

Exposition on Psalm 49

by St. Augustine

The sermon emphasizes the importance of hearing and pondering the words of wisdom, repenting from sin, and trusting in God's mercy and forgiveness.

Scripture: Matthew 11:15

Topics: "Eternal Rewards", "Righteous Living"

Description

St. Augustine preaches about the contrast between the righteous and the unrighteous, emphasizing the temporary pleasures of the unrighteous who focus on earthly gains and false goods, while the righteous labor in faith and hope for eternal rewards. He warns against trusting in riches, friends, or virtue for redemption, highlighting the importance of seeking God's kingdom and doing good works to redeem the soul. St. Augustine encourages believers to endure the night of trials, yearning for the morning of eternal blessings, and to confess to God and imitate the righteousness of their forefathers to secure a blessed future.

Transcript

The First Part.

1. ...Hear ye these things, all you nations Psalm 48:1. Not then you only who are here. For of what power is our voice so to cry out, as that all nations may hear? For Our Lord Jesus Christ has proclaimed it through the Apostles, has proclaimed it in so many tongues that He sent; and we see this Psalm, which before was only repeated in one nation, in the Synagogue of the Jews, now repeated throughout the whole world, throughout all Churches; and that fulfilled which is here spoken of, Hear ye these words, all you nations....Of whom you are: With ears ponder, all you that dwell in the world. This He seems to have repeated a second time, lest to have said hear, before, were too little. What I say, he says, hear, with ears ponder, that is, hear not cursorily. What is, with ears ponder? It is what the Lord said, he that has ears to hear, let him hear: Matthew 11:15 for as all who were in His presence must have had ears, what ears did He require save those of the heart, when He said, he that has ears to hear, let him hear? The same ears also this Psalm does smite. With ears ponder, all you that dwell in the world. Perhaps there is here some distinction. We ought not indeed to narrow our view, but there is no harm in explaining even this view of the sense. Perhaps there is some difference between the saying, all nations, and the saying, all you that dwell in the world. For perchance he would have us understand the expression, dwell in, with a further meaning, so as to take all nations for all the wicked, but the dwellers of the world all the just. For he does

inhabit who is not held fast: but he that is occupied is inhabited, and does not inhabit. Just as he does possess whatever he has, who is master of his property: but a master is one who is not held in the meshes of covetousness: while he that is held fast by covetousness is the possessed, and not the possessor....

2. Therefore let even the ungodly hear: Hear ye this, all you nations. Let the just also hear, who have not heard to no purpose, and who rather rule the world than are ruled by the world: with ears ponder, all you that dwell in the world.

3. And again he says, both all you earthborn, and sons of men Psalm 48:2. The expression earthborn refers to sinners; the expression sons of men to the faithful and righteous. You see then that this distinction is observed. Who are the earthborn? The children of the earth. Who are the children of the earth? They who desire earthly inheritances. Who are the sons of men? They who appertain to the Son of Man. We have already before explained this distinction to your Sanctity, and have concluded that Adam was a man, but not the son of man; that Christ was the Son of Man, but was God also. For whosoever pertain to Adam, are earthborn: whosoever pertain to Christ, are sons of men. Nevertheless, let all hear, I withhold my discourse from no one. If one is earthborn, let him hear, because of the judgment: another is a son of man, let him hear for the kingdom's sake. The rich and poor together. Again, the same words are repeated. The expression rich refers to the earthborn; but the word poor to the sons of men. By the rich understand the proud, by the poor the humble....He says in another Psalm, The poor shall eat and be satisfied. How has he commended the poor? The poor shall eat and be satisfied. What eat they? That Food which the faithful know. How shall they be satisfied? By imitating the Passion of their Lord, and not without cause receiving their recompense. The poor shall eat and be satisfied, and they shall praise the Lord who seek Him. What of the rich? Even they eat. But how eat they? All the rich upon the earth have eaten and worshipped. He said not, Have eaten and are satisfied; but, have eaten and worshipped. They worship God indeed, but they will not display brotherly humaneness. These eat and worship; those eat and are filled: yet both eat. Of the eater what he eats is required: let him not be forbidden by the distributor to eat, but let him be admonished to fear him who does require his account. Let these words then be heard by sinners and righteous, nations, and those who inhabit the world, earthborn and sons of men, the rich and the poor together: not divided, not separated. That is for the time of the harvest to do, the hand of the winnower will effect that. Matthew 3:12 Now together let rich and poor hear, let goats and sheep feed in the same pasture, until He come who shall separate the one on His right hand, the other on His left. Matthew 25:32 Let them all hear together the teacher, lest separated from one another they hear the voice of the Judge.

