

Homily 14 on Romans

by St. John Chrysostom

We are debtors to the Spirit, not to the flesh, and through the Spirit we can become sons of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, and receive the glory that is to come.

Scripture: Matthew 6:19, Luke 12:33, 1 Timothy 6:17, James 2:14

Topics: "Eternal Rewards", "Christian Charity"

Description

John Chrysostom preaches about the importance of shifting our focus from the temporary pleasures and riches of this world to the eternal glory and blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven. He emphasizes the need to show mercy, kindness, and love towards others, especially the poor and needy, as a way to store up treasures in Heaven. Chrysostom urges his listeners to prioritize acts of charity and compassion, highlighting the eternal value of helping those in need over accumulating material wealth. He paints a vivid picture of the glorious rewards awaiting those who choose to invest in acts of kindness and generosity towards others, aligning their actions with God's will and demonstrating love towards their fellow human beings.

Transcript

Romans VIII. 12, 13

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if you live after the flesh, you shall die; but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live.

After showing how great the reward of a spiritual life is, and that it makes Christ to dwell in us, and that it quickens our mortal bodies, and wings them to heaven, and renders the way of virtue easier, he next fitly introduces an exhortation to this purpose. Therefore we ought not to live after the flesh. But this is not what he says, for he words it in a much more striking and powerful way, thus, we are debtors to the Spirit. For saying, we are debtors not to the flesh, indicates this.

And this is a point he is everywhere giving proof of, that what God has done for us is not matter of debt, but of mere grace. But after this, what we do is no longer matter of free-will offering, but of debt. For when he says, You are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men 1 Corinthians 7:23; and when he writes, You are not your own 1 Corinthians 6:19; and again in another passage he calls these selfsame things to their mind, in these words, If (most manuscripts om. if) One died for all, then all died that they should not henceforth live unto themselves. 2 Corinthians 5:15 And it is to establish this that he says here

also, We are debtors; then since he said we are not debtors to the flesh, lest you should again take him to be speaking against the nature of the flesh, he does not leave speaking, but proceeds, to live after the flesh.

For there are many things which we do owe it, as giving it food, warmth, and rest, medicine when out of health, clothing, and a thousand other attentions. To prevent your supposing then that it is this ministration he is for abrogating when he says, We are not debtors to the flesh, he explains it by saying, to live after the flesh. For the care that I am for abrogating is, he means, that which leads to sin, as I should be for its having what is healing to it. And this he shows further on.

For when he says, Make not provision for the flesh, he does not pause at this, but adds, to fulfil the lusts thereof. Romans 13:14 And this instruction he gives us here also, meaning, Let it have attention shown it indeed, for we do owe it this, yet let us not live according to the flesh, that is, let us not make it the mistress of our life. For it must be the follower, not the leader, and it is not it that must regulate our life, but the laws of the Spirit must it receive. Having then defined this point, and having proved that we are debtors to the Spirit, to show next for what benefits it is that we are debtors, he does not speak of those past (a thing which serves as a most striking proof of his judgment), but those which were to come; although even the former were enough for the purpose.

Yet still he does not set them down in the present case, or mention even those unspeakable blessings, but the things to come. For a benefit once for all conferred does not, for the most part, draw men on so much as one which is expected, and is to come. After adding this then, he first uses the pains and ills that come of living after the flesh, to put them in fear, in the following words; For if you live after the flesh you shall die, so intimating to us that deathless death, punishment, and vengeance in hell.

Or rather if one were to look accurately into this, such an one is, even in this present life, dead. And this we have made clear to you in the last discourse. But if you through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live. You see that it is not the essence of the body whereof we are discoursing, but the deeds of the flesh. For he does not say, if you through the Spirit do mortify the essence of the body, but the deeds of it, and these not all deeds, but such as are evil.

And this is plain in what follows: for if you do this, you shall live, he says. And how is it in the nature of things for this to be, if it was all deeds that his language applied to? For seeing and hearing and speaking and walking are deeds of the body; and if we mortify these, we shall be so far from living, that we shall have to suffer the punishment of a manslayer. What sort of deeds then does he mean us to mortify? Those which tend toward wickedness, those which go after vice, which there is no other way of mortifying save through the Spirit.

