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THEOLOGY

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BOOK 2

The Knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ, First Disclosed to the Fathers Under the Law, and Then to Us in the Gospel

CHAPTER 1

**BY THE FALL AND REVOLT OF ADAM THE
WHOLE HUMAN RACE WAS DELIVERED
TO THE CURSE,**

**AND DEGENERATED FROM ITS ORIGINAL CONDITION; THE
DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN**

(A true knowledge of ourselves destroys self-confidence, 1-3)

1. WRONG AND RIGHT KNOWLEDGE OF SELF

With good reason the ancient proverb strongly recommended knowledge of self to man.^{fi} For if it is considered disgraceful for us not to know all that pertains to the business of human life, even more detestable is our ignorance of ourselves, by which, when making decisions in necessary matters, we miserably deceive and even blind ourselves!

But since this precept is so valuable, we ought more diligently to avoid applying it perversely. This, we observe, has happened to certain philosophers, who, while urging man to know himself, propose the goal of recognizing his own worth and excellence. And they would have him contemplate in himself nothing but what swells him with empty assurance and puffs him up with pride [^{<010127>}Genesis 1:27].

But knowledge of ourselves lies first in considering what we were given at creation and how generously God continues his favor toward us, in order to know how great our natural excellence would be if only it had remained

unblemished; yet at the same time to bear in mind that there is in us nothing of our own, but that we hold on sufferance whatever God has bestowed upon us. Hence we are ever dependent on him. Secondly, to call to mind our miserable condition after Adam's fall; the awareness of which, when all our boasting and self-assurance are laid low, should truly humble us and overwhelm us with shame. In the beginning God fashioned us after his image [^{<010127>}Genesis 1:27] that he might arouse our minds both to zeal for virtue and to meditation upon eternal life. Thus, in order that the great nobility of our race (which distinguishes us from brute beasts) may not be buried beneath our own dullness of wit, it behooves us to recognize that we have been endowed with reason and understanding so that, by leading a holy and upright life, we may press on to the appointed goal of blessed immortality.

But that primal worthiness cannot come to mind without the sorry spectacle of our foulness and dishonor presenting itself by way of contrast, since in the person of the first man we have fallen from our original condition. From this source arise abhorrence and displeasure with ourselves, as well as true humility; and thence is kindled a new zeal to seek God, in whom each of us may recover those good things which we have utterly and completely lost.

2. MAN BY NATURE INCLINES TO DELUDED SELF-ADMIRATION

Here, then, is what God's truth requires us to seek in examining ourselves: it requires the kind of knowledge that will strip us of all confidence in our own ability, deprive us of all occasion for boasting, and lead us to submission. We ought to keep this rule if we wish to reach the true goal of both wisdom and action. I am quite aware how much more pleasing is that principle which invites us to weigh our good traits rather than to look upon our miserable want and dishonor, which ought to overwhelm us with shame. There is, indeed, nothing that man's nature seeks more eagerly than to be flattered. Accordingly, when his nature becomes aware that its gifts are highly esteemed, it tends to be unduly credulous about them. It is thus no wonder that the majority of men have erred so perniciously in this respect. For, since blind self-love is innate in all mortals, they are most freely persuaded that nothing inheres in themselves that deserves to be

considered hateful. Thus even with no outside support the utterly vain opinion generally obtains credence that man is abundantly sufficient of himself to lead a good and blessed life.^{f2} But if any take a more modest attitude and concede something to God, so as not to appear to claim everything for themselves, they so divide the credit that the chief basis for boasting and confidence remains in themselves.

Nothing pleases man more than the sort of alluring talk that tickles the pride that itches in his very marrow. Therefore, in nearly every age, when anyone publicly extolled human nature in most favorable terms, he was listened to with applause. But however great such commendation of human excellence is that teaches man to be satisfied with himself, it does nothing but delight in its own sweetness; indeed, it so deceives as to drive those who assent to it into utter ruin. For what do we accomplish when, relying upon every vain assurance, we consider, plan, try, and undertake what we think is fitting; then — while in our very first efforts we are actually forsaken by and destitute of sane understanding as well as true virtue — we nonetheless rashly press on until we hurtle to destruction? Yet for those confident they can do anything by their own power, things cannot happen otherwise. Whoever, then, heeds such teachers as hold us back with thought only of our good traits will not advance in self-knowledge, but will be plunged into the worst ignorance.

3. THE TWO CHIEF PROBLEMS OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

God's truth, therefore, agrees with the common judgment of all mortals, that the second part of wisdom consists in the knowledge of ourselves; yet there is much disagreement as to how we acquire that knowledge. According to carnal judgment, man seems to know himself very well, when, confident in his understanding and uprightness, he becomes bold and urges himself to the duties of virtue and, declaring war on vices, endeavors to exert himself with all his ardor toward the excellent and the honorable. But he who scrutinizes and examines himself according to the standard of divine judgment finds nothing to lift his heart to self-confidence. And the more deeply he examines himself, the more dejected he becomes, until, utterly deprived of all such assurance, he leaves nothing to himself with which to direct his life aright.

Yet God would not have us forget our original nobility, which he had bestowed upon our father Adam, and which ought truly to arouse in us a zeal for righteousness and goodness. For we cannot think upon either our first condition or to what purpose we were formed without being prompted to meditate upon immortality, and to yearn after the Kingdom of God. That recognition, however, far from encouraging pride in us, discourages us and casts us into humility. For what is that origin? It is that from which we have fallen. What is that end of our creation? It is that from which we have been completely estranged, so that sick of our miserable lot we groan, and in groaning we sigh for that lost worthiness.^{f3} But when we say that man ought to see nothing in himself to cause elation, we mean that he has nothing to rely on to make him proud.

Therefore, if it is agreeable, let us divide the knowledge that man ought to have of himself. First, he should consider for what purpose he was created and endowed with no mean gifts.^{f4} By this knowledge he should arouse himself to meditation upon divine worship and the future life.^{f5} Secondly, he should weigh his own abilities — or rather, lack of abilities. When he perceives this lack, he should lie prostrate in extreme confusion, so to speak, reduced to nought. The first consideration tends to make him recognize the nature of his duty; the second, the extent of his ability to carry it out. We shall discuss each as the order of teaching demands.

(Adam's sin entailed loss of man's original endowment and ruin of the whole human race, 4-7)

4. THE HISTORY OF THE FALL SHOWS US WHAT SIN IS [GENESIS CH. 3]: UNFAITHFULNESS

Because what God so severely punished must have been no light sin but a detestable crime, we must consider what kind of sin there was in Adam's desertion that enkindled God's fearful vengeance against the whole of mankind. To regard Adam's sin as gluttonous intemperance (a common notion) is childish. As if the sum and head of all virtues lay in abstaining solely from one fruit, when all sorts of desirable delights abounded everywhere; and not only abundance but also magnificent variety was at hand in that blessed fruitfulness of earth!

We ought therefore to look more deeply. Adam was denied the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to test his obedience and prove that he was willingly under God's command. The very name of the tree shows the sole purpose of the precept was to keep him content with his lot and to prevent him from becoming puffed up with wicked lust. But the promise by which he was bidden to hope for eternal life so long as he ate from the tree of life, and, conversely, the terrible threat of death once he tasted of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, served to prove and exercise his faith. Hence it is not hard to deduce by what means Adam provoked God's wrath upon himself. Indeed, Augustine speaks rightly when he declares that pride was the beginning of all evils.¹⁶ For if ambition had not raised man higher than was meet and right, he could have remained in his original state.

But we must take a fuller definition from the nature of the temptation which Moses describes. Since the woman through unfaithfulness was led away from God's Word by the serpent's deceit, it is already clear that disobedience was the beginning of the Fall. This Paul also confirms, teaching that all were lost through the disobedience of one man.

[<450519>Romans 5:19.] Yet it is at the same time to be noted that the first man revolted from God's authority, not only because he was seized by Satan's blandishments, but also because, contemptuous of truth, he turned aside to falsehood. And surely, once we hold God's Word in contempt, we shake off all reverence for him. For, unless we listen attentively to him, his majesty will not dwell among us, nor his worship remain perfect.

Unfaithfulness, then, was the root of the Fall. But thereafter ambition and pride, together with ungratefulness, arose, because Adam by seeking more than was granted him shamefully spurned God's great bounty, which had been lavished upon him. To have been made in the likeness of God seemed a small matter to a son of earth unless he also attained equality with God — a monstrous wickedness! If apostasy, by which man withdraws from the authority of his Maker — indeed insolently shakes off his yoke — is a foul and detestable offense, it is vain to extenuate Adam's sin. Yet it was not simple apostasy, but was joined with vile reproaches against God. These assented to Satan's slanders, which accused God of falsehood and envy and ill will. Lastly, faithlessness opened the door to ambition, and ambition was indeed the mother of obstinate disobedience; as a result, men,

having cast off the fear of God, threw themselves wherever lust carried them. Hence Bernard rightly teaches that the door of salvation is opened to us when we receive the gospel today with our ears, even as death was then admitted by those same windows when they were opened to Satan [cf. <240921>Jeremiah 9:21].^{f7} For Adam would never have dared oppose God’s authority unless he had disbelieved in God’s Word. Here, indeed, was the best bridle to control all passions: the thought that nothing is better than to practice righteousness by obeying God’s commandments; then, that the ultimate goal of the happy life is to be loved by him. Therefore Adam, carried away by the devil’s blasphemies, as far as he was able extinguished the whole glory of God.

5. THE FIRST SIN AS ORIGINAL SIN

As it was the spiritual life of Adam to remain united and bound to his Maker, so estrangement from him was the death of his soul. Nor is it any wonder that he consigned his race to ruin by his rebellion when he perverted the whole order of nature in heaven and on earth. “All creatures,” says Paul, “are groaning” [<450822>Romans 8:22], “subject to corruption, not of their own will” [<450820>Romans 8:20]. If the cause is sought, there is no doubt that they are bearing part of the punishment deserved by man, for whose use they were created. Since, therefore, the curse, which goes about through all the regions of the world, flowed hither and you from Adam’s guilt, it is not unreasonable if it is spread to all his offspring. Therefore, after the heavenly image was obliterated in him, he was not the only one to suffer this punishment — that, in place of wisdom, virtue, holiness, truth, and justice, with which adornments he had been clad, there came forth the most filthy plagues, blindness, impotence, impurity, vanity, and injustice — but he also entangled and immersed his offspring in the same miseries.

This is the inherited corruption, which the church fathers termed “original sin,” meaning by the word “sin” the depravation of a nature previously good and pure. There was much contention over this matter, inasmuch as nothing is farther from the usual view than for all to be made guilty by the guilt of one, and thus for sin to be made common. This seems to be the reason why the most ancient doctors of the church touched upon this subject so obscurely. At least they explained it less clearly than was

fitting. Yet this timidity could not prevent Pelagius from rising up with the profane fiction that Adam sinned only to his own loss without harming his posterity.^{f8} Through this subtlety Satan attempted to cover up the disease and thus to render it incurable. But when it was shown by the clear testimony of Scripture that sin was transmitted from the first man to all his posterity [^{<450512>}Romans 5:12], Pelagius quibbled that it was transmitted through imitation, not propagation. Therefore, good men (and Augustine above the rest) labored to show us that we are corrupted not by derived wickedness, but that we bear inborn defect from our mother's womb.^{f9} To deny this was the height of shamelessness. But no man will wonder at the temerity of the Pelagians and Coelestians when he perceived from that holy man's warnings what shameless beasts they were in all other respects. Surely there is no doubt that David confesses himself to have been "begotten in iniquities, and conceived by his mother in sin" [^{<195105>}Psalms 51:5 p.]. There he does not reprove his father and mother for their sins; but, that he may better commend God's goodness toward himself, from his very conception he carries the confession of his own perversity. Since it is clear that this was not peculiar to David, it follows that the common lot of mankind is exemplified in him.

Therefore all of us, who have descended from impure seed, are born infected with the contagion of sin. In fact, before we saw the light of this life we were soiled and spotted in God's sight. "For who can bring a clean thing from an unclean? There is not one" — as The Book of Job says [^{<181404>}Job 14:4, cf. Vg.].

6. ORIGINAL SIN DOES NOT REST UPON IMITATION

We hear that the uncleanness of the parents is so transmitted to the children that all without any exception are defiled at their begetting. But we will not find the beginning of this pollution unless we go back to the first parent of all, as its source. We must surely hold that Adam was not only the progenitor but, as it were, the root of human nature; and that therefore in his corruption mankind deserved to be vitiated. This the apostle makes clear from a comparison of Adam with Christ. "As through one man sin came into the world and through sin death, which spread among all men when all sinned" [^{<450512>}Romans 5:12], thus through Christ's grace righteousness and life are restored to us [^{<450517>}Romans

5:17]. What nonsense will the Pelagians chatter here? That Adam's sin was propagated by imitation? Then does Christ's righteousness benefit us only as an example set before us to imitate? Who can bear such sacrilege! But if it is beyond controversy that Christ's righteousness, and thereby life, are ours by communication, it immediately follows that both were lost in Adam, only to be recovered in Christ; and that sin and death crept in through Adam, only to be abolished through Christ. These are no obscure words: "Many are made righteous by Christ's obedience as by Adam's disobedience they had been made sinners" [^{<450519>}Romans 5:19 p.]. Here, then, is the relationship between the two: Adam, implicating us in his ruin, destroyed us with himself; but Christ restores us to salvation by his grace.

In such clear light of truth, I think that there is no need for longer or more laborious proof. In the first letter to the Corinthians, Paul wishes to strengthen the faith of the godly in the resurrection. Here he accordingly shows that the life lost in Adam is recovered in Christ [^{<461522>}1 Corinthians 15:22]. Declaring that all of us died in Adam, Paul at the same time plainly testifies that we are infected with the disease of sin. For condemnation could not reach those untouched by the guilt of iniquity. The clearest explanation of his meaning lies in the other part of the statement, in which he declares that the hope of life is restored in Christ. But it is well known that this occurs in no other way than that wonderful communication whereby Christ transfuses into us the power of his righteousness. As it is written elsewhere, "The Spirit is life to us because of righteousness" from. 8:10 p.]. There is consequently but one way for us to interpret the statement, "We have died in Adam": Adam, by sinning, not only took upon himself misfortune and ruin but also plunged our nature into like destruction. This was not due to the guilt of himself alone, which would not pertain to us at all, but was because he infected all his posterity with that corruption into which he had fallen.

Paul's statement that "by nature all are children of wrath" [^{<490203>}Ephesians 2:3] could not stand, unless they had already been cursed in the womb itself. Obviously, Paul does not mean "nature" as it was established by God, but as it was vitiated in Adam. For it would be most unfitting for God to be made the author of death. Therefore, Adam so corrupted himself that infection spread from him to all his descendants. Christ himself, our heavenly judge, clearly enough proclaims that all men

are born wicked and depraved when he says that “whatever is born of flesh is flesh” [^{<430306>} John 3:6], and therefore the door of life is closed to all until they have been reborn [^{<430305>} John 3:5].

7. THE TRANSMISSION OF SIN FROM ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER

No anxious discussion is needed to understand this question, which troubled the fathers not a little — whether the son’s soul proceeds by derivation ^{f10} from the father’s soul — because the contagion chiefly lies in it. With this we ought to be content: that the Lord entrusted to Adam those gifts which he willed to be conferred upon human nature. Hence Adam, when he lost the gifts received, lost them not only for himself but for us all. Who should worry about the derivation of the soul when he hears that Adam had received for us no less than for himself those gifts which he lost, and that they had not been given to one man but had been assigned to the whole human race? There is nothing absurd, then, in supposing that, when Adam was despoiled, human nature was left naked and destitute, or that when he was infected with sin, contagion crept into human nature. Hence, rotten branches came forth from a rotten root, which transmitted their rottenness to the other twigs sprouting from them. For thus were the children corrupted in the parent, so that they brought disease upon their children’s children. That is, the beginning of corruption in Adam was such that it was conveyed in a perpetual stream from the ancestors into their descendants. For the contagion does not take its origin from the substance of the flesh or soul, but because it had been so ordained by God that the first man should at one and the same time have and lose, both for himself and for his descendants, the gifts that God had bestowed upon him. ^{f11}

But it is easy to refute the quibble of the Pelagians, who hold it unlikely that children should derive corruption from godly parents, inasmuch as the offspring ought rather to be sanctified by their parents’ purity [cf. ^{<460714>} 1 Corinthians 7:14]. For they descend not from their parents’ spiritual regeneration but from their carnal generation. Hence, as Augustine says, whether a man is a guilty unbeliever or an innocent believer, he begets not innocent but guilty children, for he begets them from a corrupted nature. ^{f12} Now, it is a special blessing of God’s people that

they partake in some degree of their parents' holiness. This does not gainsay the fact that the universal curse of the human race preceded. For guilt is of nature, but sanctification, of supernatural grace.