4. And what is it they are now to hear? My mouth shall speak of wisdom, and the meditation of my heart understanding Psalm 48:3. And this repetition is perhaps made, lest perchance if he had said only my mouth, you should suppose that one spoke to you who had understanding but in his lips. For many have understanding in their lips, but have not in their heart, of whom the Scripture says, This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Isaiah 29:13 What says he then who speaks to you? When he has said, My mouth shall speak of wisdom, in order that you may know that what is poured forth from the mouth flows from the bottom of the heart, he has added, And the meditation of my heart of understanding.

5. I will incline mine ear to the parable, I will show my proposition upon the harp Psalm 48:4....And why to a parable? Because now we see through a glass darkly, 1 Corinthians 13:12 as says the Apostle; while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. 2 Corinthians 5:6 For our vision is not yet that face to face, where there are no longer parables, where there no longer are riddles and comparisons. Whatever

now we understand we behold through riddles. A riddle is a dark parable which it is hard to understand. Howsoever a man may cultivate his heart and apply himself to apprehend mysteries, so long as we see through the corruption of this flesh, we see but in part....But as He was seen by those who believed, and by those who crucified Him, when He was judged; so will He be seen, when He shall have begun to be judge, both by those whom He shall condemn, and by those whom He shall crown. But that vision of divinity, which He has promised to them that love Him, when He says, He that loves Me shall be loved of My Father, and he that loves Me keeps My commandments, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him: John 14:21 this the ungodly shall not see. This manifestation is in a certain way familiar: He keeps it for His own, He will not show it to the ungodly. Of what sort is the vision itself? Of what sort is Christ? Equal to the Father. Of what sort is Christ? In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1 For this vision we sigh now, and groan so long as we sojourn here; to this vision we shall be brought home at the last, this vision now we see but darkly. If then we see now darkly, let us incline our ear to the parable, and then let us show our proposition upon the harp: let us hear what we say, do what we enjoy.

6. And what has he said? And wherefore shall I fear in the evil day? The iniquity of my heel shall compass me Psalm 48:5. He begins something obscurely. Therefore he ought the rather to fear if the iniquity of his heel shall compass him. Nay, for let not man fear, he says, who has not power to escape. For example, he who fears death, what shall he do to escape death? Let him tell me how he is to escape what Adam owes, he who is born of Adam. But let him consider that he is born of Adam, and has followed Christ, and ought to pay what Adam owes, and obtain what Christ has promised. Therefore, he who fears death can no wise escape: but he who fears the damnation which the ungodly shall hear, Go ye into everlasting fire, Matthew 25:41 has an escape. Let him not fear then. For why should he fear? Will the iniquity of his heel compass him? If then he avoid the iniquity of his heel, and walk in the ways of God, he shall not come to the evil day: the evil day, the last day, shall not be evil to him....Now while they live, let them take heed to themselves, let them put away iniquity from their heel: let them walk in that way, let them walk in the way of which He says Himself, I am the way, the truth, and the life: John 14:6 and let them not fear in the evil day, for He gives them safety who became The Way. Therefore let them avoid the iniquity of their heel. With the heel a man slips. Let your Love observe. What was said by God to the Serpent? She shall mark your head, and you shall mark her heel. The devil marks your heel, in order that when you slip he may overthrow you. He marks your heel, do thou mark his head. What is his head? The beginning of an evil suggestion. When he begins to suggest evil thoughts, then you thrust him away before pleasure arises, and consent follows; and so shall you avoid his head, and he shall not grasp your heel. But wherefore said He this to Eve? Because through the flesh man does slip. Our flesh is an Eve within us. He that loves his wife, he says, loves himself. What means himself? He continues, and says, For no man ever yet has hated his own flesh. Ephesians 5:28-29 Because then the devil would make us slip through the flesh, just as he made that man Adam to slip, through Eve; Eve is bidden to mark the head of the devil, because the devil marks her heel. If then the iniquity of our heel shall compass us, why fear we in the evil day, since being converted to Christ we are able not to do iniquity; and there will be nothing to compass us, and we shall joy and not sorrow in the last day?

7. But who are they whom the iniquity of their heel shall compass? They who trust in their virtue, and in the abundance of their riches do glory Psalm 48:6. Therefore such sins will I avoid, and the iniquity of my heel shall never compass me. What is avoiding such sins? Let us not trust in our own virtue, let us not glory in the abundance of our own riches, but let us glory in Him who has promised to us, being humble, exaltation, and has threatened condemnation to men exalted; and then iniquity of our heel shall never

compass us.

