

# Homily 5 on Romans

by St. John Chrysostom

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*St. John Chrysostom's Homily 5 on Romans addresses the nature of sin, the inevitability of God's judgment, and the call for repentance and righteous living among all people.*

**Scripture:** Romans 1:28, Romans 2:6, Romans 2:10, Romans 2:12-14, Romans 2:16, Romans 2:21, Romans 2:29

**Topics:** "Sin And Repentance", "Gods Judgment"

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## Description

John Chrysostom preaches about the consequences of rejecting God and living in sin, emphasizing that God gives people over to a reprobate mind when they choose to ignore Him. He highlights the distinction between those who do evil and those who seek to do good, pointing out the intense nature of sin and the importance of repentance. Chrysostom urges believers to examine their hearts and actions, reminding them that God's judgment is just and based on truth, rewarding those who seek glory, honor, and immortality through patient continuance in well-doing. He warns of the impending judgment where God will reveal the secrets of men through Jesus Christ, calling for repentance and a sincere love for Christ above all else.

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## Transcript

Rom. I. 28

Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.

Lest he should seem to be hinting at them by delaying in his discourse so long over the unnatural sin, he next passes on to other kinds of sins also, and for this cause he carries on the whole of his discourse as of other persons. And as he always does when discoursing with believers about sins, and wishing to show that they are to be avoided, he brings the Gentiles in, and says, Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the other Gentiles which know not God. 1 Thessalonians 4:5 And again: sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 1 Thessalonians 4:13 And so here too he shows that it was to them the sins belonged, and deprives them of all excuse. For he says, that their daring deeds came not of ignorance, but of practice. And this is why he did not say, and as they knew not God; but as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge; as much as to say, that the sin was one of a perverted determination of obstinacy, more than of a sudden ravishment, and shows that it was not the flesh (as some heretics say) but the mind, to the wicked lust whereof the sins belonged, and that it was thence the fount of the evils flowed. For since the mind has become undistinguishing, all else is then dragged out of course and overturned, when he is

corrupted that held the reins! (Plat. Phaedr. 246 A. B.)

Ver. 29. Being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness.

See how everything here is intensive. For he says, being filled, and with all, and having named maliciousness in general, he also further pursues the particulars, and these too in excess, saying, Full of envy, murder, for the latter of these comes from the former, as was shown in Abel's case and Joseph's, and then after saying, debate, deceit, malignity;

Ver. 30. Whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, and classing things which to many seem indifferent among his charges, he further strengthens his accusation, going up to the stronghold of their wickednesses, and styles them boasters. For even worse than sinning is it, even though sinning to be haughty-minded. Wherefore also he charges the Corinthians with it, saying, You are puffed up. 1 Corinthians 5:2 For if in a good action he that puffs himself up loses all, if any one do so among his sins, what vengeance is there of which he is not worthy, since such an one cannot repent any more? Next, he says, inventors of evil things; showing that they were not content with those already existing, but even invented others. And this again is like men that are full purposed and in earnest, not those that are hurried away and forced out of their course; and after mentioning the several kinds of maliciousness, and showing that here too they stood against nature itself (for he says, disobedient to parents), he then goes on to the root of the great pestilence, calling them,

Ver. 31. Without natural affection, implacable.

For this Christ Himself also pronounces to be the cause of wickedness, saying, When iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. Matthew 24:12. This too St. Paul here says, calling them covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful, and showing that they were traitors even to the gift of nature. For we have a sort of family feeling even by nature towards one another, which even beasts have got towards each other. For every beast, it says, loves his like, and every man his neighbor. Sirach 13:15 But these became more ferocious even than they. The disorder then which resulted to the world by evil doctrines, he proves to us by these witnesses, and clearly shows that the malady in either case came of the negligence of them that were disordered. He shows besides, what he did in the case of the doctrines, that they were here also deprived of all excuse; and so he says,

Ver. 32. Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Having assumed here two objections, he in the first place removes them. For what reason have you to say, he means, that you know not the things which ought to be done? At best, even if you did not know, you are to blame in having left God who instructs you. But as it is by many arguments we have shown that you do know, and transgress willingly. But are you drawn by passion? Why then do you both cooperate therewith and praise it? For they not only do such things, he says, but have pleasure in them that do them. Having then put the more grievous and the unpardonable sin first, that he might have done with it (Or convict you of it,  $\blacksquare \nu\alpha \blacksquare \lambda \blacksquare$ ); (for he that praises the sin is far worse than even he that trespasses;) having then put this the first, he by this method grapples more powerfully with him in the sequel, speaking on this wise,

Chap. ii. ver. 1. Therefore you are inexcusable, O man; whosoever you are that judgest; for wherein you judge another, you condemn yourself.