For by killing yourself you may put an end to the others. And this you have no right to do. But to these (you can put an end) by the Spirit only. For if This be present, all the billows are laid low, and the passions cower under It, and nothing can exalt itself against us. So you see how it is on things to come, as I said before, that he grounds his exhortations to us, and shows that we are debtors not owing to what has been already done only. For the advantage of the Spirit is not this only, that He has set us free from our former sins, but that He renders us impregnable against future ones, and counts us worthy of the immortal life. Then, to state another reward also, he proceeds:

Ver. 14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Now this is again a much greater honor than the first. And this is why he does not say merely, As many as live by the Spirit of God, but, as many as are led by the Spirit of God, to show that he would have Him use such power over our life as a pilot does over a ship, or a charioteer over a pair of horses. And it is not the body only, but the soul itself too, that he is for setting under reins of this sort. For he would not have even that independent, but place its authority also under the power of the Spirit. For lest through a confidence in the Gift of the Spirit they should turn negligent of their conversation after it, he would say, that even supposing you receive baptism, yet if you are not minded to be led by the Spirit afterwards, you lose the dignity bestowed upon you, and the pre-eminence of your adoption. This is why he does not say, As many as have received the Spirit, but, as many as are led by the Spirit, that is, as many as live up to this all their life long, they are the sons of God. Then since this dignity was given to the Jews also, for it says, I said you are Gods, and all of you children of the Most High Psalm 82:6; and again, I have nourished and brought up children Isaiah 1:2; and so, Israel is My first-born Exodus 4:22; and Paul too says, Whose is the adoption Romans 9:4-- he next asserts the great difference between the latter and the former honor. For though the names are the same, he means, still, the things are not the same. And of these points he gives a clear demonstration, by introducing a comparison drawn both from the persons so advanced (κατορθομένωντων) and from what was given them, and from what was to come. And first he shows what they of old had given them. What then was this? A spirit of bondage: and so he thus proceeds,

Ver. 15. For you 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 you 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 gives 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 Corinthians 10:3-4 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 immediately, 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 gets purged out. For He does not say, You shall do no murder, only, but even you shall not be angry: so too, it is not, You shall not commit adultery, but you shall 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 does he promise a land flowing with milk and honey, but makes 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 jeopardized. 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 (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?

Do you not hear Moses, when he says, You deserted the God that begot you? Deuteronomy 32:15, Septuagint Do you not hear Malachi reproaching them, and saying, that one God formed you, and there is one Father of you all? Malachi 2:10, Septuagint 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 has it foretells 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 calls 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 bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

For it is not from the language merely, he says, that I make my assertion, but from the cause out of which the language has its birth; since it is from the Spirit suggesting it that we so speak. And this in another passage he has put into plainer words, thus: God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts,

crying, Abba Father. Galatians 4:6 And what is that, Spirit bears witness with spirit? The Comforter, he means, with that Gift, which is given unto us. For it is not of the Gift alone that it is the voice, but of the Comforter also who gave the Gift, He Himself having taught us through the Gift so to speak. But when the Spirit bears witness what farther place for doubtfulness? For if it were a man, or angel, or archangel, or any other such power that promised this, then there might be reason in some doubting. But when it is the Highest Essence that bestows this Gift, and bears witness by the very words He bade us use in prayer, who would doubt any more of our dignity? For not even when the Emperor elects any one, and proclaims in all men's hearing the honor done him, does anybody venture to gainsay.

Ver. 17. And if children, then heirs.

