

Exposition on Psalm 103

by St. Augustine

St. Augustine exhorts us to bless the Lord, remember His rewards, think of all His rewards, hear all His rewards, seek our own good, and show mercy to all, and to trust in God's goodness and mercy towards us.

Scripture: Psalm 102:1-11

Topics: "Praise And Worship", "Gods Mercy"

Description

St. Augustine preaches about the importance of blessing the Lord with all that is within us, not just with our voices but with our hearts and souls, continuously praising God in every aspect of our lives. He emphasizes the need to remember God's rewards, which include forgiveness, redemption, and mercy, and to acknowledge our sins and seek His grace. St. Augustine highlights God's compassion, mercy, and long-suffering towards those who fear Him, urging us to keep His commandments not just in memory but in our actions. He reminds us of the fleeting nature of life and the importance of doing God's will to receive His eternal rewards.

Transcript

1. ...Bless the Lord, O my soul! And all that is within me, His holy Name Psalm 102:1. I suppose that he speaks not of what is within the body; I do not suppose him to mean this, that our lungs and liver, and so forth, are to burst forth into the voice of blessing of the Lord. There are lungs in our breast indeed, like a kind of bellows, which send forth successive breathings, which breathing forth of the air inhaled is pressed out into voice and sound, when the words are articulated; nor can any utterance sound forth from our mouth, but what the pressed lungs have given vent to; but this is not the meaning here; all this relates to the ears of men. God has ears: the heart also has a voice. A man speaks to the things within him, that they may bless God, and says unto them, all that is within me bless His holy Name! Do you ask the meaning of what is within you? Your soul itself. In saying then, all that is within me, bless His holy Name, it only repeats the above, Bless the Lord, O my soul: for the word Bless, is understood. Cry out with your voice, if there be a man to hear; hush your voice, when there is no man to hear you; there is never wanting one to hear all that is within you. Blessing therefore has already been uttered from our mouth, when we were chanting these very words. We sung as much as sufficed for the time, and were then silent: ought our hearts within us to be silent to the blessing of the Lord? Let the sound of our voices bless Him at intervals, alternately, let the voice of our hearts be perpetual. When you come to church to recite a hymn, your voice sounds forth the praises of God: you have sung as far as you could; you have left the church; let your soul sound the praises of God. You are engaged in your daily work: let your soul praise God. You

are taking food; see what the Apostle says: Whether you eat or drink, do all to the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31 I venture to say; when you sleep, let your soul praise the Lord. Let not thoughts of crime arouse you, let not the contrivances of thieving arouse you, let not arranged plans of corrupt dealing arouse you. Your innocence even when you are sleeping is the voice of your soul.

2. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His rewards Psalm 102:2. But the rewards of the Lord cannot be before your eyes unless your sins are before your eyes. Let not delight in past sin be before your eyes, but let the condemnation of sin be before your eyes: condemnation from you, forgiveness from God. For thus God rewards you, so that you may say, How shall I reward the Lord for all His rewards unto me? This it was that the martyrs considering (whose memory we are this day celebrating), and all the saints who have despised this life, and as you have heard in the Epistle of St. John, laid down their lives for the brethren, which is the perfection of love, 1 John 3:16 even as our Lord says: Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends: John 15:13 this the holy martyrs, then, considering, despised their lives here, that they might find them there, following our Lord's words when He said, He that loves his life, shall lose it; and he that loses his life for My sake, shall keep it unto life eternal.. ..Forget not, he says, all His rewards: not awards, but rewards. For something else was due, and what was not due has been paid. Whence also these words: What, he asks, shall I reward the Lord for all His rewards unto me? You have rewarded good with evil; He rewards evil with good. How have you, O man, rewarded your God with evil for good? You who has once been a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, 1 Timothy 1:13 hast rewarded blasphemies. For what good things? First, because you are: but a stone also is. Next, because you live, but a brute also lives. What reward will you give the Lord, for His having created you above all the cattle; and above all the fowls of the air, in His image and likeness? Genesis 1:26-27 Seek not how to reward Him: give back unto Him His own image: He requires no more; He demands His own coin. Matthew 22:21 ...