(Original sin defined as a depravity of nature, which deserves punishment, but which is not from nature as created, 8-11)

8. THE NATURE OF ORIGINAL SIN

So that these remarks may not be made concerning an uncertain and unknown matter, let us define original sin.^{f13} It is not my intention to investigate the several definitions proposed by various writers, but simply to bring forward the one that appears to me most in accordance with truth. Original sin, therefore, seems to be a hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused into all parts of the soul, which first makes us liable to God's wrath, then also brings forth in us those works which Scripture calls "works of the flesh" [^{<480505>} Galatians 5:59]. And that is properly what Paul often calls sin. The works that come forth from it — such as adulteries, fornications, thefts, hatreds, murders, carousings — he accordingly calls "fruits of sin" [^{<480519>} Galatians 5:19-21], although they are also commonly called "sins" in Scripture, and even by Paul himself. We must, therefore, distinctly note these two things. First, we are so vitiated and perverted in every part of our nature that by this great corruption we stand justly condemned and convicted before God, to whom nothing is acceptable but righteousness, innocence, and purity. And this is not liability for another's transgression. For, since it is said that we became subject to God's judgment through Adam's sin, we are to understand it not as if we, guiltless and undeserving, bore the guilt of his offense but in the sense that, since we through his transgression have become entangled in the curse, he is said to have made us guilty. Yet not only has punishment fallen upon us from Adam, but a contagion imparted by him resides in us, which justly deserves punishment. For this reason, Augustine, though he often calls sin "another's" to show more clearly that it is distributed among us through propagation, nevertheless declares at the same time that it is peculiar to each.^{f14} And the apostle himself most eloquently testifies that "death has spread to all because all have sinned" [^{<450512>} Romans 5:12]. That is, they have been enveloped in original sin and defiled by its stains. For that reason, even infants themselves, while they carry their

condemnation along with them from the mother's womb, are guilty not of another's fault but of their own. For, even though the fruits of their iniquity have not yet come forth, they have the seed enclosed within them. Indeed, their whole nature is a seed of sin; hence it can be only hateful and abhorrent to God. From this it follows that it is rightly considered sin in God's sight, for without guilt there would be no accusation.

Then comes the second consideration: that this perversity never ceases in us, but continually bears new fruits — the works of the flesh that we have already described — just as a burning furnace gives forth flame and sparks, or water ceaselessly bubbles up from a spring. Thus those who have defined original sin as “the lack of the original righteousness, which ought to reside in us,” although they comprehend in this definition the whole meaning of the term, have still not expressed effectively enough its power and energy.^{f15} For our nature is not only destitute and empty of good, but so fertile and fruitful of every evil that it cannot be idle. Those who have said that original sin is “concupiscence”^{f16} have used an appropriate word, if only it be added — something that most will by no means concede — that whatever is in man, from the understanding to the will, from the soul even to the flesh, has been defiled and crammed with this concupiscence. Or, to put it more briefly, the whole man is of himself nothing but concupiscence.

9. SIN OVERTURNS THE WHOLE MAN

For this reason, I have said that all parts of the soul were possessed by sin after Adam deserted the fountain of righteousness. For not only did a lower appetite seduce him, but unspeakable impiety occupied the very citadel of his mind, and pride penetrated to the depths of his heart. Thus it is pointless and foolish to restrict the corruption that arises thence only to what are called the impulses of the senses; or to call it the “kindling wood” that attracts, arouses, and drags into sin only that part which they term “sensuality.” In this matter Peter Lombard has betrayed his complete ignorance. For, in seeking and searching out its seat, he says that it lies in the flesh, as Paul testifies; yet not intrinsically, but because it appears more in the flesh.^{f17} As if Paul were indicating that only a part of the soul, and not its entire nature, is opposed to supernatural grace! Paul removes all doubt when he teaches that corruption subsists not in one part only,

but that none of the soul remains pure or untouched by that mortal disease. For in his discussion of a corrupt nature Paul not only condemns the inordinate impulses of the appetites that are seen, but especially contends the mind is given over to blindness and the heart to depravity. ^{f18}

The whole third chapter of Romans is nothing but a description of original sin [vs. 1-20]. From the “renewal” that fact appears more clearly. For the Spirit, who is opposed to the old man and to the flesh, not only marks the grace whereby the lower or sensual part of the soul is corrected, but embraces the full reformation of all the parts. Consequently, Paul not only enjoins that brute appetites be brought to nought but bids us “be renewed in the spirit of our mind” [^{<490423>} Ephesians 4:23]; in another passage he similarly urges us to “be transformed in newness of mind” [^{<451202>} Romans 12:2]. From this it follows that that part in which the excellence and nobility of the soul especially shine has not only been wounded, but so corrupted that it needs to be healed and to put on a new nature as well. We shall soon see to what extent sin occupies both mind and heart. Here I only want to suggest briefly that the whole man is overwhelmed — as by a deluge — from head to foot, so that no part is immune from sin and all that proceeds from him is to be imputed to sin. As Paul says, all turnings of the thoughts to the flesh are enmities against God [^{<450807>} Romans 8:7], and are therefore death [^{<450806>} Romans 8:6].

10. SIN IS NOT OUR NATURE, BUT ITS DERANGEMENT

Now away with those persons who dare write God’s name upon their faults, because we declare that men are vicious by nature! ^{f19} They perversely search out God’s handiwork in their own pollution, when they ought rather to have sought it in that unimpaired and uncorrupted nature of Adam. Our destruction, therefore, comes from the guilt of our flesh, not from God, inasmuch as we have perished solely because we have degenerated from our original condition.

Let no one grumble here that God could have provided better for our salvation if he had forestalled Adam’s fall. ^{f20} Pious minds ought to loathe this objection, because it manifests inordinate curiosity. Furthermore, the matter has to do with the secret of predestination, which will be discussed later in its proper place. ^{f21} Let us accordingly remember to impute our ruin

to depravity of nature, in order that we may not accuse God himself, the Author of nature. True, this deadly wound clings to nature, but it is a very important question whether the wound has been inflicted from outside or has been present from the beginning. Yet it is evident that the wound was inflicted through sin. We have, therefore, no reason to complain except against ourselves. Scripture has diligently noted this fact. For Ecclesiastes says: “This I know, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many devices.” [²¹⁰⁷²⁹Ecclesiastes 7:29.] Obviously, man’s ruin is to be ascribed to man alone; for he, having acquired righteousness by God’s kindness, has by his own folly sunk into vanity.

11. “NATURAL” CORRUPTION OF THE “NATURE” CREATED BY GOD

Therefore we declare that man is corrupted through natural vitiation, but a vitiation that did not flow from nature.^{f22} We deny that it has flowed from nature in order to indicate that it is an adventitious quality which comes upon man rather than a substantial property which has been implanted from the beginning. Yet we call it “natural” in order that no man may think that anyone obtains it through bad conduct, since it holds all men fast by hereditary right. Our usage of the term is not without authority. The apostle states: “We are all by nature children of wrath.” [⁴⁹⁰²⁰³Ephesians 2:3.] How could God, who is pleased by the least of his works, have been hostile to the noblest of all his creatures? But he is hostile toward the corruption of his work rather than toward the work itself. Therefore if it is right to declare that man, because of his vitiated nature, is naturally abominable to God, it is also proper to say that man is naturally depraved and faulty. Hence Augustine, in view of man’s corrupted nature, is not afraid to call “natural” those sins which necessarily reign in our flesh wherever God’s grace is absent.^{f23} Thus vanishes the foolish trifling of the Manichees, who, when they imagined wickedness of substance in man, dared fashion another creator for him in order that they might not seem to assign the beginning of evil to the righteous God.^{f24}

CHAPTER 2

MAN HAS NOW BEEN DEPRIVED OF FREEDOM OF CHOICE AND BOUND OVER TO MISERABLE SERVITUDE

(Perils of this topic: point of view established, 1)

1. We have now seen that the dominion of sin, from the time it held the first man bound to itself, not only ranges among all mankind, but also completely occupies individual souls. It remains for us to investigate more closely whether we have been deprived of all freedom since we have been reduced to this servitude; and, if any particle of it still survives, how far its power extends. But in order that the truth of this question may be more readily apparent to us, I shall presently set a goal to which the whole argument should be directed. The best way to avoid error will be to consider the perils that threaten man on both sides.

(1) When man is denied all uprightness, he immediately takes occasion for complacency from that fact; and, because he is said to have no ability to pursue righteousness on his own, he holds all such pursuit to be of no consequence, as if it did not pertain to him at all.

(2) Nothing, however slight, can be credited to man without depriving God of his honor, and without man himself falling into ruin through brazen confidence. Augustine points out both these precipices.^{f25}

Here, then, is the course that we must follow if we are to avoid crashing upon these rocks: when man has been taught that no good thing remains in his power, and that he is hedged about on all sides by most miserable necessity, in spite of this he should nevertheless be instructed to aspire to a good of which he is empty, to a freedom of which he has been deprived. In fact, he may thus be more sharply aroused from inactivity than if it were supposed that he was endowed with the highest virtues. Everyone sees how necessary this second point is. I observe that too many persons have doubts about the first point. For since this is an undoubted fact, that

nothing of his own ought to be taken away from man, it ought to be clearly evident how important it is for him to be barred from false boasting. At the time when man was distinguished with the noblest marks of honor through God's beneficence, not even then was he permitted to boast about himself. How much more ought he now to humble himself, cast down as he has been — due to his own ungratefulness — from the loftiest glory into extreme disgrace! At that time, I say, when he had been advanced to the highest degree of honor, Scripture attributed nothing else to him than that he had been created in the image of God [^{<010127>} Genesis 1:27], thus suggesting that man was blessed, not because of his own good actions, but by participation in God. What, therefore, now remains for man, bare and destitute of all glory, but to recognize God for whose beneficence he could not be grateful when he abounded with the riches of his grace; and at least, by confessing his own poverty, to glorify him in whom he did not previously glory in recognition of his own blessings? ^{f26}

Also, it is no less to our advantage than pertinent to God's glory that we be deprived of all credit for our wisdom and virtue. Thus those who bestow upon us anything beyond the truth add sacrilege to our ruin. When we are taught to wage our own war, we are but borne aloft on a reed stick, only to fall as soon as it breaks! Yet we flatter our strength unduly when we compare it even to a reed stick! For whatever vain men devise and babble concerning these matters is but smoke. Therefore Augustine with good reason often repeats the famous statement that free will is by its defenders more trampled down than strengthened. ^{f27} It has been necessary to say this by way of preface because some, while they hear that man's power is rooted out from its very foundations that God's power may be built up in man, bitterly loathe this whole disputation as dangerous, not to say superfluous. ^{f28} Nonetheless, it appears both fundamental in religion and most profitable for us.

(Critical discussion of opinions on free will given by philosophers and theologians, 2-9)

2. THE PHILOSOPHERS TRUST IN THE POWER OF THE UNDERSTANDING

Since we said just above that the faculties of the soul are situated in the mind and the heart, ^{f29} now let us examine what both parts can do. The philosophers (obviously with substantial agreement) imagine that the reason is located in the mind, which like a lamp illumines all counsels, and like a queen governs the will. For they suppose that it is suffused with divine light to take the most effective counsel; and that it excels in power to wield the most effective command. On the other hand, they imagine that sense perception is gripped by torpor and dimness of sight; so that it always creeps along the ground, is entangled in baser things, and never rises up to true discernment. They hold that the appetite, if it undertakes to obey the reason and does not permit itself to be subjected to the senses, is borne along to the pursuit of virtues, holds the right way, and is molded into will. But if it subjects itself to the bondage of the senses, it is so corrupted and perverted by the latter as to degenerate into lust. ^{f30} In their opinion those faculties of which I have spoken above ^{f31} — understanding, sense, appetite, or will (which last designation is now accepted in more common usage) — have their seat in the soul. These philosophers consequently declare that the understanding is endowed with reason, the best ruling principle for the leading of a good and blessed life, provided it sustains itself within its own excellence and displays the strength bestowed upon it by nature. But they state that the lower impulse, called “sense,” by which man is drawn off into error and delusion is such that it can be tamed and gradually overcome by reason’s rod. Further, they locate the will midway between reason and sense. That is, it possesses right and freedom of itself either to obey reason or to prostitute itself to be ravished by sense — whichever it pleases.

3. THUS, IN SPITE OF ALL, THE PHILOSOPHERS ASSERT FREEDOM OF THE WILL

Sometimes, convinced by experience itself, they do not deny the great difficulty with which man establishes the rule of reason a kingdom within himself. At one time he is tickled by the enticements of pleasures; at another is tricked by a false image of good things; and again is violently

struck by immoderate inclinations, and as by cords and strings is pulled in divers directions, as Plato says.^{f32}

Accordingly, Cicero says that the faint glimmer given us by nature is soon quenched by our wicked opinions and evil customs.^{f33} The philosophers concede that such diseases, once they have occupied men's minds, rage so violently that no one can easily restrain them. Nor do these writers hesitate to compare them to wild horses, which when reason is overthrown, as a charioteer tossed from his chariot, intemperately and without restraint play the wanton.^{f34}

Nevertheless, the philosophers hold as certain that virtues and vices are in our power. They say: If to do this or that depends upon our choice, so also does not to do it. Again, if not to do it, so also to do it. Now we seem to do what we do, and to shun what we shun, by free choice. Therefore, if we do any good thing when we please, we can also not do it; if we do any evil, we can also shun it.^{f35} Indeed, certain of them have broken forth into such license as to boast that the fact that we live is a gift of the gods, but if we live well and holily, it is our own doing. Thence, also, comes that saying of Cicero in the person of Cotta, that "because every man acquires virtue for himself, no wise man ever has thanked God for it. For we are praised for our virtue, and glory in our virtue. This would not happen if the gift were of God and not from ourselves." A little later he says: "This is the judgment of all mortals, that fortune is to be sought from God but that wisdom is to be acquired from oneself."^{f36} This is the sum of the opinion of all philosophers: reason which abides in human understanding is a sufficient guide for right conduct; the will, being subject to it, is indeed incited by the senses to evil things; but since the will has free choice, it cannot be hindered from following reason as its leader in all things.

4. THE CHURCH FATHERS GENERALLY SHOW LESS CLARITY BUT A TENDENCY TO ACCEPT FREEDOM OF THE WILL. WHAT IS FREE WILL?

All ecclesiastical writers have recognized both that the soundness of reason in man is gravely wounded through sin, and that the will has been very much enslaved by evil desires. Despite this, many of them have come far too close to the philosophers.^{f37} Of these, the early ones seem to me to

have, with a twofold intent, elevated human powers for the following reasons. First, a frank confession of man's powerlessness would have brought upon them the jeers of the philosophers with whom they were in conflict. Second, they wished to avoid giving fresh occasion for slothfulness to a flesh already indifferent toward good.^{f38} Therefore, that they might teach nothing absurd to the common judgment of men, they strove to harmonize the doctrine of Scripture halfway with the beliefs of the philosophers. Yet they paid especial attention to the second point, not to give occasion for slothfulness. This appears from their words.

Chrysostom somewhere expresses it: "Since God has placed good and evil in our power, he has granted free decision of choice, and does not restrain the unwilling, but embraces the willing." Again: "He who is evil, if he should wish, is often changed into a good man; and he who is good falls through sloth and becomes evil. For the Lord has made our nature free to choose. Nor does he impose necessity upon us, but furnishes suitable remedies and allows everything to hinge on the sick man's own judgment." Again: "Just as we can never do anything rightly unless we are aided by God's grace, so we cannot acquire heavenly favor unless we bring our portion." But he had said before: "In order that not everything may depend on divine help, we must at the same time bring something ourselves." One of his common expressions is: "Let us bring what is ours; God will furnish the rest."^{f39} What Jerome says agrees with this: "Ours is to begin, God's to fulfill; ours to offer what we can, his to supply what we cannot."^{f40}

Surely you see by these statements that they credited man with more zeal for virtue than he deserved because they thought that they could not rouse our inborn sluggishness unless they argued that we sinned by it alone. But how skillfully they did this we shall subsequently see. A little later it will be quite evident that these opinions to which we have referred are utterly false.