Observe how he enhances the Gift little by little. For since it is a possible case to be children, and yet not become heirs (for it is not by any means all children that are heirs), he adds this besides -- that we are heirs. But the Jews, besides their not having the same adoption as we, were also cast out from the inheritance. For He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out the vineyard to other husbandmen Matthew 21:41: and before this, He said that many shall come from the East and from the West, and shall sit down with Abraham, but the children of the Kingdom shall be cast out. (ib. 8:11, 12.) But even here he does not pause, but sets down something even greater than this. What may this be then? That we are heirs of God; and so he adds, heirs of God. And what is more still, that we are not simply heirs, but also joints heirs with Christ. Observe how ambitious he is of bringing us near to the Master. For since it is not all children that are heirs, he shows that we are both children and heirs; next, as it is not all heirs that are heirs to any great amount, he shows that we have this point with us too, as we are heirs of God. Again, since it were possible to be God's heir, but in no sense joint heir with the Only-Begotten, he shows that we have this also. And consider his wisdom. For after throwing the distasteful part into a short compass, when he was saying what was to become of such as live after the flesh, for instance, that they shall die, when he comes to the more soothing part, he leads forth his discourse into a large room, and so expands it on the recompense of rewards, and in pointing out that the gifts too are manifold and great. For if even the being a child were a grace unspeakable, just think how great a thing it is to be heir! But if this be great, much more is it to be joint heir. Then to show that the Gift is not of grace only, and to give at the same time a credibility to what he says, he proceeds, If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. If, he would say, we be sharers with Him in what is painful, much more shall it be so in what is good. For He who bestowed such blessings upon those who had wrought no good, how, when He sees them laboring and suffering so much, shall he do else than give them greater requital? Having then shown that the thing was a matter of return, to make men give credit to what was said, and prevent any from doubting, he shows further that it has the virtue of a gift. The one he showed, that what was said might gain credit even with those that doubted, and that the receivers of it might not feel ashamed as being evermore receiving salvation for nought; and the other, that you might see that God outdoes the toils by His recompenses. And the one he has shown in the words, If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. But the other in proceeding to add;

Ver. 18. The sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in (Gr. ἐν) us.

In what went before, he requires of the spiritual man the correcting of his habits (Mar. and 6 manuscripts passions), where he says, You are not debtors to live after the flesh, that such an one, for instance, should be above lust, anger, money, vainglory, grudging. But here having reminded them of the whole gift, both as given and as to come, and raised him up aloft with hopes, and placed him near to Christ, and showed

him to be a joint-heir of the Only-Begotten; he now leads him forth with confidence even to dangers.

For to get the better of the evil affections in us, is not the same thing with bearing up under those trials, scourges, famine, plunderings, bonds, chains, executions. For these last required much more of a noble and vigorous spirit. And observe how he at once allays and rouses the spirit of the combatants. For after he had shown that the rewards were greater than the labors, he both exhorts to greater efforts, and yet will not let them be elated, as being still outdone by the crowns given in requital.

And in another passage he says, For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory 2 Corinthians 4:17: it being the deeper sort of persons he was then speaking to. Here, however, he does not allow that the afflictions were light; but still he mingles comfort with them by the compensation which good things to come afford, in the words, For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared, and he does not say, with the rest (■ νεσιν) that is to come, but what is much greater, with the glory which is to come.

For it does not follow, that where rest is there is glory; but that where glory is there is rest, does follow: then as he had said that it is to come, he shows that it already is. For he does not say, that which is to be, but which shall be revealed in us, as if already existing but unrevealed. As also in another place he said in clearer words, Our life is hid with Christ in God. Be then of a good heart about it. For already has it been prepared, and awaits your labors. But if it vexes you that it is yet to come, rather let this very thing rejoice you.

For it is owing to its being great and unutterable, and transcending our present condition, that it is stored up there. And so he has not put barely the sufferings of this present time, but he speaks so as to show that it is not in quality only, but in quantity also, that the other life has the advantage. For these sufferings, whatever they are, are attached to our present life; but the blessings to come reach themselves out over ages without end. And since he had no way of giving a particular description of these, or of putting them before us in language, he gives them a name from what seems to be specially an object of desire with us, glory.

For the summit of blessings and the sum of them, this seems to be. And to urge the hearer on in another way also, he gives a loftiness to his discourse by the mention of the creation, gaining two points by what he is next saying, the contempt of things present, and the desire of things to come, and a third beside these, or rather the first, is the showing how the human race is cared for on God's part and in what honor He holds our nature. And besides this, all the doctrines of the philosophers, which they had framed for themselves about this world, as a sort of cobweb or child's mound, he throws down with this one doctrine. But that these things may stand in a clearer light, let us hear the Apostle's own language.

