ not from one another, save by a little space of time; both the one and the other affirm the Son of God to be a creature.”

And he says, “What then means, “Being made in the likeness of men”? He had many things belonging to us, and many He had not; for instance, He was not born of wedlock. He did no sin. These things had He which no man has. He was not what he seemed only, but He was God also; He seemed to be a man, but He was not like the mass of men.”

And he explains, “For He was like them in flesh. He means then, that He was not a mere man. Wherefore he says, “in the likeness of men.” For we indeed are soul and body, but He was God, and soul and body, wherefore he says, “in the likeness.” For lest when you hear that He emptied Himself, you should think that some change, and degeneracy, and loss is here; he says, whilst He remained what He was, He took that which He was not, and being made flesh He remained God, in that He was the Word. (John i. 14)”

Chrysostom’s defense of the deity of Christ is very good here.

He continues, and says, “Thus much against these heretics. I must now speak against such as deny that He took a soul. If “the form of God” is “perfect God,” then the “form of a servant” is “a perfect servant.” Again, against the Arians. Here concerning His divinity, we no longer find “He became,” “He took,” but “He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men”; here concerning his humanity we find “He took, He became.” He became the latter, He took the latter; He was the former. Let us not then confound nor divide the natures. There is one God, there is one Christ, the Son of God; when I say “One,” I mean a union, not a confusion; the one Nature did not degenerate into the other, but was united with it.”

We can applaud Chrysostom here. He has upheld the Scriptures, and defended the faith.



## Widows

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY VI, page 348-352

Ver. 13. "But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, which have no hope."

These two things, poverty and despondency, distressed them most, which also pertain to all men. See therefore how he remedies them. But their poverty arose from their goods being taken from them. But if he commands those, whose goods had been taken from them for Christ's sake, to support themselves by working, much more than others. For that they were taken away is manifest from his saying, Ye became partakers (**Schaff Note:** [Chrys. is aiming to quote (ii. 14), "Ye became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judæa"; and he then explains the situation in Judæa by quoting from the Epistle to the Hebrews. The chronology of the Epistles is seldom very real to his mind. The inaccurate and abridged quotation is natural, but of course the amended text filled it out, as seen in the earlier editions.—J.A.B.]) with the churches of God. How partakers with them? "And ye took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions." (Heb. x. 34)

Here he proceeds now to start his discourse concerning the Resurrection. And why? Had he not discoursed with them upon that point? Yes, but here he glances at some further mystery. What then is this? "That we that are alive," he says, "that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in nowise precede them that are fallen asleep." The discourse then of the Resurrection was sufficient to comfort him that was grieving. But that which is now said is sufficient also to make the Resurrection eminently worthy of credit. But first let us speak of what precedes, "But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, which have no hope." See how here also he treats them mildly. He does not say, "Are ye so without understanding?" as he said to the Corinthians, "foolish"? that, knowing there is a resurrection, ye so sorrow, as those who do not believe; but he speaks very mildly, showing respect to their other virtues. And he has not said "concerning the dead," but "them that are asleep," even at the beginning suggesting consolation to them. "That ye sorrow not," he says, "even as the rest, which have no hope." Therefore to afflict yourselves for the departed is to act like those who have no hope. And they justly. For a soul that knows nothing of the Resurrection, but thinks that this death is death, naturally afflicts itself, and bewails and mourns intolerably as for lost ones. But thou, who expectest a resurrection, on what account dost thou lament? To lament then is the part of those who have no hope.

Hear this, ye women, as many of you as are fond of wailing, as many as at times of mourning take the sorrow impatiently, that ye act the part of heathens. But if to grieve for the departed is the part of heathens, then tell me whose part it is to beat one's self, and tear the cheeks? On what account do you lament, if you believe that he will rise again, that he has not perished, that the matter is but a slumber and a sleep? You say, On account of his society, his protection, his care of our affairs, and all his other services. When therefore you lose a child at an untimely age, who is not yet able to do anything, on what account do you lament? Why do you seek to recall him? He was displaying, you say, good hopes, and I was expecting that he

would be my supporter. On this account I miss my husband, on this account my son, on this account I wail and lament, not disbelieving the Resurrection, but being left destitute of support, and having lost my protector, my companion, who shared with me in all things—my comforter. On this account I mourn. I know that he will rise again, but I cannot bear the intermediate separation. A multitude of troubles rushes in upon me. I am exposed to all who are willing to injure me. Those of my servants who formerly feared me now despise me, and trample upon me. If any one has been benefited, he has forgotten the benefit he received from him; if any one was ill-treated by the departed, to return the grudge against him, he lets loose his anger upon me. These things do not suffer me to bear my widowhood. It is for these things that I afflict myself, for these things I bewail.

How then shall we comfort such? What shall we say? How shall we banish their sorrow? In the first place I shall endeavor to convict them, that their wailing proceeds not from these things they say, but from an unreasonable passion. For if you mourn for these things, you ought always to mourn the departed. But if when a year has passed away, you forget him as if he had never been, you do not bewail the departed nor his protection. But you cannot endure the separation, nor the breaking off of your society? And what can they say, who even enter into second marriages? Sure enough! It is the former husbands that they long for. But let us not direct our discourse to them, but to those who preserve a kind affection towards the departed. Wherefore dost thou lament thy child? Wherefore thine husband? The former, because I had not enjoyed him, you say; the latter, because I expected that I should have enjoyed him longer. And this very thing, what want of faith does it argue, to suppose that thy husband or thy son constitutes thy safety, and not God! How dost thou not think to provoke Him? For often on this account He takes them away, that thou mayest not be so bound to them, so that it may withdraw thy hopes from them. For God is jealous, and wills to be loved by us most of all things: and that, because He loves us exceedingly. For ye know that this is the custom of those who love to distraction. They are excessively jealous, and would choose rather to throw away their life, than to be surpassed in esteem by any of their rival lovers. On this account also God hath taken him because of these words. (**Schaff Note:** i.e. “because you say such things about him.”)

For, tell me, on what account were there not in old times widowhoods, and untimely orphanhoods? Wherefore did He permit Abraham and Isaac to live a long time? Because even when he was living he preferred God before him. He said indeed, slay; and he slew him. Why did he bring Sarah to so great an age? Because, even whilst she was living, he listened to God rather than to her. For this reason God said to him, “Hear Sarah thy wife.” (From Gen. xxi. 12) No one then either from love to husband or wife, or on account of the protection of a child, provoked God to anger. But now because we are declining downwards, and have exceedingly fallen off, we men love our wives more than God, and we women honor our husbands more than God. It is on this account that He draws us even against our will to the love of Himself. Love not thy husband more than God, and thou shalt not ever experience widowhood. Or rather, even if it should happen, thou shalt not have the feeling of it. Why? Because thou hast an immortal Protector who loves thee better. If thou lovest God more, mourn not: for He who is more beloved is immortal, and does not suffer thee to feel the loss of him who is less beloved. This I will make manifest to thee by an example. Tell me, if thou hast a husband, complying with thee in all things, one that is respected, and that makes thee honorable everywhere, and not to be despised, one respected amongst all, intelligent and wise, and loving thee, thou being

esteemed happy on his account, and in conjunction with him shouldest thou also bring forth a child, and then before it has arrived at the age of maturity, that child should depart; wilt thou then feel the affliction? By no means. For he that is more beloved makes it disappear. And now if thou love God more than thy husband, assuredly He will not soon take him away. But even if He should take him, thou wilt not be sensible of the affliction. For this reason the blessed Job felt no severe suffering, when he heard of the death of his children all at once, because he loved God more than them. And whilst He whom he loved was living, those things would not be able to afflict him.

