

Hebrews 1:6-2:4

by St. John Chrysostom

The sermon emphasizes the superiority of Christ and the importance of heeding the word of God, highlighting the dangers of neglecting salvation and the trustworthiness of the word spoken by the Lord.

Topics: "Christ's Incarnation", "Eternal Salvation"

Description

John Chrysostom preaches about the significance of Christ's incarnation, highlighting the metaphor of Christ going out to reconcile humanity to God by taking on flesh and purging sins. He contrasts Christ's superiority over angels, emphasizing the worship due to Him as the eternal God. Chrysostom explains the eternal nature of Christ's throne and the transfiguration of the world, underscoring the unchanging nature of Christ amidst the changing world. He encourages believers to heed the salvation proclaimed by Christ and the apostles, emphasizing the importance of not neglecting the great salvation offered through Christ.

Transcript

And again when He brings in the First-Begotten into the world, He says, And let all the angels of God worship Him. And of the Angels He says, Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son He says, Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever.

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ calls His coming in the flesh an exodus [or going out]: as when He says, The sower went out to sow. Matthew 13:3 And again, I went out from the Father, and have come. John 16:28 And in many places one may see this. But Paul calls it an [eisodus or] coming in, saying, And when again He brings in the First-Begotten into the world, meaning by this Bringing in, His taking on Him flesh.

Now why has he so used the expression? The things signified [thereby] are manifest, and in what respect it is [thus] said. For Christ indeed calls it a Going out, justly; for we were out from God. For as in royal palaces, prisoners and those who have offended the king, stand without, and he who desires to reconcile them, does not bring them in, but himself going out discourses with them, until having made them meet for the king's presence, he may bring them in, so also Christ has done. Having gone out to us, that is, having taken flesh, and having discoursed to us of the King's matters, so He brought us in, having purged the sins, and made reconciliation. Therefore he calls it a Going out.

But Paul names it a Coming in, from the metaphor of those who come to an inheritance and receive any portion or possession. For the saying, and when again He brings in the First-Begotten into the world, means this, when he puts the world into His hand. For when He was made known, then also He obtained

possession of the whole thereof, He says not these things concerning God The Word, but concerning that which is according to the flesh. For if according to John, He was in the world, and the world was made by Him John 1:10: how is He brought in, otherwise than in the flesh?

And, says he, Let all the angels of God worship Him. Whereas he is about to say something great and lofty, he prepares it beforehand, and makes it acceptable, in that he represents the Father as bringing in the Son. He had said above, that He spoke to us not by prophets but by His Son; that the Son is superior to angels; yea and he establishes this from the name [Son]. And here, in what follows, from another fact also. What then may this be? From worship. And he shows how much greater He is, as much as a Master is than a slave; just as any one introducing another into a house straightway commands those having the care thereof to do him reverence; [so] saying in regard to the Flesh, And let all the Angels of God worship Him.

Is it then Angels only? No; for hear what follows: And of His Angels He says, Which makes His Angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire: but unto the Son, Your Throne, O God, is for ever and ever. Behold, the greatest difference! That they are created, but He uncreated. While of His angels He says, who makes; wherefore of the Son did He not say Who makes? Although he might have expressed the difference as follows: Of His Angels He says, Who makes His Angels spirits, but of the Son, 'The Lord created Me': 'God has made Him Lord and Christ.' Proverbs 8:22; Acts 2:36 But neither was the one spoken concerning the Son, nor the other concerning God The Word, but concerning the flesh. For when he desired to express the true difference, he no longer included angels only, but the whole ministering power above. Do you see how he distinguishes, and with how great clearness, between creatures and Creator, ministers and Lord, the Heir and true Son, and slaves?

2. But unto the Son he says, Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever. Behold a symbol of Kingly Office. A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. Behold again another symbol of Royalty.

Hebrews 1:9

Then again with respect to the flesh Hebrews 1:9 You have loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, even Your God, has anointed You.