Ver. 19, 20. For the earnest expectation of the creation waits, he says, for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who has subjected the same in hope.

And the meaning is something of this kind. The creation itself is in the midst of its pangs, waiting for and expecting these good things whereof we have just now spoken. For earnest expectation (■ ποκαραδοκ■α, looking out) implies expecting intensely. And so his discourse becomes more emphatic, and he personifies this whole world as the prophets also do, when they introduce the floods clapping their hands, and little hills leaping, and mountains skipping, not that we are to fancy them alive, or ascribe any reasoning power to them, but that we may learn the greatness of the blessings, so great as to reach even

to things without sense also.

The very same thing they do many times also in the case of afflicting things, since they bring in the vine lamenting, and the wine too, and the mountains, and the boardings of the Temple howling, and in this case too it is that we may understand the extremity of the evils. It is then in imitation of these that the Apostle makes a living person of the creature here, and says that it groans and travails: not that he heard any groan conveyed from the earth and heaven to him, but that he might show the exceeding greatness of the good things to come; and the desire of freedom from the ills which now pervaded them.

For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who has subjected the same. What is the meaning of, the creation was made subject to vanity? Why that it became corruptible. For what cause, and on what account? On account of you, O man. For since you have taken a body mortal and liable to suffering, the earth too has received a curse, and brought forth thorns and thistles. But that the heaven, when it is waxen old along with the earth, is to change afterwards to a better portion (Λξίv v. p. 384) hear from the Prophet in his words; You, O Lord, from the beginning hast founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands.

They shall perish, but you shall endure; and they all shall grow old like a garment, and You shall fold them up like a cloak, and they shall be changed. Psalm 102:25-26 Isaiah too declares the same, when he says, Look to the heaven above, and upon the earth beneath, for the heavens are as a firmament of smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall perish in like manner. Isaiah 51:6. Now you see in what sense the creation is in bondage to vanity, and how it is to be freed from the ruined state.

For the one says, You shall fold them up as a garment, and they shall be changed; and Isaiah says, and they that dwell therein shall perish in like manner, not of course meaning an utter perishing. For neither do they that dwell therein, mankind, that is, undergo such an one, but a temporary one, and through it they are changed into an incorruptible 1 Corinthians 15:53 state, and so therefore will the creature be. And all this he showed by the way, by his saying in like manner 2 Peter 3:13, which Paul also says farther on.

At present, however, he speaks about the bondage itself, and shows for what reason it became such, and gives ourselves as the cause of it. What then? Was it harshly treated on another's account? By no means, for it was on my account that it was made. What wrong then is done it, which was made for my sake, when it suffers these things for my correction? Or, indeed, one has no need to moot the question of right and wrong at all in the case of things void of soul and feeling. But Paul, since he had made it a living person, makes use of none of these topics I have mentioned, but another kind of language, as desiring to comfort the hearer with the utmost advantage.

And of what kind is this? What have you to say? He means. It was evil intreated for your sake, and became corruptible; yet it has had no wrong done it. For incorruptible will it be for your sake again. This then is the meaning of in hope. But when he says, it was not willingly that it was made subject, it is not to show that it is possessed of judgment that he says so, but that you may learn that the whole is brought about by Christ's care, and this is no achievement of its own. And now say in what hope?

Ver. 21. That the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption.

Now what is this creation? Not yourself alone, but that also which is your inferior, and partakes not of reason or sense, this too shall be a sharer in your blessings. For it shall be freed, he says, from the

bondage of corruption, that is, it shall no longer be corruptible, but shall go along with the beauty given to your body; just as when this became corruptible, that became corruptible also; so now it is made incorruptible, that also shall follow it too. And to show this he proceeds. (ε■ζ) Into the glorious liberty of the children of God. That is, because of their liberty. For as a nurse who is bringing up a king's child, when he has come to his father's power, does herself enjoy the good things along with him, thus also is the creation, he means. You see how in all respects man takes the lead, and that it is for his sake that all things are made. See how he solaces the struggler, and shows the unspeakable love of God toward man. For why, he would say, do you fret at your temptations? You are suffering for yourself, the creation for you. Nor does he solace only, but also shows what he says to be trustworthy. For if the creation which was made entirely for you is in hope, much more ought thou to be, through whom the creation is to come to the enjoyment of those good things. Thus men (3 manuscripts fathers) also when a son is to appear at his coming to a dignity, clothe even the servants with a brighter garment, to the glory of the son; so will God also clothe the creature with incorruption for the glorious liberty of the children.