Further, even though the Greeks above the rest — and Chrysostom especially among them — extol the ability of the human will, yet all the ancients, save Augustine, so differ, waver, or speak confusedly on this subject, that almost nothing certain can be derived from their writings. Therefore, we shall not stop to list more exactly the opinions of individual

writers; but we shall only select at random from one or another, as the explanation of the argument would seem to demand.

The other writers who came after them, while each sought praise for his own cleverness in his defense of human nature, one after another gradually fell from bad to worse, until it came to the point that man was commonly thought to be corrupted only in his sensual part and to have a perfectly unblemished reason and a will also largely unimpaired.^{f41} Meanwhile the well-known statement flitted from mouth to mouth: that the natural gifts in man were corrupted, but the supernatural taken away.^{f42} But scarcely one man in a hundred had an inkling of its significance. For my part, if I wanted clearly to teach what the corruption of nature is like, I would readily be content with these words. But it is more important to weigh carefully what man can do, vitiated as he is in every part of his nature and shorn of supernatural gifts. Those, then, who boasted that they were Christ's disciples spoke of this matter too much like philosophers. The term "free will" has always been used among the Latins, as if man still remained upright. The Greeks were not ashamed to use a much more presumptuous word. They called it "self-power,"^{f43} as if each man had power in his own hands. All — even the common folk — were imbued with this principle, that man is endowed with free will. Yet some of them who wish to seem distinguished do not know how far it extends. Let us, therefore, first investigate the force of this term; then let us determine from the simple testimony of Scripture what promise man, of his own nature, has for good or ill.

Few have defined what free will is, although it repeatedly occurs in the writings of all. Origen seems to have put forward a definition generally agreed upon among ecclesiastical writers when he said that it is a faculty of the reason to distinguish between good and evil, a faculty of the will to choose one or the other.^{f44} Augustine does not disagree with this when he teaches that it is a faculty of the reason and the will to choose good with the assistance of grace; evil, when grace is absent.^{f45} Bernard, wishing to speak subtly, "on account of the imperishable freedom of the will, and of the unfailing judgment of the reason," more obscurely says it is "consent."^{f46} And Anselm's well-known definition is not plain enough: that it is the power of maintaining rectitude for its own sake.^{f47} As a consequence, Peter Lombard and the Scholastics preferred to accept Augustine's

definition because it was clearer and did not exclude God's grace. They realized that without grace the will could not be sufficient unto itself. Nevertheless, they bring forward their own ideas, which they consider either to be better or to make for a fuller explanation. First, they agree that the noun *arbitrium* ought rather to refer to reason, whose task it is to distinguish between good and evil; that the adjective *liberum* pertains properly to the will, which can be turned to one side or the other.^{f48} Hence, Thomas says that, since freedom properly belongs to the will, it would be most suitable to call free will a "power of selection," which, derived from a mingling of understanding and appetite, yet inclines more to appetite.^{f49} We now find wherein they teach that the power of free decision resides, that is, in the reason and the will. It remains for us to see briefly how much they attribute to each.

5. DIFFERENT KINDS OF "WILL" AND OF "FREEDOM" IN THE CHURCH FATHERS

Under man's free counsel they commonly class those intermediate things^{f50} which obviously do not pertain to God's Kingdom; but they refer true righteousness to God's special grace and spiritual regeneration. To show this, the author of the work *The Calling of the Gentiles* enumerates three kinds of will: first, the sensual; second, the psychic; third, the spiritual. With the first two, he teaches, man is freely endowed; the last is the work of the Holy Spirit in man.^{f51} We shall discuss in its proper place whether this is true. Now I intend briefly to weigh, not to refute, the statements of others. Hence, it happens that when the church fathers are discussing free will, they first inquire, not into its importance for civil or external actions, but into what promotes obedience to the divine law. Although I grant this latter question is the main one, I do not think the former ought to be completely neglected. I hope I shall render a very good account of my own opinion.^{f52}

Now in the schools three kinds of freedom are distinguished: first from necessity, second from sin, third from misery. The first of these so inheres in man by nature that it cannot possibly be taken away, but the two others have been lost through sin.^{f53} I willingly accept this distinction, except in so far as necessity is falsely confused with compulsion. The extent of the

difference between them and the need to bear it in mind will appear elsewhere.^{f54}

6. “OPERATING” AND “CO-OPERATING” GRACE?

If this be admitted, it will be indisputable that free will is not sufficient to enable man to do good works, unless he be helped by grace, indeed by special grace, which only the elect receive through regeneration. For I do not tarry over those fanatics who babble that grace is equally and indiscriminately distributed.^{f55} But it has not yet been demonstrated whether man has been wholly deprived of all power to do good, or still has some power, though meager and weak; a power, indeed, that can do nothing of itself, but with the help of grace also does its part. The Master of the Sentences meant to settle this point when he taught: “We need two kinds of grace to render us capable of good works.” He calls the first kind “operating,” which ensures that we effectively will to do good. The second he calls “co-operating,” which follows the good will as a help.^{f56} The thing that displeases me about this division is that, while he attributes the effective desire for good to the grace of God, yet he hints that man by his very own nature somehow seeks after the good — though ineffectively. Thus Bernard declares the good will is God’s work, yet concedes to man that of his own impulse he seeks this sort of good will. But this is far from Augustine’s thought, from whom Peter Lombard pretended to have taken this distinction.^{f57} The ambiguity in the second part offends me, for it has given rise to a perverted interpretation. They thought we co-operate with the assisting grace of God, because it is our right either to render it ineffectual by spurning the first grace, or to confirm it by obediently following it. This the author of the work *The Calling of the Gentiles* expresses as follows: “Those who employ the judgment of reason are free to forsake grace, so that not to have forsaken it is a meritorious act; and what could not be done without the co-operation of the Spirit is counted meritorious for those whose own will could not have accomplished it.”^{f58} I chose to note these two points in passing that you, my reader, may see how far I disagree with the sounder Schoolmen. I differ with the more recent Sophists^{f59} to an even greater extent, as they are farther removed from antiquity. How ever, we at least understand from this division in what way they grant free will to man. For Lombard finally declares that

we have free will, not in that we are equally capable of doing or thinking good and evil, but merely that we are freed from compulsion. According to Lombard, this freedom is not hindered, even if we be wicked and slaves of sin, and can do nothing but sin.^{f60}

7. THAT MAN IS NECESSARILY, BUT WITHOUT COMPULSION, A SINNER ESTABLISHES NO DOCTRINE OF FREE WILL

Man will then be spoken of as having this sort of free decision, not because he has free choice equally of good and evil, but because he acts wickedly by will, not by compulsion. Well put, indeed, but what purpose is served by labeling with a proud name such a slight thing? A noble freedom, indeed — for man not to be forced to serve sin, yet to be such a willing slave^{f61} that his will is bound by the fetters of sin! Indeed, I abhor contentions about words,^{f62} with which the church is harassed to no purpose. But I have scrupulously resolved to avoid those words which signify something absurd, especially where pernicious error is involved. But how few men are there, I ask, who when they hear free will attributed to man do not immediately conceive him to be master of both his own mind and will, able of his own power to turn himself toward either good or evil? Yet (someone will say) this sort of danger will be removed if the common folk are diligently warned of its meaning. Man's disposition voluntarily so inclines to falsehood that he more quickly derives error from one word than truth from a wordy discourse. In this very word we have more certain experience of this matter than we should like. For, overlooking that interpretation of the ancient writers, almost all their successors, while they have clung to the etymological meaning of the word, have been carried into a ruinous self-assurance.

8. AUGUSTINE'S DOCTRINE OF "FREE WILL"

Now, if the authority of the fathers has weight with us, they indeed have the word constantly on their lips, yet at the same time they declare what it connotes to them. First of all, there is Augustine, who does not hesitate to call it "unfree."^{f63} Elsewhere he is angry toward those who deny that the will is free; but he states his main reason in these words: "Only let no one so dare to deny the decision of the will as to wish to excuse sin."^{f64} Yet elsewhere he plainly confesses that "without the Spirit man's will is not

free, since it has been laid under by shackling and conquering desires.”^{f65} Likewise, when the will was conquered by the vice into which it had fallen, human nature began to lose its freedom.^{f66} Again, man, using free will badly, has lost both himself and his will. Again, the free will has been so enslaved that it can have no power for righteousness. Again, what God’s grace has not freed will not be free. Again, the justice of God is not fulfilled when the law so commands, and man acts as if by his own strength; but when the Spirit helps, and man’s will, not free, but freed by God, obeys. And he gives a brief account of all these matters when he writes elsewhere: man, when he was created, received great powers of free will, but lost them by sinning.^{f67} Therefore in another passage, after showing that free will is established through grace, he bitterly inveighs against those who claim it for themselves without grace. “Why then,” he says, “do miserable men either dare to boast of free will before they have been freed, or of their powers, if they have already been freed? And they do not heed the fact that in the term ‘free will’ freedom seems to be implied. ‘Now where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.’ [^{<470317>} 2 Corinthians 3:17.] If, therefore, they are slaves of sin, why do they boast of free will? For a man becomes the slave of him who has overcome him.

Now, if they have been freed, why do they boast as if it had come about through their own effort? Or are they so free as not to wish to be the slaves of him who says: ‘Without me you can do nothing.’” [^{<431505>} John 15:5]?

Why, elsewhere he seems to ridicule the use of this word when he says that the will is indeed free but not freed: free of righteousness but enslaved to sin! he also repeats and explains this statement in another place, where he teaches that man is not free from righteousness except by decision of the will; moreover, he does not become free from sin except by the grace of the Savior.^{f68} When he asserts that man’s freedom is nothing but emancipation or manumission from righteousness he seems aptly to mock its empty name. If anyone, then, can use this word without understanding it in a bad sense, I shall not trouble him on this account. But I hold that because it cannot be retained without great peril, it will, on the contrary, be a great boon for the church if it be abolished. I prefer not to use it myself, and I should like others, if they seek my advice, to avoid it.

9. VOICES OF TRUTH AMONG THE CHURCH FATHERS

Perhaps I may seem to have brought a great prejudice upon myself when I confess that all ecclesiastical writers, except Augustine, have spoken so ambiguously or variously on this matter that nothing certain can be gained from their writings. Some will interpret this as if I wanted to deprive them of any voice in the matter because they all are my opponents. But I meant nothing else than that I wanted simply and sincerely to advise godly folk; for if they were to depend upon those men's opinions in this matter, they would always flounder in uncertainty. At one time these writers teach that man, despoiled of the powers of free will, takes refuge in grace alone. At another time they provide, or seem to provide, him with his own armor.

Nevertheless, it is not difficult to demonstrate that they, in the ambiguity of their teaching, held human virtue in no or very slight esteem, but ascribed all credit for every good thing to the Holy Spirit. For this purpose I shall introduce certain of their expressions that clearly teach this. For what else does that statement of Cyprian mean which Augustine so often repeats: "We ought to glory in nothing, because nothing is ours,"^{f69} except that man, rendered utterly destitute in his own right, should learn to depend wholly upon God? What do Augustine and Eucherius mean when they interpret the tree of life as Christ and say that whoever extends his hand to it will live; while they interpret the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as the decision of the will, and say that he who, bereft of God's grace, tastes of it will die?^{f70} What does Chrysostom mean when he says that every man is not only a sinner by nature, but wholly sin?^{f71} If there is no good in us, if man is wholly sin from head to foot, if he is not even allowed to test how far the power of the will can be effective — how could anyone possibly parcel out the credit for good works between God and man? I could refer to very many statements of this sort from other authors. Lest, however, anyone should charge that I am choosing only what serves my purpose while I craftily suppress what disagrees with it, I shall refrain from such testimony. Yet I dare affirm this: however excessive they sometimes are in extolling free will, they have had this end in view — to teach man utterly to forsake confidence in his own virtue and to hold that all his strength rests in God alone. Now I come to a simple explanation of the truth concerning the nature of man.

(We must abandon all self-approbation, 10-11)

10. THE DOCTRINE OF FREE WILL IS ALWAYS IN DANGER OF ROBBING GOD OF HIS HONOR

Nevertheless, what I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter I am compelled here to repeat once more: that whoever is utterly cast down and overwhelmed by the awareness of his calamity, poverty, nakedness, and disgrace has thus advanced farthest in knowledge of himself.¹⁷² For there is no danger of man's depriving himself of too much so long as he learns that in God must be recouped what he himself lacks. Yet he cannot claim for himself ever so little beyond what is rightfully his without losing himself in vain confidence and without usurping God's honor, and thus becoming guilty of monstrous sacrilege. And truly, whenever this lust invades our mind to compel us to seek out something of our own that reposes in ourselves rather than in God, let us know that this thought is suggested to us by no other counselor than him who induced our first parents to want to become "like gods, knowing good and evil" [^{<010305>}Genesis 3:5]. If it is the devil's word that exalts man in himself, let us give no place to it unless we want to take advice from our enemy. Sweet, indeed, it is for you to have so much power of your own that you are able to rely on yourself! But, not to be deluded by this empty confidence, let us be deterred by numerous weighty passages of Scripture that utterly humiliate us. Such are these: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his arm." [^{<241705>}Jeremiah 17:5.] Again, "God's delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man, but he takes pleasure in those who fear him, relying upon his goodness." [^{<19E710>}Psalms 147:10-11.] Again, "He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. He causes youths to faint and be weary, and young men to fall exhausted; but they who trust in him alone shall be strengthened." [^{<234029>}Isaiah 40:29-31.] All these passages have this purpose: that we should not rely on any opinion of our own strength, however small it is, if we want God to be favorable toward us, Who "opposes the proud, but gives grace to the meek" [^{<590406>}James 4:6 and ^{<600505>}1 Peter 5:5, Vg.; cf. ^{<200334>}Proverbs 3:34]. Then let these promises come to mind: "I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground" [^{<234403>}Isaiah 44:3]. Again, "All ye who thirst come to the waters." [^{<235501>}Isaiah 55:1.]

These testify that no one is permitted to receive God's blessings unless he is consumed with the awareness of his own poverty. And we must not pass over other statements like these, such as this one of Isaiah: "The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night; but the Lord will be your everlasting light" [^{<236019>} Isaiah 60:19]. Surely the Lord does not take away the brightness of the sun or moon from his servants; but because he wills alone to appear glorious in them, he calls them far away from trust even in those things which they deem most excellent.

11. TRUE HUMILITY GIVES GOD ALONE THE HONOR

A saying of Chrysostom's has always pleased me very much, that the foundation of our philosophy is humility.^{f73} But that of Augustine pleases me even more: "When a certain rhetorician was asked what was the chief rule in eloquence, he replied, 'Delivery'; what was the second rule, 'Delivery'; what was the third rule, 'Delivery';^{f74} so if you ask me concerning the precepts of the Christian religion, first, second, third, and always I would answer, 'Humility.'"

But, as he elsewhere declares, Augustine does not consider it humility when a man, aware that he has some virtues, abstains from pride and arrogance; but when man truly feels that he has no refuge except in humility. "Let no man," he says, "flatter himself; of himself he is Satan. His blessing comes from God alone. For what do you have of your own but sin? Remove from yourself sin which is your own; for righteousness is of God." Again: "Why do we presume so much on ability of human nature? It is wounded, battered, troubled, lost. What we need is true confession, not false defense." Again: "When anyone realizes that in himself he is nothing and from himself he has no help, the weapons within him are broken, the wars are over. But all the weapons of impiety must be shattered, broken, and burned; you must remain unarmed, you must have no help in yourself. The weaker you are in yourself, the more readily the Lord will receive you." Thus in his interpretation of the Seventieth Psalm he forbids us to remember our own righteousness, that we may know God's righteousness; and he shows that God so commends his grace to us that we know that we are nothing. By God's mercy alone we stand, since by ourselves we are nothing but evil.^{f75} At this point, then, let us not

contend against God concerning our right, as if what is attributed to him were withdrawn from our well-being. As our humility is his loftiness, so the confession of our humility has a ready remedy in his mercy. Now I do not claim that man, unconvinced, should yield himself voluntarily, and that, if he has any powers, he should turn his mind from them in order that he may be subjected to true humility. But I require only that, laying aside the disease of self-love and ambition,^{f76} by which he is blinded and thinks more highly of himself than he ought [cf. ^{<480603>}Galatians 6:3], he rightly recognize himself in the faithful mirror of Scripture [cf. ^{<590122>}James 1:22-25].