What is, Your God? Why, after that he has uttered a great word, he again qualifies it. Here he hits both Jews, and the followers of Paul of Samosata, and the Arians, and Marcellus, and Sabellius, and Marcion. How? The Jews, by his indicating two Persons, both God and Man; the other Jews, I mean the followers of Paul of Samosata, by thus discoursing concerning His eternal existence, and uncreated essence: for by way of distinction, against the word, He made, he put, Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever. Against the Arians there is both this same again, and also that He is not a slave; but if a creature, He is a slave. And against Marcellus and the others, that these are two Persons, distinguished in reference to their subsistence. And against the Marcionites, that the Godhead is not anointed, but the Manhood.

Next he says, Above Your fellows. But who are these His fellows other than men? That is Christ received not the Spirit by measure. John 3:34 Do you see how with the doctrine concerning His uncreated nature he always joins also that of the Economy? What can be clearer than this? Did you see how what is created and what is begotten are not the same? For otherwise he would not have made the distinction, nor in contrast to the word, He made [&c.], have added, But unto the Son He said, Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever. Nor would he have called the name, Son, a more excellent Name, if it is a sign of the same thing. For what is the excellence? For if that which is created, and that which is begotten be the same, and

they [the Angels] were made, what is there [in Him] more excellent? Lo! Again Θεός, God, with the Article.

Hebrews 1:10-12

3. And again he says Hebrews 1:10-12: You Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands. They shall perish, but You remain, and they shall all wax old as a garment, and as a vesture shall You fold them up, and they shall be changed: but You are the same and Your years shall not fail.

Lest hearing the words, and when He brings in the First-Begotten into the world; you should think it as it were a Gift afterwards super-added to Him; above, he both corrected this beforehand, and again further corrects, saying, in the beginning: not now, but from the first. See again he strikes both Paul of Samosata and also Arius a mortal blow, applying to the Son the things which relate to the Father. And withal he has also intimated another thing by the way, greater even than this. For surely he has incidentally pointed out also the transfiguration of the world, saying, they shall wax old as a garment, and as a vesture You shall fold them up, and they shall be changed. Which also he says in the Epistle to the Romans, that he shall transfigure the world. See Romans 8:21 And showing the facility thereof, he adds, as if a man should fold up a garment so shall He both fold up and change it. But if He with so much ease works the transfiguration and the creation to what is better and more perfect, needed He another for the inferior creation? How far does your shamelessness go? At the same time too this is a very great consolation, to know that things will not be as they are, but they all shall receive change, and all shall be altered, but He Himself remains ever existing, and living without end: and Your years, he says, shall not fail.

Hebrews 1:13

4. But to which of the Angels said He at any time, Sit on My right hand until I make your enemies your footstool? Behold, again he encourages them, inasmuch as their enemies were to be worsted, and their enemies are the same also with Christ's.

This again belongs to Sovereignty, to Equal Dignity, to Honor and not weakness, that the Father should be angry for the things done to the Son. This belongs to His great Love and honor towards the Son, as of a father towards a son. For He that is angry in His behalf how is He a stranger to Him? Which also he says in the second Psalm, He that dwells in heaven shall laugh them to scorn, and the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure. Psalm 2:4-5 And again He Himself says, Those that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither before Me, and slay them. Luke 19:27 For that they are His own words, hear also what He says in another place, How often would I have gathered your children together, and you would not! Behold, your house is left desolate. Luke 13:34-35 And again, The kingdom shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. Matthew 21:43 And again, He that falls upon that stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever It shall fall, It will grind him to powder. Matthew 21:44 And besides, He who is to be their Judge in that world, much more did He Himself repay them in this. So that the words Till I make your enemies your footstool are expressive of honor only towards the Son.

Hebrews 1:14

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? What marvel (says he) if they minister to the Son, when they minister even to our salvation? See how he lifts up

their minds, and shows the great honor which God has for us, since He has assigned to Angels who are above us this ministration on our behalf. As if one should say, for this purpose (says he) He employs them; this is the office of Angels, to minister to God for our salvation. So that it is an angelical work, to do all for the salvation of the brethren: or rather it is the work of Christ Himself, for He indeed saves as Lord, but they as servants. And we, though servants are yet Angels' fellow-servants. Why do you gaze so earnestly on the Angels (says he)? They are servants of the Son of God, and are sent many ways for our sakes, and minister to our salvation. And so they are partners in service with us.