What sayest thou, O woman? Thy husband or thy son was thy protector? But does not thy God spare thee? Who gave thee thy very husband? Was it not He? And who made thee? Was it not He? He surely who brought thee out of nothing into being, and breathed into thee a soul, and put in thee a mind, and vouchsafed to favor thee with the knowledge of Himself, and for thy sake spared not His Only Begotten Son, does not He spare thee? And does thy fellow-servant spare thee? What wrath is due to these words! What of this kind hast thou had from thy husband? Thou canst not say anything. For if he has even done thee any kindness, it was after he had received kindness, you having previously begun. But in the case of God no one can say any such thing. For it is not as having received any favors from us that God benefits us, but being incapable of want, from His goodness alone He does good to mankind. He has promised thee a kingdom, He has given immortal life, glory, brotherhood, adoption. He has made thee fellow-heir with His Only-Begotten. And dost thou after so great benefits remember thy husband? What has he bestowed of this kind? He has made His sun to shine, He has given rain, He sustains thee with yearly nourishment. Woe to us for our great ingratitude!

For this reason He takes thy husband, that thou mayest not seek him. But dost thou still cling to him though departed, and forsakest God, when it was thy duty to give thanks, to cast it all upon Him? For what is it that thou hast received from thy husband? The pains of childbirth, and labors, and insults and reproaches often, and chidings, and bursts of anger. Are not these the things that come from husbands? But there are, you say, other things too that are good. Of what sort then are these? Did he set off thy beauty with costly garments? Did he put gold ornaments about thy face? Did he make thee respected by all? But if thou wilt, thou shalt adorn thyself with a much better ornament than the departed. For gravity makes its possessor much more admirable than golden ornaments. This King also has garments, not of this sort, but much better. With those, if thou wilt, invest thyself. Of what sort then are they? There is a clothing which has fringes of gold; if thou wilt, array the soul. But did he make thee not to be despised by men? And what is there great in that? Thy widowhood suffers thee not to be despised by the demons. Then thou ruledst over thy servants, if at least thou didst at all rule over them. But now, instead of thy servants, thou hast mastery over unbodied powers, principalities, authorities, the ruler of this world. And thou dost not mention the troubles, in which thou sharedst with him, sometimes the fear of magistrates, sometimes the preference given to neighbors. From all these things thou art now delivered, from dread and fear. But art thou solicitous who will support the children that are left thee? The "Father of the fatherless." For tell me, who gave them? Dost thou not hear Christ in the Gospels saying, "Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?" (Matt. vi. 25)

Seest thou, that thy lamentation is not from loss of his society, but from want of faith. But the children of a father that is dead are not equally illustrious. Wherefore? They have God for

their Father, and are they not illustrious? How many can I show you brought up by widows, who have become famous, how many who have been under their fathers, and have been undone! For if thou bringest them up from their first youth, as they ought to be brought up, they will enjoy an advantage much greater than a father's protection. For that it is the business of widows—I speak of the bringing up of children—hear Paul saying, “If she hath brought up children” (1 Tim. v. 10); and again, “She shall be saved through the child-bearing,” (he has not said through her husband,) if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety.” (1 Tim. ii. 15) Instill into them the fear of God from their first youth, and He will protect them better than any father; this will be a wall not to be broken. For when there is a guard seated within, we have no need of contrivances without: but where he is not, all our outward contrivances are vain.

This will be to them wealth and glory too and ornament. This will make them illustrious, not upon earth, but even in heaven. For do not look to those who are begirt with the golden girdles, nor those who are borne on horses, nor those who shine in kings' palaces on account of their fathers, nor those who have footmen and tutors. For these things perhaps cause widows to bewail over their orphans, thinking that this my son also, if his father at least were living, would have enjoyed so much happiness; but now he is in a state of depression and dishonor, and worthy of no consideration. Think not of these things, O woman, but open to thee in thought the gates of heaven, consider the palace there, behold the King who is there seated. Consider if those who are upon the earth can be more illustrious than thy son there—and then groan. But if some are of good repute on earth, this is not worth any consideration. It is allowed him, if thou wilt, to be a soldier in heaven, to enlist him in the ranks of that army. For those who are enlisted there are not borne on horses, but in the clouds. They walk not upon earth, but are caught up into heaven. They have not slaves to go before them, but the Angels themselves. They stand not in the presence of a mortal king, but of Him who is immortal, the King of kings and Lord of lords. They have not a leathern girdle about their loins, but that glory which is unspeakable, and they are more splendid than kings, or whoever have been most illustrious. For in those royal courts not wealth is required, nor noble birth, nothing else than virtue alone; and where that is present, nothing is wanting to their obtaining the chief place.

Nothing is painful to us, if we are willing to cultivate wisdom. Look up to heaven, and see how much more splendid it is than the roofs of palaces. And if the pavement of the palaces above is so much more grand than those below, that the one may be considered as dirt in comparison with the other; if any one should be thought worthy to see those palaces perfectly, what blessedness will not be his!

“But she,” he says, “that is a widow indeed, and desolate, hath her hope set on God.” (1 Tim. v. 5) To whom is this said? To those who have no children, because they are more highly approved, and have a greater opportunity of pleasing God, because all their chains are loosened to them. There is no one to hold them fast, no one to compel them to drag their chains after them. Thou art separated from thy husband, but art united to God. Thou hast not a fellow-servant for thy associate, but thou hast thy Lord. When thou prayest, tell me, dost thou not converse with God? When thou readest, hear Him conversing with thee. And what does He say to thee? Much kinder words than thy husband. For though indeed thy husband should flatter thee, the honor is not great, for he is thy fellow-servant. But when the Lord flatters the slave, then is the courtship great. How then does He court us? Hear by what means he does it.

“Come,” He says, “unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. xi. 28) And again through the Prophet He calls, saying, “Will a woman forget to have compassion on the offspring of her womb? But even if a woman should forget, yet will I not forget thee, saith the Lord.” (Isa. xlix. 15, Sept.) Of how great a love are these words? And again, “Turn unto Me” (Isa. xlv. 22); and again elsewhere, “Turn unto Me, and thou shalt be saved.” (Isa. xlv. 22) And if one was willing to select too from the Canticles, taking them in the more mystical way, he will hear Him conversing and saying to every soul that is fitted for Him, “My fair one, my dove.” (Cant. ii. 10) What is sweeter than these words? Seest thou the conversation of God with men? But what? tell me, seest thou not how many children of those blessed women are gone, and are in their tombs; how many have suffered more severely, and with their husbands have lost also their children? To these things let us attend; let us be anxious about these things, and nothing will be grievous to us, but we shall continue passing all our time in spiritual joy; and we shall enjoy the eternal blessings, of which may we all be partakers, by the grace and lovingkindness, &c.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Ver. 13. “But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, which have no hope.”

