

Saint_Thomas_on_the_14th_Sunday_after_Pentecost

No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other: or he will sustain the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat: and the body more than the raiment? Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns: and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? And which of you by taking thought, can add to his stature by one cubit? And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they labour not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. And if the grass of the field, which is today, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe: how much more you, O ye of little faith? Be not solicitous therefore, saying, What shall we eat: or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.

PSEUD-CHRYS. The Lord had said above, that he that has a spiritual mind is able to keep his body free from sin; and that He who has not, is not able. Of this He here gives the reason, saying, No man can serve two masters.

GLOSS. Otherwise; it had been declared above, that good things become evil, when done with a worldly purpose. It might therefore have been said by someone, I will do good works from worldly and heavenly motives at once. Against this the Lord says, No man can serve two masters.

CHRYS. Or otherwise; in what had gone before He had restrained the tyranny of avarice by many and weighty motives, but He now adds yet more. Riches do not only harm us in that they are robbers against us, and that they cloud our understanding, but they moreover turn us away from God's service. This He proves from familiar notions, saying, No man can serve two masters; two, He means, whose orders are contrary; for concord makes one of many. This is proved by what follows, for either he will hate the one. He mentions two, that we may see that change for the better is easy. For if one were to give himself up in despair as having been made a slave to riches, namely, by loving them, he may hence learn, that it is possible for him to change into a better service, namely, by not submitting to such slavery, but by despising it.

GLOSS. Or; He seems to allude to two different kinds of servants; one kind who serve freely for love, another who serve servilely from fear. If then one serve two masters of contrary character from love, it must be that he hate the one; if from fear, while he trembles before the one, he must despise the other. But as the world or God predominate in a man's heart, he must be drawn contrary ways; for God draws him who serves Him to things above; the earth draws to things beneath; therefore He concludes, You cannot serve God and riches.

JEROME. Let the covetous man who is called by the Christian name, hear this, that he cannot serve both Christ and riches. Yet He said not, he who has riches, but, he who is the servant of riches. For he who is the slave of money, guards his money as a slave; but he who has thrown off the yoke of his slavery, dispenses them as a master.

GLOSS. By riches is meant the Devil, who is the lord of money, not that he can bestow them unless where God wills, but because by means of them he deceives men.

AUG. Whoever serves riches, verily serves him, who, being for desert of his perversity set over these things of earth, is called by the Lord, The prince of this world. Or otherwise; who the two masters are He shows when He says, You cannot serve God and riches, that is to say, God and the Devil. Either then man will hate the one, and love the other, namely God; or, he will endure the one and despise the other. For he who is riches' servant endures a hard master; for ensnared by his own lust he has been made subject to the Devil, and loves him not. As one whose passions have connected him with another man's handmaid, suffers a hard slavery, yet loves not him whose handmaid he loves. But He said, will despise, and not will hate, the other, for none can with a right conscience hate God. But he despises, that is, fears Him not, as being certain of His goodness.

AUG. The Lord had taught above, that whoever desires to love God, and to take heed not to offend, should not think that he can serve two masters; lest though perhaps he may not look for superfluities, yet his heart may become double for the sake of very necessities, and his thoughts bent to obtain them. Therefore I say to you, Be not you careful for your life what you shall eat, or for your body what you shall put on.

CHRYS. He does not hereby mean that the spirit needs food, for it is incorporeal, but He speaks according to common usage, for the soul cannot remain in the body unless the body be fed.

AUG. Or we may understand the soul in this place to be put for the animal life.

JEROME; Some MSS. add here, nor what you shall drink. That which belongs naturally to all animals alike, to brutes and beasts of burden as well as to man, from all thought of this we are not freed. But we are bid not to be anxious what we should eat, for in the sweat of our face we earn our bread; the toil is to be undergone, the anxiety put away. This Be not careful, is to be taken of bodily food and clothing; for the food and clothing of the spirit it becomes us to be always careful.