Ver. 22. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now.

Observe, how he shames the hearer, saying almost, Be not thou worse than the creation, neither find a pleasure in resting in things present. Not only ought we not to cling to them, but even to groan over the delay of our departure hence. For if the creation does this, much more ought thou to do so, honored with reason as you are. But as this was not yet enough to force their attention, he proceeds.

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 5:15, or garments Acts 19:12, 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 groans, 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 do you say, let me hear? You insisted on it at every turn, and cried aloud, that we were already made sons, and now do you 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 de cease 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 (■ πολ■τρωσις), not a redemption only, but such, that we shall never again return to our former captivity. For that you may not be perplexed at hearing so much of glory without getting any distinct knowledge of it, he partially exposes to your view the things to come, setting before you the change of your body (Gr. changing your 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 His glorious Body. Philippians 3:21 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 Corinthians 15:54 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 passes away. 1 Corinthians 7:31

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, Were you not liable for countless sins? Were you not in despair? Were you not under sentence? Were not all out of heart about your salvation? What then saved you? It was your hoping in God alone, and trusting to Him about His promises and gifts, and nothing besides had you to bring in. If it was this then that saved you, hold it fast now also. For that which afforded you so great blessings, to a certainty will not deceive you in regard to things to come. For in that it found you dead, and ruined, and a prisoner, and an enemy, and yet made you 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 you in what is to follow? Say not to me, hopes again! expectations again! faith again! For it is in this way thou were saved from the beginning, and this dowry was the only one that you brought in to the Bridegroom. Hold it then fast and keep it: for if you demand to have everything in this world, you have lost that well-doing of yours, through which you became bright, and this is why he proceeds to say, But hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for?

Ver. 25.-- But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

That is, if you are to be looking for everything in this world, what need is there for hope? What is hope then? It is feeling confidence in things to come. What great demand then does God make upon you, since He Himself gives you blessings quite entire from His own stores? One thing only, hope, He asks of you, that you too may have somewhat of your own to contribute toward your salvation. And this he intimates in what he proceeds with: For if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. As then God crowns him that undergoes labors, and hardnesses, and countless toils, so does He him that hopes. For the name of patience belongs to hard work and much endurance. Yet even this He has granted to the man that hopes, that He might solace the wearied soul. And then to show that for this light task we enjoy abundant aid, he proceeds:

Ver. 26. Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities.

For the one point is your own, that of patience, but the other comes of the Spirit's furnishings, Who also cherishes (Gr. anoints) you unto this hope, and through it again lightens your labors. Then that you might know that it is not in your labors only and dangers that this grace stands by you, but even in things the most easy seemingly, it works with you, 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, you 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 Corinthians 12:8, 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 Deuteronomy 3:26, and Jeremiah when he made supplication for the Jews Jeremiah 15:1, and Abraham when he interceded for the people of Sodom. But the Spirit Itself makes 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 Corinthians 14:32 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 receives the grace, and intercedes to God, and groans.

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 makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.

Ver. 27. But He that searches 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 searches the Spirit. But that you may learn that the language is meant of a spiritual man, who has the gift of prayer, he proceeds, And he that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, that is, of the spiritual man.

Because he makes 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 works one and the self-same Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:11 And it is for our instruction that this takes place, and to show the love of the Spirit, it condescends even to this. And it is from this that the person praying gets 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 has not done for us? The world He has 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 punishes the devil for us, He has seated us on the Right Hand, He was reproached for us.

For the reproaches of them that reproached you, it says, fell upon me. Psalm 69:9 Yet still, when we are drawing back after so great favor, He leaves us not, but again entreats, and on our account incites 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 Exodus 32:10, that He might drive him upon supplicating on their behalf. And now He does the same thing. Hence He gave the gift of prayer.