He refers to **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):13** But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

He continues, “These two things, poverty and despondency, distressed them most, which also pertain to all men. See therefore how he remedies them. But their poverty arose from their goods being taken from them. But if he commands those, whose goods had been taken from them for Christ’s sake, to support themselves by working, much more than others. For that they were taken away is manifest from his saying, Ye became partakers (**Schaff Note:** [Chrys. is aiming to quote (ii. 14), “Ye became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judæa”; and he then explains the situation in Judæa by quoting from the Epistle to the Hebrews. The chronology of the Epistles is seldom very real to his mind. The inaccurate and abridged quotation is natural, but of course the amended text filled it out, as seen in the earlier editions.—J.A.B.]) with the churches of God. How partakers with them? “And ye took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions.” (Heb. x. 34)”

He refers to **Hebrews 10 (KJV):34** For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

And to **1 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):14** For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judæa are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:

He continues, “Here he proceeds now to start his discourse concerning the Resurrection. And why? Had he not discoursed with them upon that point? Yes, but here he glances at some further mystery. What then is this? “That we that are alive,” he says, “that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in nowise precede them that are fallen asleep.””

He refers in context to **1 Thessalonians 4 (NKJV):14** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to

you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

He continues, “The discourse then of the Resurrection was sufficient to comfort him that was grieving. But that which is now said is sufficient also to make the Resurrection eminently worthy of credit. But first let us speak of what precedes, “But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, which have no hope.” See how here also he treats them mildly. He does not say, “Are ye so without understanding?” as he said to the Corinthians, “foolish”? that, knowing there is a resurrection, ye so sorrow, as those who do not believe; but he speaks very mildly, showing respect to their other virtues. And he has not said “concerning the dead,” but “them that are asleep,” even at the beginning suggesting consolation to them. “That ye sorrow not,” he says, “even as the rest, which have no hope.” Therefore to afflict yourselves for the departed is to act like those who have no hope. And they justly. For a soul that knows nothing of the Resurrection, but thinks that this death is death, naturally afflicts itself, and bewails and mourns intolerably as for lost ones. But thou, who expectest a resurrection, on what account dost thou lament? To lament then is the part of those who have no hope.

Hear this, ye women, as many of you as are fond of wailing, as many as at times of mourning take the sorrow impatiently, that ye act the part of heathens. But if to grieve for the departed is the part of heathens, then tell me whose part it is to beat one’s self, and tear the cheeks? On what account do you lament, if you believe that he will rise again, that he has not perished, that the matter is but a slumber and a sleep? You say, On account of his society, his protection, his care of our affairs, and all his other services. When therefore you lose a child at an untimely age, who is not yet able to do anything, on what account do you lament? Why do you seek to recall him? He was displaying, you say, good hopes, and I was expecting that he would be my supporter. On this account I miss my husband, on this account my son, on this account I wail and lament, not disbelieving the Resurrection, but being left destitute of support, and having lost my protector, my companion, who shared with me in all things—my comforter. On this account I mourn. I know that he will rise again, but I cannot bear the intermediate separation. A multitude of troubles rushes in upon me. I am exposed to all who are willing to injure me. Those of my servants who formerly feared me now despise me, and trample upon me. If any one has been benefited, he has forgotten the benefit he received from him; if any one was ill-treated by the departed, to return the grudge against him, he lets loose his anger upon me. These things do not suffer me to bear my widowhood. It is for these things that I afflict myself, for these things I bewail.

How then shall we comfort such? What shall we say? How shall we banish their sorrow? In the first place I shall endeavor to convict them, that their wailing proceeds not from these things they say, but from an unreasonable passion. For if you mourn for these things, you ought always to mourn the departed. But if when a year has passed away, you forget him as if he had never been, you do not bewail the departed nor his protection. But you cannot endure the separation, nor the breaking off of your society? And what can they say, who even enter into second marriages? Sure enough! It is the former husbands that they long for. But let us not direct our discourse to them, but to those who preserve a kind affection towards the departed. Wherefore dost thou lament thy child? Wherefore thine husband? The former, because I had not enjoyed him, you say; the latter, because I expected that I should have enjoyed him longer. And

this very thing, what want of faith does it argue, to suppose that thy husband or thy son constitutes thy safety, and not God! How dost thou not think to provoke Him? For often on this account He takes them away, that thou mayest not be so bound to them, so that it may withdraw thy hopes from them. For God is jealous, and wills to be loved by us most of all things: and that, because He loves us exceedingly. For ye know that this is the custom of those who love to distraction. They are excessively jealous, and would choose rather to throw away their life, than to be surpassed in esteem by any of their rival lovers. On this account also God hath taken him because of these words. (**Schaff Note:** i.e. “because you say such things about him.”)

For, tell me, on what account were there not in old times widowhoods, and untimely orphanhoods? Wherefore did He permit Abraham and Isaac to live a long time? Because even when he was living he preferred God before him. He said indeed, slay; and he slew him. Why did he bring Sarah to so great an age? Because, even whilst she was living, he listened to God rather than to her. For this reason God said to him, “Hear Sarah thy wife.” (From Gen. xxi. 12)”

He refers in context to **Genesis 21 (KJV):**9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. 10 Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. 11 And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. 12 And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

He continues, “No one then either from love to husband or wife, or on account of the protection of a child, provoked God to anger. But now because we are declining downwards, and have exceedingly fallen off, we men love our wives more than God, and we women honor our husbands more than God. It is on this account that He draws us even against our will to the love of Himself. Love not thy husband more than God, and thou shalt not ever experience widowhood. Or rather, even if it should happen, thou shalt not have the feeling of it. Why? Because thou hast an immortal Protector who loves thee better. If thou lovest God more, mourn not: for He who is more beloved is immortal, and does not suffer thee to feel the loss of him who is less beloved. This I will make manifest to thee by an example. Tell me, if thou hast a husband, complying with thee in all things, one that is respected, and that makes thee honorable everywhere, and not to be despised, one respected amongst all, intelligent and wise, and loving thee, thou being esteemed happy on his account, and in conjunction with him shouldest thou also bring forth a child, and then before it has arrived at the age of maturity, that child should depart; wilt thou then feel the affliction? By no means. For he that is more beloved makes it disappear. And now if thou love God more than thy husband, assuredly He will not soon take him away. But even if He should take him, thou wilt not be sensible of the affliction. For this reason the blessed Job felt no severe suffering, when he heard of the death of his children all at once, because he loved God more than them. And whilst He whom he loved was living, those things would not be able to afflict him.”

He refers to **Job 1 (NKJV):**18 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, 19 and suddenly a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you!” 20 Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the

ground and worshiped. 21 And he said: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord.” 22 In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

Job did not charge God with wrong, nor did he sin. But the Scripture does not minimize Job’s grief, as we read in **Job 2 (KJV):**11 Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, each one came from his own place—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. For they had made an appointment together to come and mourn with him, and to comfort him. 12 And when they raised their eyes from afar, and did not recognize him, they lifted their voices and wept; and each one tore his robe and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven. 13 So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great.

Chrysostom continues, “What sayest thou, O woman? Thy husband or thy son was thy protector? But does not thy God spare thee? Who gave thee thy very husband? Was it not He? And who made thee? Was it not He? He surely who brought thee out of nothing into being, and breathed into thee a soul, and put in thee a mind, and vouchsafed to favor thee with the knowledge of Himself, and for thy sake spared not His Only Begotten Son, does not He spare thee? And does thy fellow-servant spare thee? What wrath is due to these words! What of this kind hast thou had from thy husband? Thou canst not say anything. For if he has even done thee any kindness, it was after he had received kindness, you having previously begun. But in the case of God no one can say any such thing. For it is not as having received any favors from us that God benefits us, but being incapable of want, from His goodness alone He does good to mankind. He has promised thee a kingdom, He has given immortal life, glory, brotherhood, adoption. He has made thee fellow-heir with His Only-Begotten. And dost thou after so great benefits remember thy husband? What has he bestowed of this kind? He has made His sun to shine, He has given rain, He sustains thee with yearly nourishment. Woe to us for our great ingratitude!