8. There are some who rely on their friends, others rely on their virtue, others on their riches. This is the presumption of mankind which relies not on God. He has spoken of virtue, he has spoken of riches, he speaks of friends. Brother redeems not, shall man redeem? Psalm 48:7. Do you expect that man shall redeem you from the wrath to come? If brother redeem you not, shall man redeem you? Who is the brother, who if He has not redeemed you, no man will redeem? It is He who said after His resurrection, Go, tell My brethren.

Matthew 28:10 Our Brother He has willed to be: and when we say to God, Our Father, this is manifested in us. For he that says to God, Our Father; says to Christ, Brother. Therefore let him that has God for his Father and Christ for his Brother, not fear in the evil day. For the iniquity of his heel shall not compass him; for he relies not on his virtue, nor glories in the abundance of his riches, nor vaunts himself of his powerful friends. Let him rely on Him who died for him, that he might not die eternally: who for his sake was humbled, in order that he might be exalted; who sought him ungodly, in order that He might be sought by him faithful.

Therefore if He redeem not, shall man redeem? Shall any man redeem, if the Son of man redeem not? If Christ redeem not, shall Adam redeem? Brother redeems not, shall man redeem? 9. He shall not give to God his propitiation, and the price of the redemption of his soul Psalm 48:8. He trusts in his virtue, and in the abundance of his riches does glory, who shall not give to God his propitiation: that is, satisfaction whereby he may prevail with God for his sins: nor the price of the redemption of his soul, who relies on his virtue, and on his friends, and on his riches.

But who are they that give the price of the redemption of their souls? They to whom the Lord says, Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that they may receive you into everlasting habitations. Luke 16:9 They give the price of the redemption of their soul who cease not to do almsdeeds. So those whom the Apostle charges by Timothy he would not have to be proud, lest they should glory in the abundance of their riches. Lastly, what they possessed he would not have to grow old in their hands: but that something should be made of it to be for the price of the redemption of their souls.

For he says, Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded: nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 1 Timothy 6:17 And as if they had said, What shall we then make of our riches? he continues, Let them be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, 1 Timothy 6:18 and they will not lose that. How know we? Hear what follows. Let them lay up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the true life. 1 Timothy 6:19 So shall they give the price of the redemption of their soul.

And our Lord counsels this: Make for yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that fails not, where thief approaches not, neither moth corrupts. Luke 12:33 God would not have you lose your wealth, but He has given you counsel to change the place thereof. Let your love understand. Suppose your friend were just now to enter your house, and find you had placed your store of grain in a damp place, and he knew the natural proneness of grain to decay, which thou perchance knew not, he would give you counsel of this sort, saying, Brother, you are losing what with great toil you have gathered, you have placed it in a damp place, in a few days this grain will decay.

And what am I to do, brother? Raise it into a higher place. You would hearken to your friend suggesting that you should raise grain from a lower to a higher chamber, and do you not hearken to Christ charging

you to lift your treasure from earth to heaven, where not what you keep in store may be paid to you, but that you may keep in store earth, may receive heaven, may keep in store things mortal, may receive things everlasting, that while you lend Christ to receive at your hands but a small loan upon earth, He may repay you a great recompense in Heaven?

Nevertheless, they whom the iniquity of their heel shall compass, because they trust in their virtue, and in the abundance of their riches do glory, and rely on human friends who are able to help them in nothing, shall not give to God their propitiation, and the price of the redemption of their souls.