3. Think thou, soul, of all the rewards of God, in thinking over all your wicked deeds: for as many as are your sins, so many are His rewards of good. And what present, what offering, what sacrifice, can you ever tender unto Him?...What will you reward the Lord with? For you were reflecting, and couldest not find: I will receive the cup of salvation. What? Has not the Lord Himself given the cup of salvation? Reward Him from your own, if you can? I would say, No, do it not; reward Him not from your own; God does not will to be rewarded from your own. If you reward Him from your own, you reward sin. For all that you have you have from Him: sins only you have of your own. He does not wish to be rewarded from yours, He does will from His own. Just as, if you should bring to a husbandman, from the land which he has sown, an ear of wheat, you have rewarded him from the husbandman's own produce; if thorns, that hast offered him of your own. Reward truth, in truth praise the Lord: if you shall choose to reward Him from your own, you will lie. He who speaks a lie, speaks of his own. John 8:44 If he who speaks a lie, speaks of his own: so he who speaks truth, speaks of the Lord's. But what is to receive the cup of salvation, but to imitate the Passion of our Lord?...I will receive the cup of Christ, I will drink of our Lord's Passion. Beware that thou fail not. But, I will call upon the Name of the Lord. They then who failed, called not upon the Lord; they presumed in their own strength. Do thou so return, as remembering that you are returning what you have received. So then let your soul bless the Lord, as not to forget all His rewards.

4. Hear ye all His rewards. Who forgives all your sin: who heals all your infirmities Psalm 102:3. Behold His rewards. What, save punishment, was due unto the sinner? What was due to the blasphemer, but the hell of burning fire? He gave not these rewards: that you may not shudder with dread: and without love fear Him....But you are a sinner. Turn again, and receive these His rewards: He forgives all your sin....Yet

even after remission of sins the soul herself is shaken by certain passions; still is she amid the dangers of temptation, still is she pleased with certain suggestions; with some she is not pleased, and sometimes she consents unto some of those with which she is pleased: she is taken. This is infirmity: but He heals all your infirmities. All your infirmities shall be healed: fear not. They are great, you will say: but the Physician is greater. No infirmity comes before the Almighty Physician as incurable: only suffer you yourself to be healed: repel not His hands; He knows how to deal with you. Be not only pleased when He cherishes you, but also bear with Him when He uses the knife: bear the pain of the remedy, reflecting on your future health.... You do not endure in uncertainty: He who promised you health, cannot be deceived. The physician is often deceived: and promises health in the human body. Why is he deceived? Because he is not healing his own creature. God made your body, God made your soul. He knows how to restore what He has made, He knows how to fashion again what He has already fashioned: do thou only be patient beneath the Physician's hands: for He hates one who rejects His hands. This does not happen with the hands of a human physician....

5. Who redeems your life from corruption Psalm 102:4. Behold, the body which is corrupted, weighs down the soul. Wisdom 9:15 The soul then has life in a corruptible body. What sort of life? It suffers burdens, it bears weights. How great obstacles are there to thinking of God Himself, as it is right that men should think of God, as if interrupting us from the necessity of human corruption? How many influences recall us, how many interrupt, how many withdraw the mind when fixed on high? What a crowd of illusions, what tribes of suggestions? All this in the human heart, as it were, teems with the worms of human corruption. We have set forth the greatness of the disease, let us also praise the Physician. Shall not He then heal you, who made you such as to be in health, had you chosen to keep the law of health which you had received?...First think of your own health. Sometimes a man is stricken in his own house, on his bed, with a more than usually manifest disorder; although this disorder too, which men dislike to contemplate, be plain; yet each man may be attacked with that sickness for which human physicians are sought, and may gasp with fever in his bed; perhaps he may wish to consider of his domestic affairs, to make some order or disposition relating to his estate or his house; at once he is recalled from such cares by the anxiety of his friends, plainly expressed around him, and he is advised to dismiss these subjects, and first to take thought for his health. This then is addressed unto you, and to all men: if you are not sick, think of other things: if your very infirmity prove you sick, first take heed of your health. Christ is your health: think therefore of Christ. Receive the cup of His saving Health, who heals all your infirmities; if you shall choose, you shall gain this Health....For your life has been redeemed from corruption: rest secure now: the contract of good faith has been entered upon; no man deceives, no man circumvents, no man oppresses, your Redeemer. He has here made a barter, He has already paid the price, He has poured forth His blood. The only Son of God, I say, has shed His blood for us: O soul, raise yourself, you are of so great price....He redeems your life from corruption.