These things he says, with an aim at the rulers, inasmuch as that city then had the rule of the world put into its hands. He anticipated them therefore by saying, You are depriving yourself of defense, whoever you may be; for when you condemn an adulterer, and yourself commit adultery, although no man condemns you, in your judgment upon the guilty person you have also passed sentence against yourself.

Ver. 2. For we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them who commit such things.

For lest any should say, until now I have escaped, to make him afraid, he says, that it is not so with God as it is here. For here (Plato in *Theæt.* et *Phædon.*) one is punished, and another escapes while doing the same thing. But hereafter it is not so. That he that judges then knows the right, he has said: but whence he knows it, he has not added; for it was superfluous. For in the case of ungodliness, he shows both that the ungodly was so even with a knowledge of God, and also whence he got that knowledge, namely, from the Creation. For inasmuch as it was not plain to all, he gave the cause also; but here he passes it over as a thing admitted. But when he says, whosoever you are that judgest, he is not addressing himself to the rulers only, but to private individuals and subjects also. For all men, even if they have no chair of state, nor executioners, nor stocks at command, yet even they judge those that offend, in conversations and public meetings (Gr. κοινον συλλογοις) and by the vote of their conscience. And no one would venture to say, that the adulterer does not deserve punishment. But it is others, he says, they condemn, and not themselves. And for this cause he stands forth vehemently against them, and says,

Ver. 3. And do you think this (4 manuscripts om. this), O man, who judges those who do such things, and does the same, that you shall escape the judgment of God?

For since he had shown the sin of the world to be great, from its doctrines, from its doings, and that they did yet sin though wise, and though they had the creation to lead them by the hand, and not by leaving God only, but also by choosing the images of creeping things, and by their dishonoring virtue, and deserting, in spite of nature's drawings back, to the service of vice even contrary to nature: he goes on next to show, that they who do such things are punished too. He did indeed at once point out a punishment by mentioning their very practice. For they received, he says, in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. But as they do not perceive that, he mentions another also, which they stood most in fear of. And indeed already he chiefly pointed at this. For when he says, That the judgment of God is according to truth, he is speaking of no other than this. But he establishes the same again upon other further grounds, saying thus, And do you think this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that you shall escape the judgment of God? You have not been acquitted of your own judgment, and will you escape through God's? Who indeed would say this? And yet you have judged yourself (3 manuscripts and not been acquitted). But since the rigorousness of the judgment-court was such, and thou were not able to spare even yourself, how should not God, that cannot do amiss, and who is in the highest sense just, be much surer to do the same? But have you condemned yourself, and is God to approve of you and praise you? And how can this be reasonable? And all the while you are deserving of a greater punishment, than he who is of you condemned. For sinning merely, is not the same thing with falling again into the same sins you have chastised another for committing. See, how he has strengthened the charge! For if you, he means, punish a person who has committed less sins, though by it you will put yourself to shame, how shall not God cast you in your suit, and condemn you more severely, who have committed greater transgressions, and this too when He will never make Himself ashamed, and you are already condemned by your own reckoning. But if you say, I know that I deserve punishment; yet through His long-suffering thinkest slightly of it, and art confident because thou dost not suffer punishment

immediately; this surely is a reason why you ought to be afraid and tremble. For the fact that you have not yet suffered punishment, will not result in your not suffering any punishment, but in your suffering a more severe one if you abide unamended. And so he goes on to say:

Ver. 4. Or despises thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

For after praising God's long-suffering, showing the gain thereof to be very great to them that heeded it (and this was the drawing sinners to repentance); he adds to the terror. For as to them, who avail themselves of it aright, it is a ground of safety; so to them that slight it, it is conducive to a greater vengeance. For whenever you utter this common notion, that God does not exact justice, because He is good and long-suffering, he says, You do but mention what will make the vengeance intenser. For God shows His goodness that you may get free from your sins, not that you may add to them. If then thou make not this use thereof, the judgment will be more fearful. Wherefore it is a chief ground for abstaining from sin, that God is long-suffering, and not for making the benefit a plea for obstinacy. For if He be long-suffering, He most certainly punishes. Whence does this appear? From what is next said. For if the wickedness be great and the wicked have not been requited, it is absolutely necessary that they should be requited. For if men do not overlook these things, how should God make an oversight? And so from this point he introduces the subject of the judgment. For the fact of showing many who, if they repent not, are liable, yet still are not punished here, introduces with it necessarily the judgment, and that with increase. Wherefore he says,

Ver. 5. But after your hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto yourself wrath.

