



# COMMENTARIES ON 'ROMANS'

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

## Chapter 6

**Verse 1.** *"What then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid."*

He is again turning off to exhortation, yet introducing it not directly, lest he should seem to many to be irksome and vexing, but as if it rose out of the doctrines. For if, even so diversifying his address, he was afraid of their being offended at what he said, and therefore said, "I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort," (Romans 15:15) much more would he have seemed to them, had he not done so, to be too harsh. Since then he showed the greatness of the grace by the greatness of the sins it healed, and owing to this it seemed in the eyes of the unthinking to be an encouragement to sin (for if the reason, they would say, why greater grace was shown, was because we had done great sins, let us not give over sinning, that grace may be more displayed still), now that they might not say this or suspect it, see how he turns the objection back again. First he does it by his deprecation. "God forbid." And this he is in the habit of doing at things confessed on all hands to be absurd. And then he lays down an irrefragable argument. And what is it?

**Verse 2.** *"How shall we," he says, "that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"*

What does "we are dead" mean? Does it mean that as for that, and as far as it goes, we have all received the sentence of death? or, that we became dead to it by believing any being enlightened. This is what one should rather say, since the sequel makes this clearly right. But what is becoming dead to it? The not obeying it in anything any more. For this baptism effected once for all, it made us dead to it. But this must of our own earnestness thenceforth continually be maintained, so that, although sin issue countless commands to us, we may never again obey it, but abide unmovable as a dead man doth. And indeed he elsewhere saith that sin itself is dead. But there he sets that down as wishing to show that virtue is easy. But here, as he earnestly desires to rouse the hearer, he puts the death on his side. Next, since what was said was obscure, he again explains, using what he had said also in the way of reproof.

**Verse 3, 4.** *"Know ye not," he says, "my brethren, that so many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death? therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death."*

What does being "baptized into His Death" mean? That it is with a view to our dying as He did. For Baptism is the Cross. What the Cross then, and Burial, is to Christ, that Baptism hath been to us, even if not in the same respects. For He died Himself and was buried in the Flesh, but we have done both to sin. Wherefore he does not say, planted together in His Death, but in the likeness of His Death. For both the one and the other is a death, but not of the same subject; since the one is of the Flesh, that of Christ; the

other of sin, which is our own. As then that is real, so is this. But if it be real, then what is of our part again must be contributed. And so he proceeds,

“That as Christ was raised up from the dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Here he hints, along with the duty of a careful walk, at the subject of the resurrection. In what way? Do you believe, he means, that Christ died, and that He was raised again? Believe then the same of thyself. For this is like to the other, since both Cross and Burial is thine. For if thou hast shared in Death and Burial, much more wilt thou in Resurrection and Life. For now the greater is done away with, the sin I mean, it is not right to doubt any longer about the lesser, the doing away of death.

But this he leaves for the present to the conscience of his hearers to reason out, but himself, after the resurrection to come had been set before us, demands of us another, even the new conversation, which is brought about in the present life by a change of habits. When then the fornicator becomes chaste, the covetous man merciful, the harsh subdued, even here a resurrection has taken place, the prelude to the other. And how is it a resurrection? Why, because sin is mortified, and righteousness hath risen again, and the old life hath been made to vanish, and this new and angelic one is being lived in. But when you hear of a new life, look for a great alteration, a wide change. But tears come into my eyes, and I groan deeply to think how great religiousness Paul requires of us, and what listlessness we have yielded ourselves up to, going back after our baptism to the oldness we before had, and returning to Egypt, and remembering the garlic after the manna. (Numbers 11:5.) For ten or twenty days at the very time of our Illumination, we undergo a change, but then take up our former doings again. But it is not for a set number of days, but for our whole life, that Paul requires of us such a conversation. But we go back to our former vomit, thus after the youth of grace building up the old age of sins. For either the love of money, or the slavery to desires not convenient, or any other sin whatsoever, useth to make the worker thereof old. “Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” (Hebrews 8:13.) For there is no body, there surely is none, to be seen as palsied by length of time, as a soul is decayed and tottering with many sins. Such an one gets carried on to the last degree of doting, yielding indistinct sounds, like men that are very old and crazed, being surcharged with rheum, and great distortion of mind, and forgetfulness, and with scales upon its eyes, and disgusting to men, and an easy prey to the devil. Such then are the souls of sinners; not so those of the righteous, for they are youthful and well-favored, and are in the very prime of life throughout, ever ready for any fight or struggle. But those of sinners, if they receive even a small shock, straightway fall and are undone. And it was this the Prophet made appear, when he said, that like as the chaff which the wind scattereth from the face of the earth (Psalm 1:4), thus are they that live in sin whirled to and fro, and exposed to every sort of harm. For they neither see like a healthy person, nor hear with simplicity, they speak not articulately, but are oppressed with great shortness of breath. They have their mouth overflowing with spittle. And would it were but spittle, and nothing offensive! But now they send forth words more fetid than any mire, and what is worst, they have not power even to spit this saliva of words away from them, but taking it in their hand with much lewdness, they smear it on again, so as to be coagulating, and hard to perspire through. Perhaps ye are sickened with this description. Ought ye not, then to be more so at the reality? For if these things when happening in the body are disgusting, much more when in the soul. Such was that son who wasted out all his share, and was reduced to the greatest wretchedness, and was in a feebler state than any imbecile or disordered person. But when he was willing, he became suddenly young by his