6. Who crowns you with mercy and loving-kindness. You had perhaps begun to be in a manner proud, when you heard the words, He crowns you. I am then great, I have then wrestled. By whose strength? By yours, but supplied by Him....He crowns you, because He is crowning His own gifts, not your deservings. I laboured more abundantly than they all, said the Apostle; but see what he adds: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. 1 Corinthians 15:10 ...It is then by His mercy that you are crowned; in nothing be proud; ever praise the Lord; forget not all His rewards. It is a reward when thou, a sinner and an ungodly man, hast been called, that you may be justified. It is a reward, when you are raised up and guided, that you may not fall. It is a reward, when strength is given you, that you may persevere unto the end. It is a reward, that even that flesh of yours by which you were oppressed rises again and that not even a hair of

your head perishes. It is a reward, that after your resurrection you are crowned. It is a reward, that you may praise God Himself for evermore without ceasing....

7. After the battle, then, I shall be crowned; after the crown, what shall I do? He who satisfies your longing with good things Psalm 102:5....Seek your own good, O soul. For one thing is good to one creature, another to another, and all creatures have a certain good of their own, to the completeness and perfection of their nature. There is a difference as to what is essential to each imperfect thing, in order that it may be made perfect; seek for your own good. There is none good but One, that is, God. Matthew 19:17 The highest good is your good. What then is wanting unto him to whom the highest good is good? For there are inferior goods, which are good to different creatures respectively. What, brethren, is good unto the cattle, save to fill the belly, to prevent want, to sleep, to indulge themselves, to exist, to be in health, to propagate? This is good to them: and within certain bounds it has an allotted measure of good, granted by God, the Creator of all things. Do you seek such a good as this? God gives also this: but do not pursue it alone. Can you, a coheir of Christ, rejoice in fellowship with cattle? Raise your hope to the good of all goods. He will be your good, by whom thou in your kind hast been made good, and by whom all things in their kind were made good. For God made all things very good....

8. When shall my longing be satisfied with good things? When, do you ask? Your youth shall be renewed as the eagle's. Do you then ask when your soul is to be satisfied with good things? When your youth shall be restored. And he adds, as an eagle's. Something here lies hidden; what however is said of the eagle, we will not pass over silently, since it is not foreign to our purpose to understand it. Let this only be impressed upon our hearts, that it is not said without cause by the Holy Spirit. For it has intimated unto us a sort of resurrection. And indeed the youth of the eagle is restored, but not into immortality, for a similitude has been given, as far as it could be drawn from a thing mortal to signify a thing immortal, not to demonstrate it. The eagle is said, after it becomes overpowered with bodily age, to be incapable of taking food from the immoderate length of its beak, which is always increasing. For after the upper part of its beak, which forms a crook above the lower part, has increased from old age to an immoderate length, the length of this increase will not allow of its opening its mouth, so as to form any interval between the lower beak and the crook above. For unless there be such an opening, it has no power of biting like a forceps, by which to shear off what it may put within its jaws. The upper part therefore increasing, and being too far hooked over, it cannot open its mouth, and take any food. This old age does to it, it is weighed down with the infirmity of age, and becomes too weak from want of power to eat; two causes of infirmity assaulting it, old age, and want. By a natural device, therefore, in order in some measure to restore its youth, the eagle is said to dash and strike against a rock the upper lip of its beak, by the too great increase of which the opening for eating is closed: and by thus rubbing it against the rock, it breaks off the weight of its old beak, which impeded its taking food. It comes to its food, and everything is restored: it will be after its old age like a young eagle; the vigour of all its limbs returns, the lustre of its plumage, the guidance of its wings, it flies aloft as before, a sort of resurrection takes place in it. For this is the object of the similitude, like that of the Moon, which after waning and being apparently intercepted, again is renewed, and becomes full; and signifies to us the resurrection; but when it is full it does not remain so; again it wanes, that the signification may never cease. Thus also what has here been said of the eagle: the eagle is not restored unto immortality, but we are unto eternal life; but the similitude is derived from hence, that the rock takes away from us what hinders us. Presume not therefore on your strength: the firmness of the rock rubs off your old age: for that Rock was Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:4 In Christ our youth shall be restored like that of the eagle....