10. And what has he said of such a man? Yea, he has laboured for ever, and shall live till the end Psalm 48:9. His labour shall be without end, his life shall have an end. Wherefore says he, He shall live till the end? Because such men think life to be nought but daily enjoyments. So when many poor and needy men of our times, unstable, and not looking to what God does promise them for their labours, see rich men in daily feasting, in the splendour and glitter of gold and of silver, they say what? These are the only people; they really live! This is a saying, be it said no longer: we both warn you, and it remains to warn you, that it be said by fewer persons than it would be said, if we had not warned you. For we do not presume to say that we so say these words, as that it be not said, but that it be said by fewer persons: for it will be said even unto the end of the world. It is too little that he says, he lives; he adds and says, he thunders, do you think that he alone lives? Let him live! His life will be ended: because he gives not the price of the redemption of his soul, his life will end, his labour will not end. He laboured for ever, and shall live till the end. How shall he live till the end? As he lived that was clothed with purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day, Luke 16:19 who, being proud and puffed up, spurned the man full of sores lying before his gate, whose sores the dogs licked, and who longed for the crumbs which fell from his table. What did those riches profit him? Both changed places: the one was borne from the rich man's gate into Abraham's bosom, the other from his rich feasts was cast into the fire; the one was in peace, the other burned; the one was sated, the other thirsted; the one had laboured till the end, but he lived for ever; the other had lived till the end, but he laboured for ever. And what did it profit the rich man, who asked, while lying in torments in hell, that a drop of water should be poured upon his tongue from the finger of Lazarus, saying, For I am burning here in this flame, Luke 16:24 and it was not granted to him? One longed for the drop from the finger, as the other had for the crumbs from the rich man's table; but the labour of the one is ended, and the life of the other is ended: the labour of this is for ever, the life of that is for ever. We who labour perchance here on the earth, have not our life here: and shall not be so placed hereafter, for our life shall be Christ for ever: while they who will have their life here, shall labour for ever and live till the end.

11. For he shall not see death, though he shall have seen wise men dying Psalm 48:10. The man who laboured for ever and shall live till the end, shall not see death, though he shall have seen wise men dying. What is this? He shall not comprehend what death is, whenever he shall have seen wise men dying. For he says to himself, this fellow, for all he was wise and dwelled with wisdom and worshipped God with piety, is he not dead? Therefore I will enjoy myself while I live; for if they that are wise in other respects, could do anything, they would not have died. Just as the Jews saw Christ hanging on the Cross and despised Him, saying, If this Man were the Son of God, He would come down from the Cross: Matthew 27:40, 42 not seeing what death is. If they had seen what death is; if they had seen, I say. He died for a time, that He might live again for ever: they lived for a time, that they might die for ever. But because they saw Him dying, they saw not death, that is to say, they understood not what was very death. What say they even in Wisdom? Let us condemn Him with a most shameful death, for by His own sayings He shall be respected; for if he is indeed the Son of God, He will deliver Him from the hands of His adversaries: He

will not suffer His Son to die, if He is truly His Son. But when they saw themselves insulting Him upon the Cross, and Him not descending from the Cross, they said, He was indeed but a Man. Thus was it spoken: and surely He could have come down from the Cross, He that could rise again from the tomb: but He taught us to bear with those who insult us; He taught us to be patient of the tongues of men, to drink now the cup of bitterness, and afterwards to receive everlasting salvation....

12. The imprudent and unwise shall perish together. Who is the imprudent? He that looks not out for himself for the future. Who is the unwise? He that perceives not in what evil case he is. But do thou perceive in what evil case you are now, and look out that thou be in a good case for the future. By perceiving in what evil case you are, you will not be unwise: by looking out for yourself for the future, you will not be imprudent. Who is he that looks out for himself? That servant to whom his master gave what he should expend, and afterwards said to him, You can not be my steward, give an account of your stewardship; and who answered, What shall I do? I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed; Luke 16:1-2, etc. had, nevertheless, by even his master's goods made to himself friends, who might receive him when he was put out of his stewardship. Now he cheated his master in order that he might get to himself friends to receive him: fear not lest you be cheating, the Lord Himself exhorts you to do so: He says Himself to you, Make to yourself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. Luke 16:9 Perhaps what you have got, you have gotten of unrighteousness: or perhaps this very thing is unrighteousness, that you have and another has not, you abound and another needs. Of this mammon of unrighteousness, of these riches which the unrighteous call riches, make to yourself friends, and you shall be prudent: you are gaining for yourself, and art not cheating. For now you seem to lose it. Will you lose it if you place it in a treasury? For boys, my brethren, no sooner find some money, wherewith to buy something, than they put it in a money-box, which they open not until afterwards: do they, because they see not what they have got, on that account lose it? Fear not: boys put in a money-box, and are secure: do you place it in the hand of Christ, and fear? Be prudent, and provide for yourself against the future in Heaven. Be therefore prudent, copy the ant, as says the Scripture: Store in summer, lest you hunger in winter; the winter is the last day, the day of tribulation; the winter is the day of offenses and of bitterness: gather what may be there for you for the future: but if you do not so, you will perish both imprudent and unwise.