But this He does, not as Himself standing in need of entreaty, but that we might not, from being saved without effort (■ πλ■ς), 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 angry.

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 you Jeremiah 11:14, not as wishing to stop his praying (for He earnestly longs 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.

Do you see not what these are doing? Ezekiel 8:6, not verbally from Septuagint And when He says to the city Though you wash yourself with nitre, and take you much soap (Gr. herb), yet you are stained before Me Jeremiah 2:22, 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 does 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. Jeremiah 43:8 But when they did not comply in this either, He sends the prophet along with them, so that they might not after all suffer total wreck. Jeremiah 44:28 For since they did not follow Him when He called, He next follows 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 Samuel 15:35 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.

Jeremiah 11:5 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. Daniel 10:2 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.

Song. ver. 16 For them Joshua also rent his garments. Joshua 7:6 For them Ezekiel too wailed and lamented when he saw them cut down. Ezekiel 9:8 And Jeremy said, Let me alone, I will weep bitterly. Isaiah 22:4 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? Isaiah 6:11 For full of affectionateness is the whole race of the saints. Wherefore also St. Paul says, Put on therefore, as the elect saints of God, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind.

Colossians 3:12 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. Do you 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 practise 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 you, then there would be some reason in your suspicions. But if it is necessary food that he comes to you for, why be showing yourself 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 you are going to God to ask forgiveness for your sins, then call these words to mind, and you will know you deserve to have these

things said to you by God, much more than the poor man by you.

And yet God has never said such words to you as Stand off, since you are an impostor, always coming to church and hearing My laws, but when abroad, setting gold, and pleasure (■ πιθυμ■αν), and friendship, and in fact anything above My commandments. And now you make yourself humble, but when your prayers are over you are bold, and cruel, and inhuman. Get you 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 long-suffering and fulfils 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 (φιλανθρωπ■ας), 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 loves 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 you do not in this way so much prove him unworthy of your liberality, as yourself 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 wilfulness, let us bestow. For we also do many sins through wilfulness, or rather we do them all through wilfulness, and yet God does 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.

Let us then quell this cruelty, let us cast out this brutal spirit, as benefiting thereby ourselves rather than others. For to these we give money, and bread, and clothing, but for ourselves we are laying up beforehand very great glory, and such as there is no putting into words. For we receive again our bodies incorruptible, and are glorified together and reign together with Christ. And how great this is we shall see from hence -- or rather there is no means of making us see it clearly now.

But to start from our present blessings, and to get from them at least some kind of scanty notice of it, I will endeavor so far as I may be able to put before you what I have been speaking of. Tell me then, if when you were grown old, and were living in poverty, and any one were to promise suddenly to make you young, and to bring you to the very prime of life, and to render you very strong, and preëminently beautiful, and were to give you the kingdom of the whole earth for a thousand years, a kingdom in the state of the deepest peace, what is there that you would not choose to do, and to suffer to gain this promise? (4 manuscripts and Sav.

Mar. object.) See then, Christ promises not this, but much more than this. For the distance between old age and youth is not to be compared with the difference of corruption and incorruption, nor that of a

kingdom and poverty to that of the present glory and the future, but the difference is that of dreams and a reality. Or rather I have yet said nothing to the purpose, since there is no language capable of setting before you the greatness of the difference between things to come and things present.

And as for time, there is no place for the idea of difference. For what mode is there for a man to compare with our present state a life that has no limit? And as for the peace it is as far removed from any present peace, as peace is different from war; and for the incorruption, it is as much better as a clear pearl is than a clod of clay. Or rather, say as great a thing as one may, nothing can put it before you. For were I even to compare the beauty of our bodies then to the light of the sunbeam, or the brightest lightning, I shall not yet be saying anything that is worthy of that brilliancy.