For this reason He takes thy husband, that thou mayest not seek him. But dost thou still cling to him though departed, and forsakest God, when it was thy duty to give thanks, to cast it all upon Him? For what is it that thou hast received from thy husband? The pains of childbirth, and labors, and insults and reproaches often, and chidings, and bursts of anger. Are not these the things that come from husbands? But there are, you say, other things too that are good. Of what sort then are these? Did he set off thy beauty with costly garments? Did he put gold ornaments about thy face? Did he make thee respected by all? But if thou wilt, thou shalt adorn thyself with a much better ornament than the departed. For gravity makes its possessor much more admirable than golden ornaments. This King also has garments, not of this sort, but much better. With those, if thou wilt, invest thyself. Of what sort then are they? There is a clothing which has fringes of gold; if thou wilt, array the soul. But did he make thee not to be despised by men? And what is there great in that? Thy widowhood suffers thee not to be despised by the demons. Then thou ruledst over thy servants, if at least thou didst at all rule over them. But now, instead of thy servants, thou hast mastery over unbodied powers, principalities, authorities, the ruler of this world. And thou dost not mention the troubles, in which thou sharedst with him, sometimes the fear of magistrates, sometimes the preference given to neighbors. From all these things thou art now delivered, from dread and fear. But art thou



solicitous who will support the children that are left thee? The “Father of the fatherless.” For tell me, who gave them? Dost thou not hear Christ in the Gospels saying, “Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?” (Matt. vi. 25)”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):25** Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

He continues, “Seest thou, that thy lamentation is not from loss of his society, but from want of faith. But the children of a father that is dead are not equally illustrious. Wherefore? They have God for their Father, and are they not illustrious? How many can I show you brought up by widows, who have become famous, how many who have been under their fathers, and have been undone! For if thou bringest them up from their first youth, as they ought to be brought up, they will enjoy an advantage much greater than a father’s protection. For that it is the business of widows—I speak of the bringing up of children—hear Paul saying, “If she hath brought up children” (1 Tim. v. 10); and again, “She shall be saved through the child-bearing,” (he has not said through her husband,) if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety.” (1 Tim. ii. 15)”

He refers in context to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):9** Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man. **10** Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

And to **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):15** Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

But this is not to say that fathers do not bear responsibility for bringing up children. Good fathers must lead their family in faith.

Chrysostom continues, “Instill into them the fear of God from their first youth, and He will protect them better than any father; this will be a wall not to be broken. For when there is a guard seated within, we have no need of contrivances without: but where he is not, all our outward contrivances are vain.

This will be to them wealth and glory too and ornament. This will make them illustrious, not upon earth, but even in heaven. For do not look to those who are begirt with the golden girdles, nor those who are borne on horses, nor those who shine in kings’ palaces on account of their fathers, nor those who have footmen and tutors. For these things perhaps cause widows to bewail over their orphans, thinking that this my son also, if his father at least were living, would have enjoyed so much happiness; but now he is in a state of depression and dishonor, and worthy of no consideration. Think not of these things, O woman, but open to thee in thought the gates of heaven, consider the palace there, behold the King who is there seated. Consider if those who are upon the earth can be more illustrious than thy son there—and then groan. But if some are of good repute on earth, this is not worth any consideration. It is allowed him, if thou wilt, to be a soldier in heaven, to enlist him in the ranks of that army. For those who are enlisted there are not borne on horses, but in the clouds. They walk not upon earth, but are caught up into heaven. They have not slaves to go before them, but the Angels themselves. They stand not in the presence of a mortal king, but of Him who is immortal, the King of kings and Lord of lords. They have not a leathern girdle about their loins, but that glory which is unspeakable, and they are more splendid than kings, or whoever have been most illustrious. For in those royal

courts not wealth is required, nor noble birth, nothing else than virtue alone; and where that is present, nothing is wanting to their obtaining the chief place.

Nothing is painful to us, if we are willing to cultivate wisdom.”

But we read in **Ecclesiastes 1 (NKJV):18** For in much wisdom *is* much grief, And he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

Chrysostom continues, “Look up to heaven, and see how much more splendid it is than the roofs of palaces. And if the pavement of the palaces above is so much more grand than those below, that the one may be considered as dirt in comparison with the other; if any one should be thought worthy to see those palaces perfectly, what blessedness will not be his!

“But she,” he says, “that is a widow indeed, and desolate, hath her hope set on God.” (1 Tim. v. 5)”

He refers to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):5** Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.

He continues, “To whom is this said? To those who have no children, because they are more highly approved, and have a greater opportunity of pleasing God, because all their chains are loosened to them. There is no one to hold them fast, no one to compel them to drag their chains after them. Thou art separated from thy husband, but art united to God. Thou hast not a fellow-servant for thy associate, but thou hast thy Lord. When thou prayest, tell me, dost thou not converse with God? When thou readest, hear Him conversing with thee. And what does He say to thee? Much kinder words than thy husband. For though indeed thy husband should flatter thee, the honor is not great, for he is thy fellow-servant. But when the Lord flatters the slave, then is the courtship great. How then does He court us? Hear by what means he does it. “Come,” He says, “unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. xi. 28)”

He refers to **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

He continues, “And again through the Prophet He calls, saying, “Will a woman forget to have compassion on the offspring of her womb? But even if a woman should forget, yet will I not forget thee, saith the Lord.” (Isa. xlix. 15, Sept.)”

He refers to **Isaiah 49 (Septuagint):15** Will a woman forget her child, so as not to have compassion upon the offspring of her womb? but if a woman should even forget these, yet I will not forget thee, saith the Lord.

And to **Isaiah 49 (KJV):15** Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

He continues, “Of how great a love are these words? And again, “Turn unto Me” (Isa. xlv. 22); and again elsewhere, “Turn unto Me, and thou shalt be saved.” (Isa. xlv. 22)”

He refers to **Isaiah 45 (KJV):22** Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

And to **Isaiah 44 (KJV):22** I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

He continues, “And if one was willing to select too from the Canticles, taking them in the more mystical way, he will hear Him conversing and saying to every soul that is fitted for Him, “My fair one, my dove.” (Cant. ii. 10)”

He refers to **Song of Solomon 2 (KJV):10** My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

He continues, “What is sweeter than these words? Seest thou the conversation of God with men? But what? tell me, seest thou not how many children of those blessed women are gone, and are in their tombs; how many have suffered more severely, and with their husbands have lost also their children? To these things let us attend; let us be anxious about these things, and nothing will be grievous to us, but we shall continue passing all our time in spiritual joy; and we shall enjoy the eternal blessings, of which may we all be partakers, by the grace and lovingkindness, &c.”

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY VI, page 348-352**, he says, “Love not thy husband more than God, and thou shalt not ever experience widowhood. Or rather, even if it should happen, thou shalt not have the feeling of it. Why? Because thou hast an immortal Protector who loves thee better. If thou lovest God more, mourn not: for He who is more beloved is immortal, and does not suffer thee to feel the loss of him who is less beloved.”

And he says, “Nothing is painful to us, if we are willing to cultivate wisdom.”