9. The Lord executes mercy and judgment for all them that are oppressed with wrong Psalm 102:6....An adulterous woman is brought forward to be stoned according to the Law, but she is brought before the Lawgiver Himself....Our Lord, at the time she was brought before Him, bending His Head, began writing on the earth. When He bent Himself down upon the earth, He then wrote on the earth: before He bent upon the earth, He wrote not on the earth, but on stone. The earth was now something fertile, ready to bring forth from the Lord's letters. On the stone He had written the Law, intimating the hardness of the Jews: He wrote on the earth, signifying the productiveness of Christians. Then they who were leading the adulteress came, like raging waves against a rock: but they were dashed to pieces by His answer. For He said to them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. John 8:7 And again bending His head, He began writing on the ground. And now each man, when he asked his own conscience, came not forward. It was not a weak adulterous woman, but their own adulterate conscience, that drove them back. They wished to punish, to judge; they came to the Rock, their judges were overthrown by the Rock.. ..

10. Execute mercy to the wicked, not as being wicked. Do not receive the wicked, in so far forth as he is wicked: that is, do not receive him as if from inclination towards and love for his iniquity. For it is forbidden to give unto a sinner, and to receive sinners. Yet how is this, Give unto every man that asks of you? And this, if your enemy hunger, feed him? Romans 12:20 This is seemingly contradictory: but it is opened to those who knock in the name of Christ, and will be clear unto those who seek. Help not a sinner: and, give not to the ungodly; Sirach 12:4-6 and yet, give unto every man that asks of you. But it is a sinner who asks of me. Give, not as unto a sinner. When do you give as unto a sinner? When that which makes him a sinner, pleases you so that you give.. ..Let those who give to a man who fights with wild beasts, tell me why they give? Why does he give to this man? He loves that in him, in which consists his greatest sin; this he feeds, this he clothes in him, wickedness itself, made public by all witnessing it. Why does the man give, who gives to actors, or to charioteers, or to courtesans? Do not these very persons give to human beings? But it is not the nature of God's work that they attend to, but the iniquity of the human work....When therefore you give, you give to infamy, not to bravery. As then he who gives to the fighter of beasts, gives not to the man, but to a most infamous profession; for if he were only a man, and not a fighter of beasts, you would not give; you honour him in vice, not nature: so on the other hand, if you give to the righteous, if you give to the prophet, if you give to the disciple of Christ anything of which he is in want, without thinking that he is Christ's disciple, that he is God's minister, that he is God's steward; but art thinking in that case of some temporal advantage, for instance, that when perchance he shall be needful to your cause, he may be bought for you, because you have given him something; you have no more given to the righteous, if you have thus given, than he gave to the man, when he gave to the beast-fighter. The matter, then, most beloved, is quite open to us, and I conceive, that although it was obscure, it is now clear. It was to this that the Lord bound you, when He said, He who has received the righteous man. That were enough. But as the righteous may be received with another intention,...He says, He who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man: that is, receiving him in consideration of his righteousness:...that is, because he is Christ's disciple, because he is a steward of the Mystery: 1 Corinthians 4:1 Verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. Matthew 10:42 So understand, he who receives a sinner in the name of a sinner shall lose his reward.