For when a man is neither to be softened by goodness nor to be turned back by fear, what can be harder than such an one? For after that he had showed the goodness of God towards men, he then shows His vengeance that it is unbearable for him who does not even so return to repentance. And observe with what propriety he uses the words! You treasure up unto yourself wrath, he says, so making it plain what is certainly laid up, and showing that it is not He that judges, but he that is condemned, who is the author of this. For he says, you store up for yourself, not God for you. For He did all, whatsoever things were fitting, and created you with a power to discern between good and what was not so, and showed long-suffering over you, and called you to repentance, and threatened a fearful day, so by every means drawing you to repentance. But if you should continue unyielding, you store up unto yourself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation and (so all manuscripts but two) the righteous judgment of God. For lest on hearing of wrath you should think of any passion, he adds, the righteous judgment of God. And he said revelation with good reason, for then is this revealed when each man receives his desert. For here many men often annoy and practise harm to one without justice. But hereafter it is not so.

Ver. 6, 7. Who will render to every man according to his deeds, to them who by patient continuance in well doing, etc.

Since he had become awestrking and harsh by discoursing of the judgment and of the punishment that shall be, he does not immediately, as one might expect, enter upon the vengeance, but turns his discourse to what was sweeter, to the recompense of good actions, saying as follows,

Ver. 7. To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life.

Here also he awakens those who had drawn back during the trials, and shows that it is not right to trust in faith only. For it is deeds also into which that tribunal will enquire. But observe, how when he is discoursing about the things to come, he is unable to tell clearly the blessings, but speaks of glory and honor. For in that they transcend all that man has, he has no image of them taken from this to show, but by those things which have a semblance of brightness among us, even by them he sets them before us as far as may be, by glory, by honor, by life. For these be what men earnestly strive after, yet are those things not these, but much better than these, inasmuch as they are incorruptible and immortal. See how he has opened to us the doors toward the resurrection of the body by speaking of incorruptibility. For incorruptibility belongs to the corruptible body. Then, since this sufficed not, he added glory and honor. For all of us are to rise incorruptible, but not all to glory, but some to punishment, and some to life.

Ver. 8. But unto them that are contentious, he says. Again, he deprives of excuse those that live in wickedness, and shows that it is from a kind of disputatiousness and carelessness that they fall into unrighteousness.

And do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness. See, here is another accusation again. For what defense can he set up, who flees from the light and chooses the dark? And he does not say, who are compelled by, lorded over by, but who obey unrighteousness, that one may learn that the fall is one of free choice, the crime not of necessity.

Ver. 9. Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that does evil.

That is, if a man be rich, if a consul, if a very sovereign (so Field: several manuscripts and Edd. the emperor himself), by none of them is the account of the judgment out-faced. Since in this dignities have no place. Having then shown the exceeding greatness of the disease, and having added the cause, that it was from the carelessness of the disordered, and finally, that destruction awaits them and that amendment is easy, in the punishment also he again gives the Jew the heavier lot. For he that had enjoyed a larger share of instruction would also deserve to undergo a larger share of vengeance if doing lawlessly. And so the wiser or mightier men we are, the more are we punished if we sin. For if you are rich, you will have more money demanded of you than of the poor; and if wiser than others, a stricter obedience; and if you have been invested with authority, more shining acts of goodness; and so in the case of all the other things, you will have to bring in measures proportioned to your power.

Ver. 10. But glory, honor, and peace to every man that works good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.

What Jew does he here mean? Or about what Gentiles is he discoursing? It is of those before Christ's coming. For his discourse had not hitherto come to the times of grace, but he was still dwelling upon the earlier times, so breaking down first from afar off and clearing away the separation between the Greek and the Jew, that when he should do this in the matter of grace, he might no more seem to be devising some new and degrading view. For if in the earlier times when this Grace had not shone forth in such greatness, when the estate of the Jews was solemn and renowned and glorious before all men, there was no difference, what could they say for themselves (τῶν αὐτῶν ἰσχυροὶν λόγον ἐπέειπεν;) now after so great a display of grace?

