Homilies on the Epistle to the Romans

HOMILIES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE

ROMANS

THE THIRTY-TWO HOMILIES
preached at Antioch by
SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

translated from the Greek by
J. B. MORRIS
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with notes by
GEORGE B. STEVENS

from Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series I, Vol. 11,
edited by
PHILIP SCHAFF, D.D., LL.D.

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ABOUT THIS SERIES

Saint John Chrysostom: Homilies on Holy Scripture presents the Golden-Mouthed preacher's complete homilies on the New Testament — Matthew, John, Acts, and the Epistles of Paul — newly typeset from the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers translations, with a scripture index prepared for this edition.

The text is set in Perpetua, designed by Eric Gill for the Monotype Corporation. It is named after St Perpetua, who was martyred at Carthage in 203 with St Felicity. It was first used in 1929, to print an English translation of the account of their martyrdom, and its italic was first called Felicity. The Greek and the Hebrew are set in Cardo.

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PREFACE TO HOMILIES ON ROMANS

St. Chrysostom's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans is one of the closest and most argumentative of those he has left us. The style of the Epistle itself called for this, being such as almost constantly to remind an attentive reader of the necessity of forming some notion of the views and feelings of the persons to whom it was originally addressed. To this point St. Chrysostom has paid much attention, and has consequently obtained a far clearer view of the doctrinal bearing of the Epistle than most other commentators. His early rhetorical education would probably have given him even too strong a bias toward that kind of exposition, but for his subsequent course of severe discipline and ascetic devotion. As it is, the rhetorical element in his commentary is of very great value. His ready apprehension of the effect intended to be produced by the style and wording of a sentence, is often the means of clearing up what might otherwise seem obscure or even inconsistent. An example of this occurs in the beginning of the seventh chapter, which he expounds in the 12th Homily. The illustration of our release from the Law of Moses by partaking in the Death of Christ, by the dissolution of marriage at death, is so stated in the Epistle as to contain an apparent inconsistency, as though the death of the Law, and the death of the person, were confounded. And the various readings only shift the difficulty, without removing it. This, however, he has very ably shown to be, in fact, an argument *a fortiori*. Other cases will strike other persons as they happen to have found difficulty in the Text.

A far higher qualification for interpreting St. Paul, in whom, as much as in any of the sacred writers, the Man appears as well as the guiding Spirit, was that peculiar affection with which he regarded him, and which he expresses particularly in the beginning of the Introduction, and at the close of the last Homily. The effect of this is perhaps best traced in the commentary on Rom. ix. 3, Hom. xvi.

The elaborate composition of these Homilies, and the close attention which it must have required, has been thought an indication that they

must have been delivered before the Author was engaged in the cares of the Bishopric of Constantinople. But Tillemont has detected even surer indications, which place the point clearly beyond all question. In his exhortation to Charity, Hom. viii. he speaks of himself and his hearers as under one Bishop. It has been objected that he speaks of himself as Pastor, in Hom. xxix. but he does the same in other Homilies, certainly delivered by him when he was only a preacher at Antioch, and the terms are less definite than in the other case, v. ad. P. Ant. Hom. xx. on the Statues. Besides, he seems to address persons who have ready access to the place in which St. Paul taught and was bound, which cannot be shown to tally with Constantinople, but evidently agrees with Antioch. The binding of St. Paul there mentioned is not, however, on record, and it is just possible he may mean in that expression to refer to another place.

Some account of the life of the Author has been given in the Preface to the Homilies on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, already translated.

The present Translation is from the text of Savile, except where otherwise noted. For the first sixteen Homilies, several Mss. have been collated in Paris, with a view to an Edition of the original, the rest of the collation is not yet come to hand. Four contain nearly the whole of the Commentary, and three more several parts of it: two of these were partially used by the Benedictine Editors, and supply some valuable readings in the latter homilies. There is also one Ms. in the Bodleian Library, which has many mistakes, but agrees in general with the best readings in those which have been collated. It contains nearly the whole text as far as Hom. xxx. and has been entirely collated after Hom. xvi. and for a great part of the earlier Homilies.

The Editors are indebted for the Translation, and much of the matter contained in the Notes, to the Reverend J. B. Morris, M. A., of Exeter College, as well as for the Index.