11. ...On this account therefore be merciful without fear, extend love even unto your enemies: punish those who chance to belong to your government, restrain them with affection, with charity, in regard to their eternal salvation; lest while you spare the flesh, the soul perish. Do this: and though thou have to endure many, over whom you can not exercise discipline, because you have no lawful authority over them; bear their injuries; be without apprehension. He will show mercy unto you if you shall have been

merciful: you shall be merciful, without the injuries you suffer losing their punishment; To Me belongs vengeance, I will repay, Deuteronomy 32:35 says the Lord.

12. He made His ways known unto Moses Psalm 102:7....For the Law was given with this view, that the sick might be convinced of his infirmity, and pray for the physician. This is the hidden way of God. You had long ago heard, Who heals all your infirmities. Their infirmities were as yet hidden in the sick; the five books were given to Moses: the pool was surrounded by five porches; he brought forth the sick, that they might lie there, that they might be made known, not that they might be healed. The five porches discovered, but healed not, the sick; the pool healed when one descended, and this when it was disturbed: John 5:2-4 the disturbance of the pool was in our Lord's Passion....Since therefore this is a mystery there, he teaches that the Law was given that sinners might be convinced of their sin, and call upon the Physician in order to receive grace....Therefore, as I had begun to say, because this is a great mystery in the Law, that it was given with this view, that by the increase of sin, the proud might be humbled, the humbled might confess, the confessing might be healed; these are the hidden ways, which He made known to Moses, through whom He gave the Law, by which sin should abound, that grace might more abound....He has made known His good pleasure unto the children of Israel. To all the children of Israel? To the true children of Israel; yea, to all the children of Israel. For the treacherous, the insidious, the hypocrites, are not children of Israel. And who are the children of Israel? Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. John 1:47

13. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: long-suffering, and of great mercy Psalm 102:8. Why so long-suffering? Why so great in mercy? Men sin and live; sins are added on, life continues: men blaspheme daily, and He makes His sun to rise over the good and the wicked. Matthew 5:45 On all sides He calls to amendment, on all sides He calls to repentance, He calls by the blessings of creation, He calls by giving time for life, He calls through the reader, He calls through the preacher, He calls through the innermost thought by the rod of correction, He calls by the mercy of consolation: He is long-suffering, and of great mercy. But take heed lest by ill using the length of God's mercy, you store up for yourself, as the Apostle says, wrath in the day of wrath....For some there are who prepare to turn, and yet put it off, and in them cries out the raven's voice, Cras! Cras! The raven which was sent from the ark, never returned. Genesis 8:7 God seeks not procrastination in the raven's voice, but confession in the wailing of the dove. The dove, when sent forth, returned. How long, Tomorrow! Tomorrow!? Look to your last morrow: since you know not what is your last morrow, let it suffice that you have lived up to this day a sinner. You have heard, often you are wont to hear, you have heard today also; daily you hear, and daily you amend not....

14. He will not always be chiding: neither keeps He His anger for ever Psalm 102:9. Since it is in consequence of His anger that we live in the scourges and corruption of mortality: we have this in punishment for the first sin....Is it not through His anger, my brethren, that in the sweat of your face and in toil you shall eat bread, and the earth shall bear thorns and thistles unto you? This was said to our forefathers. Or if our life is different from this; if you can, turn unto some pleasure, where you may not feel thorns. Choose what you have wished, whether you are covetous or luxurious; to name these two alone; add a third passion, that of ambition; how great thorns are there in the desire of honours? In the luxury of lusts how great thorns? In the ardour of covetousness how great thorns? What troubles are there in base loves? What terrible anxieties here in this life? I omit hell. Beware lest you even now become a hell unto yourself. The whole of this, my brethren, is the result of His anger: and when you have turned yourself unto works of righteousness, you can not but toil upon earth; and toil ends not before life ends. We must toil on the way, that we may rejoice in our country. He therefore consoles by His promises your toil, your

labours, your troubles, saying to you, He will not always be chiding.