decision alone and his change. For as soon as he had said, "I will return to my Father," this one word conveyed to him all blessings; or rather not the bare word, but the deed which he added to the word. For he did not say, "Let me go back," and then stay there; but said, Let me go back, and went back, and returned the whole of that way. Thus let us also do; and even if we have gotten carried beyond the boundary, let us go up to our Father's house, and not stay lingering over the length of the journey. For if we be willing, the way back again is easy and very speedy. Only let us leave the strange and foreign land; for this is what sin is, drawing us far away from our Father's house; let us leave her then, that we may speedily return to the house of our Father. For our Father hath a natural yearning towards us, and will honor us if we be changed, no less than those that are unattained, if we change, but even more, just as the father showed that son the greater honor. For he had greater pleasure himself at receiving back his son. And how am I to go back again? one may say. Do but put a beginning upon the business, and the whole is done. Stay from vice, and go no farther into it, and thou hast laid hold of the whole already. For as in the case of the sick, being no worse may be a beginning of getting better, so is the case with vice also. Go no further, and then your deeds of wickedness will have an end. And if you do so for two days, you will keep off on the third day more easily; and after three days you will add ten, then twenty, then an hundred, then your whole life. For the further thou goest on, the easier wilt thou see the way to be, and thou wilt stand on the summit itself, and wilt at once enjoy many goods. For so it was when the prodigal came back, there were flutes, and harps, and dancings, and feasts, and assemblings: and he who might have called his son to account for his ill-timed extravagance, and flight to such a distance, did nothing of the sort, but looked upon him as unattainted, and could not find it in him even to use the language of reproach, or rather, even to mention barely to him the former things, but threw himself upon him, and kissed him, and killed the calf, and put a robe upon him, and placed on him abundant honors. Let us then, as we have such examples before us, be of good cheer and keep from despair. For He is not so well pleased with being called Master, as Father, nor with having a slave as with having a son. And this is what He liketh rather than that. This then is why He did all that He has done; and "spared not even His Only-begotten Son" (Romans 8:32), that we might receive the adoption of sons, that we might love Him, not as a Master only, but as a Father. And if He obtained this of us He taketh delight therein as one that has glory given him, and proclaimeth it to all though He needeth nothing of ours. This is what, in Abraham's case for instance, He everywhere does, using these words, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." And yet it was the), of His household who should have found an honor in this; but now it is the Lord evidently who does this; for this is why He says to Peter, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" (John 21:17) to show that He seeketh nothing so much as this from us. For this too He bade Abraham offer his son to Him, that He might make it known to all that He was greatly beloved by the patriarch. Now this desire to be loved exceedingly comes from loving exceedingly. For this cause too He said to the Apostles, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me." (Matthew 10:37.) For this cause He bids us esteem that even which is in the most close connection with us, our soul (or, life, 5:39, and John 12:25), as second to the love of him, since He wisheth to be beloved by us with exceeding entireness. For we too, if we have no strong feelings about a person, have no strong desire for his friendship either, though he be great and noble; whereas when we love any one warmly and really, though the person loved be of low rank and humble, yet we esteem love from him as a very great honor. And for this reason He Himself also called it glory not to be loved by us only, but even to suffer those shameful things in our behalf. However, those things were a glory owing to love only. But whatever we suffer for Him, it is not for love alone; but even for the sake of the greatness and dignity of Him we long for, that it would with good reason both be called glory, and be so indeed. Let us then incur dangers for Him as if running for the greatest crowns, and let us esteem neither poverty, nor

disease, nor affront, nor calumny, nor death itself, to be heavy and burdensome, when it is for Him that we suffer these things. For if we be right-minded, we are the greatest possible gainers by these things, as neither from the contrary to these shall we if not right-minded gain any advantage. But consider; does any one affront thee and war against thee? Doth he not thereby set thee upon thy guard, and give thee an opportunity of growing like unto God? For if thou lovest him that plots against thee, thou wilt be like Him that "maketh His Sun to rise upon the evil and good." (Matthew 5:45.) Does another take thy money away? If thou bearest it nobly, thou shalt receive the same reward as they who have spent all they have upon the poor. For it says, "Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." (Hebrews 10:34.) Has any one reviled thee and abused thee, whether truly or falsely, he weaves for thee a very great crown if thou bearest meekly his contumely; since he too, who calumniates, provides for us an abundant reward. For "rejoice," it says, "and be exceeding glad, when men say all manner of evil against you falsely, because great is your reward in Heaven." (Matthew 5:12, 11.) And he too that speaketh truth against us is of the greatest service, if we do but bear meekly what is said. For the Pharisee spake evil of the Publican, and with truth, still instead of a Publican he made him a righteous man. (Luke 18:11.) And what need to go into particular instances. For any one that will go to the conflicts of Job may learn all these points accurately. And this is why Paul said, "God for us, who against us?" (Romans 8:31.) As then by being earnest, we gain even from things that vex us, so by being listless, we do not even improve from things that favor us. For what did Judas profit, tell me, by being with Christ? or what profit was the Law to the Jew? or Paradise to Adam? or what did Moses profit those in the wilderness? And so we should leave all, and look to one point only, how we may husband aright our own resources. And if we do this, not even the devil himself will ever get the better of us, but will make our profiting the greater, by putting us upon being watchful. Now in this way it is that Paul rouses the Ephesians, by describing his fierceness. Yet we sleep and snore, though we have to do with so crafty an enemy. And if we were aware of a serpent nestling by our bed, we should make much ado to kill him. But when the devil nestleth in our souls, we fancy that we take no harm, but lie at our ease; and the reason is, that we see him not with the eyes of our body. And yet this is why we should rouse us the more and be sober. For against an enemy whom one can perceive, one may easily be on guard; but one that cannot be seen, if we be not continually in arms, we shall not easily escape. And the more so, because he hath no notion of open combat (for he would surely be soon defeated), but often under the appearance of friendship he insinuates the venom of his cruel malice. In this way it was that he suborned Job's wife, by putting on the mask of natural affectionateness, to give that wretchless advice. And so when conversing with Adam, he puts on the air of one concerned and watching over his interests, and saith, that "your eyes shall be opened in the day that ye eat of the tree." (Genesis 3:5.) Thus Jephtha too he persuaded, under the pretext of religion, to slay his daughter, and to offer the sacrifice the Law forbade. Do you see what his wiles are, what his varying warfare? Be then on thy guard, and arm thyself at all points with the weapons of the Spirit, get exactly acquainted with his plans, that thou mayest both keep from being caught, and easily catch him. For it was thus that Paul got the better of him, by getting exactly acquainted with these. And so he says, "for we are not ignorant of his devices." (2 Corinthians 2:11.) Let us then also be earnest in learning and avoiding his stratagems, that after obtaining a victory over him, we may, whether in this present life or in that which is to come, be proclaimed conquerors, and obtain those unalloyed blessings, by the grace and love toward man, etc.