C. Marriott.

The Benedictine text having been revised by Mr. Field with singular acumen by aid of collations of all European Mss. of any account, it was not thought right to republish this important volume without revising the translation by that text. This was kindly undertaken by the Rev. W. H. Simcox, late Fellow of Queen's College, and has been executed with the care and exactness to be expected from that accomplished scholar. In

other respects, he has with a remarkable modesty left the previous translation untouched.

1876 E. B. Pusey.

THE ARGUMENT[1]

As I keep hearing the Epistles of the blessed Paul read, and that twice every week, and often three or four times, whenever we are celebrating the memorials of the holy martyrs, gladly do I enjoy the spiritual trumpet, and get roused and warmed with desire at recognizing the voice so dear to me, and seem to fancy him all but present to my sight, and behold him conversing with me. But I grieve and am pained, that all people do not know this man, as much as they ought to know him; but some are so far ignorant of him, as not even to know for certainty the number of his Epistles. And this comes not of incapacity, but of their not having the wish to be continually conversing with this blessed man. For it is not through any natural readiness and sharpness of wit that even I am acquainted with as much as I do know, if I do know anything, but owing to a continual cleaving to the man, and an earnest affection towards him. For, what belongs to men beloved, they who love them know above all others; because they are interested in them. And this also this blessed Apostle shows in what he said to the Philippians; "Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the Gospel." (Phil. i. 7.) And so ye also, if ye be willing to apply to the reading of him with a ready mind, will need no other aid. For the word of Christ is true which saith, "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Matt. vii. 7.) But since the greater part of those who here gather themselves to us, have taken upon themselves the bringing up of children, and the care of a wife, and the charge of a family, and for this cause cannot afford to give themselves wholly to this labor, be ye at all events aroused to receive those things which have been brought together by others, and bestow as much attention upon the hearing of what is said as ye give to the gathering together of goods. For although it

[1] Field counts this as the first Homily: but it seemed needless to disturb the usual numeration.

is unseemly to demand only so much of you, yet still one must be content if ye give as much. For from this it is that our countless evils have arisen—from ignorance of the Scriptures; from this it is that the plague of heresies has broken out; from this that there are negligent lives; from this labors without advantage. For as men deprived of this daylight would not walk aright, so they that look not to the gleaming of the Holy Scriptures must needs be frequently and constantly sinning, in that they are walking in the worst darkness. And that this fall not out, let us hold our eyes open to the bright shining of the Apostle's words; for this man's tongue shone forth above the sun, and he abounded more than all the rest in the word of doctrine; for since he labored more abundantly than they, he also drew upon himself a large measure of the Spirit's grace. (1 Cor. xv. 10.) And this I constantly affirm, not only from his Epistles, but also from the Acts. For if there were anywhere a season for oratory, to him men everywhere gave place. Wherefore also he was thought by the unbelievers to be Mercurius, because he took the lead in speech. (Acts xiv. 12.) And as we are going to enter fully into this Epistle, it is necessary to give the date also at which it was written. For it is not, as most think, before all the others, but before all that were written from Rome, yet subsequent to the rest, though not to all of them. For both those to the Corinthians were sent before this: and this is plain from what he wrote at the end of this, saying as follows: "But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints: for it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem." (Rom. xv. 25, 26.) For in writing to the Corinthians he says: "If it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me" (1 Cor. xvi. 4); meaning this about those who were to carry the money from thence. Whence it is plain, that when he wrote to the Corinthians, the matter of this journey of his was in doubt, but when to the Romans, it stood now a decided thing. And this being allowed, the other point is plain, that this Epistle was after those. But that to the Thessalonians also seems to me to be before the Epistle to the Corinthians: for having written to them before, and having moved the question of alms to them, when he said, "But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren" (1 Thess. iv. 9, 10): then he wrote to the Corinthians. And this very point he makes plain in the words, "For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago, and your zeal hath provoked very many" (2 Cor. ix. 2): whence he shows that they