15. He has not dealt with us according to our sins Psalm 102:10. Thanks unto God, because He has vouchsafed this. We have not received what we were deserving of: He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our wickednesses. For as the height of heaven above the earth, so has the Lord confirmed His mercy toward them that fear Him Psalm 102:11. Observe the heaven: everywhere on every side it covers the earth, nor is there any part of the earth not covered by the heaven. Men sin beneath heaven: they do all evil deeds beneath the heaven; yet they are covered by the heaven. Thence is light for the eyes, thence air, thence breath, thence rain upon the earth for the sake of its fruits, thence all mercy from heaven. Take away the aid of heaven from the earth: it will fail at once. As then the protection of heaven abides upon the earth, so does the Lord's protection abide upon them that fear Him. You fear God; His protection is above you. But perhaps you are scourged, and conceive that God has forsaken you. God has forsaken you, if the protection of heaven has forsaken the earth.

16. Look, how wide the east is from the west; so far has He set our sins from us Psalm 102:12. They who know the Sacraments know this; nevertheless, I only say what all may hear. When sin is remitted, your sins fall, your grace rises; your sins are as it were on the decline, your grace which frees you on the rise. Truth springs from the earth. What means this? Your grace is born, your sins fall, you are in a certain manner made new. You should look to the rising, and turn away from the setting. Turn away from your sins, turn unto the grace of God; when your sins fall, thou rises and profitest....One region of the heaven falls, another rises: but the region which is now rising will set after twelve hours. Not like this is the grace which rises unto us: both our sins fall for ever, and grace abides for ever.

17. Yea, like as a father pities his own children, even so has the Lord had mercy on them that fear Him Psalm 102:13. Let Him be as angry as He shall will, He is our Father. But He has scourged us, and afflicted us, and bruised us: He is our Father. Son, if you bewail, wail beneath your Father; do not so with indignation, do not so with the puffing up of pride. What you suffer, whence you mourn, it is medicine, not punishment; it is your chastening, not your condemnation. Do not refuse the scourge, if you dost not wish to be refused your heritage: do not think of what punishment you suffer in the scourge, but what place you have in the Testament.

18. For He knows our forming Psalm 102:14: that is, our infirmity. He knows what He has created, how it has fallen, how it may be repaired, how it may be adopted, how it may be enriched. Behold, we are made of clay: The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. 1 Corinthians 15:47 He sent even His own Son, Him who was made the second man, Him who was God before all things. For He was second in His coming, first in His returning: He died after many, He arose before all. He knows our forming. What forming? Ourselves. Why do you say that He knows? Because He has pitied. Remember that we are but dust. Addressing God Himself, he says, Remember, as if God could forget: He perceives, He knows in such a manner that He cannot forget. But what means, Remember? Let your mercy continue towards us. You know our forming; forget not our forming, lest we forget your grace.

19. Man, his days are but as grass Psalm 102:15. Let man consider what he is; let not man be proud. His days are but as grass. Why is the grass proud, that is now flourishing, and in a very short space dried up? Why is the grass proud that flourishes only for a brief season, until the sun be hot? It is then good for us that His mercy be upon us, and from grass make gold. For he flourishes as a flower of the field. The whole splendour of the human race; honour, powers, riches, pride, threats, is the flower of the grass. That house flourishes, and that family is great, that family flourishes; and how many flourish, and how many years do

they live! Many years to you, are but a short season unto God. God does not count, as you do. Compared with the length and long life of ages, all the flower of any house is as the flower of the field. All the beauty of the year hardly lasts for the year. Whatever there flourishes, whatever there is warmed with heat, whatever there is beautiful, lasts not; nay, it cannot exist for one whole year. In how brief a season do flowers pass away, and these are the beauty of the herbs! This which is so very beautiful, this quickly falls. Isaiah 40:6-8 Inasmuch then as He knows as a father our forming, that we are but grass, and can only flourish for a time; He sent unto us His Word, and His Word, which abides for evermore, He has made a brother unto the grass which abides not. Wonder not that you shall be a sharer of His Eternity; He became Himself first a sharer of your grass. Will He who assumed from you what was lowly, deny unto you what is exalted in respect of you?