AUG. There are certain heretics called Euchitae, who hold that a monk may not do any work even for his support; who embrace this profession that they may be freed from necessity of daily labor.

AUG. For they say the Apostle did not speak of personal labor, such as that of husbandmen or craftsmen, when he said, Who will not work, neither let him eat. For he could not be so contrary to the Gospel where it is said, Therefore I say to you, Be not careful. Therefore in that saying of the Apostle we are to understand spiritual works, of which it is elsewhere said, I have planted, Apollos waters. And thus they think themselves obedient to the Apostolic precept, interpreting the Gospel to speak of not taking care for the needs of the body, and the Apostle to speak of spiritual labor and food. First let us prove that the Apostle meant that the servants of God should labor with the body. He had said, You yourselves know how you ought to imitate us in that we were not troublesome among you, nor did we eat any man's bread for nothing; but travailing in labor and weariness day and night, that we might not be burdensome to any of you. Not that we have not power, but that we might offer ourselves as a pattern to you which you should imitate. For when we were among you, this we taught among you, that if a man would not work, neither should he eat. What shall we say to this, since he taught by his example what

he delivered in precept, in that he himself wrought with his own hands. This is proved from the Acts, where it is said, that he abode with Aquila and his wife Priscilla, laboring with them, for they were tent-makers. And yet to the Apostle, as a preacher of the Gospel, a soldier of Christ, a planter of the vineyard, a shepherd of his flock, the Lord had appointed that he should live of the Gospel, but he refused that payment which was justly his due, that he might present himself an example to those who exacted what was not due to them. Let those hear this who have not that power which he had; namely, of eating bread for nought, and only laboring with spiritual labor. If indeed they be Evangelists, if ministers of the Altar, if dispensers of the Sacraments, they have this power. Or if they had had in this world possessions, whereby they might without labor have supported themselves, and had on their turning to God distributed this to the needy, then were their infirmity to be believed and to be borne with. And it would not import whatever place it was in which he made the distribution, seeing there is but one commonwealth of all Christians. But they who enter the profession of God's service from the country life, from the workman's craft, or the common labor, if they work not, are not to be excused. For it is by no means fitting that in that life in which senators become laborers, there should laboring men become idle; or that where lords of farms come having given up their luxuries, there should rustic slaves come to find luxury. But when the Lord says, Be not you careful, He does not mean that they should not procure such things as they have need of, wherever they may honestly, but that they should not look to these things, and should not for their sake do what they are commanded to do in preaching the Gospel; for this intention He had a little before called the eye.

CHRYS. Or we may connect the context otherwise; When the Lord had inculcated contempt of money that none might say, How then shall we be able to live when we have given up our all? He adds, Therefore I say to you, Take no thought for your life.

GLOSS. That is, Be not withdrawn by temporal cares from things eternal.

JEROME; The command is therefore, not to be anxious what we shall eat. For it is also commanded, that in the Sweat of our face we must eat bread. Toil therefore is enjoined.

PSEUD-CHRYS. Bread may not be gained by carefulness of spirit, but by toil of body; and to them that will labor it abounds, God bestowing it as a reward of their industry; and is lacking to the idle, God withdrawing it as punishment of their sloth. The Lord also confirms our hope, and descending first from the greater to the less, says, Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

JEROME; He who has given the greater, will He not also give the less?

PSEUD-CHRYS. For had He not willed that that which was should be preserved, He had not created it; but what He so created that it should be preserved by food, it is necessary that He give it food, as long as He would have it to be preserved.

HILARY; Otherwise; Because the thoughts of the unbelievers were ill-employed respecting care of things future, caviling concerning what is to be the appearance of our bodies in time resurrection, what the food in the eternal life, therefore He continues, Is not the life more than food? He will not endure that our hope should hang in care for the meat and drink and clothing that is to be in the resurrection, lest there should be affront given to Him who has given us the more precious things, in our being anxious that He should also give us the lesser.

PSEUD-CHRYS. Having confirmed our hope by this arguing from the greater to the less, He next confirms it by an argument from less to greater, Behold the fowls of the air, they sow not, neither do they reap.