Consider how he ascribes no great difference to the kinds of creatures. And yet the space between angels and men is great; nevertheless he brings them down near to us, all but saying, For us they labor, for our sake they run to and fro: on us, as one might say, they wait. This is their ministry, for our sake to be sent every way.

And of these examples both the Old [Testament] is full, and the New. For when Angels bring glad tidings to the shepherds, or to Mary, or to Joseph; when they sit at the sepulcher, when they are sent to say to the disciples, You men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? Acts 1:11, when they release Peter out of the prison, when they discourse with Philip, consider how great the honor is; when God sends His Angels for ministers as to friends; when to Cornelius [an Angel] appears, when [an Angel] brings forth all the apostles from the prison, and says, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people the words of this life Acts 5:20; and to Paul himself also an Angel appears. Do you see that they minister to us on God's behalf, and that they minister to us in the greatest matters? Wherefore Paul says, All things are yours, whether life or death, or the world, or things present, or things to come. 1 Corinthians 3:22

Well then the Son also was sent, but not as a servant, nor as a minister, but as a Son, and Only-Begotten, and desiring the same things with the Father. Rather indeed, He was not sent: for He did not pass from place to place, but took on Him flesh: whereas these change their places, and leaving those in which they were before, so come to others in which they were not.

And by this again he incidentally encourages them, saying, What do you fear? Angels are ministering to us.

Hebrews 2:1

5. And having spoken concerning the Son, both what related to the Economy, and what related to the Creation, and to His sovereignty, and having shown His co-equal dignity, and that as absolute Master He rules not men only but also the powers above, he next exhorts them, having made out his argument, that we ought to give heed to the things which have been heard. Hebrews 2:1 Wherefore we ought to give more earnest heed (says he) to the things which we have heard. Why more earnest? Here he meant more earnest than to the Law: but he suppressed the actual expression of it, and yet makes it plain in the course of reasoning, not in the way of counsel, nor of exhortation. For so it was better.

Hebrews 2:2-3

For if the word spoken by Angels (says he) was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken to us by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him?

Why ought we to give more earnest heed to the things which we have heard? Were not those former things of God, as well as these? Either then he means more earnest than [to] the Law, or very earnest; not making comparison, God forbid. For since, on account of the long space of time, they had a great opinion of the Old Covenant, but these things had been despised as yet new, he proves (more than his argument required) that we ought rather to give heed to these. How? By saying in effect, Both these and those are of God, but not in a like manner. And this he shows us afterwards: but for the present he treats it somewhat superficially, but afterwards more clearly, saying For if that first covenant had been faultless Hebrews 8:7, and many other such things: for that which decays and waxes old is ready to vanish away. Hebrews 8:13 But as yet he ventures not to say any such thing in the beginning of his discourse, nor until he shall have first occupied and possessed his hearer by his fuller [arguments].

Why then ought we to give more earnest heed? Lest at any time, says he, we should let them slip -- that is, lest at any time we should perish, lest we should fall away. And here he shows the grievousness of this falling away, in that it is a difficult thing for that which has fallen away to return again, inasmuch as it has happened through wilful negligence. And he took this form of speech from the Proverbs. For, says he, my son [take heed] lest you fall away Proverbs 3:21, Septuagint, showing both the easiness of the fall, and the grievousness of the ruin. That is, our disobedience is not without danger. And while by his mode of reasoning he shows that the chastisement is greater, yet again he leaves it in the form of a question, and not in the conclusion. For indeed this is to make one's discourse inoffensive, when one does not in every case of one's self infer the judgment, but leaves it in the power of the hearer himself to give sentence: and this would render them more open to conviction. And both the prophet Nathan does the same in the Old [Testament], and in Matthew Christ, saying, What will He do to the husbandmen Matthew 21:40 of that vineyard? So compelling them to give sentence themselves: for this is the greatest victory.

Next, when he had said, For if the word which was spoken by Angels was steadfast -- he did not add, much more that by Christ: but letting this pass, he said what is less, How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? And see how he makes the comparison. For if the word which was spoken by Angels, says he. There, by Angels, here, by the Lord -- and there a word, but here, salvation.

Then lest any man should say, Your sayings, O Paul, are they Christ's? He proves their trustworthiness both from his having heard these things of Him, and from their being now spoken by God; since not merely a voice is wafted, as in the case of Moses, but signs are done, and facts bear witness.