**Verse 5.** *"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection,"*

What I had before occasion to remark, that I mention here too, that he continually digresseth into exhortation, without making any twofold division as he does in the other Epistles, and setting apart the former portion for doctrines, and the latter for the care of moral instruction. Here then he does not do so, but blends the latter with the subject throughout, so as to gain it an easy admission. Here then he says there are two mortifyings, and two deaths, and that one is done by Christ in Baptism, and the other it is our duty to effect by earnestness afterwards. For that our former sins were buried, came of His gift. But the remaining dead to sin after baptism must be the work of our own earnestness, however much we find God here also giving us large help. For this is not the only thing Baptism has the power to do, to obliterate our former transgressions; for it also secures against subsequent ones. As then in the case of the former, thy contribution was faith that they might be obliterated, so also in those subsequent to this, show thou forth the change in thine aims, that thou mayest not defile thyself again. For it is this and the like that he is counseling thee when he says, “for if we have been planted together in the likeness of His Death, we shall be also in the likeness of His Resurrection.” Do you observe, how he rouses the hearer by leading him straightway up to his Master, and taking great pains to show the strong likeness? This is why he does not say “in death,” lest you should gainsay it, but, “in the likeness of His Death.” For our essence itself hath not died, but the man of sins, that is, wickedness. And he does not say, “for if we have been” partakers of “the likeness of His Death;” but what? “If we have. been planted together,” so, by the mention of planting, giving a hint of the fruit resulting to us from it. For as His Body, by being buried in the earth, brought forth as the fruit of it the salvation of the world; thus ours also, being buried in baptism, bore as fruit righteousness, sanctification, adoption, countless blessings. And it will bear also hereafter the gift of the resurrection. Since then we were buried in water, He in earth, and we in regard to sin, He in regard to His Body, this is why he did not say, “we were planted together in His Death,” but “in the likeness of His Death.” For both the one and the other is death, but not that of the same subject. If then he says, “we have been planted together in His Death, we shall be in that of His Resurrection,” speaking here of the Resurrection which is to come. For since when he was upon the subject of the Death before, and said, “Know ye not, brethren, that so many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into His Death?” he had not made any clear statement about the Resurrection, but only about the way of life after baptism, bidding men walk in newness of life; therefore he here resumes the same subject, and proceeds to foretell to us clearly that Resurrection. And that you may know that he is not speaking of that resulting from baptism, but about the other, after saying, “for if we were planted together in the likeness of His Death,” he does not say that we shall be in the likeness of His Resurrection, but we shall belong to the Resurrection. For to prevent thy saying, and how, if we did not die as He died, are we to rise as He rose? when he mentioned the Death, he did not say, “planted together in the Death,” but, “in the likeness of His Death.” But when he mentioned the Resurrection, he did not say, “in the likeness of the Resurrection,” but we shall be “of the Resurrection” itself. And he does not say, We have been made, but we shall be, by this word again plainly meaning that Resurrection which has not yet taken place, but will hereafter. Then with a view to give credibility to what he says, he points out another Resurrection which is brought about here before that one, that from that which is present thou mayest believe also that which is to come. For after saying, “we shall be planted together in the Resurrection,” he adds,

**Verse 6.** *“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed.”*

So putting together both the cause and the demonstration of the Resurrection which is to come. And he does not say is crucified, but is crucified with Him, so bringing baptism near to the Cross. And on this score also it was that he said above, "We have been planted together in the likeness of His Death that the body of sin might be destroyed," not giving that name to this body of ours, but to all iniquity. For as he calls the whole sum of wickedness the old man, thus again the wickedness which is made up of the different parts of iniquity he calls the body of that man. And that what I am saying is not mere guesswork, hearken to Paul's own interpretation of this very thing in what comes next. For after saying, "that the body of sin might be destroyed," he adds, "that henceforth we should not serve sin." For the way in which I would have it dead is not so that ye should be destroyed and die, but so that ye sin not. And as he goes on he makes this still clearer.

**Verse 7.** *"For he that is dead," he says, "is freed from sin."*

This he says of every man, that as he that is dead is henceforth freed from sinning, lying as a dead body, so must he that has come up from baptism, since he has died there once for all, remain ever dead to sin. If then thou hast died in baptism, remain dead, for any one that dies can sin no more; but if thou sinnest, thou marrest God's gift. After requiring of us then heroism of this degree, he presently brings in the crown also, in these words.

**Verse 8.** *"Now if we be dead with Christ.":*

And indeed even before the crown, this is in itself the greater crown, the partaking with our Master. But he says, I give even another reward. Of what kind is it? It is life eternal. For "we believe," he says, "that we shall also live with Him." And whence is this clear?

**Verse 9.** *"That Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more."*

And notice again his undauntedness, and how he makes the thing good from opposite grounds. Since then it was likely that some would feel perplexed at the Cross and the Death, he shows that this very thing is a ground for feeling confident henceforward.