AUG. Some argue that they ought not to labor, because the fowls of the air neither Sow nor reap. Why then do they not attend to that which follows, neither gather into barns? Why do they seek to have their hands idle, and their storehouses full? Why indeed do they grind corn, and dress it? For this do not the birds. Or even if they find men whom they can persuade to supply them day by day with victuals ready prepared, at least they draw water from the spring, and set on table for themselves, which the birds do not. But if neither are they driven to fill themselves vessels with water, then have they gone one new step of righteousness beyond those who were at that time at Jerusalem, who of corn sent to them of free gift, made, or caused to be made, loaves, which the birds do not. But not to lay up any thing for the morrow cannot be observed by those, who for many days together withdrawn from the sight of men, and suffering none to approach to them, shut themselves up, to live in much fervency of prayer. What? Will you say that the more holy men become, the more unlike the birds of the air in this respect they become? What He says respecting the birds of the air, He says to this end, that none of His servants should think that God has no thought of their wants, when they see Him so provide even for these inferior creatures. Neither is it not God that feeds those that earn their bread by their own labor; neither because God has said, Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you, ought the Apostle therefore not to have fled, but to have remained still to have been seized, that God might save him as He did the Three Children out of the midst of the fire. Should any object in this sort to the saints in their flight from persecution, they would answer that they ought not to tempt God, and that God, if He pleased, would so do to deliver them as He had done Daniel from the lions, Peter from prison, then when they could no longer help them selves; but that in having made flight possible to them, should they be saved by flight, it was by God that they were saved. In like manner, such of God's servants as have strength to earn their food by the labor of their hands, would easily answer any who should object to them this out of the Gospel concerning the birds of the air, that they neither sow nor reap; and would say, if we by sickness or any other hindrance are not able to work, He will feed us as He feeds the birds, that work not. But when we can work, we ought not to tempt God, seeing that even this our ability is His gift; and that we live here we live of His goodness that has made us able to live; He feeds us by whom the birds of the air are fed; as He says, Your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you of much greater value?

AUG. You are of more value, because a rational animal, such as man is, is higher in the scale of nature than an irrational, such as are the birds of the air.

ID. Indeed a higher price is often given for a horse than a slave, for a jewel than for a waiting maid, but this not from reasonable valuation, but from the need of the person requiring, or rather from his pleasure desiring it.

PSEUD-CHRYS. For God created all animals for man, but man for himself; therefore by how much the more precious is the creation of man, so much the greater is God's care for him. If then the birds without toiling find food, shall man not find, to whom God has given both knowledge of labor and hope of fruitfulness?

JEROME; There be some who, seeking to go beyond the limits of their fathers, and to soar into the air, sink into the deep and are drowned. These will have the birds of the air to mean the Angels, and the other powers in the ministry of God, who without any care of their own are fed by God's providence. But if this be indeed as they would have it, how follows it, said to men, Are not you of more worth than they? It must be taken then in the plain sense; If birds that today are, and tomorrow are not, be nourished by God's providence, without thought or toil of their own, how much more men to whom eternity is promised!

HILARY; It may be said, that under the name of birds, He exhorts us by the example of the unclean spirits, to whom, without any trouble of their own in seeking and collecting it, provision of life is given by the power of the Eternal Wisdom. And to lead us to refer this to the unclean spirits, He suitably adds, Are not you of much more value than they? Thus showing the great interval between piety and wickedness.

GLOSS. He teaches us not only by the instance of the birds, but adds a further proof, that to our being and life our own care is not enough, but Divine Providence therein works; saying, Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?

PSEUD-CHRYS. For it is God who day by day works the growth of Your body, yourself not feeling it. If then the Providence of God works thus daily in your very body, how shall that Same Providence withhold from working in necessities of life? And if by taking thought you cannot add the smallest part to your body, how shall you by taking thought be altogether saved?