*(Man's natural endowments not wholly extinguished:
the understanding, 12-17)*

12. SUPERNATURAL GIFTS DESTROYED; NATURAL GIFTS CORRUPTED; BUT ENOUGH OF REASON REMAINS TO DISTINGUISH MAN FROM BRUTE BEASTS

And, indeed, that common opinion which they have taken from Augustine pleases me: that the natural gifts were corrupted in man through sin, but that his supernatural gifts were stripped from him.^{f77} For by the latter clause they understand the light of faith as well as righteousness, which would be sufficient to attain heavenly life and eternal bliss. Therefore, withdrawing from the Kingdom of God, he is at the same time deprived of spiritual gifts, with which he had been furnished for the hope of eternal salvation. From this it follows that he is so banished from the Kingdom of God that all qualities belonging to the blessed life of the soul have been extinguished in him, until he recovers them through the grace of regeneration. Among these are faith, love of God, charity toward neighbor, zeal for holiness and for righteousness. All these, since Christ restores them in us, are considered adventitious, and beyond nature: and for this reason we infer that they were taken away. On the other hand, soundness of mind and uprightness of heart were withdrawn at the same time. This is the corruption of the natural gifts. For even though something of understanding and judgment remains as a residue along with the will, yet we shall not call a mind whole and sound that is both weak and plunged into deep darkness. And depravity of the will is all too well known.

Since reason, therefore, by which man distinguishes between good and evil, and by which he understands and judges, is a natural gift, it could not be completely wiped out; but it was partly weakened and partly corrupted, so that its misshapen ruins appear. John speaks in this sense: “The light still shines in the darkness, but the darkness comprehends it not”

[<430105> John 1:5]. In these words both facts are clearly expressed. First, in man’s perverted and degenerate nature some sparks still gleam. These show him to be a rational being, differing from brute beasts, because he is endowed with understanding. Yet, secondly, they show this light choked with dense ignorance, so that it cannot come forth effectively.

Similarly the will, because it is inseparable from man’s nature, did not perish, but was so bound to wicked desires that it cannot strive after the right. This is, indeed, a complete definition, but one needing a fuller explanation.

Therefore, so that the order of discussion may proceed according to our original division of man’s soul into understanding and will,¹⁷⁸ let us first of all examine the power of the understanding.

When we so condemn human understanding for its perpetual blindness as to leave it no perception of any object whatever, we not only go against God’s Word, but also run counter to the experience of common sense. For we see implanted in human nature some sort of desire to search out the truth to which man would not at all aspire if he had not already savored it. Human understanding then possesses some power of perception, since it is by nature captivated by love of truth. The lack of this endowment in brute animals proves their nature gross and irrational. Yet this longing for truth, such as it is, languishes before it enters upon its race because it soon falls into vanity. Indeed, man’s mind, because of its dullness, cannot hold to the right path, but wanders through various errors and stumbles repeatedly, as if it were groping in darkness, until it strays away and finally disappears. Thus it betrays how incapable it is of seeking and finding truth.

Then it grievously labors under another sort of vanity: often it cannot discern those things which it ought to exert itself to know. For this reason, in investigating empty and worthless things, it torments itself in its absurd curiosity, while it carelessly pays little or no attention to matters that it

should particularly understand. Indeed, it scarcely ever seriously applies itself to the study of them. Secular writers habitually complain of this perversity, yet they are almost all found to have entangled themselves in it. For this reason, Solomon, through the whole of his Ecclesiastes, after recounting all those studies in which men seem to themselves to be very wise, declares them to be vain and trifling [^{<210102>} Ecclesiastes 1:2, 14; 2:11; etc.].

13. THE POWER OF THE UNDERSTANDING WITH RESPECT TO EARTHLY THINGS AND THE FORM OF THE HUMAN COMMUNITY

Yet its efforts do not always become so worthless ^{f79} as to have no effect, especially when it turns its attention to things below. On contrary, it is intelligent enough to taste something of things above, although it is more careless about investigating these. Nor does it carry on this latter activity with equal skill. For when the mind is borne above the level of the present life, it is especially convinced of its own frailty. Therefore, to perceive more clearly how far the mind can proceed in any matter according to the degree of its ability, we must here set forth a distinction. This, then, is the distinction: that there is one kind of understanding of earthly things; another of heavenly. I call “earthly things” those which do not pertain to God or his Kingdom, to true justice, or to the blessedness of the future life; but which have their significance and relationship with regard to the present life and are, in a sense, confined within its bounds. I call “heavenly things” the pure knowledge of God, the nature of true righteousness, and the mysteries of the Heavenly Kingdom. The first class includes government, household management, all mechanical skills, and the liberal arts. In the second are the knowledge of God and of his will, and the rule by which we conform our lives to it.

Of the first class the following ought to be said: since man is by nature a social animal, ^{f80} he tends through natural instinct to foster and preserve society. Consequently, we observe that there exist in all men’s minds universal impressions of a certain civic fair dealing and order. Hence no man is to be found who does not understand that every sort of human organization must be regulated by laws, and who does not comprehend the principles of those laws. Hence arises that unvarying consent of all nations

and of individual mortals with regard to laws. For their seeds have, without teacher or lawgiver, been implanted in all men.

I do not dwell upon the dissension and conflicts that immediately spring up. Some, like thieves and robbers, desire to overturn all law and right, to break all legal restraints, to let their lust alone masquerade as law. Others think unjust what some have sanctioned as just (an even commoner fault), and contend that what some have forbidden is praiseworthy. Such persons hate laws not because they do not know them to be good and holy; but raging with headlong lust, they fight against manifest reason. What they approve of in their understanding they hate on account of their lust. Quarrels of this latter sort do not nullify the original conception of equity. For, while men dispute among themselves about individual sections of the law, they agree on the general conception of equity. In this respect the frailty of the human mind is surely proved: even when it seems to follow the way, it limps and staggers. Yet the fact remains that some seed of political order has been implanted in all men. And this is ample proof that in the arrangement of this life no man is without the light of reason.

14. UNDERSTANDING AS REGARDS ART AND SCIENCE

Then follow the arts, both liberal and manual. The power of human acuteness also appears in learning these because all of us have a certain aptitude. But although not all the arts are suitable for everyone to learn, yet it is a certain enough indication of the common energy that hardly anyone is to be found who does not manifest talent in some art. There are at hand energy and ability not only to learn but also to devise something new in each art or to perfect and polish what one has learned from a predecessor. This prompted Plato to teach wrongly that such apprehension is nothing but recollection.^{f81} Hence, with good reason we are compelled to confess that its beginning is inborn in human nature. Therefore this evidence clearly testifies to a universal apprehension of reason and understanding by nature implanted in men. Yet so universal is this good that every man ought to recognize for himself in it the peculiar grace of God. The Creator of nature himself abundantly arouses this gratitude in us when he creates imbeciles. Through them he shows the endowments that the human soul would enjoy unpervaded by his light, a light so natural to all that it is certainly a free gift of his beneficence to

each! Now the discovery or systematic transmission of the arts, or the inner and more excellent knowledge of them, which is characteristic of few, is not a sufficient proof of common discernment. Yet because it is bestowed indiscriminately upon pious and impious, it is rightly counted among natural gifts.

15. SCIENCE AS GOD'S GIFT

Whenever we come upon these matters in secular writers, let that admirable light of truth shining in them teach us that the mind of man, though fallen and perverted from its wholeness, is nevertheless clothed and ornamented with God's excellent gifts. If we regard the Spirit of God as the sole fountain of truth, we shall neither reject the truth itself, nor despise it wherever it shall appear, unless we wish to dishonor the Spirit of God.^{f82} For by holding the gifts of the Spirit in slight esteem, we contemn and reproach the Spirit himself. What then? Shall we deny that the truth shone upon the ancient jurists who established civic order and discipline with such great equity? Shall we say that the philosophers were blind in their fine observation and artful description of nature? Shall we say that those men were devoid of understanding who conceived the art of disputation and taught us to speak reasonably? Shall we say that they are insane who developed medicine, devoting their labor to our benefit? What shall we say of all the mathematical sciences? Shall we consider them the ravings of madmen? No, we cannot read the writings of the ancients on these subjects without great admiration. We marvel at them because we are compelled to recognize how preeminent they are. But shall we count anything praiseworthy or noble without recognizing at the same time that it comes from God? Let us be ashamed of such ingratitude, into which not even the pagan poets fell, for they confessed that the gods had invented philosophy, laws, and all useful arts.^{f83} Those men whom Scripture [^{<460214>} 1 Corinthians 2:14] calls "natural men"^{f84} were, indeed, sharp and penetrating in their investigation of inferior things. Let us, accordingly, learn by their example how many gifts the Lord left to human nature even after it was despoiled of its true good.^{f85}

16. HUMAN COMPETENCE IN ART AND SCIENCE ALSO DERIVES FROM THE SPIRIT OF GOD

Meanwhile, we ought not to forget those most excellent benefits of the divine Spirit, which he distributes to whomever he wills, for the common good of mankind. The understanding and knowledge of Bezalel and Oholiab, needed to construct the Tabernacle, had to be instilled in them by the Spirit of God [^{<023102>} Exodus 31:2-11; 35:30-35]. It is no wonder, then, that the knowledge of all that is most excellent in human life is said to be communicated to us through the Spirit of God. Nor is there reason for anyone to ask, What have the impious, who are utterly estranged from God, to do with his Spirit? We ought to understand the statement that the Spirit of God dwells only in believers [^{<450809>} Romans 8:9] as referring to the Spirit of sanctification through whom we are consecrated as temples to God [^{<460316>} 1 Corinthians 3:16]. Nonetheless he fills, moves, and quickens all things by the power of the same Spirit, and does so according to the character that he bestowed upon each kind by the law of creation. But if the Lord has willed that we be helped in physics, dialectic, mathematics, and other like disciplines, by the work and ministry of the ungodly, let us use this assistance. For if we neglect God's gift freely offered in these arts, we ought to suffer just punishment for our sloths. But lest anyone think a man truly blessed when he is credited with possessing great power to comprehend truth under the elements of this world [cf. ^{<510208>} Colossians 2:8], we should at once add that all this capacity to understand, with the understanding that follows upon it, is an unstable and transitory thing in God's sight, when a solid foundation of truth does not underlie it. For with the greatest truth Augustine teaches that as the free gifts were withdrawn from man after the Fall, so the natural ones remaining were corrupted. On this, the Master of the Sentences and the Schoolmen, ^{f86} as we have said, are compelled to agree with him. Not that the gifts could become defiled by themselves, seeing that they came from God. But to defiled man these gifts were no longer pure, and from them he could derive no praise at all.

17. SUMMARY OF 12-16

To sum up: We see among all mankind that reason is proper to our nature; it distinguishes us from brute beasts, just as they by possessing feeling differ from inanimate things. Now, because some are born fools or stupid,

that defect does not obscure the general grace of God.^{f87} Rather, we are warned by that spectacle that we ought to ascribe what is left in us to God's kindness. For if he had not spared us, our fall would have entailed the destruction of our whole nature. Some men excel in keenness; others are superior in judgment; still others have a readier wit to learn this or that art. In this variety God commends his grace to us, lest anyone should claim as his own what flowed from the sheer bounty of God. For why is one person more excellent than another? Is it not to display in common nature God's special grace^{f88} which, in passing many by, declares itself bound to none? Besides this, God inspires special activities, in accordance with each man's calling. Many examples of this occur in The Book of Judges, where it is said that "the Spirit of the Lord took possession" of those men whom he had called to rule the people [^{<070634>}Judges 6:34]. In short, in every extraordinary event there is some particular impulsions. For this reason, Saul was followed by the brave men "whose hearts God had touched" [^{<091026>}1 Samuel 10:26]. And when Saul's consecration as king was foretold, Samuel said: "Then the Spirit of the Lord will come mightily upon you, and you shall be another man" [^{<091006>}1 Samuel 10:6]. And this was extended to the whole course of government, as is said afterward of David: "The Spirit of the Lord came upon him from that day forward" [^{<091613>}1 Samuel 16:13]. The same thing is taught elsewhere with respect to particular actions. Even in Homer, men are said to excel in natural ability not only as Jupiter has bestowed it upon each, but "as he leads them day by day."^{f89} And surely experience shows that, when those who were once especially ingenious and skilled are struck dumb, men's minds are in God's hand and under his will, so that he rules them at every moment. For this reason it is said: "He takes understanding away from the prudent [cf. ^{<181220>}Job 12:20] and makes them wander in trackless wastes" [^{<181224>}Job 12:24; cf. Psalm 207:40]. Still, we see in this diversity some remaining traces of the image of God, which distinguish the entire human race from the other creatures.

(But spiritual discernment is wholly lost until we are regenerated, 18-21)

18. THE LIMITS OF OUR UNDERSTANDING

We must now analyze what human reason can discern with regard to God's Kingdom and to spiritual insight. This spiritual insight consists chiefly in three things:

- (1) knowing God;
- (2) knowing his fatherly favor in our behalf, in which our salvation consists;
- (3) knowing how to frame our life according to the rule of his law.

In the first two points — and especially in the second — the greatest geniuses are blinder than moles! Certainly I do not deny that one can read competent and apt statements about God here and there in the philosophers, but these always show a certain giddy imagination. As was stated above, the Lord indeed gave them a slight taste of his divinity that they might not hide their impiety under a cloak of ignorance.^{f90} And sometimes he impelled them to make certain utterances by the confession of which they would themselves be corrected. But they saw things in such a way that their seeing did not direct them to the truth, much less enable them to attain it! They are like a traveler passing through a field at night who in a momentary lightning flash sees far and wide, but the sight vanishes so swiftly that he is plunged again into the darkness of the night before he can take even a step — let alone be directed on his way by its help. Besides, although they may chance to sprinkle their books with droplets of truth, how many monstrous lies defile them! In short, they never even sensed that assurance of God's benevolence toward us (without which man's understanding can only be filled with boundless confusion).

Human reason, therefore, neither approaches, nor strives toward, nor even takes a straight aim at, this truth: to understand who the true God is or what sort of God he wishes to be toward us.^{f91}

19. MAN'S SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS SHOWN FROM ^{<431004>} JOHN 10:4-5

But we are drunk with the false opinion of our own insight and are thus extremely reluctant to admit that it is utterly blind and stupid in divine

matters. Hence, it will be more effective, I believe, to prove this fact by Scriptural testimonies than by reasons. John very beautifully teaches it in a passage that I have previously quoted; ^{f92} he writes that: “Life was in God from the beginning and that life was the light of men; this light shines in the darkness, but the darkness comprehends it not” [^{<430104>} John 1:4-5]. He shows that man’s soul is so illumined by the brightness of God’s light as never to be without some slight flame or at least a spark of it; but that even with this illumination it does not comprehend God. Why is this? Because man’s keenness of mind is mere blindness as far as the knowledge of God is concerned. For when the Spirit calls men “darkness,” he at once denies them any ability of spiritual understanding. Therefore he declares that those believers who embrace Christ are “born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” [John 1:13]. This means: Flesh is not capable of such lofty wisdom as to conceive God and what is God’s, unless it be illumined by the Spirit of God. As Christ testified, the fact that Peter recognized him was a special revelation of the Father [^{<401617>} Matthew 16:17].

20. MAN’S KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IS GOD’S OWN WORK

If we were convinced that our nature lacks everything that our Heavenly Father bestows upon his elect through the Spirit of regeneration [cf. ^{<560305>} Titus 3:5] — a fact that should be beyond controversy — we would have here no occasion for doubt! For so speak the faithful people according to the prophet: “For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light” [^{<193609>} Psalm 36:9]. The apostle testifies the same when he says that “no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit” [^{<461203>} 1 Corinthians 12:3]. And John the Baptist, seeing his disciples’ wonderment, exclaimed: “No one can receive anything except what is given him from above” [^{<430327>} John 3:27]. That he understands by “gift” a special illumination, ^{f93} not a common endowment of nature, is evident from his complaint that the very words with which he commended Christ to his disciples availed him not. “I see,” he says, “that my words have no power to imbue men’s minds with divine matters, unless the Lord through his Spirit gives understanding.” Even Moses, reproaching the people for their forgetfulness, nevertheless notes at the same time that one cannot become wise in God’s mysteries except by his gift. He says: “Your

eyes saw those signs and great wonders; but the Lord has not given you a heart to understand, or ears to hear, or eyes to see.” [^{<052903>} Deuteronomy 29:3-4, cf. Vg.] What more could he express if he called us “blocks” in our contemplation of God’s works? For this reason, the Lord as a singular grace promises through the prophet he will give the Israelites a heart to know him [^{<242407>} Jeremiah 24:7]. This doubtless means man’s mind can become spiritually wise only in so far as God illumines it.