But we read in **Ecclesiastes 1 (NKJV):18** For in much wisdom *is* much grief, And he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

We feel grief when we experience a loss. Losing a husband or a wife is a loss. God has created us with feelings. To deny our feelings is not wise. We must not deny our feelings, but process our feelings. As we do so, we will notice five stages of grief, according to Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. “These stages include denial, anger, bargaining, sadness-depression, and acceptance. Giving ourselves permission to grieve allows us to finish the work of the past and prepares us to accept the new experiences of the present. This is a process that takes time.” **Christian Adults in Recovery, A Ten Week Study Book, by Julianne Maki, M.F.C.C., and Mark Maki, 1992, page 19.**

Those who experience widowhood will feel a loss. It will take time to process. It took time for Job to process. But Job was victorious, as we read in **Job 42 (NKJV):1** Then Job answered the Lord and said: 2 “I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. 3 You asked, ‘Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. 4 Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, ‘I will question you, and you shall answer Me.’ 5 “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. 6 Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes.”

As we process what we feel, and agree with God, we will find the victory. Let us remember what we read in **Psalms 30 (NKJV):5** For His anger *is but for* a moment, His favor *is for* life; Weeping may endure for a night, But joy *comes* in the morning.

## The Antichrist

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY III, page 386-387**

Chap. ii. 1, 2. “Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind.”

When the Resurrection will be, he has not said, but that it will not be now, he has said. “And our gathering together unto Him.” This also is no little matter. See how the exhortation also is again accompanied with commendation and encouragement, in that He and all the Saints will certainly appear with us. Here he is discoursing concerning the resurrection and our gathering together. For these things will happen at the same time. He raises up their minds. “That ye be not quickly shaken,” he says, “nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is now present.”

Here he seems to me to intimate that certain persons went about having forged an Epistle, as if from Paul, and showing this, said that the Day of the Lord is at hand, that thence they might lead many into error. Therefore that they might not be deceived, Paul gives security by the things he writes, and says, “be not troubled, either by spirit or by word”: and this is the meaning of what he says: Though any one having the spirit of prophecy should say this, believe it not. For when I was with you I told you these things, so that you ought not to change your persuasion from the things which you were taught. Or thus, “by spirit”: so he calls the false prophet, speaking what they spoke by an unclean spirit. For these men, willing the more to be believed, not only endeavored to deceive by persuasive words, (for this he shows, saying, “or by word,”) but they also showed a forged letter, as from Paul, declaring the same thing. Wherefore pointing out this also, he has added, “or by letter as from us.” Having therefore secured them on every side, he thus sets forth his own doctrine, and says:

Ver. 3, 4. “Let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God.”

Here he discourses concerning the Antichrist, and reveals great mysteries. What is “the falling away?” (**Schaff Note:** [The Greek word translated “falling away” is that which we borrow as apostasy.—J.A.B.]) He calls him Apostasy, as being about to destroy many, and make them fall away. So that if it were possible, He says, the very Elect should be offended. (From Matt. xxiv. 24) And he calls him “the man of sin.” For he shall do numberless mischiefs, and shall cause others to do them. But he calls him “the son of perdition,” because he is also to be destroyed. But who is he? Is it then Satan? By no means; but some man, that admits his fully working in him. For he is a man. “And exalteth himself against all that is called God or is worshiped.” For he will not introduce idolatry, but will be a kind of opponent to God; he will abolish all the gods, and will order men to worship him instead of God, and he will be seated in the temple of God, not that in Jerusalem only, but also in every Church. “Setting himself forth,” he says; he does not say, saying it, but endeavoring to show it. For he will perform great works,

and will show wonderful signs.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “Chap. ii. 1, 2. “Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind.”

He refers to **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):1** Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

He continues, “When the Resurrection will be, he has not said, but that it will not be now, he has said. “And our gathering together unto Him.” This also is no little matter. See how the exhortation also is again accompanied with commendation and encouragement, in that He and all the Saints will certainly appear with us. Here he is discoursing concerning the resurrection and our gathering together. For these things will happen at the same time. He raises up their minds. “That ye be not quickly shaken,” he says, “nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is now present.”

Here he seems to me to intimate that certain persons went about having forged an Epistle, as if from Paul, and showing this, said that the Day of the Lord is at hand, that thence they might lead many into error. Therefore that they might not be deceived, Paul gives security by the things he writes, and says, “be not troubled, either by spirit or by word”: and this is the meaning of what he says: Though any one having the spirit of prophecy should say this, believe it not. For when I was with you I told you these things, so that you ought not to change your persuasion from the things which you were taught. Or thus, “by spirit”: so he calls the false prophet, speaking what they spoke by an unclean spirit. For these men, willing the more to be believed, not only endeavored to deceive by persuasive words, (for this he shows, saying, “or by word,”) but they also showed a forged letter, as from Paul, declaring the same thing. Wherefore pointing out this also, he has added, “or by letter as from us.” Having therefore secured them on every side, he thus sets forth his own doctrine, and says:

Ver. 3, 4. “Let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God.””

He refers to **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):3** Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

He continues, “Here he discourses concerning the Antichrist, and reveals great mysteries. What is “the falling away?” (**Schaff Note:** [The Greek word translated “falling away” is that which we borrow as apostasy.—J.A.B.]) He calls him Apostasy, as being about to destroy many, and make them fall away. So that if it were possible, He says, the very Elect should be offended. (From Matt. xxiv. 24)”

He refers to **Matthew 24 (KJV):24** For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

He continues, “And he calls him “the man of sin.” For he shall do numberless mischiefs, and shall cause others to do them. But he calls him “the son of perdition,” because he is also to be destroyed. But who is he? Is it then Satan? By no means; but some man, that admits his fully working in him. For he is a man. “And exalteth himself against all that is called God or is worshiped.” For he will not introduce idolatry, but will be a kind of opponent to God; he will abolish all the gods, and will order men to worship him instead of God, and he will be seated in the temple of God, not that in Jerusalem only, but also in every Church. “Setting himself forth,” he says; he does not say, saying it, but endeavoring to show it. For he will perform great works, and will show wonderful signs.”

The Antichrist sits in the temple of God, showing himself to be God. This is the abomination of desolation that we read of in **Matthew 24 (KJV):15** When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

And in Daniel we read of this in **Daniel 9 (KJV):27** And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

This will be the final week of the 70 determined upon Israel in Daniel 9:24, and the Church will already have been raptured.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY IV, page 388-389**

2 Thessalonians ii. 6–9

“And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming: even he whose coming is according to the working of Satan.”

One may naturally enquire, what is that which withholdeth, and after that would know, why Paul expresses it so obscurely. What then is it that withholdeth, that is, hindereth him from being revealed? Some indeed say, the grace of the Spirit, but others the Roman empire, to whom I most of all accede. Wherefore? Because if he meant to say the Spirit, he would not have spoken obscurely, but plainly, that even now the grace of the Spirit, that is the gifts, withhold him. And otherwise he ought now to have come, if he was about to come when the gifts ceased; for they have long since ceased. But because he said this of the Roman empire, he naturally glanced at it, and speaks covertly and darkly. For he did not wish to bring upon himself superfluous enmities, and useless dangers. For if he had said that after a little while the Roman empire would be dissolved, they would immediately have even overwhelmed him, as a pestilent person, and all the faithful, as living and warring to this end. And he did not say that it will be quickly, although he is always saying it—but what? “that he may be revealed in his own season,” he says,

“For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work.” He speaks here of Nero, as if he were the type of Antichrist. For he too wished to be thought a god. And he has well said, “the

mystery”; that is, it worketh not openly, as the other, nor without shame. For if there was found a man before that time, he means, who was not much behind Antichrist in wickedness, what wonder, if there shall now be one? But he did not also wish to point him out plainly: and this not from cowardice, but instructing us not to bring upon ourselves unnecessary enmities, when there is nothing to call for it. So indeed he also says here. “Only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way,” that is, when the Roman empire is taken out of the way, then he shall come. And naturally. For as long as the fear of this empire lasts, no one will willingly exalt himself, but when that is dissolved, he will attack the anarchy, and endeavor to seize upon the government both of man and of God. For as the kingdoms before this were destroyed, for example, that of the Medes by the Babylonians, that of the Babylonians by the Persians, that of the Persians by the Macedonians, that of the Macedonians by the Romans: so will this also be by the Antichrist, and he by Christ, and it will no longer withhold. And these things Daniel delivered to us with great clearness.