13. But that rich man Luke 16:22 too died, and a like funeral was made for him. See to what men have brought themselves: they regard not what a wicked life he led while he lived, but what pomp followed him when he died! O happy he, whom so many lament! But the other lived in such sort, that few lament. For all ought to lament a man living so sadly. But there is the funeral train; he is received in a costly tomb, he is wound in costly robes, he is buried in perfumes and spices. Secondly, what a monument he has! How marbled! Does he live in that same monument? He is therein dead. Men deeming these to be good things, have strayed from God, and have not sought the true good things, and have been deceived with the false. To this end see what follows. He who gave not the price of the redemption of his soul, who understood not death, because he saw wise men dying, he became imprudent and unwise, in order that he might die with them. And how shall they perish, who shall leave their riches to aliens?...

14. But do those same aliens indeed serve them who are called their own? Hear in what they serve them, observe how they are ridiculed: why has he said, to strangers? Because they can do them no good. Nevertheless, wherein do they seem to themselves to do good? And their tombs shall be their house for ever Psalm 48:11. Now because these tombs are erected, the tombs are a house. For often you hear a rich man saying, I have a house of marble which I must quit, and I think not for myself of an eternal house, where I shall always be. When he thinks to make for himself a monument of marble or of sculpture, he is

deeming as it were of an eternal house: as if therein this rich man would abide! If he would abide there, he would not burn in hell. We must consider that the place where the spirit of an evil doer abides, is not where the mortal body is laid: but their tombs shall be their house for ever. Their dwelling places are from generation to generation. Dwelling places are wherein they abode for a season: house is wherein they will abide as it were for ever, that is to say, their tombs. Thus they leave their dwelling places, where they abode while they lived, to their families, and they pass as it were to everlasting houses, to their tombs. What profit to them are their dwelling places, from generation to generation? Now suppose a generation and generation are sons, grandsons there will be, and great grandsons; what do their dwelling places, what do they profit them? What? Hear: they shall invoke their names in their lands. What is this? They shall take bread and wine to their tombs, and there they shall invoke the names of the dead. Do you consider how loudly was invoked the name of the rich man after his death, when men drank them drunk at his monument, and there came down not one drop upon his own burning tongue? Men minister to their own belly, not to the ghosts of their friends. The souls of the dead nothing does reach, but what they have done of themselves while alive: but if they have done nought of themselves while alive, nothing does reach them dead. But what do the survivors? They will but invoke their names in their lands.

15. And man though he was in honour perceived not, he was compared to the beasts without sense, and was made like to them Psalm 48:12....They ought, on the contrary, to have made ready for themselves an eternal house in good works, to have made ready for themselves everlasting life, to have sent before them expenditure, to have followed their works, to have ministered to a needy companion, to have given to him with whom they were walking, not to have despised Christ covered with sores before their gate, who has said, Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, you have done it unto Me. Matthew 25:40 However, man being in honour has not understood. What is, being in honour? Being made after the image and likeness of God, man is preferred to beasts. For God has not so made man as He made a beast: but God has made man for beasts to minister to: is it to his strength then, and not to his understanding? Nay. But he understood not; and he who was made after the image of God, is compared to the beasts without sense, and is made like them. Whence it is said elsewhere, Be not like to horse and mule, in which there is no understanding.

16. This their own way is an offense to them Psalm 48:13. Be it an offense to them, not to you. But when will it be so to you too? If you think such men to be blessed. If you perceive that they be not blessed, their own way will be an offense to themselves; not to Christ, not to His Body, not to His members. And afterwards they shall bless with their mouth. What means, Afterwards they shall bless with their mouth? Though they have become such, that they seek nothing but temporal goods, yet they become hypocrites: and when they bless God, with lips they bless, and not with heart. Christians like these, when to them eternal life is commended, and they are told, that in the name of Christ they ought to be despisers of riches, do make grimaces in their hearts: and if they dare not do it with open face, lest they blush, or lest they should be rebuked by men, yet they do it in heart, and scorn; and there remains in their mouth blessing, and in their heart cursing.

The Second Part.

1. Like sheep laid in hell, death is their shepherd Psalm 48:14. Whose? Of those whose way is a stumbling-block to themselves. Whose? Of those who mind only things present, while they think not of things future: of those who think not of any life, but of that which must be called death. Not without cause, then, like sheep in hell, have they death to their shepherd. What means, they have death to their shepherd? For is death either some thing or some power? Yea, death is either the separation of the soul

