229 Wages (*Merces*)

The faithful Lord pays faithfully to the one serving his wages according to his works, Wis. 10[:17]: “And the Lord rendered to the just the wages of their labors.” Chrysostom, Homily 13, in *Imperfecto*,[[1]](#endnote-1) so is man, who on account of man does the good like an evil merchant, who within the time of his lease consumes his merchandise. Moreover, when the time has been finished, he withdraws, he goes away empty. Thus, empty he goes to God, who had desired to receive the wages of his works here. Strive first he who gathers the wages and put them in a perforated sack. Here note that when the householder has a good hired worker and does not give him immediately his whole wages, but only as much as he needs for sustenance of life and rest. He observes lest he spend that in the meantime or lest he leaves his service, but Job 7[:1] it is said, “his days are like the days of a hireling.”

We are all hirelings of God, but if he does not approve the service of another, immediately he gives him the wages of his labors. However, those he wants longer or to remain permanently, he does not give wages immediately, Wis. 5[:16]: “Their reward is with the Lord.” Nevertheless, concerning those who are rewarded in the present, it is said in Eccle. 9[:5]: “The dead know nothing more, neither have they a reward anymore,” of which the cause is said in Matt. 6[:2]: “Amen I say to you, they have received their reward.” However, concerning the permanent ones, it is said in Luke 6[:23]: “Your reward is great in heaven.” Gregory, *Homilia* 17,[[2]](#endnote-2) wages are owed double to one good work, one on the way, the other in the fatherland, one which sustains in labor, the other which remunerates us in the resurrection. Therefore, the wages that are received in the present, these ought to motivate us to tend toward a following wage more vigorously. Wherefore, Eccli. 51[:38]: “Work your work before the time, and he will give you your reward in his time.”

Again, the householder gives wages to the hireling for his labor, because he reserves for himself the whole inheritance, so God does for us. Wherefore Job 7[:2]: “As the hireling looks for the end of his work.” So also, I for the empty months of winter, and John in the second canonical [1:8]: “Look to yourselves, that you lose not the things which you have wrought: but that you may receive a full reward.” Bernard, *Epistola* 36,[[3]](#endnote-3) O how much are the wages with God, if in the present they do not hope for their price. Eccli. 11[:24]: “The blessing of God makes haste to reward the just.” Seneca, *Epistula* 69,[[4]](#endnote-4) shows that all vices allow for wages. For avarice promises money, lust pleasure, ambition pomp.

1. (Pseudo-)Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Mattheum* Homilia 13 ex cap. 5 (PG 56:706-707): Sic est homo, qui propter homines facit bonum sicut mercenarius malus, qui intra tempus locationes suae comedit omnes mercedes suas. cum autem tempore completo recesserit, nudus egreditur. Sic ergo vacuus vadit ad Deum, qui mercedem omnium bonorum suorum accipere desideravit in saeculo. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Gregory, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia* 1.17.7 (PL 76:1141-1142): Qua in re considerandum est quod uni nostro operi duae mercedes debentur, una in via, altera in patria; una quae nos in labore sustentat, alia quae nos in resurrectione remunerat. Merces itaque quae in praesenti [Col.1142A] accipitur: hoc in nobis debet agere, ut ad sequentem mercedem robustius tendatur. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Bernard, cf. Jerome, *Epistolae secundum ordinem temporum* 52.6 (PL 22:533): O quanta apud Deum merces, si in praesenti pretium non sperarent! [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Seneca *Epistula* 69.4 (LCL 76:54-55): Avaritia pecuniam promittit, luxuria multas ac varias voluptates, ambitio purpuram et plausum [↑](#endnote-ref-4)