AUG. Or it may be connected with what follows it; as though He should say, It was not by our care that our body was brought to its present stature; so that we may know that if we desired to add one cubit to it, we should not be able. Leave then the care of clothing that body to Him who made it to grow to its present stature.

HILARY; Otherwise; As by the example of the spirits He had fixed our faith in the supply of food for our lives, so now by a decision of common understanding He cuts off all anxiety about supply of clothing. Seeing that He it is who shall raise in one perfect man every various kind of body that ever drew breath, and is alone able to add one or two or three cubits to each man's stature; surely in being anxious concerning clothing, that is, concerning the appearance of our bodies, we offer affront to Him who will add so much to each man's stature as shall bring all to an equality.

AUG. But if Christ rose again with the same stature with which He died, it is impious to say that when the time of the resurrection of all shall come, there shall be added to His body a bigness that it had not at His own resurrection, (for He appeared to His disciples with that body in which He had been known among them,) such that He shall be equaled to the tallest among men. If again we say that all men's bodies, whether tall or short, shall be alike brought to the size and stature of the Lord's body, then much will perish from many bodies, though He has declared that not a hair shall fall. It remains therefore that each be raised in his own stature-that stature which he had in youth, if he died in old age; if in childhood that Stature to which he would have attained had he lived. For the Apostle says not, 'To the measure of the stature,' but, To the measure of the full age of Christ. For the bodies of the dead shall rise in youth and maturity; to which we know that Christ attained.

CHRYS. Having shown that it is not right to be anxious about food, He passes to that which is less; (for raiment is not so necessary as food;) and asks, And why are you careful wherewith

you shall be clothed? He uses not here with the instance of the birds, when He might have drawn some to the point, as the peacock, or the swan, but brings forward the lilies, saying, Consider the lilies of the field. He would prove in two things the abundant goodness of God; to wit, the richness of the beauty with which they are clothed, and the mean value of the things so clothed with it.

AUG. The things instanced are not to be allegorized so that we inquire what is denoted by the birds of the air, or the lilies of the field; they are only examples to prove God's care for the greater from His care for the less.

PSEUD-CHRYS. For lilies within a fixed time are formed into branches, clothed in whiteness, and endowed with sweet odor, God conveying by an unseen operation, what the earth had not given to the root. But in all the same perfection is observed, that they may not be thought to have been formed by chance, but may be known to be ordered by God's providence. When He says, They toil not, He speaks for the comfort of men; Neither do they spin, for the women.

CHRYS. He forbids not labor but carefulness, both here and above when He spoke of Sowing.

GLOSS. And for the greater exaltation of God's providence in those things that are beyond human industry, He adds, I say to you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

JEROME; For, what regal purple, what silk, what web of divers colors from the loom, may vie with flowers? What work of man has the red blush of the rose? the pure white of the lily? How the Tyrian dye yields to the violet, sight alone and not words can express.

CHRYS. As widely as truth differs from falsehood, so widely do our clothes differ from flowers. If then Solomon, who was more eminent than all other kings, was yet surpassed by flowers, how shall you exceed the beauty of flowers by your garments? And Solomon was exceeded by the flowers not once only, or twice, but throughout his whole reign; and this is that He says, In all his glory; for no one day was he arrayed as are the flowers.

PSEUD-CHRYS. Or the meaning may be, that Solomon though he toiled not for his own raiment, yet he gave command for the making of it. But where command is, there is often found both offense of them that minister, and wrath of him that commands. When then any are without these things, then they are arrayed as are the lilies.

HILARY; Or; By the lilies are to be understood the eminence of the heavenly Angels, to whom a Surpassing radiance of whiteness is communicated by God. They toil not, neither do they spin, because the angelic powers received in the very first allotment of their existence such a nature, that as they were made so they should ever continue to be; and when in the resurrection men shall be like to Angels, He would have them look for a covering of angelic glory by this example of angelic excellence.

PSEUD-CHRYS. If God then thus provides for the flowers of the earth which only spring up, that they may be seen and die, shall He overlook men whom He has created not to be seen for a time, but that they should be forever?