from the body, or a separation of the soul from God, and that indeed which men fear is the separation of the soul from the body: but the real death, which men do not fear, is the separation of the soul from God. And oftentimes when men fear that which does separate the soul from the body, they fall into that wherein the soul is separated from God. This then is death. But how is death their shepherd? If Christ is life, the devil is death. But we read in many places in Scripture, how that Christ is life. But the devil is death, not because he is himself death, but because through him is death. For whether that (death) wherein Adam fell was given man to drink by the persuasion of him: or whether that wherein the soul is separated from the body, still they have him for the author thereof, who first falling through pride envied him who stood, and overthrew him who stood with an invisible death, in order that he might have to pay the visible death. They who belong to him have death to their shepherd: but we who think of future immortality, and not without reason do wear the sign of the Cross of Christ on the forehead, have no shepherd but life. Of unbelievers death is the shepherd, of believers life is the shepherd. If then in hell are the sheep, whose shepherd is death, in heaven are the sheep, whose shepherd is life. What then? Are we now in heaven? In heaven we are by faith. For if not in heaven, where is the Lift up your heart? If not in heaven, whence with the Apostle Paul, For our conversation is in heaven? Philippians 3:20 In body we walk on earth, in heart we dwell in heaven. We dwell there, if there we send anything which holds us there. For no one dwells in heart, save where thought is: but there his thought is, where his treasure is. He has treasured on earth, his heart does not withdraw from earth: he has treasured in heaven, his heart from heaven does not come down: for the Lord says plainly, Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Matthew 6:12

2. They, then, whose shepherd is death, seem to flourish for a time, and the righteous to labour: but why? Because it is yet night. What means, it is night? The merits of the righteous appear not, and the felicity of the unrighteous has, as it were, a name. So long as it is winter, grass appears more verdant than a tree. For grass flourishes through the winter, a tree is as it were dry through the winter: when in summer time the sun has come forth with greater heat, the tree, which seemed dry through the winter, is bursting with leaves, and puts forth fruits, but the grass withers: you will see the honour of the tree, the grass is dried. So also now the righteous labour, before that summer comes. There is life in the root, it does not yet appear in the branches. But our root is love. And what says the Apostle? That we ought to have our root above, in order that life may be our shepherd, because our dwelling ought not to quit heaven, because in this earth we ought to walk as if dead; so that living above, below we may be dead; not so as that being dead above, we may live below....Our labour shall appear in the morning, and there shall be fruit in the morning: so that they that now labour shall hereafter reign, and they that now boast them and are proud, shall hereafter be brought under. For what follows? Like sheep laid in hell, death is their shepherd; and the righteous shall reign over them in the morning.

3. Endure thou the night, yearn for the morning. Think not because the night has life, the morning too has not life. Does then he that sleeps live, and he that rises live not? Is not he that sleeps more like death? And who are they that sleep? They whom the Apostle Paul rouses, if they choose but to awake. For to certain he says, Awake, you that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light. Ephesians 5:14 They then that are lightened by Christ watch now, but the fruit of their watchings appears not yet: in the morning it shall appear, that is, when doubtful things of this world shall have passed away. For these are very night: for do they not appear to you like darkness?...But they on whom men have trampled, and who were ridiculed for believing, shall hear from Life Itself, whom they have for shepherd, Come, you blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom which was prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Therefore the righteous shall reign over them, not now, but in the morning. Let no one say, Wherefore am I a Christian? I rule no one, I would rule the wicked. Be not in haste, you shall reign, but in

the morning. And the help of them shall grow old in hell from their glory. Now they have glory, in hell they shall grow old. What is the help of them? Help from money, help from friends, help from their own might. But when a man shall be dead, in that day shall perish all his thoughts. How great glory he seemed to have among men, while he lived, so great oldness and decay of punishments shall he have, when he shall be dead in hell.

4. Nevertheless, God shall redeem my soul Psalm 48:15. Behold the voice of one hoping in the future: Nevertheless, God shall redeem my soul. Perhaps it is the voice of one still wishing to be relieved from oppression. Some one is in prison, he says, God shall redeem my soul: some one is in bond, God shall redeem my soul: some one is suffering peril by sea, is being tossed by waves and raging tempests, what says he? God shall redeem my soul. They would be delivered for the sake of this life. Not such is the voice of this man. Hear what follows: God shall redeem my soul from the hand of hell, when He shall have received me. He is speaking of this redemption, which Christ now shows in Himself. For He has descended into hell, and has ascended into heaven. What we have seen in the Head we have found in the Body. For what we have believed in the Head, they that have seen, have themselves told us, and by themselves we have seen: For we are all one body. Romans 12:5 But are they better that hear, we worse to whom it has been told? Not so says The Life Itself, Our Shepherd Himself. For He rebukes a certain disciple of His, doubting and desiring to handle His scars, and when he had handled the scars and had cried out, saying, My Lord and my God, John 20:28 seeing His disciple doubting, and looking to the whole world about to believe, Because you have seen Me, He says, you have believed: blessed are they that see not, and believe. But God shall redeem my soul from the land of hell, when He has received me. Here then what? Labour, oppression, tribulation, temptation: expect nothing else. Where joy? In future hope....