6. But what is this, For if the word spoken by Angels was steadfast? For in the Epistle to the Galatians also he says to this effect, Being ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator. Galatians 3:19 And again, You received a law by the disposition of Angels, and have not kept it. Acts 7:53 And everywhere he says it was given by angels. Some indeed say that Moses is signified; but without reason. For here he says Angels in the plural: and the Angels too which he here speaks of, are those in Heaven. What then is it? Either he means the Decalogue only (for there Moses spoke, and God answered him Exodus 19:19) -- or that angels were present, God disposing them in order -- or that he speaks thus in regard of all things said and done in the old Covenant, as if Angels had part in them. But how is it said in another place, The Law was given by Moses John 1:17, and here by Angels? For it is said, And God came down in thick darkness. Exodus 19:16-20

For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast. What is was steadfast? True, as one may say; and faithful in its proper season; and all the things which had been spoken came to pass. Either this is his meaning, or that they prevailed, and the threatenings were coming to be accomplished. Or by the word he means

injunctions. For apart from the Law, Angels sent from God enjoined many things: for instance at Bochim, in the Judges, in [the history of] Samson. Judges 2:1; 13:3 For this is the cause why he said not the Law but the word. And he seems to me haply rather to mean this, viz., those things which are committed to the management of angels. What shall we say then? The angels who were entrusted with the charge of the nation were then present, and they themselves made the trumpets, and the other things, the fire, the thick darkness. Exodus 19:16

And every transgression and disobedience, says he. Not this one and that one, but every one. Nothing, he says, remained unavenged, but received a just recompense of reward, instead of [saying] punishment. Why now spoke he thus? Such is the manner of Paul, not to make much account of his phrases, but indifferently to put down words of evil sound, even in matters of good meaning. As also in another place he says, Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:5 And again he has put the recompense for punishment, as here he calls punishment reward. If it be a righteous thing, he says, with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled rest. 2 Thessalonians 1:6-7 That is, justice was not violated, but God went forth against them, and caused the penalty to come round on the sinners, though not all their sins are made manifest, but only where the express ordinances were transgressed.

How then shall we, he says, escape if we neglect so great salvation? Hereby he signified, that other salvation was no great thing. Well too did he add the So great. For not from wars (he says) will He now rescue us, nor bestow on us the earth and the good things that are in the earth, but it will be the dissolution of death, the destruction of the devil, the kingdom of Heaven, everlasting life. For all these things he has briefly expressed, by saying, if we neglect so great salvation.

7. Then he subjoins what makes this worthy of belief. Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord: that is, had its beginning from the fountain itself. It was not a man who brought it over into the earth, nor any created power, but the Only-Begotten Himself.

And was confirmed unto us by them that heard [Him]. What is confirmed? It was believed, or, it came to pass. For (he says) we have the earnest; that is, it has not been extinguished, it has not ceased, but it is strong and prevails. And the cause is, the Divine power works therein. It means they who heard from the Lord, themselves confirmed us. This is a great thing and trustworthy: which also Luke says in the beginning of his Gospel, As they delivered unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word. Luke 1:2

Hebrews 2:4

How then was it confirmed? What if those that heard were forgers? Says some one. This objection then he overthrows, and shows that the grace was not human. If they had gone astray, God would not have borne witness to them; for he subjoined Hebrews 2:4, God also bearing witness with them. Both they indeed bear witness, and God bears witness too. How does He bear witness? Not by word or by voice, (though this also would have been worthy of belief): but how? By signs, and wonders, and various miracles. (Well said he, various miracles, declaring the abundance of the gifts: which was not so in the former dispensation, neither so great signs and so various.) That is, we did not believe them simply, but through signs and wonders: wherefore we believe not them, but God Himself.

And by gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will.

What then, if wizards also do signs, and the Jews said that He cast out devils through Beelzebub? Luke 11:15 But they do not such kind of signs: therefore said he various miracles: for those others were not miracles, [or powers,] but weakness and fancy, and things altogether vain. Wherefore he said, by gifts of the Holy Ghost according to His own will.