JEROME; Tomorrow in Scripture is put for time future in general. Jacob says, So shall my righteousness answer, for me tomorrow And in the phantasm of Samuel, the Pythoness says to Saul, Tomorrow shall you be with me.

GLOSS. Some copies have into the fire, or, into an heap, which has the appearance of an oven.

CHRYS. He calls them no more lilies, but the grass of the field, to show their small worth; and adds moreover another cause of their small value; which today is. And He said not, and tomorrow is not, but what is yet greater fall, is cast into the oven. In that He says How much more you, is implicitly conveyed the dignity of the human race, as though He had said, You to whom He has given a soul, for whom He has contrived a body, to whom He has sent Prophets and gave His Only-begotten Son.

GLOSS. He says, of little faith, for that faith is little which is not sure of even the least things.

HILARY; Or, under the signification of grass the Gentiles are pointed to. If then an eternal existence is only therefore granted to the Gentiles, that they may soon be handed over to the judgment fires; how impious it is that the saints should doubt of attaining to eternal glory, when the wicked have eternity bestowed on them for their punishment.

REMIG. Spiritually, by the birds of the air are meant the Saints who are born again in the water of holy Baptism; and by devotion raise themselves above the earth and seek the skies. The Apostles are said to be of more value than these, because they are the heads of the Saints. By the lilies also may be understood the Saints, who without the toil of legal ceremonies pleased God by faith alone; of whom it is said, My Beloved, who feeds among the lilies. Holy Church also is understood by the lilies, because of the whiteness of its faith, and the odor of its good conversation, of which it is said in the same place, As the lily among the thorns. By the grass are denoted the unbelievers, of whom it is said, The grass has dried up, and the flowers thereof faded. By the oven eternal damnation; so that the sense be, If God bestows temporal goods on the unbelievers, how much more shall He bestow on you eternal goods!

GLOSS. Having thus expressly cut off all anxiety concerning food and raiment, by an argument drawn from observation of the inferior creation, He follows it up by a further prohibition; Be not you therefore careful, saying, What shall we eat, what shall we drink, or Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

REMIG. The Lord repeated this, that He might show how highly necessary this precept is, and that He might inculcate it more strongly on our hearts.

RABAN. It should be observed that He does not say, Do not you seek, or be thoughtful for, food, drink, and raiment, but what you shall eat, what you shall drink, or wherewithal you shall be clothed. Wherein they seem to me to be convicted, who, using themselves the usual food and clothing, require of those with whom they live either greater sumptuousness, or greater austerity in both.

GLOSS. There is also a further needless solicitude wherein men sin, when they lay by of produce or money more than necessity requires, and leaving spiritual things, are intent on these things, as though despairing of the goodness of God; this is what is forbidden; for after all these things do the Gentiles seek.

PSEUD-CHRYS. Since their belief is that it is Fortune and not Providence that has place in human affairs, and think not that their lives are directed by God's counsel, but follow the uncertain chance, they accordingly fear and despair, as having none to guide them. But he who believes that he is guided by God's counsel, entrusts his provision of food to God's hand; as it follows, for your Father knows that you have need of these things.

CHRYS. He said not God knows, but, Your Father knows, in order to lead them to higher hope; for if He be their Father, He will not endure to forget his children, since not even human fathers could do so. He says, That you have need of all these things, in order that for that very reason, because they are necessary, you may the more lay aside all anxiety. For he who denies his son bare necessities, after what fashion is he a father? But for superfluities they have no right to look with the like confidence.

AUG. God did not gain this knowledge at any certain time, but before all time without beginning of knowledge, foreknew that the things of the world would be, and among others, both what and when we should ask of Him.

ID. As to what some say that these things are so many that they cannot be compassed by the knowledge of God; they ought with like reason to maintain further that God cannot know all numbers which are certainly infinite. But infinity of number is not beyond the compass of His understanding, who is Himself infinite. Therefore if whatever is compassed by knowledge, is bounded by the compass of him that has the knowledge, then is all infinity in a certain unspeakable way bounded by God, because it is not incomprehensible by His knowledge.