5. ...Perchance your heart says, Wretch that I am, I suppose to no purpose I have believed, God does not regard things human. God therefore does awaken us: and He says what? Fear not, though a man have become rich Psalm 48:16. For why did you fear, because a man has become rich? You feared that you had believed to no purpose, that perchance you should have lost the labour for your faith, and the hope of your conversion: because perchance there has come in your way gain with guilt, and you could have been rich, if you had seized upon that same gain with the guilt, and needed not have laboured; and you, remembering what God has threatened, have refrained from guilt, and have contemned the gain: you see another man that has made gain by guilt, and has suffered no harm; and you fear to be good. Fear not, says the Spirit of God to you, though a man shall have become rich. Would you not have eyes but for things present? Things future He has promised, who has risen again; peace in this world, and repose in this life, He has not promised. Every man does seek repose; a good thing he is seeking, but not in the proper region thereof he is seeking it. There is no peace in this life; in Heaven has been promised that which on earth we are seeking: in the world to come has been promised that which in this world we are seeking.

6. Fear not, though a man be made rich, and though the glory of his house be multiplied. Wherefore fear not? For when he shall die, he shall not receive anything Psalm 48:17. You see him living, consider him dying. You mark what he has here, mark what he takes with him. What does he take with him? He has store of gold, he has store of silver, numerous estates, slaves: he dies, these remain, he knows not for whom. For though he leaves them for whom he will, he keeps them not for whom he will.

For many have gained even what was not left them, and many have lost what was left them. All these things then remain, and he takes with him what? Perhaps some one says, He takes that with him in which he is wound, and that which is expended upon him for a costly and marble tomb, to erect a monument, this

he takes with him. I say, not even this. For these things are presented to him without his feeling them. If you deck a man sleeping and not awake, he has the decorations with him on the couch: perhaps the decorations are resting upon the body of him as he lies, and perhaps he sees himself in tatters during sleep.

What he feels is more to him than what he feels not. Though even this when he shall have awaked will not be: yet to him sleeping, that which he saw in sleep was more than that which he felt not. Why then, brethren, should men say to themselves, Let money be spent at my death: why do I leave my heirs rich? Many things will they have of mine, let me too have something of my own for my body. What shall a dead body have? What shall rotting flesh have? What shall flesh not feeling have?

If that rich man had anything, whose tongue was dry, then man has something of his own. My brethren, do we read in the Gospel, that this rich man appeared in the fire with all-silken and fine-linen coverings? Was he of such sort in hell as he was in feastings at table? When he thirsted and desired a drop, all those things were not there. Therefore man carries not with him anything, nor does the dead take with him that which the burial takes. For where feeling is, there is the man; where is no feeling, the man is not.

There lies fallen the vessel which contained the man, the house which held the man. The body let us call the house, the spirit let us call the inhabitant of the house. The spirit is tormented in hell: what does it profit him, that the body lies in spices and perfumes, wound in costly linens? just as if the master of the house should be sent into banishment, and you should garnish the walls of his house. He in banishment is in need, and does faint with hunger, he scarce finds to himself one hovel where he may snatch a sleep, and you say, Happy is he, for his house has been garnished.

Who would not judge that you were either jesting or wast mad? You garnish the body; the spirit is tormented. Give something to the spirit, and you have given something to the dead man. But what will you give him, when he desired one drop, and received not? For the man scorned to send before him anything. Wherefore scorned? because this their way is a stumbling-block to them. He minded not any but the present life, he thought not but how he might be buried, wound in costly vestments.

His soul was taken from him, as the Lord says: You fool, this night your soul shall be taken from you, and whose shall those things be which you have provided? Luke 12:20 And that is fulfilled which this Psalm says: Fear not, though a man be made rich, and though the glory of his house be multiplied: for when he shall die he shall not receive anything, nor shall his glory descend together with him.