Now for such things as these what money so much that it were not worth the while to give up? What bodies, or rather what souls is it not worth one's while to give up? At present if any one were to lead you into the palace, and in presence of all were to give you an opportunity of conversing with the king, and make you sit at his table, and join in his fare, you would call yourself the happiest of men. But when you are to go up to Heaven, and stand by the King of the universe Himself, and to vie with angels in brightness, and to enjoy even that unutterable glory, do you hesitate whether you ought to give up money?

Whereas if you had to put off life itself, you ought to leap and exult, and mount on wings of pleasure. But you, that you may get an office (■ πχ■v), as a place to pillage from (for call a thing of this sort gain, I cannot), put all you have to hazard, and after borrowing of others, will, if need be, pawn your wife and children too without hesitation.

But when the kingdom of Heaven is set before you, that office (■ πχ■ς) which has none to supersede you in it, and God bids you take not a part of a corner of the earth, but the whole of Heaven entirely, are you hesitating, and reluctant, and gaping after money, and forgetful that if the parts of that Heaven which we see are so fair and delightful, how greatly so must the upper Heaven be, and the Heaven of Heaven? But since we have as yet no means of seeing this with our bodily eyes, ascend in your thought, and standing above this Heaven, look up unto that Heaven beyond this, into that height without a bound, into that Light surcharged with awe, into the crowds of the Angels, into the endless ranks of Archangels, into the rest of the incorporeal Powers.

And then lay hold again of the image (cf. Plat. Rep. vii. p. 516) thereof we have, after coming down from above, and make a sketch of the estate of a king with us, as his men in gold armor, and his pairs of white mules proudly decked with gold, and his chariots set with jewels and his snow-like cushions (στρωμν■v Poll. x. 41), and the spangles that flutter about the chariot, and the dragons shaped out in the silken hangings, and the shields with their gold bosses, and the straps that reach up from these to the rim of them through so many gems, and the horses with the gilded trappings and the gold bits.

But when we see the king we immediately lose sight of all these. For he alone turns our eyes to him, and to the purple robe, and the diadem, and the throne, and the clasp, and the shoes, all that splendor of his appearance. After gathering all these things together then with accuracy, then again remove your thoughts from these things to things above, and to that awful day in which Christ is coming. For then you will not see any pairs of mules, nor golden chariots, nor dragons and shields, but things that are big with a mighty awe, and strike such amazement that the very incorporeal Powers are astonished.

For the powers of the Heavens, He says, shall be shaken. Matthew 24:29 Then is the whole Heaven thrown open, and the gates of those concaves unfold themselves, and the Only-begotten Son of God

comes down, not with twenty, not with a hundred men for His bodyguard, but with thousands, ten thousands of Angels and Archangels, Cherubim and Seraphim, and other Powers, and with fear and trembling shall everything be filled, whiles the earth is bursting itself up, and the men that ever were born, from Adam's birth up to that day, are rising from the earth, and all are caught up; 1 Thessalonians 4:17 when Himself appears with such great glory as that the sun, and the moon, and all light whatever, is cast into the shade, being outshone by that radiance.

What language is to set before us that blessedness, brightness, glory? Alas! My soul. For weeping comes upon me and great groaning, as I reflect what good things we have fallen from, what blessedness we are estranged from. For estranged we are (I am now speaking of my own case still), unless we do some great and astonishing work; speak not then of hell to me now, for more grievous than any hell is the fall from this glory, and worse than punishments unnumbered the estrangement from that lot.

But still we are gaping after this present world, and we take not thought of the devil's cunning, who by little things bereaves us of those great ones, and gives us clay that he may snatch from us gold, or rather that he may snatch Heaven from us, and shows us a shadow that he may dispossess us of the reality, and puts phantoms before us in dreams (for such is the wealth of this world), that at daybreak he may prove us the poorest of men. Laying these things to heart, late though it be, let us fly from this craft, and pass to the side of things to come.

For we cannot say that we were ignorant how exposed to accidents the present life is, since things every day din in our ears more loudly than a trumpet, the worthlessness, the ridiculousness, the shamefulness, the dangers, the pitfalls, of the present scene. What defense then shall we have to set up for pursuing things so subject to hazards, and laden with shame, with so much eagerness, and leaving things unfailing, which will make us glorious and bright, and giving our whole selves up to the thralldom of money?