“And then,” he says, “shall be revealed the lawless one.” And what after this? The consolation is at hand. “Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming, even he whose coming is according to the working of Satan.”

For as fire merely coming on even before its arrival makes torpid and consumes the little animals that are afar off; so also Christ, by His commandment only, and Coming. It is enough for Him to be present, and all these things are destroyed. He will put a stop to the deceit, by only appearing. Then who is this, whose coming is after the working of Satan, “With all display all power,” but nothing true, but for deceit. “And lying wonder,” he says, that is, false, or leading to falsehood.

Ver. 10. “And with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing.”

Why then, you say, did God permit this to be? and what dispensation is this? And what is the advantage of his coming, if it takes place for the ruin of our race? Fear not, beloved, but hear Him saying, “In them that are perishing,” he hath strength, who, even if he had not come, would not have believed. What then is the advantage? That these very men who are perishing will be put to silence. How? Because both if he had come, and if he had not come, they would not have believed in Christ; He comes therefore to convict them. For that they may not have occasion to say, that since Christ said that He was God,—although He nowhere said this openly,—but since those who came after proclaimed it, we have not believed. Because we have heard that there is One God from whom are all things, therefore we have not believed. This their pretext then Antichrist will take away. For when he comes, and comes commanding nothing good, but all things unlawful, and is yet believed from false signs alone, he will stop their mouths. For if thou believest not in Christ, much more oughtest thou not to believe in Antichrist. For the former said that He was sent from the Father, but the latter the contrary. For this reason Christ said, “I am come in My Father’s name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name. him ye will receive.” (John v. 43) But we have seen signs, you say. But many and great signs were also wrought in the case of Christ; much more therefore ought ye to have believed in Him. And yet many things were predicted concerning this one, that he is the lawless one, that he is the son of perdition, that his coming is after the working of Satan. But the contrary concerning the other, that He is the Saviour, that He brings with Him unnumbered blessings.

Ver. 10, 11, 12. “For because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; for this cause God will send them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

“That they might be judged.” He does not say, that they might be punished; for even before this they were about to be punished; but “that they might be condemned,” that is, at the dreadful Seat of Judgment, in order that they might be without excuse. “Who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” He calls Christ, “the Love of the Truth.” “For because,” says he, “they received not the love of the truth.” For He was both, and came for the sake of both, both as loving men, and on behalf of things that were true. (**Schaff Note:** Compare John xviii. 37)

“But had pleasure,” he says, “in unrighteousness.” For he came to the destruction of men and to injure them. For what will he not then work? He will change and confound all things, both by his commandments, and by the fear of him. He will be terrible in every way, from his power, from his cruelty, from his unlawful commandments.

**Commentary:** He begins, as he quotes, “2 Thessalonians ii. 6–9

“And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming: even he whose coming is according to the working of Satan.”

He refers in context to **2 Thessalonians 2 (NKJV):6** And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

He continues, “One may naturally enquire, what is that which withholdeth, and after that would know, why Paul expresses it so obscurely. What then is it that withholdeth, that is, hindereth him from being revealed? Some indeed say, the grace of the Spirit, but others the Roman empire, to whom I most of all accede. Wherefore? Because if he meant to say the Spirit, he would not have spoken obscurely, but plainly, that even now the grace of the Spirit, that is the gifts, withhold him. And otherwise he ought now to have come, if he was about to come when the gifts ceased; for they have long since ceased.”

The early Church was subject to horrible persecution, which all occurred before the time of Chrysostom. Because of this, all of the doctrine of the apostles was lost. Though the Church still had the word of God, they did not understand much of it. They believed that Jesus was God, and confessed Him as Lord. But their understanding of water baptism and the Lord’s Supper was greatly influenced by traditions that had cropped up over time. Then their belief in a priesthood had also become firmly entrenched, which they felt was necessary in order to minister the rituals which they thought made people born again, and kept them saved. So it is understandable why the gifts of the Spirit had ceased in the Church in his time. And the fall of



the Roman Empire in the late 400s A.D. also proved his thinking wrong, that is, that it was the Roman Empire that withheld the lawless one from being revealed. Those who believe it is the Holy Spirit that will withhold or restrain are correct. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church is what is restraining. When the Church is raptured, the presence of the Holy Spirit will be taken up with the Church.

Chrysostom continues, “But because he said this of the Roman empire, he naturally glanced at it, and speaks covertly and darkly. For he did not wish to bring upon himself superfluous enmities, and useless dangers. For if he had said that after a little while the Roman empire would be dissolved, they would immediately have even overwhelmed him, as a pestilent person, and all the faithful, as living and warring to this end. And he did not say that it will be quickly, although he is always saying it—but what? “that he may be revealed in his own season,” he says,

“For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work.” He speaks here of Nero, as if he were the type of Antichrist. For he too wished to be thought a god. And he has well said, “the mystery”; that is, it worketh not openly, as the other, nor without shame. For if there was found a man before that time, he means, who was not much behind Antichrist in wickedness, what wonder, if there shall now be one? But he did not also wish to point him out plainly: and this not from cowardice, but instructing us not to bring upon ourselves unnecessary enmities, when there is nothing to call for it. So indeed he also says here. “Only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way,” that is, when the Roman empire is taken out of the way, then he shall come. And naturally. For as long as the fear of this empire lasts, no one will willingly exalt himself, but when that is dissolved, he will attack the anarchy, and endeavor to seize upon the government both of man and of God. For as the kingdoms before this were destroyed, for example, that of the Medes by the Babylonians, that of the Babylonians by the Persians, that of the Persians by the Macedonians, that of the Macedonians by the Romans: so will this also be by the Antichrist, and he by Christ, and it will no longer withhold. And these things Daniel delivered to us with great clearness.”

He speaks of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in **Daniel 2 (KJV):31** Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. 32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, 33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. 34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

Then Daniel interprets the dream as we read in **Daniel 2 (KJV):36** This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. 37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. 38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. 39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all

these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. 41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. 43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. 44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. 45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

Now referring to the image of Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon is the head of gold, the Persians are the breast and arms of silver, the Macedonians, or Greece, the belly and thighs of brass, and the fourth kingdom which "shall be strong as iron" is Rome.

And we read of Nebuchadnezzar's son, Belshazzar, in **Daniel 5 (KJV):30** In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. 31 And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

And we read in **Daniel 6 (KJV):8** Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. 9 Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

So the Medes and the Persians took over from Babylon. And we continue to read in **Daniel 6 (KJV):28** So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

And then after this, we read in **Daniel 10 (KJV):20** Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. 21 But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.

So the archangel Michael revealed this to Daniel, that Greece, or Macedonia as Chrysostom would have it, would follow Persia. And we know by history that Rome followed Greece. And in the time of Chrysostom, Rome was still ruling.