For suppose not, he says, because He once died, that He is mortal, for this is the very reason of His being immortal. For His death hath been the death of death, and because He did die, He therefore doth not die. For even that death.

**Verse 10.** *"He died unto sin."*

"What does "unto sin" mean? It means that He was not subject even to that one, but for our sin, that He might destroy it, and cut away its sinews and all its power, therefore He died. Do you see how he affrighteth them? For if He does not die again, then there is no second layer, then do thou keep from all inclinableness to sin. For all this he says to make a stand against the "let us do evil that good may come. Let us remain in sin that grace may abound." To take away this conception then, root and branch, it is, that he sets down all this. But in that "He liveth, He liveth unto God," he says, - that is, unchangeably, so that death hath no more any dominion over Him. For if it was not through any liability to it that He died the former death, save only for the sin of others, much less will He die again now that He hath done that

sin away. And this he says in the Epistle to the Hebrews also, "But now once," he says, "in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." (Hebrews 9:26-28.) And he both points out the power of the life that is according to God, and also the strength of sin. For with regard to the life according to God, he showeth that Christ shall die no more. With regard to sin, that if it brought about the death even of the Sinless, how can it do otherwise than be the ruin of those that are subject to it? And then as he had discoursed about His life; that none might say, What hath that which you have been saying to do with us? he adds,

**Verse 11.** *"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God."*

He well says, "reckon," because there is no setting that, which he is speaking of, before the eyes as yet. And what are we to reckon? one may ask. That we "are dead unto sin, but alive unto God. In Jesus Christ our Lord." For he that so liveth will lay hold of every virtue, as having Jesus Himself for his ally. For that is what, "in Christ," means, for if He raised them when dead, much more when alive will He be able to keep them so.

**Verse 12.** *"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."*

He does not say, let not the flesh live or act, but, "let not sin reign," for He came not to destroy our nature, but to set our free choice aright. Then to show that it is not through any force or necessity that we are held down by iniquity, but willingly, he does not say, let it not tyrannize, a word that would imply a necessity, but let it not reign. For it is absurd for those who are being conducted to the kingdom of heaven to have sin empress over them, and for those who are called to reign with Christ to choose to be the captives of sin, as though one should hurl the diadem from off his head, and choose to be the slave of a frantic woman, who came begging, and was clothed in rags. Next since it was a heavy task to get the upper hand of sin, see how he shows it to be even easy, and how he allays the labor by saying, "in your mortal body." For this shows that the struggles were but for a time, and would soon bring themselves to a close. At the same time he reminds us of our former evil plight, and of the root of death, as it was from this that, contrary even to its beginning, it became mortal. Yet it is possible even for one with a mortal body not to sin. Do you see the abundancy of Christ's grace? For Adam, though as yet he had not a mortal body, fell. But thou, who hast received one even subject to death, canst be crowned. How then, is it that "sin reigns?" he says. It is not from any power of its own, but from thy listlessness. Wherefore after saying, "let it not reign," he also points out the mode of this reigning, by going on to say "that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." For it is not honor to concede to it (i.e. to the body) all things at will, nay, it is slavery in the extreme, and the height of dishonor; for when it doth what it listeth, then is it bereft of all liberties; but when it is put under restraints, then it best keeps its own proper rank.

**Verse 13.** *"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin....but as instruments of righteousness."*

The body then is indifferent between vice and virtue, as also instruments (or arms) are. But either effect is wrought by him that useth it. As if a soldier fighting in his country's behalf, and a robber who was arming against the inhabitants, had the same weapons for defense. For the fault is not laid to the suit of

armor, but to those that use it to an ill end. And this one may say of the flesh too which becomes this or that owing to the mind's decision, not owing to its own nature. For if it be curious after the beauty of another, the eye becomes an instrument of iniquity, not through any agency of its own (for what is of the eye, is but seeing, not seeing amiss), but through the fault of the thought which commands it. But if you bridle it, it becomes an instrument of righteousness. Thus with the tongue, thus with the hands, thus with all the other members. And he well calls sin unrighteousness. For by sinning a man deals unrighteously either by himself or by his neighbor, or rather by himself more than by his neighbor. Having then led us away from wickedness, he leads us to virtue, in these words:

“But yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead.”

See how by his bare words he exhorts them, on that side naming “sin” and on this “God.” For by showing what a difference there is between the rulers, he casts out of all excuse the soldier that leaveth God, and desireth to serve under the dominion of sin. But it is not only in this way, but also by the sequel, that he establishes this; by saying, “as alive from the dead.” For by these he shows the wretchedness of the other, and the greatness of God's gift. For consider, he says, what you were, and what you have been made. What then were ye? Dead, and ruined by a destruction which could not from any quarter be repaired. For neither was there any one who had the power to assist you. And what have ye been made out of those dead ones? Alive with immortal life. And by whom? By the all-powerful God. Ye ought therefore to marshal yourselves under Him with as much cheerful readiness, as men would who had been made alive from being dead.

“And your members as instruments of righteousness.”

Hence, the body is not evil, since it may be made an arm of righteousness. But by calling it an arm, he makes it clear that there is a hard warfare at hand for us. And for this reason we need strong armor, and also a noble spirit, and one acquainted too with the ways of this warfare; and above all we need a commander. The Commander however is standing by, ever ready to help us, and abiding unconquerable, and has furnished us with strong arms likewise. Farther, we have need of a purpose of mind to handle them as should be, so that we may both obey our Commander, and take the field for our country. Having then given us this vigorous exhortation, and reminded us of arms, and battle, and wars, see how he encourages the soldier again and cherishes his ready spirit.