were the first he had spoken to about this. This Epistle then is later than those, but prior (πρώτη) to those from Rome; for he had not as yet set foot in the city of the Romans when he wrote this Epistle, and this he shows by saying, "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift." (Rom. i. 11.) But it was from Rome he wrote to the Philippians; wherefore he says, "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household" (Phil. iv. 22): and to the Hebrews from thence likewise, wherefore also he says, "all they of Italy salute them." (Heb. xiii. 24.) And the Epistle to Timothy he sent also from Rome, when in prison; which also seems to me to be the last of all the Epistles; and this is plain from the end: "For I am now ready to be offered," he says, "and the time of my departure is at hand." (2 Tim. iv. 6.) But that he ended his life there, is clear, I may say, to every one. And that to Philemon is also very late, (for he wrote it in extreme old age, wherefore also he said, "as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner in Christ Jesus,") (Philem. 9), yet previous to that to the Colossians. And this again is plain from the end. For in writing to the Colossians, he says, "All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, whom I have sent with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother." (Col. iv. 7.) For this was that Onesimus in whose behalf he composed the Epistle to Philemon. And that this was no other of the same name with him, is plain from the mention of Archippus. For it is he whom he had taken as worker together with himself in the Epistle to Philemon, when he besought him for Onesimus, whom when writing to the Colossians he stirreth up, saying, "Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received, that thou fulfil it." (Col. iv. 17.) And that to the Galatians seems to me to be before that to the Romans. But if they have a different order in the Bibles, that is nothing wonderful, since the twelve Prophets, though not exceeding one another in order of time, but standing at great intervals from one another, are in the arrangement of the Bible placed in succession. Thus Haggai and Zachariah and the Messenger[2] prophesied after Ezekiel and Daniel, and long after Jonah and Zephaniah and all the rest. Yet they are nevertheless joined with all those from whom they stand so far off in time.

But let no one consider this an undertaking beside the purpose, nor a search of this kind a piece of superfluous curiosity; for the date of the Epistles contributes no little to what we are looking after. For when I see

[2] "Or 'Angel,' i.e. Malachi; who was so called from the expression Mal. i. 1 (LXX. διὰ χειρὸς ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ. cf. E.V. in margin 'by the hand of Malachi'), cf. 2 Esdr. 1. 40."

him writing to the Romans and to the Colossians about the same subjects, and yet not in a like way about the same subjects; but to the former with much condescension, as when he says, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations; for one believeth that he may eat all things, another, who is weak, eateth herbs" (Rom. xiv. 1, 2): but to the Colossians he does not write in this way, though about the same things, but with greater boldness of speech: "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ," he says, "why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances (touch not, taste not, handle not), which all are to perish with the using, not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh" (Col. ii. 20–23);—I find no other reason for this difference than the time of the transaction. For at the first it was needful to be condescending, but afterwards it became no more so. And in many other places one may find him doing this. Thus both the physician and the teacher are used to do. For neither does the physician treat alike his patients in the first stage of their disorder, and when they have come to the point of having health thenceforth, nor the teacher those children who are beginning to learn and those who want more advanced subjects of instruction. Now to the rest he was moved to write by some particular cause and subject, and this he shows, as when he says to the Corinthians, "Touching those things whereof ye wrote unto me" (1 Cor. vii. 1): and to the Galatians too from the very commencement of the whole Epistle writes so as to indicate the same thing; but to these for what purpose and wherefore does he write? For one finds him bearing testimony to them that they are "full of goodness, being filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish others." (Rom. xv. 14.) Why then does he write to them? "Because of the grace of God," he says, "which is given unto me, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ" (ib. 15 , 16): wherefore also he says in the beginning: "I am a debtor; as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also;" for what is said—as that they are "able to exhort others also" (Rom. i. 14, 15),—and the like, rather belongs to encomium and encouragement: and the correction afforded by means of a letter, was needful even for these; for since he had not yet been present, he bringeth the men to good order in two ways, both by the profitableness of his letter and by the expectation of his presence. For such was that holy soul, it comprised the whole world and carried about all men in itself thinking the nearest relationship to be that in God. And he loved them so, as if he had begotten them all, or rather showed (so 4 Mss.) a greater instinctive affection than any father (so Field: all Mss. give "a father's toward all"); for such is the grace of the Spirit, it