8. Here he seems to me to intimate something further. For it is not likely there were many there who had gifts, but that these had failed, upon their becoming more slothful. In order then that even in this he might comfort them, and not leave them to fall away, he referred all to the will of God. He knows (he says) what is expedient, and for whom, and apports His grace accordingly. Which also he [Paul] does in the Epistle to the Corinthians, saying, God has set every one of us, as it pleased Him. 1 Corinthians 12:18 And again, The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 1 Corinthians 12:7

According to His will. He shows that the gift is according to the will of the Father. But oftentimes on account of their unclean and slothful life many have not received a gift, and sometimes also those whose life is good and pure have not received one. Why, I pray you? Lest they might be made haughty, that they might not be puffed up, that they might not grow more negligent, that they might not be more excited. For if even without a gift, the mere consciousness of a pure life be sufficient to lift a man up, much more when the grace is added also. Wherefore to the humble, to the simple, it was rather given, and especially to the simple: for it is said, in singleness and gladness of heart. Acts 2:46 Yea, and hereby also he rather urged them on, and if they were growing negligent gave them a spur. For the humble, and he who imagines no great things concerning himself, becomes more earnest when he has received a gift, in that he has obtained what is beyond his deserts, and thinks that he is not worthy thereof. But he who thinks he has done well, reckoning it to be his due, is puffed up. Wherefore God dispenses this profitably: which one may see taking place also in the Church: for one has the word of teaching, another has not power to open his mouth. Let not this man (he says) be grieved because of this. For the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 1 Corinthians 12:7 For if a man that is an householder knows to whom he should entrust anything, much more God, who understands the mind of men, who knows all things or ever they come into being. One thing only is worthy of grief, Sin: there is nothing else.

Say not, Wherefore have I not riches? Or, If I had, I would give to the poor. You know not, if you had them, whether you would not the rather be covetous. For now indeed you say these things, but being put to the trial you would be different. Since also when we are satisfied, we think that we are able to fast; but when we have gone without a little space, other thoughts come into us. Again, when we are out of the way of strong drink, we think ourselves able to master our appetite, but no longer so, when we are caught by it.

Say not, Wherefore had I not the gift of teaching? Or, If I had it, I should have edified innumerable souls. You know not, if you had it, whether it would not be to your condemnation -- whether envy, whether sloth, would not have disposed you to hide your talent. Now, indeed, you are now free from all these, and though thou give not the portion of meat Luke 12:42, you are not called to account: but then, you would have been responsible for many.

9. And besides, neither now are you without the gift. Show in the little, what you would have been, if you had had the other. For if (he says) you are not faithful in that which is little, how shall any one give you that which is great? Luke 16:11 Give such proof as did the widow; she had two farthings, and she cast in all, whatsoever she possessed.

Do you seek riches? Prove that you think lightly of the few things, that I may trust you also concerning the many things. But if you do not think lightly even of these, much less will you do so of the other.

Again, in speech, prove that you can use fitly exhortation and counsel. Have you not external eloquence? Have you not store of thoughts? But nevertheless you know these common things. You have a child, you have a neighbor, you have a friend, you have a brother, you have kinsmen. And though publicly before the Church, you are not able to draw out a long discourse, these you can exhort in private. Here, there is no need of rhetoric, nor of elaborate discourse: prove in these, that if you had skill of speech, you would not have neglected it. But if in the small matter you are not in earnest, how shall I trust you concerning the great?

For, that every man can do this, hear what Paul says, how he charged even lay people; Edify, he says, one another, as also ye do. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 And, Comfort one another with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4:18 God knows how He should distribute to every man. Are you better than Moses? Hear how he shrinks from the hardship. Am I, says he, able to bear them? For You said to me, Bear them up, as a nursing-father would bear up the sucking-child. Numbers 11:12 What then did God? He took of his spirit and gave unto the others, showing that neither when he bare them was the gift his own, but of the Spirit. If you had had the gift, you would perchance have been lifted up, perchance would you have been turned out of the way. You know not yourself as God knows you. Let us not say, To what end is that? On what account is this? When God dispenses, let us not demand an account of Him: for this [is] of the uttermost impiety and folly. We are slaves, and slaves far apart from our Master, knowing not even the things which are before us.