**Verse 14.** *“For sin shall no more have dominion over you; for ye are not under the Law, but under grace.”*

If then sin hath no more dominion over us, why does he lay so great a charge upon them as he does in the words, “Let not sin reign in your mortal body,” and, “yield not ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin?” What does that here said mean then? He is sowing a kind of seed in this statement, which he means to develop afterwards, and to cultivate in a powerful argument. What then is this statement? It is this; that our body, before Christ's coming, was an easy prey to the assaults of sin. For after death a great swarm of passions entered also. And for this cause it was not lightsome for running the race of virtue. For there was no Spirit present to assist, nor any baptism of power to mortify. (John 7:39.) But as some horse that answereth not the rein, it ran indeed, but made frequent slips, the Law meanwhile announcing what was to be done and what not, yet not conveying into those in the race anything over and above exhortation by means of words. But when Christ had come, the effort became



afterwards more easy, and therefore we had a more distant goal set us, in that the assistance we had given us was greater. Wherefore also Christ saith, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. (Matthew 5:20.) But this he says more clearly in the sequel. But at present he alludes here briefly to it, to show that unless we stoop down very low to it, sin will not get the better of us. For it is not the Law only that exhorteth us, but grace too which also remitted our former sins, and secures us against future ones. For it promised them crowns after toils, but this crowned them first, and than led them to the contest. Now it seems to me that he is not signifying here the whole life of a believer, but instituting a comparison between the Baptism and the Law. And this he says in another passage also "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." (2 Corinthians 3:6.) For the Law convinceth of transgression, but grace undoes transgression. As then the former by convincing establisheth sin so the latter by forgiving suffereth us not to be under sin. And so thou art in two ways set free from this thralldom; both in thy not being under the Law, and in thy enjoying grace. After then he had by these words given the hearer a breathing time, he again furnishes him a safeguard, by introducing an exhortation in reply to an objection, and by saying as follows.

**Verse 15.** *"What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the Law, but under grace? God forbid."*

So he first adopted a form of adjuration, because it was an absurd thing he had named. And then he makes his discourse pass on to exhortation, and shows the great facility of the struggle, in the following words.

**Verse 16.** *"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"*

I do not, he would say, mention hell as yet, nor that great punishment, but the shame it is in this world, when ye become slaves, and slaves of your own accord too, and sin's slaves, and when the wages are such as a second death. For if before baptism, it wrought death of the body, and the wound required so great attendance, that the Lord of all came down to die, and so put a stop to the evil; if after so great a gift, and so great liberty, it seize thee again, while thou bendest down under it willingly, what is there that it may not do? Do not then run into such a pit, or willingly give thyself up. For in the case of wars, soldiers are often given up even against their will. But in this case, unless thou desertest of thyself, there is no one who will get the better of thee. Having then tried to shame them by a sense of duty, he alarms them also by the rewards, and lays before them the wages of both; righteousness, and death, and that a death not like the former, but far worse. For if Christ is to die no more, who is to do away with death? No one! We must then be punished, and have vengeance taken upon us forever. For a death perceptible to the senses is not still to come in this case, as in the former, which gives the body rest, and separates it from the soul. "For the last enemy, death, is destroyed" (1 Corinthians 15:26), whence the punishment will be deathless. But not to them that obey, for righteousness, and the blessings springing from it, will be their rewards.

**Verse 17.** *"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you."*

After shaming them by the slavery, after alarming them by the rewards, and so exhorting them, he again rights them by calling the benefits to mind. For by these he shows that they were great evils from which they were freed, and that not by any labors of their own, and that things henceforth would be more manageable. Just as any one who has rescued a captive from a cruel tyrant, and advises him not to run away back to him, reminds him of his grievous thralldom; so does Paul set the evils passed away most emphatically before us, by giving thanks to God. For it was no human power that could set us free from all those evils, but, "thanks be to God," who was willing and able to do such great things. And he well says, "Ye have obeyed from the heart." Ye were neither forced nor pressed, but ye came over of your own accord, with willing mind. Now this is like one that praises and rebukes at once. For after having willingly come, and not having had any necessity to undergo, what allowance can you claim, or what excuse can you make, if you run away back to your former estate? Next that you may learn that it came not of your own willing temper only, but the whole of it of God's grace also, after saying, "Ye have obeyed from the heart," he adds, "that form of doctrine which was delivered you." For the obedience from the heart shows the free will. But the being delivered, hints the assistance from God. But what is the form of doctrine? It is living aright, and in conformity with the best conversation.

**Verse 18.** *"Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."*

There are two gifts of God which he here points out. The "freeing from sin," and also the "making them servants to righteousness," which is better than any freedom. For God hath done the same as if a person were to take an orphan, who had been carried away by savages into their own country, and were not only to free him from captivity, but were to set a kind father over him, and bring him to very great dignity. And this has been done in our case. For it was not our old evils alone that He freed us from, since He even led us to the life of angels, and paved the way for us to the best conversation, handing us over to the safe keeping of righteousness, and killing our former evils, and deadening the old man, and leading us to an immortal life.