20. The wind shall go over on it, it shall not be; and the place thereof shall know it no more Psalm 102:16. For he is not speaking of grass, but of that for whose sake even the Word became grass. For you are man, and on your account the Word became man. All flesh is grass: and the Word was made flesh. John 1:14 How great then is the hope of the grass, since the Word has been made flesh? That which abides for evermore, has not disdained to assume grass, that the grass might not despair of itself.

21. In your reflections therefore on yourself, think of your low estate, think of your dust: be not lifted up: if you are anything better, you will be so by His Grace, you will be so by His mercy. For hear what follows: but the mercy of the Lord endures for ever and ever upon them that fear Him Psalm 102:17. You who fear not Him, will be grass, and in grass, and in torment with the grass: for the flesh shall arise unto the torment. Let those who fear Him rejoice, because His mercy is upon them.

22. And His righteousness upon children's children Psalm 102:18. He speaks of reward, upon children's children. How many servants of God are there who have not children, how much less children's children? But He calls our works our children; the reward of works, our children's children. Even upon such as keep His covenant. Let men beware that all may not conceive what is here said to belong to themselves: let them choose, while they have the choice. And keep in memory His commandments to do them. You were already disposed to flatter yourself, and perhaps to recite to me the Psalter, which I have not by heart, or from memory to say over the whole Law. Clearly you are better in point of memory than I, better than any righteous man who does not know the Law word for word: but see that thou keep the commandments. But how should you keep them? Not by memory, but by life. Such as keep in memory His commandments: not, to recite them; but, to do them. And now perhaps each man's soul is disturbed. Who remembers all the commandments of God? Who remembers all the writings of God? Lo, I wish not only to hold them in my memory, but also to do them in my works: but who remembers them all? Fear not: He burdens you not: on two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. Matthew 22:40 ...

23. The Lord has prepared His throne in heaven Psalm 102:19. Who but Christ has prepared His throne in heaven? He who descended and ascended, He who died, and rose from the dead, He who lifted up to heaven the manhood He had assumed, has Himself prepared His throne in heaven. The throne is the seat of the Judge: observe therefore ye who hear, that He has prepared His throne in heaven....The kingdom is the Lord's, and He shall be the Governor among the people. And His kingdom shall rule over all.

24. Bless ye the Lord, you Angels of His, you that are mighty in strength: ye that fulfil His word Psalm 102:20. By the word of God, then, you are not righteous, nor faithful, unless when thou dost it. You that are mighty in strength, you that fulfil His commandment, and hearken unto the voice of His words.

25. Bless ye the Lord, all you His hosts: ye servants of His that do His pleasure Psalm 102:21. All you angels, all you that are mighty in strength: ye that do His word: all you His hosts, you servants of His that do His pleasure, do ye, you bless the Lord. For all they who live wickedly, though their tongues be silent, by their lips do curse the Lord. What does it profit if your tongue sings a hymn, while your life breathes sacrilege? By living ill you have set many tongues to blasphemy. Your tongue is given to the hymn, the tongues of those who behold you, to blasphemy. If then thou dost wish to bless the Lord, do His word, do His will....

26. Bless ye the Lord, all you works of His, in all places of His dominion Psalm 102:22. Therefore in every place. Let Him not be blessed where He rules not: in all places of His dominion. Let no man perchance say: I cannot praise the Lord in the East, because He has departed unto the West; or, I cannot praise Him in the West, because He is in the East. For neither from the east, nor from the west, nor yet from the desert hills. And why? God is the Judge. He is everywhere, in such wise that everywhere He may be praised: He is in such wise on every side, that we may be joyful in Him on every side: He is in such wise blessed on every side, that on every side we may live well....In every place of His dominion: bless thou the Lord, O my soul! The last verse is the same as the first: blessing is at the head of the Psalm, blessing at the end; from blessing we set out, to blessing let us return, in blessing let us reign.

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