But let us read again in **2 Thessalonians 2 (NASB):1** Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? 6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 that is, the one

whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

The one who “restrains” in verse 6 is the Holy Spirit. This is so that the lawless one, the antichrist, may be revealed in his time. The Holy Spirit will be taken out of the way when the Church is raptured, just before the tribulation of seven years.

Chrysostom continues, “And then,” he says, “shall be revealed the lawless one.” And what after this? The consolation is at hand. “Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming, even he whose coming is according to the working of Satan.”

For as fire merely coming on even before its arrival makes torpid and consumes the little animals that are afar off; so also Christ, by His commandment only, and Coming. It is enough for Him to be present, and all these things are destroyed. He will put a stop to the deceit, by only appearing. Then who is this, whose coming is after the working of Satan, “With all display all power,” but nothing true, but for deceit. “And lying wonder,” he says, that is, false, or leading to falsehood.

Ver. 10. “And with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing.””

He refers to **2 Thessalonians 2 (NASB):10** and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

He continues, “Why then, you say, did God permit this to be? and what dispensation is this? And what is the advantage of his coming, if it takes place for the ruin of our race? Fear not, beloved, but hear Him saying, “In them that are perishing,” he hath strength, who, even if he had not come, would not have believed. What then is the advantage? That these very men who are perishing will be put to silence. How? Because both if he had come, and if he had not come, they would not have believed in Christ; He comes therefore to convict them. For that they may not have occasion to say, that since Christ said that He was God,—although He nowhere said this openly,—but since those who came after proclaimed it, we have not believed. Because we have heard that there is One God from whom are all things, therefore we have not believed. This their pretext then Antichrist will take away. For when he comes, and comes commanding nothing good, but all things unlawful, and is yet believed from false signs alone, he will stop their mouths. For if thou believest not in Christ, much more oughtest thou not to believe in Antichrist. For the former said that He was sent from the Father, but the latter the contrary. For this reason Christ said, “I am come in My Father’s name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name. him ye will receive.” (John v. 43)”

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):43** I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

He continues, “But we have seen signs, you say. But many and great signs were also wrought in the case of Christ; much more therefore ought ye to have believed in Him. And yet many things were predicted concerning this one, that he is the lawless one, that he is the son of perdition, that his coming is after the working of Satan. But the contrary concerning the other, that He is the Saviour, that He brings with Him unnumbered blessings.

Ver. 10, 11, 12. “For because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be

saved; for this cause God will send them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.””

He refers to **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):10** And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

He continues, ““That they might be judged.” He does not say, that they might be punished; for even before this they were about to be punished; but “that they might be condemned,” that is, at the dreadful Seat of Judgment, in order that they might be without excuse. “Who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” He calls Christ, “the Love of the Truth.” “For because,” says he, “they received not the love of the truth.” For He was both, and came for the sake of both, both as loving men, and on behalf of things that were true. (**Schaff Note:** Compare John xviii. 37)

And we read in **John 18 (KJV):37** Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. 38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.

He continues, ““But had pleasure,” he says, “in unrighteousness.” For he came to the destruction of men and to injure them. For what will he not then work? He will change and confound all things, both by his commandments, and by the fear of him. He will be terrible in every way, from his power, from his cruelty, from his unlawful commandments.”

And the Antichrist, the beast, will be taken in the battle of Armageddon and cast into the Lake of Fire, as we read in **Revelation 19 (KJV):19** And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY III, page 386-387**, he says, referring to 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, “Here he discourses concerning the Antichrist, and reveals great mysteries. What is “the falling away?” He calls him Apostasy, as being about to destroy many, and make them fall away. So that if it were possible, He says, the very Elect should be offended. (From Matt. xxiv. 24)”

And he says, “And he calls him “the man of sin.” For he shall do numberless mischiefs, and shall cause others to do them. But he calls him “the son of perdition,” because he is also to be destroyed. But who is he? Is it then Satan? By no means; but some man, that admits his fully working in him. For he is a man. “And exalteth himself against all that is called God or is worshiped.” For he will not introduce idolatry, but will be a kind of opponent to God; he will abolish all the gods, and will order men to worship him instead of God, and he will be seated in

the temple of God, not that in Jerusalem only, but also in every Church. "Setting himself forth," he says; he does not say, saying it, but endeavoring to show it. For he will perform great works, and will show wonderful signs."

**In Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 13, HOMILIES ON THESSALONIANS, HOMILY IV, page 388-389**, he says, ""One may naturally enquire, what is that which withholdeth, and after that would know, why Paul expresses it so obscurely. What then is it that withholdeth, that is, hindereth him from being revealed? Some indeed say, the grace of the Spirit, but others the Roman empire, to whom I most of all accede. Wherefore? Because if he meant to say the Spirit, he would not have spoken obscurely, but plainly, that even now the grace of the Spirit, that is the gifts, withhold him. And otherwise he ought now to have come, if he was about to come when the gifts ceased; for they have long since ceased."

And he says, "So indeed he also says here. "Only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way," that is, when the Roman empire is taken out of the way, then he shall come."

However, it is the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church that is restraining. When the Church is raptured, the presence of the Holy Spirit will be taken up with the Church.

And he says, "For as the kingdoms before this were destroyed, for example, that of the Medes by the Babylonians, that of the Babylonians by the Persians, that of the Persians by the Macedonians, that of the Macedonians by the Romans: so will this also be by the Antichrist, and he by Christ, and it will no longer withhold. And these things Daniel delivered to us with great clearness."

And he says, "And then," he says, "shall be revealed the lawless one." And what after this? The consolation is at hand. "Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming, even he whose coming is according to the working of Satan."

And he says, "But we have seen signs, you say. But many and great signs were also wrought in the case of Christ; much more therefore ought ye to have believed in Him. And yet many things were predicted concerning this one, that he is the lawless one, that he is the son of perdition, that his coming is after the working of Satan. But the contrary concerning the other, that He is the Saviour, that He brings with Him unnumbered blessings."

Chrysostom agrees with the Scriptures about the Antichrist.

## Future Events

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY XXI, page 463**

[5.] These things were indeed said to the Hebrews, but they are a general exhortation also to many of those who are here assembled. How and in what way? To the faint-hearted; to the meanspirited. For when they see the wicked prospering, and themselves faring ill, they are troubled, they bear it impatiently: while they long for the chastisement, and the inflicting vengeance on others; while they wait for the rewards of their own sufferings. “For yet a little time, and He that shall come will come.”

Let us then say this to the slothful: Doubtless there will be punishment; doubtless He will come, henceforth the events of the Resurrection are even at the doors.

Whence [does] that [appear] (you say)? I do not say, from the prophets; for neither do I now speak to Christians only; but even if a heathen be here, I am perfectly confident, and bring forward my proofs, and will instruct him. How (you say)?

Christ foretold many things. If those former things did not come to pass, then do not believe them; but if they all came to pass, why doubt concerning those that remain? And indeed, it were very unreasonable, nothing having come to pass, to believe the one, or when all has come to pass, to disbelieve the others.