And this is why he establishes it with so great earnestness. For when the hearer has been informed that this held in the earlier times, much more will he receive it after the faith. But by Greeks he here means not them that worshipped idols, but them that adored God, that obeyed the law of nature, that strictly kept all

things, save the Jewish observances, which contribute to piety, such as were Melchizedek and his (ο■  
περ■), such as was Job, such as were the Ninevites, such as was Cornelius.

Here then he is first breaking through the partition between the circumcision and the uncircumcision: and at a distance dissipates this distinction beforehand, so as to do it without being suspected, and to strike into it as compelled by another occasion, which is ever a characteristic of his Apostolic wisdom. For if he had showed it in the times of grace, what he said would have had a very suspicious look. But on describing the vice which possessed the world, and where end the ways of wickedness, to pass from that consecutively into the treatment of these points renders his teaching unsuspected.

And that he means this, and for this purpose so put this together, is plain from hence: for if he were not intent upon effecting this, it were enough for him to have said, According to your hardness and impenitent heart you store up unto yourself wrath against the day of wrath; and then to have dropped this subject, since it would have been complete. But in that what he had in view was not to speak of the judgment to come only, but to show also that the Jew had no advantage of such a Greek, and so was not to be haughty-spirited, he advances farther, and speaks of them in order.

But consider! He had put the hearer in fear, had advanced against him the fearful day, had told him what an evil it is to be living in wickedness, had showed him that no man sins of ignorance, nor with impunity, but that even though he suffer no punishment now, yet he certainly will suffer it: then he wishes to make good next that the teaching of the Law was not a thing of great importance. For it is upon works that both punishment and reward depend, not upon circumcision and uncircumcision.

Since then he had said, that the Gentile shall by no means go unpunished and had taken this for granted, and upon it had made good that he shall also be rewarded, he next showed the Law and circumcision to be superfluous. For it is the Jews that he is here chiefly opposing. For inasmuch as they were somewhat captiously disposed, first, of their haughtiness, not deigning to be reckoned along with the Gentiles, and secondly thinking it ridiculous if the faith is to do away all sins; for this cause he accused the Gentiles first, in whose behalf he is speaking, that without suspicion and with boldness of speech, he may attack the Jews.

And then having come to the enquiry concerning the punishment, he shows that the Jew is so far from being at all profited by the Law, that he is even weighed down by it. And this was his drift some way back. For if the Gentile be on this score inexcusable, because, when the creation led him on and his own reasonings, he yet did not amend, much more were the Jew so, who besides these had the teaching of the Law also. Having then persuaded him to a ready admission of these reasonings, in the case of other men's sins, he now compels him even against his will to do so in the case of his own.

And in order that what he says may be more readily allowed, he leads him forward with the better things also in view, speaking on this wise: But glory and honor and peace to every man that works good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. For here whatever good things a man has, he has with fightings, even if he be rich, if a prince, if a king. Even if he be not at variance with others, yet is he often so with himself, and has abundant war in his own thoughts. But there it is no such thing, but all is still and void of trouble, and in possession of true peace. Having then made good from what was said above, that they too which have not the Law are to enjoy the same blessings, he adds his reason in the following words:

Ver. 11. For there is no respect of persons with God.

For when he says that as well the Jew as the Gentile is punished if he sin, he needs no reasonings: but when he wants to prove that the Gentile is honored also, he then needs a foundation for it also; as it seemed wonderful and extravagant if he who had heard neither Law nor Prophets, were to be honored upon his working good. And this is why (as I also said before) he exercises their hearing in the times before grace, that he might afterwards more treatably bring in, along with the faith, the acquiescence in these things also. For here he is not at all suspected, as seeming not to be making his own point good. Having then said, Glory and honor and peace to every man that works good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile, he adds, For there is no respect of persons with God. Wonderful! What more than victory has he gained! For he shows, by reducing it to an absurdity, that it was not meet with God that it should be otherwise. For it would then be a case of respecting of persons. But of such character God is not. And he does not say, for if this were not so, God would be a respecter of persons, but with more of dignity, For there is no respect of persons with God. That it is not quality of persons, but difference of actions. Which He makes inquisition for. By so saying he shows that it was not in actions but in persons only that the Jew differed from the Gentile. The consequence of this would be thus expressed; For it is not because one is a Jew and the other a Gentile, that one is honored and the other disgraced, but it is from the works that either treatment comes. But he does not say so, since it would have roused the anger of the Jew, but he sets down something more, so bringing their haughty spirit yet lower, and quelling it for the admission of the other. But what is this? The next position.