Christ also confirmed this most clearly in his own words when he said: “No one can come to me unless it be granted by my Father” [^{<430644>} John 6:44 P.]. Why? Is he not himself the living image of the Father [cf. ^{<510115>} Colossians 1:15], wherein the whole splendor of his glory is revealed [cf. Hebrews 1:3]? Therefore, he could characterize our capacity to know God in no better way than by denying that we have eyes to see his image even when it is openly exhibited before us. Why? Did not Christ descend to earth in order to reveal the Father’s will to men [cf. John 1:18]? And did he not faithfully carry out his mission? This is obviously so. But nothing is accomplished by preaching him if the Spirit, as our inner teacher, does not show our minds the way. Only those men, therefore, who have heard and have been taught by the Father come to him. What kind of learning and hearing is this? Surely, where the Spirit by a wonderful and singular power forms our ears to hear and our minds to understand. And Christ cites the prophecy of Isaiah to show that this is nothing new. When He promises the renewal of the church, he teaches that those who will be gathered unto salvation [^{<235407>} Isaiah 54:7] “shall be God’s disciples” [^{<430645>} John 6:45; ^{<235413>} Isaiah 54:13]. If God is there foretelling some particular things concerning his elect, it is evident that he is not speaking of that sort of instruction which the impious and profane also share.

It therefore remains for us to understand that the way to the Kingdom of God is open only to him whose mind has been made new by the illumination of the Holy Spirit.^{f94} Paul, however, having expressly entered this discussion, speaks more clearly than all [1 Corinthians 1:18 ff.]. After condemning the stupidity and vanity of all human wisdom and utterly reducing it to nothing [cf. ^{<460113>} 1 Corinthians 1:13 ff.], he concludes: “The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are

spiritually discerned” [^{<460214>} 1 Corinthians 2:14]. Whom does he call “natural”? The man who depends upon the light of nature. He, I say, comprehends nothing of God’s spiritual mysteries. Why is this? Is it because he neglects them out of laziness? No, even though he try, he can do nothing, for “they are spiritually discerned.” What does this mean? Because these mysteries are deeply hidden from human insight, they are disclosed solely by the revelation of the Spirit. Hence, where the Spirit of God does not illumine them, they are considered folly. Previously, however, Paul had extolled above the capacity of eye, ear, and mind “what God has prepared for those who love him” [1 Corinthians 2:9]. Indeed, he had likened human wisdom to a veil that hinders the mind from seeing God. What then? The apostle declares, “God has made foolish the wisdom of this world.” [1 Corinthians 1:20.] Shall we then attribute to it the keen insight by which man can penetrate to God and to the secret places of the Kingdom of Heaven? Away with such madness!

21. WITHOUT THE LIGHT OF THE SPIRIT, ALL IS DARKNESS

Accordingly, what Paul here denies to men, elsewhere, in prayer, he ascribes to God alone. “May God,” he says, “. . . and the Father of Glory give to you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation.” [^{<490117>} Ephesians 1:17, Vg. and Comm.] Now you hear that all wisdom and revelation are God’s gift. What else does he say? “Having the eyes of your mind enlightened.” [Ephesians 1:18a, Vg. and Comm.] Surely, if they have need of new revelation, they are blinded of themselves. There follows: “That you may know the hope to which he has called you,” etc. [^{<490118>} Ephesians 1:18b, cf. Vg. and Comm.]. He admits that men’s minds are incapable of sufficient understanding^{f94x} to know their own calling.

Let no Pelagian^{f95} babble here that God remedies this stupidity or, if you will, ignorance, when he directs man’s understanding by the teaching of his Word to that which it could not have reached without guidance. For David had the Law in which was comprised all wisdom that can be desired; yet not content with it, he asks that his eyes be opened to “contemplate the mysteries of His law” [^{<19B918>} Psalm 119:18 p.]. By this expression he evidently means that the sun rises upon the earth when God’s Word shines upon men; but they do not have its benefit until he who is called the “Father of lights” [^{<590117>} James 1:17] either gives eyes or opens them. For

wherever the Spirit does not cast his light, all is darkness. In this same way the apostles were properly and fully taught by the best of teachers. Yet if they had not needed the Spirit of truth to instruct their minds in this very doctrine which they had heard before [^{<431426>} John 14:26], he would not have bidden them to wait for him [^{<440104>} Acts 1:4]. If we confess that we lack what we seek of God, and he by promising it proves our lack of it, no one should now hesitate to confess that he is able to understand God's mysteries only in so far as he is illumined by God's grace. He who attributes any more understanding to himself is all the more blind because he does not recognize his own blindness.

(Sin is distinct from ignorance [vs. Plato], but may be occasioned by delusion, 22-25)

22. THE EVIDENCE OF GOD'S WILL THAT MAN POSSESSES MAKES HIM INEXCUSABLE BUT PROCURES FOR HIM NO RIGHT KNOWLEDGE

There remains the third aspect of spiritual insight, ^{f96} that of knowing the rule for the right conduct of life. This we correctly call the "knowledge of the works of righteousness." The human mind sometimes seems more acute in this than in higher things. For the apostle testifies: "When Gentiles, who do not have the law, do the works of the law, they are a law to themselves... and show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their thoughts accuse them among themselves or excuse them before God's judgment" ^{<450214>} Romans 2:14-15 p.]. If the Gentiles by nature have law righteousness engraved upon their minds, we surely cannot say they are utterly blind as to the conduct of life.

There is nothing more common than for a man to be sufficiently instructed in a right standard of conduct by natural law ^{f97} (of which the apostle is here speaking). Let us consider, however, for what purpose men have been endowed with this knowledge of the law. How far it can lead them toward the goal of reason and truth will then immediately appear. This is also clear from Paul's words, if we note their context. He had just before said that those who sinned in the law are judged through the law; they who sinned without the law perish without the law. Because it might seem absurd that

the Gentiles perish without any preceding judgment, Paul immediately adds that for them conscience stands in place of law; this is sufficient reason ‘for their just condemnation. The purpose of natural law, therefore, is to render man inexcusable. This would not be a bad definition: natural law is that apprehension of the conscience which distinguishes sufficiently between just and unjust, and which deprives men of the excuse of ignorance, while it proves them guilty by their own testimony. Man is so indulgent toward himself that when he commits evil he readily averts his mind, as much as he can, from the feeling of sin. This is why Plato seems to have been compelled to consider (in his *Protagoras*) that we sin only out of ignorance.^{f98} This might have been an appropriate statement if only human hypocrisy had covered up vices with sufficient skill to prevent the mind from being recognized as evil in God’s sight. The sinner tries to evade his innate power to judge between good and evil. Still, he is continually drawn back to it, and is not so much as permitted to wink at it without being forced, whether he will or not, at times to open his eyes. It is falsely said, therefore, that man sins out of ignorance alone.

23. JUDGMENT OF GOOD AND EVIL IS UNCLEAR, SO LONG AS IT TAKES PLACE ARBITRARILY

Themistius more correctly teaches that the intellect is very rarely deceived in general definition or in the essence of the thing; but that it is illusory when it goes farther, that is, applies the principle to particular cases.^{f99} In reply to the general question, every man will affirm that murder is evil. But he who is plotting the death of an enemy contemplates murder as something good. The adulterer will condemn adultery in general, but will privately flatter himself in his own adultery. Herein is man’s ignorance: when he comes to a particular case, he forgets the general principle that he has just laid down. On this point Augustine has expressed himself beautifully in his exposition of the first verse of Psalm 57.

Themistius’ rule, however, is not without exception. Sometimes the shamefulness of evil-doing presses upon the conscience so that one, imposing upon himself no false image of the good, knowingly and willingly rushes headlong into wickedness. Out of such a disposition of mind come statements like this: “I see what is better and approve it, but I follow the worse.”^{f100} To my mind Aristotle has made a very shrewd distinction

between incontinence and intemperance: “Where incontinence reigns,” he says, “the disturbed mental state or passion so deprives the mind of particular knowledge that it cannot mark the evil in its own misdeed which it generally discerns in like instances; when the perturbation subsides, repentance straightway returns. Intemperance, however, is not extinguished or shattered by the awareness of sin, but on the contrary, stubbornly persists in choosing its habitual evil.” ^{f101}

24. HUMAN KNOWLEDGE WHOLLY FAILS AS REGARDS THE FIRST TABLE OF THE LAW; AS REGARDS THE SECOND, FAILS IN A CRITICAL SITUATION

Now when you hear of a universal judgment discriminating between good and evil, do not consider it to be sound and whole in every respect. For if men’s hearts have been imbued with the ability to distinguish just from unjust, solely that they should not pretend ignorance as an excuse, it is not at all a necessary consequence that truth should be discerned in individual instances. It is more than enough if their understanding extends so far that evasion becomes impossible for them, and they, convicted by the witness of their own conscience, begin even now to tremble before God’s judgment seat. And if we want to measure our reason by God’s law, the pattern of perfect righteousness, we shall find in how many respects it is blind! Surely it does not at all comply with the principal points of the First Table; ^{f102} such as putting our faith in God, giving due praise for his excellence and righteousness, calling upon his name, and truly keeping the Sabbath [^{<022003>}Exodus 20:3-17]. What soul, relying upon natural perception, ever had an inkling that the lawful worship of God consists in these and like matters? For when profane men desire to worship God, even if they be called away a hundred times from their empty trifles, they always slip back into them once more. They admit, of course, that God is not pleased with sacrifices unless sincerity of intention accompany them. ^{f103} By this they testify that they have some notion of the spiritual worship of God, yet they at once pervert it with false devisings. For they could never be persuaded that what the law prescribes concerning worship is the truth. Shall I then say that the mind that can neither be wise of itself nor heed warnings excels in discernment?

Men have somewhat more understanding of the precepts of the Second Table [^{<022012>}Exodus 20:12 ff.] because these are more closely concerned with the preservation of civil society among them. Yet even here one sometimes detects a failure to endure. A man of most excellent disposition finds it utterly senseless to bear an unjust and excessively imperious domination, if only he can in some way throw it off. And this is the common judgment of human reason: the mark of a servile and abject person is to bear it with patience; that of an honorable and freeborn man to shake it off. Nor do the philosophers consider the avenging of injuries to be a vice. But the Lord condemns this excessive haughtiness and enjoins upon his own people a patience disgraceful in men's eyes. But in all our keeping of the law we quite fail to take our concupiscence into account. For the natural man refuses to be led to recognize the diseases of his lusts. The light of nature is extinguished before he even enters upon this abyss. While the philosophers label the immoderate incitements of the mind as "vices," they have reference to those which are outward and manifested by grosser signs. They take no account of the evil desires that gently tickle the mind.

25. EVERY DAY WE NEED THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT WE MAY NOT MISTAKE OUR WAY

Just as we deservedly censured Plato above because he imputed all sins to ignorance,^{f104} so also ought we to repudiate the opinion of those who suppose that there is deliberate malice and depravity in all sins. For we know all too well by experience how often we fall despite our good intention. Our reason is overwhelmed by so many forms of deceptions, is subject to so many errors, dashes against so many obstacles, is caught in so many difficulties, that it is far from directing us aright. Indeed, Paul shows us in every part of life how empty reason is in the Lord's sight when he denies "that we are sufficient of ourselves to claim something as coming from us as if it really did" [1 Corinthians 3:5]. He is not speaking of the will or the emotions; but he even takes from us the ability to think how the right doing of anything can enter our minds. Is our diligence, insight, understanding, and carefulness so completely corrupted that we can devise or prepare nothing right in God's eyes? No wonder that it seems too hard for us who grudgingly suffer ourselves to be deprived of keenness of reason, which we count the most precious gift of all! But to

the Holy Spirit who “knows that all the thoughts of the wise are futile” [^{<460320>} 1 Corinthians 3:20; cf. ^{<199411>} Psalm 94:11] and who clearly declares that “every imagination of the human heart is solely evil” [^{<010605>} Genesis 6:5; 8:21 p.] it seems most fitting. If whatever our nature conceives, instigates, undertakes, and attempts is always evil, how can that which is pleasing to God, to whom holiness and righteousness alone are acceptable, even enter our minds?

Thus we can see that the reason of our mind, wherever it may turn, is miserably subject to vanity. David was aware of this feebleness when he prayed to be given understanding to learn the Lord’s commandments rightly [^{<19B934>} Psalm 119:34]. In desiring to obtain a new understanding he intimates that his own nature is insufficient. And not once, but almost ten times in a single psalm he repeats the same prayer [^{<19B912>} Psalm 119:12,18,19, 26,33,64,68,73,124,125,135,169]. By this repetition he suggests how great is the necessity that compels him to pray thus. And what David seeks for himself alone, Paul is accustomed to implore for the churches in common. “We ceased not to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of God in all spiritual wisdom and understanding in order that you may walk worthily before God,” etc. [^{<510109>} Colossians 1:9-10 p.; cf. ^{<500109>} Philippians 1:9.] We should remember, however, that whenever he represents this thing as a benefit from God he bears witness at the same time that it has not been placed within man’s ability. But Augustine so recognizes this inability of the reason to understand the things of God that he deems the grace of illumination no less necessary for our minds than the light of the sun for our eyes. Not content with this, he adds the correction that we ourselves open our eyes to behold the light, but the eyes of the mind, unless the Lord open them, remain closed.^{f105} Nor does Scripture teach that our minds are illumined only on one day and that they may thereafter see of themselves. For what I have just quoted from Paul has reference to continuing progress and increase. David has aptly expressed it in these words: “With my whole heart I have sought thee; let me not wander from thy commandments!” [^{<19B910>} Psalm 119:10]. Although he had been reborn and had advanced to no mean extent in true godliness, he still confesses that he needs continual direction at every moment, lest he decline from the knowledge with which he has been endowed. Therefore he prays elsewhere

that a right spirit, lost by his own fault, be restored [^{<195110>}Psalm 51:10]. For it is the part of the same God to restore that which he had given at the beginning, but which had been taken away from us for a time.

(Man's inability to will the good, 26-27)

26. THE NATURAL INSTINCT THAT TREATS THE “GOOD” AND THE “ACCEPTABLE” ALIKE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH FREEDOM

Now we must examine the will,^{f106} upon which freedom of decision especially depends; for we have already seen that choice belongs to the sphere of the will rather than to that of the understanding.^{f107} To begin with, the philosophers teach that all things seek good through a natural instinct, and this view is received with general consent. But that we may not suppose this doctrine to have anything to do with the uprightness of the human will, let us observe that the power of free choice is not to be sought in such an appetite, which arises from inclination of nature rather than from deliberation of mind. Even the Schoolmen admit that free will is active only when the reason considers alternative possibilities.^{f108} By this they mean that the object of the appetite must be amenable to choice, and deliberation must go before to open the way to choice. And actually, if you consider the character of this natural desire of good in man, you will find that he has it in common with animals. For they also desire their own well-being; and when some sort of good that can move their sense appears, they follow it. But man does not choose by reason and pursue with zeal what is truly good for himself according to the excellence of his immortal nature; nor does he use his reason in deliberation or bend his mind to it. Rather, like an animal he follows the inclination of his nature, without reason, without deliberation. Therefore whether or not man is impelled to seek after good by an impulse of nature has no bearing upon freedom of the will. This instead is required: that he discern good by right reason; that knowing it he choose it; that having chosen it he follow it.

That no reader may remain in doubt, we must be warned of a double misinterpretation. For “appetite” here signifies not an impulse of the will itself but rather an inclination of nature; and “good” refers not to virtue or justice but to condition, as when things go well with man. To sum up,

much as man desires to follow what is good, still he does not follow it. There is no man to whom eternal blessedness is not pleasing, yet no man aspires to it except by the impulsion of the Holy Spirit. The desire for well-being natural to men no more proves freedom of the will than the tendency of metals and stones toward perfection of their essence proves it in them. This being so, we must now examine whether in other respects the will is so deeply vitiated and corrupted in its every part that it can beget nothing but evil; or whether it retains any portion unimpaired, from which good desires may be born.