Let us then continue living this life; for many of those who seem to breathe and to walk about are in a more wretched plight than the dead. For there are different kinds of deadness; and one there is of the body, according to which Abraham was dead, and still was not dead. For "God," He says, "is not a God of the dead, but of the living." (Matthew 22:32.) Another is of the soul which Christ alludes to when He says, "Let the dead bury their dead." Another, which is even the subject of praise, which is brought about by religion, of which Paul saith, "Mortify your members which are upon the earth." (Colossians 3:5.) Another, which is the cause even of this, the one which takes place in baptism. "For our old man," he says, "has been crucified" (ver. 6), that is, has been deadened. Since then we know this, let us flee from the deadness by which, even though alive, we die. And let us not be afraid of that with which common death comes on. But the other two, whereof one is blissful, having been given by God, the other praiseworthy, which is accomplished by ourselves together with God, let us both choose and be emulous of. And of those two, one doth David pronounce blessed, when he says, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven" (Psalm 32:1); and the other, Paul holds in admiration, saying, and writing to the Galatians, "They that be Christ's have crucified the flesh." (Galatians 5:24.) But of the other couple, one Christ declares to be easy to hold in contempt, when He says, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul:" and the other fearful, for, "Fear" (He says) "Him that is able to destroy both body and soul in hell." (Matthew 10:28.) And therefore let us flee from this, and choose that deadness which is held blessed and admirable; that of the other two, we may escape the one and

not fear the other: for it is not the least good to us to see the sun, and to eat and drink, unless the life of good words be with us. For what would be the advantage, pray, of a king dressed in a purple robe and possessed of arms, but without a single subject, and exposed to all that had a mind to attack and insult him? In like manner it will be no advantage to a Christian to have faith, and the gift of baptism, and yet be open to all the passions. In that way the disgrace will be greater, and the shame more. For as such an one having the diadem and purple is so far from gaining by this dress any honor to himself, that he even does disgrace to that by his own shame: so the believer also, who leadeth a corrupt life, is so far from becoming, as such, an object of respect, that he is only the more one of scorn. "For as many," it says, "as sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law." (Romans 2:12). And in the Epistle to the Hebrews, he says, "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who had trodden under foot the Son of God?" (Hebrews 10:28, 29.) And with reason. For I placed (He might say) all the passions in subjection to thee by baptism. How then comes it that thou hast disgraced so great a gift, and hast become one thing instead of another? I have killed and buried thy former transgressions, like worms - how is it that thou hast bred others? - for sins are worse than worms, since these do harm to the body, those to the soul; and those make the more offensive stench. Yet we perceive it not, and so we are at no pains to purge them out. Thus the drunkard knows not how disgusting the stale wine is, but he that is not drunken has a distinct perception of it. So with sins also, he that lives soberly knows thoroughly that other mire, and the stain. But he that gives himself up to wickedness, like a man made drowsy with drunkenness, does not even know the very fact that he is ill. And this is the most grievous part of vice, that it does not allow those who fall into it even to see the greatness of their own bane, but as they lie in the mire, they think they are enjoying perfumes. And so they have not even the power of getting free, but when full of worms, like men that pride themselves in precious stones. so do they exult in these. And for this reason they have not so much as the will to kill them, but they even nourish these up, and multiply them in themselves, until they send them on to the worms of the world to come. For these are providers for those, and are not only providers, but even the fathers of those that never die; as it says, "their worm shall not die." (Mark 9:44.) These kindle the hell which never extinguishes. To prevent this from happening then, let us do away with this fountain of evil, and extinguish the furnace, and let us draw up the root of wickedness from beneath, since you will do no good by cutting the tree off from above, if the root remains below, and sends up fresh shoots of the same kind again. What then is the root of the evils? Learn from the good husbandman (i.e. St. Paul 1 Corinthians 3:6-9), who has an accurate knowledge of such things, and tends the spiritual vine and cultivates the whole world. Now what does he say is the cause of all the evils? The love of money. For the "love of money is the root of all evils." (1 Timothy 6:10). Hence come fightings, and enmities and wars; hence emulations, and railings, and suspicions, and insults; hence murders, and thefts, and violations of sepulchers. Through this, not cities and countries only, but roads and habitable and inhabitable parts, and mountains, and groves, and hills, and, in a word, all places are filled with blood and murder. And not even from the sea has this evil withdrawn, but even there also with great fury hath it revealed, since pirates beset it on all sides, thus devising a new mode of robbery. Through this have the laws of nature been subverted, and the claims of relationship set aside, and the laws of piety itself broken through. For the thralldom of money hath armed, not against the living only, but even against the departed too, the right hands of such men. And at death even, they make no truce with them, but bursting open the sepulchers, they put forth their impious hands even against dead bodies, and not even him that hath let go of life will they suffer to be let go from their plotting. And all the evils that you may find, whether in the house or in the market-place, or in the courts of law, or in the senate, or in the