But I will make the matter more plain by an example. Christ said, that Jerusalem should be taken, and should be so taken as no city ever was before, and that it should never be raised up: and in fact this prediction came to pass. He said, that there should be “great tribulation” (Matt. xxiv. 21), and it came to pass. He said that a grain of mustard seed is sown, so should the preaching [of the Gospel] be extended: and every day we see this running over the world. He said, that they who left father or mother, or brethren, or sisters, should have both fathers and mothers; And this we see fulfilled by facts. He said, “in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John xvi. 33), that is, no man shall get the better of you. And this we see by the events has come to pass. He said that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church” (Matt. xvi. 18), even though persecuted, and that no one shall quench the preaching [of the Gospel]: and the experience of events bears witness to this prediction also: and yet when He said these things, it was very hard to believe Him. Why? Because all these were words, and He had not as yet given proof of the things spoken. So that they have now become far more credible. He said that “when the Gospel should have been preached among all the nations, then the end shall come” (Matt. xxiv. 14); lo! now ye have arrived at the end: for the greater part of the world hath been preached to, therefore the end is now at hand. Let us tremble, beloved.

[6.] But what, tell me? Art thou anxious about the end? It indeed is itself near, but each man’s life and death is nearer. For it is said, “the days of our years are seventy years; but if [one be] in strength, fourscore years.” (Ps. xc. 10; [LXX lxxxix. 10]) The day of judgment is near. Let us fear. “A brother doth not redeem; shall man redeem?” (Ps. xlix. 7 ; [LXX xlvi. 8]) There we shall repent much, “but in death no man shall praise Him.” (Ps. vi. 5 ; [LXX 6]) Wherefore he saith, “Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving” (Ps. xcv. 2 ; [LXX

Ps. xciv.]), that is, his coming. For here [in this life] indeed, whatever we do has efficacy; but there, no longer. Tell me, if a man placed us for a little while in a flaming furnace, should we not submit to anything in order to escape, even were it necessary to part with our money, nay to undergo slavery? How many have fallen into grievous diseases, and would gladly give up all, to be delivered from them, if the choice were offered them? If in this world then, a disease of short duration so afflicts us, what shall we do yonder, when repentance will be of no avail?

**Commentary:** He begins, as he says, “[5.] These things were indeed said to the Hebrews, but they are a general exhortation also to many of those who are here assembled. How and in what way? To the faint-hearted; to the meanspirited. For when they see the wicked prospering, and themselves faring ill, they are troubled, they bear it impatiently: while they long for the chastisement, and the inflicting vengeance on others; while they wait for the rewards of their own sufferings. “For yet a little time, and He that shall come will come.”

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Whence [does] that [appear] (you say)? I do not say, from the prophets; for neither do I now speak to Christians only; but even if a heathen be here, I am perfectly confident, and bring forward my proofs, and will instruct him. How (you say)?

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But I will make the matter more plain by an example. Christ said, that Jerusalem should be taken, and should be so taken as no city ever was before, and that it should never be raised up: and in fact this prediction came to pass. He said, that there should be “great tribulation” (Matt. xxiv. 21), and it came to pass.”

He refers in context to **Matthew 24 (KJV):15** “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.

But the great tribulation has not come to pass yet. It will occur when the antichrist comes to power. And before this, Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles, “until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”, as Christ prophesied as in **Luke 21 (KJV):20** And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. 22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led

away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

This happened in 70 A.D. when the Roman general Titus destroyed Jerusalem, and the temple. And Jesus also prophesied the destruction of the temple in **Matthew 24 (KJV):1** And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

But Jesus did not say that Jerusalem “should never be raised up”, but that there would be wrath upon the Jews until “the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”. Then the Church will be raptured, and the tribulation will begin. This will fulfill Daniel’s prophecy of the 70<sup>th</sup> week in Daniel 9:24-27. Chrysostom did not understand the timetable of events of the second coming of Christ.

Chrysostom continues, “He said that a grain of mustard seed is sown, so should the preaching [of the Gospel] be extended: and every day we see this running over the world. He said, that they who left father or mother, or brethren, or sisters, should have both fathers and mothers; And this we see fulfilled by facts. He said, “in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John xvi. 33), that is, no man shall get the better of you.”

He refers to **John 16 (KJV):33** These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

He continues, “And this we see by the events has come to pass. He said that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church” (Matt. xvi. 18), even though persecuted, and that no one shall quench the preaching [of the Gospel]:”

He refers to **Matthew 16 (KJV):18** And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

He continues, “and the experience of events bears witness to this prediction also: and yet when He said these things, it was very hard to believe Him. Why? Because all these were words, and He had not as yet given proof of the things spoken. So that they have now become far more credible. He said that “when the Gospel should have been preached among all the nations, then the end shall come” (Matt. xxiv. 14);”

He refers to **Matthew 24 (KJV):14** And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

He continues, “lo! now ye have arrived at the end: for the greater part of the world hath been preached to, therefore the end is now at hand. Let us tremble, beloved.”

Chrysostom had no idea how big the world is.

He continues, “[6.] But what, tell me? Art thou anxious about the end? It indeed is itself near, but each man’s life and death is nearer. For it is said, “the days of our years are seventy years; but if [one be] in strength, fourscore years.” (Ps. xc. 10; [LXX lxxxix. 10])”

He refers to **Psalms 90 (KJV):10** The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.



And to **Psalm 89 (Septuagint):10** [As for] the days of our years, in them are seventy years; and if [men should be] in strength, eighty years: and the greater part of them would be labour and trouble; for weakness overtakes us, and we shall be chastened.

He continues, “The day of judgment is near. Let us fear. “A brother doth not redeem; shall man redeem?” (Ps. xlix. 7; [LXX xlviii. 8])”

He refers to **Psalm 49 (KJV):7** None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:

And in context to **Psalm 48 (Septuagint):8** A brother does not redeem, shall a man redeem? he shall not give to God a ransom for himself, 9 or the price of the redemption of his soul, though he labour for ever, 10 and live to the end, [so] that he should not see corruption.

He continues, “There we shall repent much, “but in death no man shall praise Him.” (Ps. vi. 5; [LXX 6])”

He refers to **Psalm 6 (KJV):5** For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?

And to **Psalm 6 (Septuagint):6** For in death no man remembers thee: and who will give thee thanks in Hades?

He continues, “Wherefore he saith, “Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving” (Ps. xciv. 2; [LXX Ps. xciv]), that is, his coming.”

He refers to **Psalm 95 (KJV):2** Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

And to **Psalm 94 (Septuagint):2** Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise to him with psalms.

He continues, “For here [in this life] indeed, whatever we do has efficacy; but there, no longer. Tell me, if a man placed us for a little while in a flaming furnace, should we not submit to anything in order to escape, even were it necessary to part with our money, nay to undergo slavery? How many have fallen into grievous diseases, and would gladly give up all, to be delivered from them, if the choice were offered them? If in this world then, a disease of short duration so afflicts us, what shall we do yonder, when repentance will be of no avail?”

## Commentary Summary

In **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14, HOMILIES ON HEBREWS, HOMILY XXI, page 463**, he says, “Let us then say this to the slothful: Doubtless there will be punishment; doubtless He will come, henceforth the events of the Resurrection are even at the doors.”

And he says, “He said that “when the Gospel should have been preached among all the nations, then the end shall come” (Matt. xxiv. 14);”

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But Jesus did not say that Jerusalem “should never be raised up”, but that there would be wrath upon the Jews until “the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”. Then the Church will be raptured, and the tribulation will begin. This will fulfill Daniel’s prophecy of the 70<sup>th</sup> week in Daniel 9:24-27. Chrysostom did not understand the timetable of events of the second coming of Christ. And the “great tribulation” has not come to pass yet, for it shall be as in **Daniel 12 (KJV):1** “At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands *watch* over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, *Even* to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.