27. OUR WILL CANNOT LONG FOR THE GOOD WITHOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

Those who attribute to God's first grace the fact that we effectually will, seem to imply, on the other hand, that there is a faculty in the soul voluntarily to aspire to good, but one too feeble to be able to come forth into firm intention, or to arouse effort. There is no doubt that this opinion, taken from Origen and certain other ancient writers, was commonly held by the Schoolmen: they usually consider man in "mere nature," as they phrase it.^{f109} As such, man is described in the apostle's words: "For I do not do the good I will, but the evil I do not will is what I do. It lies in my power to will, but I find myself unable to accomplish" [^{<450719>}Romans 7:19,18, cf. Vg.]. But they wrongly pervert the whole argument that Paul is pursuing here. For he is discussing the Christian struggle (more briefly touched in Galatians [^{<480517>}Galatians 5:17]), which believers constantly feel in themselves in the conflict between flesh and spirit. But the Spirit comes, not from nature, but from regeneration. Moreover, it is clear that the apostle is speaking of these regenerated, because when he had said that no good dwelt in him, he adds the explanation that he is referring to his flesh [^{<450718>}Romans 7:18]. Accordingly, he declares that it is not he who does evil, but sin dwelling in him. [^{<450720>}Romans 7:20.] What does he mean by this correction: "In me, that is, in my flesh" [^{<450718>}Romans 7:18]? It is as if he were speaking in this way: "Good does not dwell in me of myself, for nothing good is to be found in my flesh." Hence follows that form of an excuse: "I myself do not do evil, but sin that dwells in me" [^{<450720>}Romans 7:20]. This excuse applies only to the regenerate who tend toward good with the chief part of their soul. Now the conclusion

appended clearly explains this whole matter: “For I delight in the law... according to the inner man, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind” [^{<450722>}Romans 7:22-23]. Who would have such strife in himself but a man who, regenerated by the Spirit of God, bears the remains of his flesh about with him? Therefore, Augustine, although at one time he had thought that passage to be concerned with man’s nature, later retracted his interpretation as false and inappropriate.^{f110} Yet if we hold the view that men have, apart from grace, some impulses (however puny) toward good, what shall we reply to the apostle who even denies that we are capable of conceiving anything [^{<470305>}2 Corinthians 3:5]? What shall we reply to the Lord, who through Moses declares that every imagination of man’s heart is only evil [^{<010821>}Genesis 8:21]? Since they have stumbled in their false interpretation of a single passage, there is no reason for us to tarry over their view. Rather let us value Christ’s saying: “Every one who commits sin is a slave to sin” [^{<430834>}John 8:34]. We are all sinners by nature; therefore we are held under the yoke of sin. But if the whole man lies under the power of sin, surely it is necessary that the will, which is its chief seat, be restrained by the stoutest bonds. Paul’s saying would not make sense, that “it is God who is at work to will in us” [^{<503813>}Philippians 2:13 p.], if any will preceded the grace of the Spirit. Away then with all that “preparation” which many babble about!^{f111} For even if believers sometimes ask that their hearts be conformed to obedience to God’s law, as David in a number of passages does, yet we must also note that this desire to pray comes from God.

This we may infer from David’s words. When he desires that a clean heart be created in himself [^{<195110>}Psalm 51:10], surely he does not credit himself with the beginning of its creation. For this reason we ought rather to value Augustine’s saying: “God has anticipated you in all things; now do you yourself — while you may — anticipate his wrath. How? Confess that you have all these things from God: whatever good you have is from him; whatever evil, from yourself.” And a little later, “Nothing is ours but sin.”^{f112}

CHAPTER 3

ONLY DAMNABLE THINGS COME FORTH FROM MAN'S CORRUPT NATURE

(Corruption of man's nature is such as to require total renewal of his mind and will, 1-5)

1. THE WHOLE MAN IS FLESH

But man cannot be better known in both faculties of his soul than if he makes his appearance with those titles whereby Scripture marks him. If the whole man is depicted by these words of Christ, "What is born of flesh, is flesh" [^{<430306>}John 3:6] (as is easy to prove), man is very clearly shown to be a miserable creature. "For to set the mind on the flesh," as the apostle testifies, "is death. Because there is enmity against God, it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot." [^{<450806>}Romans 8:6-7 p.] Is the flesh so perverse that it is wholly disposed to bear a grudge against God, cannot agree with the justice of divine law, can, in short, beget nothing but the occasion of death? Now suppose that in man's nature there is nothing but flesh: extract something good from it if you can. But, you will say, the word "flesh" pertains only to the sensual part of the soul, not to the higher part. ^{f113} This is thoroughly refuted from the words of Christ and of the apostle. The Lord's reasoning is: Man must be reborn [^{<430303>}John 3:3], for he "is flesh" [^{<430306>}John 3:6]. He is not teaching a rebirth as regards the body. Now the soul is not reborn if merely a part of it is reformed, but only when it is wholly renewed. The antithesis set forth in both passages confirms this. The Spirit is so contrasted with flesh that no intermediate thing is left. Accordingly, whatever is not spiritual in man is by this reckoning called "carnal." We have nothing of the Spirit, however, except through regeneration. Whatever we have from nature, therefore, is flesh.

But Paul relieves us of any possible doubt on this matter. Having described the old man who, he had said, was "corrupted by deceptive

desires” [^{<490422>}Ephesians 4:22 p.], he bids us “be renewed in the spirit of our mind” [^{<490423>}Ephesians 4:23 p.]. You see that he lodges unlawful and wicked desires not solely in the sensual part of the soul, but even in the mind itself, and for this reason he requires its renewal. To be sure, a little while before he had painted a picture of human nature that showed us corrupt and perverted in every part. He writes that “all the Gentiles walk in the vanity of their minds, being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance which is in them, and their blindness of heart.” [^{<490417>}Ephesians 4:17-18.] There is not the least doubt that this statement applies to all those whom the Lord has not yet formed again to the uprightness of his wisdom and justice. This also becomes clearer from the comparison immediately added wherein he admonishes believers that they “did not so learn Christ” [^{<490420>}Ephesians 4:20]. We, indeed, infer from these words that the grace of Christ is the sole remedy to free us from that blindness and from the evils consequent upon it. Isaiah also had so prophesied concerning Christ’s Kingdom when he promised: “The Lord will be an everlasting light” for his church [^{<236019>}Isaiah 60:19 p.], while “shadows will shroud the earth and darkness will cover the peoples” [^{<236002>}Isaiah 60:2]. He there testifies that the light of God will arise in the church alone; and leaves only shadows and blindness outside the church. ^{f114} I shall not individually recount the statements made everywhere concerning men’s vanity, especially in The Psalms and the Prophets. Great is the utterance of David: “If a man be weighed with vanity, he shall be vainer than vanity itself” [^{<196101>}Psalms 61:10, Vg.; ^{<196209>}Psalms 62:9, EV]. Man’s understanding is pierced by a heavy spear when all the thoughts that proceed from him are mocked as stupid, frivolous, insane, and perverse.

2. ROMANS, CHAPTER 3, AS WITNESS FOR MAN’S CORRUPTION

That condemnation of the heart when it is called “deceitful and corrupt above all else” [^{<241709>}Jeremiah 17:9 p.] is no less severe. But because I am striving for brevity, I shall be content with but one passage; yet it will be like the clearest of mirrors in which we may contemplate the whole image of our nature. For the apostle, when he wishes to cast down the arrogance of humankind, does so by these testimonies: “No one is righteous, no one

understands, no one seeks God. All have turned aside, together they have become unprofitable; no one does good, not even one' [^{<191401>}Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3]. 'Their throat is an open grave, they use their tongues deceitfully' [^{<190509>}Psalm 5:9]. 'The venom of asps is under their lips' [^{<19E003>}Psalm 140:3]. 'Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness' [^{<191007>}Psalm 10:7]. 'Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery' [^{<235907>}Isaiah 59:7 P.]. There is no fear of God before their eyes" [^{<450310>}Romans 3:10-16, 18 p.]. With these thunderbolts he inveighs not against particular men but against the whole race of Adam's children. Nor is he decrying the depraved morals of one age or another, but indicting the unvarying corruption of our nature.^{f115} Now his intention in this passage is not simply to rebuke men that they may repent, but rather to teach them that they have all been overwhelmed by an unavoidable calamity from which only God's mercy can deliver them. Because this could not be proved unless it rested upon the ruin and destruction of our nature, he put forward these testimonies which prove our nature utterly lost.

Let this then be agreed: that men are as they are here described not merely by the defect of depraved custom, but also by depravity of nature. The reasoning of the apostle cannot otherwise stand: Except out of the Lord's mercy there is no salvation for man, for in himself he is lost and forsaken [^{<450323>}Romans 3:23 ff.]. I shall not toil in proving the applicability of these passages, in order that they may not seem to have been inappropriately seized upon by the apostle. I shall proceed as if these statements had first been made by Paul, not drawn from the Prophets. First of all, he strips man of righteousness, that is, integrity and purity; then, of understanding [^{<450310>}Romans 3:10-11]. Indeed, apostasy from God proves defect of understanding, for to seek him is the first degree of wisdom. This defect, therefore, is necessarily found in all who have forsaken God. He adds that all have fallen away and have, as it were, become corrupt, that there is no one who does good. Then he adds the shameful acts with which they — once they have been let loose in wickedness — defile their several members. Finally, he declares them devoid of the fear of God, to whose rule our steps ought to have been directed. If these are the hereditary endowments of the human race, it is futile to seek anything good in our nature. Indeed, I grant that not all these

wicked traits appear in every man; yet one cannot deny that this hydra lurks in the breast of each. For as the body, so long as it nourishes in itself the cause and matter of disease (even though pain does not yet rage), will not be called healthy, so also will the soul not be considered healthy while it abounds with so many fevers of vice. This comparison, however, does not fit in every detail. For in the diseased body some vigor of life yet remains; although the soul, plunged into this deadly abyss, is not only burdened with vices, but is utterly devoid of all good.

3. GOD’S GRACE SOMETIMES RESTRAINS WHERE IT DOES NOT CLEANSE

Almost the same question that was previously answered now confronts us anew. In every age there have been persons who, guided by nature, have striven toward virtue throughout life.^{f116} I have nothing to say against them even if many lapses can be noted in their moral conduct. For they have by the very zeal of their honesty given proof that there was some purity in their nature. Although in discussing merit of works we shall deal more fully with what value such virtues have in God’s sight, we must nevertheless speak of it also at this point, inasmuch as it is necessary for the unfolding of the present argument. These examples, accordingly, seem to warn us against adjudging man’s nature wholly corrupted, because some men have by its prompting not only excelled in remarkable deeds, but conducted themselves most honorably throughout life. But here it ought to occur to us that amid this corruption of nature there is some place for God’s grace; not such grace as to cleanse it, but to restrain it inwardly. For if the Lord gave loose rein to the mind of each man to run riot in his lusts, there would doubtless be no one who would not show that, in fact, every evil thing for which Paul condemns all nature is most truly to be met in himself [^{<191403>} Psalm 14:3; ^{<450312>} Romans 3:12].

What then? Do you count yourself exempt from the number of those whose “feet are swift to shed blood” [^{<450315>} Romans 3:15], whose hands are fouled with robberies and murders, “whose throats are like open graves, whose tongues deceive, whose lips are envenomed” [^{<450313>} Romans 3:13]; whose works are useless, wicked, rotten, deadly; whose hearts are without God; whose inmost parts, depravities; whose eyes are set upon stratagems; whose minds are eager to revile — to sum

up, whose every part stands ready to commit infinite wickedness [^{<450310>}Romans 3:10-18]? If every soul is subject to such abominations as the apostle boldly declares, we surely see what would happen if the Lord were to permit human lust to wander according to its own inclination. No mad beast would rage as unrestrainedly; no river, however swift and violent, burst so madly into flood. In his elect the Lord cures these diseases in a way that we shall soon explain. Others he merely restrains by throwing a bridle over them only that they may not break loose, inasmuch as he foresees their control to be expedient to preserve all that is. Hence some are restrained by shame from breaking out into many kinds of foulness, others by the fear of the law — even though they do not, for the most part, hide their impurity. Still others, because they consider an honest manner of life profitable, in some measure aspire to it. Others rise above the common lot, in order by their excellence to keep the rest obedient to them. Thus God by his providence bridles perversity of nature, that it may not break forth into action; but he does not purge it within.

4. UPRIGHTNESS IS GOD'S GIFT; BUT MAN'S NATURE REMAINS CORRUPTED

Nevertheless the problem has not yet been resolved. For either we must make Camillus equal to Catiline, or we shall have in Camillus an example proving that nature, if carefully cultivated, is not utterly devoid of goodness. ^{f117} Indeed, I admit that the endowments resplendent in Camillus were gifts of God and seem rightly commendable if judged in themselves. But how will these serve as proofs of natural goodness in him? Must we not hark back to his mind and reason thus: ^{f118} if a natural man excelled in such moral integrity, undoubtedly human nature did not lack the ability to cultivate virtue? Yet what if the mind had been wicked and crooked, and had followed anything but uprightness? And there is no doubt that it was such, if you grant that Camillus was a natural man. What power for good will you attribute to human nature in this respect, if in the loftiest appearance of integrity, it is always found to be impelled toward corruption? Therefore as you will not commend a man for virtue when his vices impress you under the appearance of virtues, so you will not

attribute to the human will the capability of seeking after the right so long as the will remains set in its own perversity.

Here, however, is the surest and easiest solution to this question: these are not common gifts of nature, but special graces of God, which he bestows variously and in a certain measure upon men otherwise wicked. For this reason, we are not afraid, in common parlance, to call this man wellborn, that one depraved in nature. Yet we do not hesitate to include both under the universal condition of human depravity; but we point out what special grace^{f119} the Lord has bestowed upon the one, while not deigning to bestow it upon the other. When he wished to put Saul over the kingdom he “formed him as a new man” [^{<091006>}1 Samuel 10:6 p.]. This is the reason why Plato, alluding to the Homeric legend, says that kings’ sons are born with some distinguishing mark.^{f120} For God, in providing for the human race, often endows with a heroic nature those destined to command. From this workshop have come forth the qualities of great leaders celebrated in histories. Private individuals are to be judged in the same way. But because, however excellent anyone has been, his own ambition always pushes him on — a blemish with which all virtues are so sullied that before God they lose all favor — anything in profane men that appears praiseworthy must be considered worthless. Besides, where there is no zeal to glorify God, the chief part of uprightness is absent; a zeal of which all those whom he has not regenerated by his Spirit are devoid. There is good reason for the statement in Isaiah, that “the spirit of the fear of God rests” upon Christ [^{<231102>}Isaiah 11:2 p.]. By this we are taught that all estranged from Christ lack “the fear of God,” which “is the beginning of wisdom” [^{<19B110>}Psalms 111:10 p.]. As for the virtues that deceive us with their vain show, they shall have their praise in the political assembly and in common renown among men; but before the heavenly judgment seat they shall be of no value to acquire righteousness.

5. MAN SINS OF NECESSITY, BUT WITHOUT COMPULSION

Because of the bondage of sin by which the will is held bound, it cannot move toward good, much less apply itself thereto; for a movement of this sort is the beginning of conversion to God, which in Scripture is ascribed entirely to God’s grace. So Jeremiah prayed to the Lord to be “converted” if it were his will to “convert him” [^{<243118>}Jeremiah 31:18, cf. Vg.]. Hence

the prophet in the same chapter, describing the spiritual redemption of the believing folk, speaks of them as “redeemed from the hand of one stronger than they” [verse 11 p.]. By this he surely means the tight fetters with which the sinner is bound so long as, forsaken by the Lord, he lives under the devil’s yoke. Nonetheless the will remains, with the most eager inclination disposed and hastening to sin. For man, when he gave himself over to this necessity, was not deprived of will, but of soundness of will. Not inappropriately Bernard teaches that to will is in us all: but to will good is gain; to will evil, loss. Therefore simply to will is of man; to will ill, of a corrupt nature; to will well, of grace.^{f121}

Now, when I say that the will bereft of freedom is of necessity either drawn or led into evil, it is a wonder if this seems a hard saying to anyone, since it has nothing incongruous or alien to the usage of holy men. But it offends those who know not how to distinguish between necessity and compulsion.^{f122} Suppose someone asks them: Is not God of necessity good? Is not the devil of necessity evil? What will they reply? God’s goodness is so connected with his divinity that it is no more necessary for him to be God than for him to be good. But the devil by his fall was so cut off from participation in good that he can do nothing but evil. But suppose some blasphemer sneers that God deserves little praise for His own goodness, constrained as He is to preserve it.^{f123} Will this not be a ready answer to him: not from violent impulsion, but from His boundless goodness comes God’s inability to do evil? Therefore, if the fact that he must do good does not hinder God’s free will in doing good; if the devil, who can do only evil, yet sins with his will — who shall say that man therefore sins less willingly because he is subject to the necessity of sinning? Augustine everywhere speaks of this necessity; and even though Cadestius caviled against him invidiously, he did not hesitate to affirm it in these words: “Through freedom man came to be in sin, but the corruption which followed as punishment turned freedom into necessity.”^{f124} And whenever he makes mention of the matter, he does not hesitate to speak in this manner of the necessary bondage of sin.