Ver. 12. For as many, he says, as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.

For here, as I said before, he shows not only the equality of the Jew and the Gentile, but that the Jew was even much burdened by the gift of the Law. For the Gentile is judged without law. But this without law (Gr. lawlessly) here expresses not the worse plight but the easier, that is, he has not the Law to accuse him. For without law (that is, without the condemnation arising from it), is he condemned solely from the reasonings of nature, but the Jew, in the Law, that is, with nature and the Law too to accuse him. For the greater the attention he enjoyed, the greater the punishment he will suffer. See how much greater is the necessity which he lays upon the Jews of a speedy recourse to grace! For in that they said, they needed not grace, being justified by the Law, he shows that they need it more than the Gentiles, considering they are liable to be punished more. Then he adds another reason again, and so farther contends for what has been said.

Ver 13. For not the hearers of the law are just before God.

Well does he add before God; for haply before men they may be able to appear dignified and to vaunt great things, but before God it is quite otherwise -- the doers of the Law alone are justified. You see with what advantage he combats, by turning what they said to an opposite bearing. For if it is by the Law you claim to be saved, in this respect, says he, the Gentile will stand before you, when seen to be a doer of what is written in the Law. And how is it possible (one may say) for one who has not heard to be a doer? Not this only, he says, is possible, but what is much more even than this. For not only is it possible without hearing to be a doer, but even with hearing not to be so. Which last thing he makes plainer, and that with a greater advantage over them, when he says, You that teaches another, do you not teach yourself? Romans 2:21 But here he is still making the former point good.

Ver. 14. For when the Gentiles, he says, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves.

I am not, he means, rejecting the Law, but even on this score I justify the Gentiles. You see how when undermining the conceit of Judaism, he gives no handle against himself as villifying the Law, but on the contrary by extolling it and showing its greatness he so makes good his whole position. But whenever he says by nature, he means by the reasonings of nature. And he shows that others are better than they, and, what is more better for this, that they have not received the Law, and have not that wherein the Jews seem to have an advantage over them. For on this ground he means they are to be admired, because they required not a law, and yet exhibited all the doings of the Law, having the works, not the letters, graven upon their minds. For this is what he says,

Ver. 15. Which show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.

Ver. 16. In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel.

See how he again puts that day before them, and brings it close to them, battering down their conceit, and showing, that those were to be the rather honored who without the Law strove earnestly to fulfil the things of the Law. But what is most to be marvelled at in the discretion of the Apostle, it is worth while to mention now. For having shown, from the grounds given, that the Gentile is greater than the Jew; in the inference, and the conclusion of his reasoning, he does not state it, in order not to exasperate the Jew.

But to make what I have said clearer, I will give the very words of the Apostle. For after saying, that it is not the hearers of the Law, but the doers of the Law, that shall be justified, it followed to say, For when the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, they are much better than those who are instructed by the Law. But this he does not say, but he stays at the encomium of the Gentiles, and does not yet awhile carry on his discourse by way of comparison, that so at least the Jew may receive what is said.

And so he does not word it as I was doing, but how? For when the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the Law, written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness. For the conscience and reason does suffice in the Law's stead. By this he showed, first, that God made man independent, so as to be able to choose virtue and to avoid vice. And be not surprised that he proves this point, not once or twice, but several times.

For this topic was very needful for him to prove owing to those who say, Why ever is it, that Christ came but now? And where in times before was the (most manuscripts this mighty) scheme of Providence? Now it is these that he is at present beating off by the way, when he shows that even in former times, and before the Law was given, the human race (Gr. nature) fully enjoyed the care of Providence. For that which may be known of God was manifest in them, and they knew what was good, and what bad; by means whereof they judged others, which he reproaches them with, when he says, wherein you judge another, you condemn yourself.

But in the case of the Jews, besides what has been mentioned, there was the Law, and not reason or conscience only. And why does he put the words accusing or else excusing?-- for, if they have a Law written, and show the work of it in them, how comes reason to be able to accuse them still? But he is not any longer speaking of those only who do well, but also of mankind (Gr. the nature) universally. For then our reasonings stand up, some accusing and some excusing. And at that tribunal a man needs no other accuser.