For the slavery to these things is worse than any bondage. And this they know who have been counted worthy to obtain their freedom from it. That ye then may also feel this goodly liberty, burst the bonds asunder, spring out of the snare. And let there be no gold lying by in your houses, but that which is more precious than millions of money, alms and love to man, for your treasure. For this gives us boldness toward God, but the other covers us with deep shame, and causes the devil to bear hard (σφοδρ■ν πνε■ν) upon us.

Why then arm your enemy, and make him stronger? Arm your right hand against him, and transfer all the splendor of your house into your soul, and stow away all your fortune in your mind, and instead of a chest and a house, let heaven keep your gold. And let us put all our property about our own selves; for we are much better than the walls, and more dignified than the pavement. Why then do we, to the neglect of our own selves, waste all our attention upon those things, which when we are gone we can no longer reach, and often even while we stay here we cannot keep hold of, when we might have such riches as to be found not in this life only, but also in that, in the easiest circumstances?

For he who carries about his farms and house and gold upon his soul, wherever he appears, appears with all this wealth. And how is this possible to be effected? One may ask. It is possible, and that with the utmost ease. For if you transfer them to Heaven by the poor man's hand, you will transfer them entire into your own soul. And if death should afterwards come upon you, no one will take them from you, but you will depart to be rich in the next world too. This was the kind of treasure Tabitha had.

Hence it was not her house that proclaimed her wealth, nor the walls, nor the stones, nor the pillars, but the bodies of widows furnished with dress, and their tears that were shed, and death that played the runaway, and life that came back again. Let us also make unto ourselves such-like treasures, let us build up for ourselves such-like houses. In this way we shall have God for our Fellow-worker, and we ourselves shall be workers together with Him. For Himself brought the poor from not being into being, and you will prevent them, after they have been brought into life and being, from perishing with hunger and other distress, by tending them and setting them upright, staying up the Temple of God in every quarter.

What can be equal to this in respect both of utility and of glory? Or if as yet you have not gained any clear notion of the great adornment He bestowed upon you when He bade you relieve poverty, consider this point with yourself. If He had given you so great power, that you were able to set up again even the Heaven if it were falling, would you not think the thing an honor far too great for you? See now He has held you worthy of a greater honor. For that which in His esteem is more precious than the Heavens, He has trusted you to repair.

For of all things visible there is nothing in God's esteem equal to man. For Heaven and earth and sea did He make for him, and finds more pleasure in dwelling with him than in the Heaven. And yet we, though with a knowledge of this, bestow no attention nor forethought upon the temples of God; but leaving them in a neglected state, we provide houses splendid and large for ourselves. This is why we are devoid of all good things, and greater beggars than the poorest poor, because we pride ourselves in these houses which we cannot take away with us when we go hence, and leave those alone which we might move away along with our own selves.

For the bodies of the poor after dissolution must needs rise again; and God, Who has given this charge, will bring them forth, and praise those who have taken care of them, and treat such with regard (θαυμάσειται), because when they were on the point of falling to ruin at one time by starvation, at another by nakedness and cold, these repaired them by all means in their power. But still, even with all these praises set before us, we loiter yet, and decline undertaking this honorable charge.

And Christ indeed has not where to lodge, but goes about a stranger, and naked, and hungry, and you set up houses out of town, and baths, and terraces, and chambers without number, in thoughtless vanity; and to Christ you give not even a share of a little hut, while for daws and vultures you deck out upper chambers. What can be worse than such insanity as this? What more grievous than such madness? For madness it is in the last stage of it, or rather one has no name to suit it, use whatever one may.

Yet still if we be so minded, it is possible to beat off the disorder, tenacious as it is; and not possible only, but even easy; and not easy merely, but even easier is it to get rid of this pest than of the sufferings of the body, since the Physician is so much greater. Let us then draw Him to ourselves, and invite Him to aid us in the attempt, and let us contribute our share, good-will, I mean, and energy. For He will not require anything further, but if He can meet with this only, He will confer all that is His part. Let us then contribute our share, that in this world we may enjoy a genuine health, and may attain to the good things to come, by the grace and love towards man, etc.

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