The chief point of this distinction, then, must be that man, as he was corrupted by the Fall, sinned willingly, not unwillingly or by compulsion; by the most eager inclination of his heart, not by forced compulsion; by the prompting of his own lust, not by compulsion from without. Yet so

depraved is his nature that he can be moved or impelled only to evil. But if this is true, then it is clearly expressed that man is surely subject to the necessity of sinning.^{f125}

Bernard, agreeing with Augustine, so writes: “Among all living beings man alone is free; and yet because sin has intervened he also undergoes a kind of violence, but of will, not of nature, so that not even thus is he deprived of his innate freedom. For what is voluntary is also free.” And a little later: “In some base and strange way the will itself, changed for the worse by sin, makes a necessity for itself. Hence, neither does necessity, although it is of the will, avail to excuse the will, nor does the will, although it is led astray, avail to exclude necessity. For this necessity is as it were voluntary.” Afterward he says that we are oppressed by no other yoke than that of a kind of voluntary servitude. Therefore we are miserable as to servitude and inexcusable as to will because the will, when it was free, made itself the slave of sin. Yet he concludes: “Thus the soul, in some strange and evil way, under a certain voluntary and wrongly free necessity is at the same time enslaved and free: enslaved because of necessity; free because of will. And what is at once stranger and more deplorable, it is guilty because it is free, and enslaved because it is guilty, and as a consequence enslaved because it is free.”^{f126} Surely my readers will recognize that I am bringing forth nothing new, for it is something that Augustine taught of old with the agreement of all the godly, and it was still retained almost a thousand years later in monastic cloisters. But Lombard, since he did not know how to distinguish necessity from compulsion, gave occasion for a pernicious error.

(Conversion of the will is the effect of divine grace inwardly bestowed, 6-14)

6. MEN’S INABILITY TO DO GOOD MANIFESTS ITSELF ABOVE ALL IN THE WORK OF REDEMPTION, WHICH GOD DOES QUITE ALONE

On the other hand, it behooves us to consider the sort of remedy by which divine grace corrects and cures the corruption of nature. Since the Lord in coming to our aid bestows upon us what we lack, when the nature of his work in us appears, our destitution will, on the other hand, at once be

manifest. When the apostle tells the Philippians he is confident “that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” [^{<500106>}Philippians 1:6], there is no doubt that through “the beginning of a good work” he denotes the very origin of conversion itself, which is in the will. God begins his good work in us, therefore, by arousing love and desire and zeal for righteousness in our hearts; or, to speak more correctly, by bending, forming, and directing, our hearts to righteousness. He completes his work, moreover, by confirming us to perseverance. In order that no one should make an excuse that good is initiated by the Lord to help the will which by itself is weak, the Spirit elsewhere declares what the will, left to itself, is capable of doing: “A new heart shall I give you, and will put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh. And I shall put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes” [^{<263626>}Ezekiel 36:26-27]. ^{f127} Who shall say that the infirmity of the human will is strengthened by his help in order that it may aspire effectively to the choice of good, when it must rather be wholly transformed and renewed?

If in a stone there is such plasticity that, made softer by some means, it becomes somewhat bent, I will not deny that man’s heart can be molded to obey the right, provided what is imperfect in him be supplied by God’s grace. But if by this comparison the Lord wished to show that nothing good can ever be wrung from our heart, unless it become wholly other, let us not divide between him and us what he claims for himself alone. If, therefore, a stone is transformed into flesh when God converts us to zeal for the right, whatever is of our own will is effaced. What takes its place is wholly from God. I say that the will is effaced; not in so far as it is will, ^{f128} for in man’s conversion what belongs to his primal nature remains entire. I also say that it is created anew; not meaning that the will now begins to exist, but that it is changed from an evil to a good will. I affirm that this is wholly God’s doing, for according to the testimony of the same apostle, “we are not even capable of thinking” [^{<470305>}2 Corinthians 3:5 p.]. Therefore he states in another place that God not only assists the weak will or corrects the depraved will, but also works in us to will [^{<503813>}Philippians 2:13]. From this, one may easily infer, as I have said, that everything good in the will is the work of grace alone. In this sense he says elsewhere: “It is God who works all things in all” [^{<461206>} 1

Corinthians 12:6 p.]. There he is not discussing universal governance, but is uttering praise to the one God for all good things in which believers excel. Now by saying “all” he surely makes God the author of spiritual life from beginning to end. Previously he had taught the same thing in other words: that believers are from God in Christ [^{<490101>}Ephesians 1:1; ^{<460806>}1 Corinthians 8:6]. Here he clearly commends the new creation, which sweeps away everything of our common nature. We ought to understand here an antithesis between Adam and Christ, which he explains more clearly in another place, where he teaches that “we are his workmanship, created in Christ for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” [^{<490210>}Ephesians 2:10, cf. Vg.]. For he would prove our salvation a free gift [cf. ^{<490205>}Ephesians 2:5], because the beginning of every good is from the second creation, which we attain in Christ. And yet if even the least ability came from ourselves, we would also have some share of the merit. But Paul, to strip us, argues that we deserve nothing because “we have been created in Christ... for good works which God prepared beforehand” [^{<490220>}Ephesians 2:20, cf. Vg.]. He means by these words that all parts of good works from their first impulse belong to God. In this way the prophet, after saying in the psalm that we are God’s handiwork, so that we may not share it with him, immediately adds: “And we ourselves have not done it” [^{<19A003>}Psalms 100:3 p.]. It is clear from the context that he is speaking of regeneration, which is the beginning of the spiritual life; for he goes on to say that “we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture” [^{<19A003>}Psalms 100:3]. Moreover, we see how, not simply content to have given God due praise for our salvation, he expressly excludes us from all participation in it. It is as if he were saying that not a whit remains to man to glory in, for the whole of salvation comes from God.

7. IT IS NOT A CASE OF THE BELIEVER’S “CO-OPERATION” WITH GRACE; THE WILL IS FIRST ACTUATED THROUGH GRACE

But perhaps some will concede that the will is turned away from the good by its own nature and is converted by the Lord’s power alone, yet in such a way that, having been prepared, it then has its own part in the action. As Augustine teaches, grace precedes every good work; while will does not go

before as its leader but follows after as its attendant.^{f129} This statement, which the holy man made with no evil intention, has by Lombard been preposterously twisted to that way of thinking.^{f130} But I contend that in the words of the prophet that I have cited, as well as in other passages, two things are clearly signified:

- (1) the Lord corrects our evil will, or rather extinguishes it;
- (2) he substitutes for it a good one from himself.

In so far as it is anticipated by grace, to that degree I concede that you may call your will an “attendant.” But because the will reformed is the Lord’s work, it is wrongly attributed to man that he obeys prevenient grace with his will as attendant. Therefore Chrysostom erroneously wrote: “Neither grace without will nor will without grace can do anything.”^{f131} As if grace did not also actuate the will itself, as we have just seen from Paul [cf. ^{<503813>}Philippians 2:13]! Nor was it Augustine’s intent, in calling the human will the attendant of grace, to assign to the will in good works a function second to that of grace. His only purpose was, rather, to refute that very evil doctrine of Pelagius which lodged the first cause of salvation in man’s merit.

Enough for the argument at hand, Augustine contends, was the fact that grace is prior to all merit. In the meantime he passes over the other question, that of the perpetual effect of grace, which he nevertheless brilliantly discusses elsewhere. For while Augustine on several occasions says that the Lord anticipates an unwilling man that he may will, and follows a willing man that he may not will in vain, yet he makes God himself wholly the Author of good works. However, his statements on this matter are clear enough not to require a long review. “Men labor,” he says, “to find in our will something that is our own and not of God; and I know not how it can be found.” Moreover, in *Against Pelagius and Caelestius*, Book I, he thus interprets Christ’s saying “Every one who has heard from my Father comes to me” [^{<430645>}John 6:45 p.]: “Man’s choice is so assisted that it not only knows what it ought to do, but also does because it has known. And thus when God teaches not through the letter of the law but through the grace of the Spirit, He so teaches that whatever anyone has learned he not only sees by knowing, but also seeks by willing, and achieves by doing.”^{f132}

8. SCRIPTURE IMPUTES TO GOD ALL THAT IS FOR OUR BENEFIT

Well, then, since we are now at the principal point, let us undertake to summarize the matter for our readers by but a few, and very clear, testimonies of Scripture. Then, lest anyone accuse us of distorting Scripture, let us show that the truth, which we assert has been drawn from Scripture, lacks not the attestation of this holy man — I mean Augustine. I do not account it necessary to recount ^{f133} item by item what can be adduced from Scripture in support of our opinion, but only from very select passages to pave the way to understanding all the rest, which we read here and there. On the other hand, it will not be untimely for me to make plain that I pretty much agree with that man whom the godly by common consent justly invest with the greatest authority.

Surely there is ready and sufficient reason to believe that good takes its origin from God alone. And only in the elect does one find a will inclined to good. Yet we must seek the cause of election outside men. It follows, thence, that man has a right will not from himself, but that it flows from the same good pleasure by which we were chosen before the creation of the world [^{<490104>} Ephesians 1:4]. Further, there is another similar reason: for since willing and doing well take their origin from faith, we ought to see what is the source of faith itself.

But since the whole of Scripture proclaims that faith is a free gift of God, it follows that when we, who are by nature inclined to evil with our whole heart, begin to will good, we do so out of mere grace. Therefore, the Lord when he lays down these two principles in the conversion of his people — that he will take from them their “heart of stone” and give them “a heart of flesh” [^{<263626>} Ezekiel 36:26] — openly testifies that what is of ourselves ought to be blotted out to convert us to righteousness; but that whatever takes its place is from him. And he does not declare this in one place only, for he says in Jeremiah: “I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me all their days” [^{<243239>} Jeremiah 32:39]. A little later: “I will put the fear of my name in their heart, that they may not turn from me” [^{<243240>} Jeremiah 32:40]. Again, in Ezekiel: “I will give them one heart and will give a new spirit in their inward parts. I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh” [^{<261119>} Ezekiel 11:19]. He

testifies that our conversion is the creation of a new spirit and a new heart. What other fact could more clearly claim for him, and take away from us, every vestige of good and right in our will? For it always follows that nothing good can arise out of our will until it has been reformed; and after its reformation, in so far as it is good, it is so from God, not from ourselves.

9. THE PRAYERS IN SCRIPTURE ESPECIALLY SHOW HOW THE BEGINNING, CONTINUATION, AND END OF OUR BLESSEDNESS COME FROM GOD ALONE

So, also, do we read the prayers composed by holy men. “May the Lord incline our heart to him,” said Solomon, “that we may keep his commandments.” [^{<110858>} 1 Kings 8:58 p.] He shows the stubbornness of our hearts: by nature they glory in rebelling against God’s law, unless they be bent. The same view is also held in The Psalms: “Incline my heart to thy testimonies [^{<19B936>} Psalm 119:36]. We ought always to note the antithesis between the perverse motion of the heart, by which it is drawn away to obstinate disobedience, and this correction, by which it is compelled to obedience. When David feels himself bereft, for a time, of directing grace, and prays God to “create in” him “a clean heart,” “to renew a right Spirit in his inward parts” [Psalm 51: 10; cf. ^{<195012>} Psalm 50:12, Vg.], does he not then recognize that all parts of his heart are crammed with uncleanness, and his spirit warped in depravity? Moreover, does he not, by calling the cleanness he implores “creation of God,” attribute it once received wholly to God? If anyone objects that this very prayer is a sign of a godly and holy disposition, ^{f134} the refutation is ready: although David had in part already repented, yet he compared his previous condition with that sad ruin which he had experienced. Therefore, taking on the role of a man estranged from God, he justly prays that whatever God bestows on his elect in regeneration be given to himself. Therefore, he desired himself to be created anew, as if from the dead, that, freed from Satan’s ownership, he may become an instrument of the Holy Spirit.

Strange and monstrous indeed is the license of our pride! The Lord demands nothing stricter than for us to observe his Sabbath most scrupulously [^{<022008>} Exodus 20:8 ff.; ^{<050512>} Deuteronomy 5:12 ff.], that is, by resting from our labors. Yet there is nothing that we are more

unwilling to do than to bid farewell to our own labors and to give God's works their rightful place. If our unreason did not stand in the way, Christ has given a testimony of his benefits clear enough so that they cannot be spitefully suppressed. "I am," he says, "the vine, you the branches [^{<431505>} John 15:5]; my Father is the cultivator [^{<431501>} John 15:1]. Just as branches cannot bear fruit of themselves unless they abide in the vine, so can you not unless you abide in me [^{<430504>} John 5:4]. For apart from me you can do nothing" [^{<430505>} John 5:5]. ^{f134a}

If we no more bear fruit of ourselves than a branch buds out when it is plucked from the earth and deprived of moisture, we ought not to seek any further the potentiality of our nature for good. Nor is this conclusion doubtful: "Apart from me you can do nothing" [John 15:5]. He does not say that we are too weak to be sufficient unto ourselves, but in reducing us to nothing he excludes all estimation of even the slightest little ability. If grafted in Christ we bear fruit like a vine — which derives the energy for its growth from the moisture of the earth, from the dew of heaven, and from the quickening warmth of the sun — I see no share in good works remaining to us if we keep unimpaired what is God's. In vain this silly subtlety is alleged: there is already sap enclosed in the branch, and the power of bearing fruit; and it does not take everything from the earth or from its primal root, because it furnishes something of its own. ^{f135} Now Christ simply means that we are dry and worthless wood when we are separated from him, for apart from him we have no ability to do good, as elsewhere he also says: "Every tree which my Father has not planted will be uprooted" [^{<401513>} Matthew 15:13, cf. Vg.]. For this reason, in the passage already cited the apostle ascribes the sum total to him. "It is God," says he, "who is at work in you, both to will and to work." [^{<503813>} Philippians 2:13.]

The first part of a good work is will; the other, a strong effort to accomplish it; the author of both is God. Therefore we are robbing the Lord if we claim for ourselves anything either in will or in accomplishment. If God were said to help our weak will, then something would be left to us. But when it is said that he makes the will, whatever of good is in it is now placed outside us. But since even a good will is weighed down by the burden of our flesh so that it cannot rise up, he added that to surmount the difficulties of that struggle we are provided with constancy of effort

sufficient to achieve this. Indeed, what he teaches in another passage could not otherwise be true: “It is God alone who works all things in all” [⁴⁶¹²⁰⁶1 Corinthians 12:6]. In this statement, as we have previously noted, the whole course of the spiritual life is comprehended.^{f136} So, too, David, after he has prayed the ways of God be made known to him so that he may walk in his truth, immediately adds, “Unite my heart to fear thy name” [¹⁹⁸⁶¹¹Psalm 86:11; cf. ^{19B933}Psalm 119:33]. By these words he means that even well-disposed persons have been subject to so many distractions that they readily vanish or fall away unless they are strengthened to persevere. In this way elsewhere, after he has prayed that his steps be directed to keep God’s word, he begs also to be given the strength to fight: “Let no iniquity,” he says, “get dominion over me” [^{19B9133}Psalm 119:133]. Therefore the Lord in this way both begins and completes the good work in us. It is the Lord’s doing that the will conceives the love of what is right, is zealously inclined toward it, is aroused and moved to pursue it. Then it is the Lord’s doing that the choice, zeal, and effort do not falter, but proceed even to accomplishment; lastly, that man goes forward in these things with constancy, and perseveres to the very end.