king's palace, or in any other place whatsoever, it is from this that you will find they all spring. For this evil it is, this assuredly, which fills all places with blood and murder, this lights up the flame of hell, this makes cities as wretchedly off as a wilderness, yea, even much worse. For those that beset the high roads, one can easily be on one's guard against, as not being always upon attack. But they who in the midst of cities imitate them are so much the worse than them, in that these are harder to guard against, and dare to do openly what the others do with secrecy. For those laws, which have been made with a view to stopping their iniquity, they draw even into alliance and fill the cities with this kind of murders and pollutions. Is it not murder, pray, and worse than murder, to hand the poor man over to famine, and to cast him into prison, and to expose him not to famine only, but to tortures too, and to countless acts of insolence? For even if you do not do these things yourself to him, yet you are the occasion of their being done, you do them more than the ministers who execute them. The murderer plunges his sword into a man at once, and after giving him pain for a short time, he does not carry the torture any farther. But do you who by your calumnies, by your harassings, by your plottings, make light darkness to him, and set him upon desiring death ten thousand times over, consider how many deaths you perpetrate instead of one only? And what is worse than all, you plunder and are grasping, not impelled to it by poverty, without any hunger to necessitate you, but that your horse's bridle may be spattered over with gold enough, or the ceiling of your house, or the capitals of your pillars. And what hell is there that this conduct would not deserve, when it is a brother, and one that has shared with yourself in blessings unutterable, and has been so highly honored by the Lord, whom you, in order that you may deck out stones, and floors, and the bodies of animals with neither reason, nor perception of these ornaments, are casting into countless calamities? And your dog is well attended too, while man, or rather Christ, for the sake of the hound, and all these things I have named, is straitened with extreme hunger. What can be worse than such confusion? What more grievous than such lawlessness as this? What streams of fire will be enough for such a soul? He that was made in the Image of God stands in unseemly plight, through thy inhumanity; but the faces of the mules that draw thy wife glisten with gold in abundance, as do the skins and woods which compose that canopy. And if it is a seat that is to be made, or a footstool, they are all made of gold and silver. But the member of Christ, for whom also He came hither from Heaven, and shed His precious Blood, does not even enjoy the food that is necessary for him, owing to thy rapaciousness. But the couches are mantled with silver on every side, while the bodies of the saints are deprived even of necessary clothing. And to thee Christ is less precious than anything else, servants, or mules, or couch, or chair, or footstool; for I pass over furniture of still meaner use than these, leaving it to you to know of it. But if thou art shocked at hearing this, stand aloof from doing it, and then the words spoken will not harm thee. Stand aloof, and cease from this madness. For plain madness it is, such eagerness about these things. Wherefore letting go of these things, let us look up, late as it is, towards Heaven, and let us call to mind the Day which is coming, let us bethink ourselves of that awful tribunal, and the exact accounts, and the sentence incorruptible. Let us consider that God, who sees all these things, sends no lightnings from Heaven; and yet what is done deserves not thunderbolts merely. Yet He neither doth this, nor doth He let the sea loose upon us, nor doth He burst the earth in twain, He quencheth not the sun, nor doth He hurl the heaven with its stars upon us. He doth not move aught from its place, but suffereth them to hole their course, and the whole creation to minister to us. Pondering all this then, let us be awestruck with the greatness of His love toward man, and let us return to that noble origin which belongs to us, since at present certainly we are in no better plight than the creatures without reason, but even in a much worse one. For they do love their kin, and need but the community of nature to cause affection towards each other. But thou who besides nature hast countless causes to draw thee together and attach thee to the member: of thyself; the being honored with the

Word the partaking in one religion, the sharing in countless blessings; art become of wilder nature than they, by displaying so much carefulness about profitless things, and leaving the Temples of God to perish in hunger and nakedness, and often surrounding them also with a thousand evils. For if it is from love of glory that you do these things, it is much more binding on you to show your brother attention, than your horse. For the better the creature that enjoys the act of kindness, the brighter the crown that is woven for such carefulness. Since now while thou fallest into the contrary of all this, thou pullest upon thyself accusers without number, yet perceivest it not. For who is there that will not speak ill of thee? who that will not indite thee as guilty of the greatest atrocity and misanthropy, when he sees that thou disregardest the human race, and settest that of senseless creatures above men, and besides senseless creatures, even the furniture of thy house? Hast thou not heard the Apostles say, that they who first received the word sold both "houses and lands" (Acts 4:34), that they might support the brethren? but you plunder both houses and lands, that you may adorn a horse, or wood-work, or skins, or walls, or a pavement. And what is worse is, that it is not men only, but women too are afflicted with this madness, and urge their husbands to this empty sort of pains, by forcing them to lay out their money upon anything rather than the necessary things. And if any one accuse them for this, they are practiced with a defense, itself loaded with much to be accused. For both the one and the other are done at once, says one. What say you? are you not afraid to utter such a thing, and to set the same store by horses and mules and couches and footstools, as by Christ an hungered? Or rather not even comparing them at all, but giving the larger share to these, and to Him meting out with difficulty a scant share? Dost thou not know that all belongs to Him, both thou and thine? Dost thou not know that He fashioned thy body, as well as gave thee a soul, and apportioned thee the whole world? but thou art not for giving a little recompense to Him. But if thou lettest a little hut, thou requirest the rent with the utmost rigor, and though reaping the whole of His creation, and dwelling in so wide a world, thou hast not courage to lay down even a little rent, but has given up to vainglory thyself and all thou hast. For this is that whereof all these things come. The horse is none the better above his natural excellence for having this ornament, neither yet is the person mounted upon him, for sometimes he is only in the less esteem for it; since many neglect the rider and turn their eyes to the horse's ornaments, and to the attendants behind and before, and to the fan-bearers. But the man, who is lackeyed by these, they hate and turn their heads from, as a common enemy. But this does not happen when thou adornest thy soul, for then men, and angels, and the Lord of angels, all weave thee a crown. And so, if thou art in love with glory, stand aloof from the things which thou art now doing, and show thy taste not in thy house, but in thy soul, that thou mayest become brilliant and conspicuous. For now nothing can be more cheap than thou art, with thy soul unfurnished, and but the handsomeness of thy house for a screen. But if thou art impatient of hearing me speak in this way, listen to what one of those that are without did, and at all events be shamed by their philosophy. For it is said that a certain one of them, who went into a palace that shone with gold in abundance, and glistened with the great beauty of the marbles and the columns, when he saw the floor strewed with carpets in all directions, spat in the face of the master of the house, and when found fault with for it said, that since there was no other part of the house where he could do this, he was obliged to do this affront to his face. See how ridiculous a man is, who displays his taste in exteriors, and how little he is in the eyes of all reasonable men. And with good reason. For if a person were to leave thy wife to be clad in rags, and to be neglected, and clothed thy maid-servants with brilliant dresses, thou wouldest not bear it meekly, but wouldest be exasperated, and say that it was insulting in the extreme. Reason then in this way about your soul. When you display your taste in walls then, and pavement, and furniture, and other things of the kind, and do not give liberally in alms, or practice the other parts of a religious life (filosofivan); you do nothing less than this, or rather what is

worse than this by far. For the difference between servant and mistress is nothing, but between soul and flesh, there is a great disparity. But if it be so with the flesh, much more is it with a house or a couch or a footstool. What kind of excuse then dost thou deserve, who putteth silver on all these, but for it hast no regard, though it be covered with filthy rags, squalid, hungry, and full of wounds, torn by hounds unnumbered (Luke 16:20, 21); and after all this fanciest that thou shall get thee glory by displaying thy taste in externals wound about thee? And this is the very height of frenzy, while ridiculed, reproached, disgraced, dishonored, and falling into the severest punishment, still to be vain of these things! Wherefore, I beseech you, laying all this to heart, let us become sober-minded, late as it is, and become our own masters, and transfer this adorning from outward things to our souls. For so it will abide safe from spoiling, and will make us equal to the angels, and will entertain us with unaltering good, which may we all attain by the grace and love toward man, etc.