7. Let your love observe: For his soul shall be blessed in his life Psalm 48:18. As long as he lived he did well for himself. This all men say, but say falsely. It is a blessing from the mind of the blesser, not from the truth itself. For what do you say? Because he ate and drank, because he did what he chose, because he feasted sumptuously, therefore he did well with himself. I say, he did ill for himself. Not I say, but Christ. He did ill for himself. For that rich man, when he feasted sumptuously every day, was supposed to do well with himself: but when he began to burn in hell, then that which was supposed to be well was found to be ill. For what he had eaten with men above, he digested in hell beneath. Unrighteousness I mean, brethren, on which he used to feast. He used to eat costly banquets with the mouth of flesh, with his heart's mouth he used to eat unrighteousness. What he ate with his heart's mouth with men above, this he digested amid those punishments in the places beneath. And verily he had eaten for a time, he digested ill for everlasting. Is then unrighteousness eaten? Perhaps some one says: what is it that he says? Unrighteousness eaten? It is not I that say: hear the Scripture: As a sour grape is vexation to the teeth,

and smoke to the eyes, so is unrighteousness to them that use it. Proverbs 10:26 For he that shall have eaten unrighteousness, that is, he that shall have had unrighteousness wilfully, shall not be able to eat righteousness. For righteousness is bread. Who is bread? I am the living bread which came down from heaven. John 6:51 Himself is the bread of our heart....Is then even righteousness eaten? If it were not eaten, the Lord would not have said, Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness. Matthew 5:6 Therefore since his soul shall be blessed in life, in life it shall be blessed, in death it shall be tormented....

8. He shall confess to You, when You shall have done him good. Be not of such sort, brethren: see ye how that to this end we say these words, to this end we sing, to this end we treat, to this end toil-- do not these things. Your business does prove you: sometimes in your business ye hear the truth, and you blaspheme. The Church ye blaspheme. Wherefore? Because you are Christians. If so it be, I betake myself to Donatus's party: I will be a heathen. Wherefore? Because you have eaten bread, and the teeth are in pain. When you saw the bread itself, you praised; you begin to eat, and the teeth are in pain; that is, when you were hearing the Word of God you praised: when it is said to you, Do this, you blaspheme, do not so ill: say this, The bread is good, but I cannot eat it. But now if you see with the eyes, you praise, when you begin to close the teeth you say, Bad is this bread, and like him that made it. So it comes to pass that you confess to God, when God does you good and you lie when you sing, I will always bless God, His praise is ever in my mouth. How always? If always gain, always He is blessed: if sometime there is loss, He is not blessed, but blasphemed. Forsooth you bless always, forsooth His praise is ever in your mouth! You will be such as just now he describes: He will confess to You, when You shall have done him good.

9. He shall enter even unto the generations of his fathers Psalm 48:19: that is, he shall imitate his fathers. For the unrighteous, that now are, have brothers, have fathers. Unrighteous men of old, are the fathers of the present; and they that are now unrighteous, are the fathers of unrighteous posterity: just as the fathers of the righteous, the righteous of old, are the fathers of the righteous that now are; and they that now are, are the fathers of them that are to be. The Holy Spirit has willed to show that righteousness is not evil when men murmur against her: but these men have their father from the beginning, even to the generation of their fathers. Two men Adam begot, and in one was unrighteousness, in one was righteousness: unrighteousness in Cain, righteousness in Abel. 1 John 3:12 Unrighteousness seemed to prevail over righteousness, because Cain unrighteous slew Abel righteous Genesis 4:8 in the night. Is it so in the morning? Nay, but the righteous shall reign over them in the morning. The morning shall come, and it shall be seen where Abel is, and where Cain. So all men who are after Cain, and so all who are after Abel, even unto the end of the world. He shall enter even unto the generations of his fathers: even to eternity he shall not see light. Because even when he was here, he was in darkness, taking pleasure in false goods, and not loving real goods: even so he shall go hence into hell: from the darkness of his dreams the darkness of torments shall receive him. Therefore, even to eternity he shall not see light.

But wherefore this? What he has written in the middle of the Psalm, the same also he has writ at the end: Man, though he was in honour, understood not, was compared to the beasts without sense, and was made like to them Psalm 48:20. But you, brethren, consider that you be men made after the image and likeness of God. The image Genesis 1:26 of God is within, is not in the body; is not in these ears which you see, and eyes, and nostrils, and palate, and hands, and feet; but is made nevertheless: wherein is the intellect, wherein is the mind, wherein the power of discovering truth, wherein is faith, wherein is your hope, wherein your charity, there God has His Image: there at least ye perceive and see that these things pass away; for so he has said in another Psalm, Though man walks in an image, yet he is disquieted in

vain: he heaps up treasures, and knows not for whom he shall gather them. Be not disquieted, for of whatsoever kind these things be, they are transitory, if you are men who being in honour understand. For if being men in honour ye understand not, you are compared to the beasts without sense, and are made like to them.

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