NEMESIUS; That there is a Providence, is shown by such signs as the following The continuance of all things, of those things especially which are in a state of decay and reproduction, and the place and order of all things that exist is ever preserved in one and the same state; and how could this be done unless by some presiding power? But some affirm that God does indeed care for the general continuance of all things in the universe, and provides for this, but that all particular events depend on contingency. Now there are but three reasons that can be alleged for God exercising no providence of particular events; either God is ignorant that it is good to have knowledge of particular things; or He is unwilling; or He is unable. But ignorance is altogether alien from blessed substance; for how shall God not know what every wise man knows, that if particulars were destroyed, the whole would be destroyed? But nothing prevents all individuals from perishing; when no power watches over them. If, again, He be unwilling, this must be from one of two reasons; inactivity, or the meanness of the occupation. But inactivity is produced by two things; either we are drawn aside by some pleasure, or hindered by some fear, neither of which can be piously supposed of God. If they affirm that it would be unbecoming, for that it is beneath such blessedness to stoop to things so trifling, how is it not inconsistent that a workman overseeing the whole of any machine, leaves no part however insignificant without attention, knowing the whole is but made up of the parts, and thus pronounce God the Creator of all things to be less wise than craftsmen? But if it be that He is unable, then is He unable to bestow benefits on us. But if we are unable to comprehend the manner of special Providence, we have not therefore any right to deny its operation; we might as well say that, because we did not know the number of mankind, therefore there were no men.

PSEUD-CHRYS. Thus then let him who believes himself to be under the rule of God's counsel commit his provision into God's hand; but let him meditate of good and evil, which if he do not, he will neither shun the evil, nor lay hold of the good. Therefore it is added, Seek you first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. The kingdom of God is the reward of good works; His righteousness is the way of piety by which we go to that kingdom. If then you consider how great is the glory of the Saints, you will either through fear of punishment depart from evil, or through desire of glory hasten to good. And if you consider what is the

righteousness of God, what He loves, and what He hates, the righteousness itself will show you His ways, as it attends on those that love it. And the account we shall have to render is not whether we have been poor or rich, but whether we have done well or ill, which is in our own power.

GLOSS. Or, He says his righteousness, as though He were to say, “You are made righteous through Him, and not through yourselves.”

PSEUDO-CHRYS. The earth for man’s sin is accursed that it should not put forth fruit, according to that in Genesis, Cursed is the ground in your works; but when we do well, then it is blessed. Seek righteousness therefore, and you shall not lack food. Wherefore it follows, and all these things shall be added to you.

AUG. To wit, these temporal goods which are thus manifestly shown not to be such goods as those goods of ours for the sake of which we ought to do well; and yet they are necessary. The kingdom of God and His righteousness is our good which we ought to make our end. But since in order to attain this end we are militant in this life, which may not be lived without supply of these necessaries, He promises, These things shall be added to you. That He says, first, implies that these are to be sought second not in time, but in value; the one is our good, the other necessary to us. For example, we ought not to preach that we may eat, for so we should hold the Gospel as of less value than our food; but we should therefore eat that we may preach the Gospel. But if we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, that is, set this before all other things, and seek other things for the sake of this, we ought not to be anxious lest we should lack necessaries; and therefore He says, All these things shall be added to you; that is, of course, without being an hindrance to you: that you may not in seeking them be turned away from the other, and thus set two ends before you.

CHRYS. And He said not, Shall he given, but, Shall be added, that you may learn that the things that are now, are nothing to the greatness of the things that shall be.

AUG. But when we read that the Apostle suffered hunger and thirst, let us not think that God’s promises failed him; for these things are rather aids. That Physician to whom we have entirely entrusted ourselves, knows when He will give and when He will withhold, as He judges most for our advantage. So that should these things ever be lacking to us, (as God to exercise us often permits,) it will not weaken our fixed purpose, but rather confirm it when wavering.

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