**Verse 19.** *“I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.”*

Since he had required great strictness of life, charging us to be dead to the world, and to Have died unto wickedness, and to abide with no notion towards the workings of sin, and seemed to be saying something great and burdensome, and too much for human nature; through a desire to show that he is not making any exorbitant demand, nor even as much as might be expected of one who enjoyed so great a gift, but one quite moderate and light, he proves it from contraries, and says, “I speak after the manner of men,” as much as to say, Going by human reasonings; by such as one usually meets with. For he signifies either this, or the moderateness of it, by the term applied, “after the manner of men.” For elsewhere he uses the same word. “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man” (1 Corinthians 10:13), that is, moderate and small. “For as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.” And truly the masters are very different ones, but still it is an equal amount of servitude that I ask. For men ought to give a much larger one, and so much the larger as this is a greater and better mastership than the other. Nevertheless I make no greater demand “because of the infirmity,” and that, he does not say of your free will or readiness of spirit, but “of your flesh,” so making what he says the less severe. And yet on one side there is uncleanness, on the other holiness: on the one iniquity, and on the other righteousness. And who is so wretched, he says, and in such straits as not to spend as much earnestness upon the service of Christ, as upon that of sin and the devil? Hear then what follows, and you will see clearly that we do not even spend this little. For when (stated in this naked way) it does not seem credible or easy to admit, and nobody would endure to hear that he does not serve Christ so much as he did serve the devil, he proves it by what follows, and renders it credible by bringing that slavery before us, and saying how they did serve him.

**Verse 20.** *“For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.”*

Now what he says is somewhat of this kind, When ye lived in wickedness, and impiety, and the worst of evils, the state of compliance ye lived in was such that ye did absolutely no good thing at all. For this is, “ye were free from righteousness.” That is ye were not subject to it, but estranged from it wholly. For ye did not even so much as divide the manner of servitude between righteousness and sin, but gave yourselves wholly up to wickedness. Now, therefore, since ye have come over to righteousness, give

yourselves wholly up to virtue, doing nothing at all of vice, that the measure you give may be at least equal. And yet it is not the mastership only that is so different, but in the servitude itself there is a vast difference. And this too he unfolds with great perspicuity, and shows what conditions they served upon then, and what now. And as yet he says nothing of the harm accruing from the thing, but hitherto speaks of the shame.

**Verse 21.** *“What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?”*

So great was the slavery, that even the recollection of it now makes you ashamed; but if the recollection makes one ashamed, the reality would much more. And so you gained now in two ways, in having been freed from the shame; and also in having come to know the condition you were in; just as then ye were injured in two ways, in doing things deserving shame, and in not even knowing to be ashamed. And this is worse than the former. Yet still ye kept in a state of servitude. Having then proved most abundantly the harm of what took place then from the shame of it, he comes to the thing in question. Now what is this thing? “For the end of those things is death.” Since then shame seems to be no such serious evil, he comes to what is very fearful, I mean death; though in good truth what he had before mentioned were enough. For consider how exceeding great the mischief must be, inasmuch as, even when freed from the vengeance due to it, they could not get free of the shame. What wages then, he says, do you expect from the reality, when from the bare recollection, and that too when you are freed from the vengeance, you hide your face and blush, though under such grace as you are! But God’s side is far otherwise.

**Verse 22.** *“For now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”*

Of the former, the fruit was shame, even after the being set free. Of these the fruit is holiness, and where holiness is, there is all confidence. But of those things the end is death, and of these everlasting life. Do you see how he points out some things as already given, and some as existing in hope, and from what are given he draws proof of the others also, that is from the holiness of the life. For to prevent your saying everything lies in hope, he points out that you have already reaped fruits, first the being freed from wickedness, and such evils as the very recollection of puts one to shame; second, the being made a servant unto righteousness; a third, the enjoying of holiness; a fourth, the obtaining of life, and life too not for a season, but everlasting. Yet with all these, he says, do but serve as ye served it. For though the master is far preferable, and the service also has many advantages, and the rewards too for which ye are serving, still I make no further demand. Next, since he had mentioned arms and a king, he keeps on with the metaphor in these words:

**Verse 23.** *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

After speaking of the wages of sin, in the case of the blessings, he has not kept to the same order: for he does not say, the wages of good deeds, “but the gift of God;” to show, that it was not of themselves that they were freed, nor was it a due they received, neither yet a return, nor a recompense of labors, but by grace all these things came about. And so there was a superiority for this cause also, in that He did not free them only, or change their condition for a better, but that He did it without any labor or trouble upon their part: and that He not only freed them, but also gave them much more than before, and that through His Son. And the whole of this he has interposed as having discussed the subject of grace, and

being on the point of overthrowing the Law next. That these things then might not both make them rather listless, he inserted the part about strictness of life, using every opportunity of rousing the hearer to the practice of virtue. For when he calls death the wages of sin, he alarms them again, and secures them against dangers to come. For the words he uses to remind them of their former estate, he also employs so as to make them thankful, and more secure against any inroads of temptations. Here then he brings the hortatory part to a stop, and proceeds with the doctrines again, speaking on this wise.