10. Let us not then busy ourselves about the counsel of God, but whatsoever He has given, this let us guard, though it be small, though it be the lowest, and we shall be altogether approved. Or rather, none of the gifts of God is small: are you grieved because you have not the gift of teaching? Then tell me, which seems to you the greater, to have the gift of teaching, or the gift of driving away diseases? Doubtless the latter. But what? Tell me; does it not seem to you greater to give eyes to the blind than even to drive away diseases? But what? Tell me; does it not seem to you greater to raise the dead than to give eyes to the blind? What again, tell me; does it not seem to you greater to do this by shadows and napkins, than by a word? Tell me then, which would you? Raise the dead with shadows and napkins, or have the gift of teaching? Doubtless you will say the former, to raise the dead with shadows and napkins. If then I should show to you, that there is another gift far greater than this, and that thou dost not receive it when it is in your power to receive it, are not you justly deprived of those others? And this gift not one or two, but all may have. I know that you open wide your mouths and are amazed, at being to hear that it is in your power to have a greater gift than raising the dead, and giving eyes to the blind, doing the same things which were done in the time of the Apostles. And it seems to you past belief.

What then is this gift? charity. Nay, believe me; for the word is not mine, but Christ's speaking by Paul. For what says he? Covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way. 1 Corinthians 12:31 What is this, yet more excellent? What he means is this. The Corinthians were proud over their gifts, and those having tongues, the least gift, were puffed up against the rest. He says therefore, Do ye by all means desire gifts? I show unto you a way of gifts not merely excelling but far more excellent. Then he says, Though I speak with the tongues of Angels, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I have faith so as to remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 1 Corinthians 13:1-2

Have you seen the gift? Covet earnestly this gift. This is greater than raising the dead. This is far better than all the rest. And that it is so, hear what Christ Himself says, discoursing with His disciples, By this shall all men know that you are My disciples. John 13:35 And showing how, He mentioned not the miracles, but what? If you have love one with another. And again He says to the Father, Hereby shall they know that You have sent Me, if they be one. John 17:21 And He said to His disciples, A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. John 13:34 Such an one therefore is more venerable and glorious than those who raise the dead; with reason. For that indeed is wholly of God's grace, but this, of your own earnestness also. This is of one who is a Christian indeed: this shows the disciple of Christ, the crucified, the man that has nothing common with earth. Without this, not even martyrdom can profit.

And as a proof, see this plainly. The blessed Paul took two of the highest virtues, or rather three; namely, those which consist in miracles, in knowledge, in life. And without this the others, he said, are nothing. And I will say how these are nothing. Though I give my goods to feed the poor, he says, and have not charity, I am nothing. 1 Corinthians 13:3 For it is possible not to be charitable even when one feeds the poor and exhausts one's means.

11. And indeed these things have been sufficiently declared by us, in the place concerning Charity: and there we refer the readers. Meanwhile, as I was saying, let us covet earnestly the Gift, let us love one another; and we shall need nothing else for the perfect acquisition of virtue, but all will be easy to us without toils and we shall do all perfectly with much diligence.

But see, even now, it is said, we love one another. For one man has two friends, and another three. But this is not to love for God's sake, but for the sake of being beloved. But to love for God's sake has not this as its principle of Love; but such an one will be disposed towards all men as towards brethren; loving those that are of the same faith as being true brothers; heretics and Heathen and Jews, brothers indeed by nature, but vile and unprofitable -- pitying and wearing himself out and weeping for them. Herein we shall be like God if we love all men, even our enemies; not, if we work miracles. For we regard even God with admiration when He works wonders, yet much more, when He shows love towards man, when He is long-suffering. If then even in God this is worthy of much admiration, much more in men is it evident that this renders us admirable.

This then let us zealously seek after: and we shall be no way inferior to Paul and Peter and those who have raised innumerable dead, though we may not be able to drive away a fever. But without this [Love]; though we should work greater miracles even than the Apostles themselves, though we should expose ourselves to innumerable dangers for the faith: there will be to us no profit from any. And these things it is not I that say, but he, the very nourisher of Charity, knows these things. To him then let us be obedient; for thus we shall be able to attain to the good things promised, of which may we all be made partakers, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father with the Holy Ghost, be the glory, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

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