Then to add to their fear, he does not say the sins of men, but the secrets of men. For since he said, Do you think, that judgest them that do such things, and doest the same, that you shall escape the judgment of God; that you may not expect such a sentence as you pass yourself, but may know, that that of God is far more exact than your own, he brings in, the secrets of men, and adds, through Jesus Christ according to my Gospel. For men sit in judgment upon overt acts alone.

And above too he spoke of the Father alone, but as soon as he had crushed them with fear, he brought in the mention of Christ also. But he does not do barely this, but even here, after having made mention of the Father, he so introduces Him. And by the same things he raises the dignity of his preaching. For this preaching, he means, openly speaks out what nature taught by anticipation. Do you see with what wisdom he has bound them both to the Gospel and to Christ, and demonstrated that our affairs come not here to a stand, but travel further. And this he made good before also, when he said, you store up to yourself wrath against the day of wrath: and here again, God shall judge the secrets of men.

Now let each man enter into his own conscience, and reckoning up his transgressions, let him call himself to a strict account, that we be not then condemned with the world. 1 Corinthians 11:32 For fearful is that court, awful the tribunal, full of trembling the accounts, a river of fire rolls along (■ λκεται). A brother does not redeem: shall man redeem? Psalm 49:8, Septuagint Call then to mind what is said in the Gospel, the Angels running to and fro, of the bridechamber being shut, of the lamps going out, of the powers which drag to the furnaces.

And consider this, that if a secret deed of any one of us were brought forth into the midst, today, before the Church only, what could he do but pray to perish, and to have the earth to gape for him, rather than have so many witnesses of his wickedness? How then shall we feel, when, before the whole world, all things are brought into the midst, in a theatre so bright and open, with both those known and those unknown to us seeing into everything? But alas! Wherewith am I forced to affright you!

With men's estimation! When I ought to use the fear of God, and His condemnation. For what, pray, is to become of us then when bound, and gnashing our teeth, we are led away to the outer darkness? Or, rather, what shall we do (and this is the most fearful thought of all) when we offend (προσκρο■σωμεν) God? For if any one have sense and reason, he has already endured a hell when he is out of sight of God. But since this does not pain, fire is therefore threatened. For we ought to smart not when we are punished, but when we sin.

Thus listen to Paul wailing and lamenting over sins, for which he was not to be punished. For I am not meet, he says, to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church. 1 Corinthians 15:9 Hear also David, when he is set free from the punishment, yet, as thinking that he had offended God, calling vengeance down upon himself, and saying, Let your hand be upon me and upon my father's house. 2 Samuel 24:17 For to have offended God is more distressing than to be punished. But now we are so wretchedly disposed, that, were there no fear of hell, we should not even choose readily to do any good thing.

Wherefore were it for nothing else, yet for this at least, we should deserve hell, because we fear hell more than Christ (several manuscripts. God). But not so the blessed Paul, but contrariwise. But since we feel otherwise, for this reason are we condemned to hell: since, did we but love Christ as we should love Him, we should have known that to offend Him we love were more painful than hell. But since we love Him not, we know not the greatness of His punishment. And this is what I bewail and grieve over the most!

And yet what has God not done, to be beloved of us? What has He not devised? What has He omitted? We insulted Him, when He had not wronged us in anything, but had even benefited us with blessings countless and unspeakable. We have turned aside from Him when calling and drawing us to Him by all ways, yet has He not even upon this punished us, but has run Himself unto us, and held us back, when fleeing, and we have shaken Him off and leaped away to the Devil. And not even on this has He stood aloof, but has sent numberless messengers to call us to Him again, Prophets, Angels, Patriarchs: and we have not only not received the embassy, but have even insulted those that came.

But not even for this did He spew us out of His mouth, but like those slighted lovers that be very earnest, He went round beseeching all, the heaven, the earth, Jeremiah, Micah, and that not that He might weigh us down, but that He might speak in behalf of His own ways Micah 6:1: and along with the prophets He went also Himself to those that turned aside from Him, being ready to submit to examination, and deigning to condescend to a conference, and drawing them that were deaf to every appeal into a disputation with Himself.

For He says, O my people, what have I done unto you, and wherein have I wearied you? Answer me. Micah 6:3 After all this we killed the Prophets, we stoned them, we did them other cruel wrongs without number. What then? In their place He sent no longer Prophets, no longer Angels, no longer Patriarchs, but the Son Himself. He too was killed when He had come, and yet not even then did He quench His love, but kindled it even more, and keeps on beseeching us, after even His own Son was killed, and entreating us, and doing all things to turn us unto Himself.

And Paul cries aloud, saying, Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: be ye reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:20 None of these things however reconciled us. Yet not even then did He leave us, but keeps on both threatening hell, and promising a kingdom, that even so He may draw us unto Himself. But we be still in an insensible mood. What can be worse than this brutishness? For had a man done these things, should we not many times over have let ourselves become slaves to him?

But God when doing so we turn us away from! O what listlessness! O what unfeelingness! We that live continually in sins and wickednesses, if we happen to do any little good, like unfeeling domestics, with what a niggardly spirit do we exact it, and how particular are we about the recompense made, if what we have done has any recompense to come of it. And yet the recompense is the greater if you do it without any hope of reward. Why saying all this, and making exact reckoning, is language fitter for an hireling than a domestic of willing mind.

For we ought to do everything for Christ's sake, not for the reward, but for Him. For this also was why He threatened hell and promised the kingdom, that He might be loved of us. Let us then so love Him as we ought to love Him. For this is the great reward, this is royalty and pleasure, this is enjoyment, and glory, and honor, this is light, this is the great happiness, which language (or reasoning) cannot set before us, nor mind conceive. Yet indeed I do not know how I was led so far in this way of speaking, and came to be exhorting men who do not even think slightly of power and glory here for Christ's sake, to think slightly of the kingdom.

Yet still those great and noble men even attained to this measure of love. Hear, for instance, how Peter burns with love towards Him, setting Him before soul, and life, and all things. And when he had denied Him, it was not the punishment he was grieved for, but that he had denied Him Whom he longed for, which

was more bitter to him than any punishment. And all this did he show before the grace of the Spirit was given. And he perseveringly pressed the question, Where are you going?

John 13:36 and before this; To whom shall we go? John 6:67; and again; I will follow You wherever You go. Luke 22:33? Thus He was all things to them, and neither heaven nor the kingdom of heaven did they count of, in comparison of Him they longed for. For You are all these things unto me, he means. And why doest thou marvel that Peter was so minded? Hear now what the Prophet says: What have I in heaven, and what is there upon earth, that I should desire in comparison of You?

Psalms 73:25 Now what he means is nearly this. Neither of things above nor of things below desire I any, save You only. This is passion; this is love. Can we so love, it will not be things present only, but even things to come, which we shall reckon as nothing compared with that love-charm, and even here shall we enjoy the Kingdom, delighting ourselves in the love of Him. And how is this to be? One may say. Let us reflect how oft we insult Him after numberless goodnesses, yet He stands and calls us to Him, and how often we run by Him, but He still does not overlook us, but runs to us, and draws us to Him, and catches us in unto Himself.

For if we consider these things, and such as these, we shall be enabled to kindle this longing. For if it were a common man that so loved, but a king who was thus beloved, would he not feel a respect for the greatness of the love? Most assuredly he would. But when the case is reversed, and His Beauty (S. that beauty) is unspeakable, and the glory and the riches too of Him that loves us, and our vileness so great, surely we deserve the utmost punishment, vile as we are and outcasts, who are treated with so exceeding great love by One so great and wonderful, and yet wax wanton against His love?

He needs not anything of ours, and yet He does not even now cease loving us. We need much what is His, and for all that we cleave not unto His love, but money we value above Him, and man's friendship, and ease of body, and power, and fame, before Him who values nothing more than us. For He had One Son, Very (Lit. true-born) and Only-Begotten, and He spared not even Him for us. But we value many things above Him. Were there not then good reason for a hell and torment, even were it twofold or threefold or manifold what it is?

For what can we have to say for ourselves, if even Satan's injunctions we value more than the Laws of Christ, and are reckless of our own salvation that we may choose the works of wickedness, before Him who suffered all things for us? And what pardon do these things deserve? What excuse have they? Not one even. (5 manuscripts οὐδὲ μίση.) Let us stop then after this in our headlong course, and let us grow again sober; and reckoning up all these things, let us send up glory unto Him by our works (for words alone suffice not thereto), that we may also enjoy the glory that comes of Him, which may we all attain unto by the grace and love toward man of our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom, and with Whom, to the Father be glory, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

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