**10. GOD’S ACTIVITY DOES NOT PRODUCE A POSSIBILITY
THAT WE CAN EXHAUST, BUT AN ACTUALITY TO
WHICH WE CANNOT ADD**

He does not move the will in such a manner as has been taught and believed for many ages — that it is afterward in our choice either to obey or resist the motion — but by disposing it efficaciously. Therefore one must deny that oft-repeated statement of Chrysostom: “Whom he draws he draws willing.”^{f137} By this he signifies that the Lord is only extending his hand to await whether we will be pleased to receive his aid. We admit that man’s condition while he still remained upright was such that he could incline to either side. But inasmuch as he has made clear by his example how miserable free will is unless God both wills and is able to work in us, what will happen to us if he imparts his grace to us in this small measure? But we ourselves obscure it and weaken it by our unthankfulness. For the apostle does not teach that the grace of a good will is bestowed upon us if we accept it, but that He wills to work in us. This means nothing else than

that the Lord by his Spirit directs, bends, and governs, our heart and reigns in it as in his own possession, indeed, he does not promise through Ezekiel that he will give a new Spirit to his elect only in order that they may be able to walk according to his precepts, but also that they may actually so walk [^{<261119>} Ezekiel 11:19-20; 36:27].

Now can Christ's saying ("Every one who has heard... from the Father comes to me" [^{<430645>} John 6:45, cf. Vg.] be understood in any other way than that the grace of God is efficacious of itself. This Augustine also maintains.^{f138} The Lord does not indiscriminately deem everyone worthy of this grace, as that common saying of Ockham (unless I am mistaken) boasts: grace is denied to no one who does what is in him.^{f139} Men indeed ought to be taught that God's loving-kindness is set forth to all who seek it, without exception. But since it is those on whom heavenly grace has breathed who at length begin to seek after it, they should not claim for themselves the slightest part of his praise. It is obviously the privilege of the elect that, regenerated through the Spirit of God, they are moved and governed by his leading. For this reason, Augustine justly derides those who claim for themselves any part of the act of willing, just as he reprehends others who think that what is the special testimony of free election is indiscriminately given to all. "Nature," he says, "is common to all, not grace." The view that what God bestows upon whomever he wills is generally extended to all, Augustine calls a brittle glasslike subtlety of wit, which glitters with mere vanity. Elsewhere he says: "How have you come? By believing. Fear lest while you are claiming for yourself that you have found the just way, you perish from the just way. I have come, you say, of my own free choice; I have come of my own will. Why are you puffed up? Do you wish to know that this also has been given you? Hear Him calling, 'No one comes to me unless my Father draws him' [^{<430644>} John 6:44 p.]."^{f140} And one may incontrovertibly conclude from John's words that the hearts of the pious are so effectively governed by God that they follow Him with unwavering intention. "No one begotten of God can sin," he says, "for God's seed abides in him." [^{<620309>} 1 John 3:9.] For the intermediate movement the Sophists dream up, which men are free either to accept or refuse, we see obviously excluded when it is asserted that constancy is efficacious for perseverance.

11. PERSEVERANCE IS EXCLUSIVELY GOD’S WORK; IT IS NEITHER A REWARD NOR A COMPLEMENT OF OUR INDIVIDUAL ACT

Perseverance would, without any doubt, be accounted God’s free gift if a most wicked error did not prevail that it is distributed according to men’s merit, in so far as each man shows himself receptive to the first grace. But since this error arose from the fact that men thought it in their power to spurn or to accept the proffered grace of God, when the latter opinion is swept away the former idea also falls of itself. However, there is here a twofold error. For besides teaching that our gratefulness for the first grace and our lawful use of it are rewarded by subsequent gifts, they add also that grace does not work in us by itself, but is only a co-worker with us.
f141

As for the first point: we ought to believe that — while the Lord enriches his servants daily and heaps new gifts of his grace upon them — because he holds pleasing and acceptable the work that he has begun in them, he finds in them something he may follow up by greater graces. This is the meaning of the statement, “To him who has shall be given”

[<402529> Matthew 25:29; <421926> Luke 19:26]. Likewise: “Well done, good servant; you have been faithful in a few matters, I will set you over much” [<402521> Matthew 25:21,23; <421917> Luke 19:17; all Vg., conflated]. But here we ought to guard against two things:

- (1) not to say that lawful use of the first grace is rewarded by later graces, as if man by his own effort rendered God’s grace effective; or
- (2) so to think of the reward as to cease to consider it of God’s free grace.

I grant that believers are to expect this blessing of God: that the better use they have made of the prior graces, the more may the following graces be thereafter increased. But I say this use is also from the Lord and this reward arises from his free benevolence. And they perversely as well as infelicitously utilize that worn distinction between operating and co-operating grace. Augustine indeed uses it, but moderates it with a suitable definition: God by co-operating perfects that which by operating he has begun. It is the same grace but with its name changed to fit the different

mode of its effect.^{f142} Hence it follows that he is not dividing it between God and us as if from the individual movement of each a mutual convergence occurred, but he is rather making note of the multiplying of grace. What he says elsewhere bears on this: many gifts of God precede man's good will, which is itself among his gifts. From this it follows that the will is left nothing to claim for itself. This Paul has expressly declared. For after he had said, "It is God who works in us to will and to accomplish," he went on to say that he does both "for his good pleasure" [^{<503813>}Philippians 2:13 p.]. By this expression he means that God's loving-kindness is freely given. To this, our adversaries usually say that after we have accepted the first grace, then our own efforts co-operate with subsequent grace.^{f143} To this I reply: If they mean that after we have by the Lord's power once for all been brought to obey righteousness, we go forward by our own power and are inclined to follow the action of grace, I do not gainsay it. For it is very certain that where God's grace reigns, there is readiness to obey it. Yet whence does this readiness come? Does not the Spirit of God, everywhere self-consistent, nourish the very inclination to obedience that he first engendered, and strengthen its constancy to persevere? Yet if they mean that man has in himself the power to work in partnership with God's grace, they are most wretchedly deluding themselves.

12. MAN CANNOT ASCRIBE TO HIMSELF EVEN ONE SINGLE GOOD WORK APART FROM GOD'S GRACE

Through ignorance they falsely twist to this purport that saying of the apostle: "I labored more than they all — yet not I but the grace of God which was with me" [^{<461510>}1 Corinthians 15:10]. Here is how they understand it: because it could have seemed a little too arrogant for Paul to say he preferred himself to all, he therefore corrected his statement by paying the credit to God's grace; yet he did this in such a way as to call himself a fellow laborer in grace. It is amazing that so many otherwise good men have stumbled on this straw. For the apostle does not write that the grace of the Lord labored with him to make him a partner in the labor. Rather, by this correction he transfers all credit for labor to grace alone. "It is not I," he says, "who labored, but the grace of God which was present with me." [^{<461510>}1 Corinthians 15:10 p.] Now, the ambiguity of the

expression deceived them, but more particularly the absurd Latin translation in which the force of the Greek article had been missed.^{f144} For if you render it word for word, he does not say that grace was a fellow worker with him; but that the grace that was present with him was the cause of everything. Augustine teaches this clearly, though briefly, when he speaks as follows: “Man’s good will precedes many of God’s gifts, but not all. The very will that precedes is itself among these gifts. The reason then follows: for it was written, ‘His mercy anticipates me’ [^{<195910>} Psalm 59:10; cf. ^{<195811>} Psalm 58:11 Vg.].^{f145} And ‘His mercy will follow me’ [^{<192306>} Psalm 23:6]. Grace anticipates unwilling man that he may will; it follows him willing that he may not will in vain.” Bernard agrees with Augustine when he makes the church speak thus: “Draw me, however unwilling, to make me willing; draw me, slow-footed, to make me run.”^{f146}

13. AUGUSTINE ALSO RECOGNIZES NO INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY OF THE HUMAN WILL

Now let us hear Augustine speaking in his own words, lest the Pelagians of our own age, that is, the Sophists of the Sorbonne, according to their custom, charge that all antiquity is against us.^{f147} In this they are obviously imitating their father Pelagius, by whom Augustine himself was once drawn into the same arena. In his treatise *On Rebuke and Grace to Valentinus*, Augustine treats more fully what I shall refer to here briefly, yet in his own words. The grace of persisting in good would have been given to Adam if he had so willed. It is given to us in order that we may will, and by will may overcome concupiscence. Therefore, he had the ability if he had so willed, but he did not will that he should be able. To us it is given both to will and to be able. The original freedom was to be able not to sin; but ours is much greater, not to be able to sin. And that no one may think that he is speaking of a perfection to come after immortality, as Lombard falsely interprets it, Augustine shortly thereafter removes this doubt. He says: “Surely the will of the saints is so much aroused by the Holy Spirit that they are able because they so will, and that they will because God brings it about that they so will. Now suppose that in such great weakness in which, nevertheless, God’s power must be made perfect to repress elation [^{<471209>} 2 Corinthians 12:9], their own will were left to them in order, with God’s aid, to be able, if they will, and that God does

not work in them that they will: amid so many temptations the will itself would then succumb through weakness, and for that reason they could not persevere. Therefore assistance is given to the weakness of the human will to move it unwaveringly and inseparably by divine grace, and hence, however great its weakness, not to let it fail.” He then discusses more fully how our hearts of necessity respond to God as he works upon them. Indeed, he says that the Lord draws men by their own wills, wills that he himself has wrought.^{f148} Now we have from Augustine’s own lips the testimony that we especially wish to obtain: not only is grace offered by the Lord, which by anyone’s free choice may be accepted or rejected; but it is this very grace which forms both choice and will in the heart, so that whatever good works then follow are the fruit and effect of grace; and it has no other will obeying it except the will that it has made. There are also Augustine’s words from another place: “Grace alone brings about every good work in us.”^{f149}

14. AUGUSTINE DOES NOT ELIMINATE MAN’S WILL, BUT MAKES IT WHOLLY DEPENDENT UPON GRACE

Elsewhere he says that will is not taken away by grace, but is changed from evil into good, and helped when it is good. By this he means only that man is not borne along without any motion of the heart, as if by an outside force; rather, he is so affected within that he obeys from the heart. Augustine writes to Boniface that grace is specially and freely given to the elect in this manner: “We know that God’s grace is not given to all men. To those to whom it is given it is given neither according to the merits of works, nor according to the merits of the will, but by free grace. To those to whom it is not given we know that it is because of God’s righteous judgment that it is not given.” And in the same epistle he strongly challenges the view that subsequent grace is given for men’s merits because by not rejecting the first grace they render themselves worthy. For he would have Pelagius admit that grace is necessary for our every action and is not in payment for our works, in order that it may truly be grace. But the matter cannot be summed up in briefer form than in the eighth chapter of the book *On Rebuke and Grace to Valentinus*. There Augustine first teaches: the human will does not obtain grace by freedom, but obtains freedom by grace; when the feeling of delight has been imparted through

the same grace, the human will is formed to endure; it is strengthened with unconquerable fortitude; controlled by grace, it never will perish, but, if grace forsake it, it will straightway fall; by the Lord's free mercy it is converted to good, and once converted it perseveres in good; the direction of the human will toward good, and after direction its continuation in good, depend solely upon God's will, not upon any merit of man. Thus there is left to man such free will, if we please so to call it, as he elsewhere describes: that except through grace the will can neither be converted to God nor abide in God; and whatever it can do it is able to do only through grace. ^{f150}

CHAPTER 4

HOW GOD WORKS IN MEN'S HEARTS ^{F151}

(Man under Satan's control: but Scripture shows God making use of Satan in hardening the heart of the reprobate, 1-5)

1. MAN STANDS UNDER THE DEVIL'S POWER, AND INDEED WILLINGLY

Unless I am mistaken, we have sufficiently proved that man is so held captive by the yoke of sin that he can of his own nature neither aspire to good through resolve nor struggle after it through effort. Besides, we posited a distinction between compulsion and necessity from which it appears that man, while he sins of necessity, yet sins no less voluntarily.

^{f152} But, while he is bound in servitude to the devil, he seems to be actuated more by the devil's will than by his own. It consequently remains for us to determine the part of the devil and the part of man in the action. Then we must answer the question whether we ought to ascribe to God any part of the evil works in which Scripture signifies that some action of his intervenes.

Somewhere Augustine compares man's will to a horse awaiting its rider's command, and God and the devil to its riders. "If God sits astride it," he says, "then as a moderate and skilled rider, he guides it properly, spurs it if it is too slow, checks it if it is too swift, restrains it if it is too rough or too wild, subdues it if it balks, and leads it into the right path. But if the devil saddles it, he violently drives it far from the trail like a foolish and wanton rider, forces it into ditches, tumbles it over cliffs, and goads it into obstinacy and fierceness."^{f153} Since a better comparison does not come to mind, we shall be satisfied with this one for the present. It is said that the will of the natural man is subject to the devil's power and is stirred up by it. This does not mean that, like unwilling slaves rightly compelled by their masters to obey, our will, although reluctant and resisting, is constrained to take orders from the devil. It means rather that the will, captivated by

Satan's wiles, of necessity obediently submits to all his leading. For those whom the Lord does not make worthy to be guided by his Spirit he abandons, with just judgment, to Satan's action. For this reason the apostle says that "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers," who are destined to destruction, that they may not see the light of the gospel [^{<470404>} 2 Corinthians 4:4]; and in another place that he "is... at work in the disobedient sons" [^{<490202>} Ephesians 2:2]. The blinding of the impious and all iniquities following from it are called "the works of Satan." Yet their cause is not to be sought outside man's will, from which the root of evil springs up, and on which rests the foundation of Satan's kingdom, that is, sin.

2. GOD, SATAN, AND MAN ACTIVE IN THE SAME EVENT

Far different is the manner of God's action in such matters. To make this clearer to us, we may take as an example the calamity inflicted by the Chaldeans upon the holy man Job, when they killed his shepherds and in enmity ravaged his flock [^{<180117>} Job 1:17]. Now their wicked act is perfectly obvious; nor does Satan do nothing in that work, for the history states that the whole thing stems from him [^{<180112>} Job 1:12].

But Job himself recognizes the Lord's work in it, saying that He has taken away what had been seized through the Chaldeans [^{<180121>} Job 1:21]. How may we attribute this same work to God, to Satan, and to man as author, without either excusing Satan as associated with God, or making God the author of evil? Easily, if we consider first the end, and then the manner, of acting. The Lord's purpose is to exercise the patience of His servant by calamity; Satan endeavors to drive him to desperation; the Chaldeans strive to acquire gain from another's property contrary to law and right. So great is the diversity of purpose that already strongly marks the deed. There is no less difference in the manner. The Lord permits Satan to afflict His servant; He hands the Chaldeans over to be impelled by Satan, having chosen them as His ministers for this task. Satan with his poison darts arouses the wicked minds of the Chaldeans to execute that evil deed. They dash madly into injustice, and they render all their members guilty and befoul them by the crime. Satan is properly said, therefore, to act in the reprobate over whom he exercises his reign, that is, the reign of wickedness. God is also said to act in His own manner, in that Satan

himself, since he is the instrument of God's wrath, bends himself hither and thither at His beck and command to execute His just judgments. I pass over here the universal activity of God whereby all creatures, as they are sustained, thus derive the energy to do anything at all. ^{f154} I am speaking only of that special action which appears in every particular deed. Therefore we see no inconsistency in assigning the same deed to God, Satan, and man; but the distinction in purpose and manner causes God's righteousness to shine forth blameless there, while the wickedness of Satan and of man betrays itself by its own disgrace.

3. WHAT DOES "HARDNESS" MEAN?

The church fathers sometimes scrupulously shrink from a simple confession of the truth because they are afraid that they may open the way for the impious to speak irreverently of God's works. As I heartily approve of this soberness, so do I deem it in no way dangerous if we simply adhere to what Scripture teaches. At times not even Augustine was free of that superstition; for example, he says that hardening and blinding refer not to God's activity but to his foreknowledge. ^{f155} Yet very many expressions of Scripture do not admit these subtleties, but clearly show that something more than God's mere foreknowledge is involved. And Augustine himself in the *Against Julian*, Book V, argues at great length that sins happen not only by God's permission and forbearance, but by his might, as a kind of punishment for sins previously committed. ^{f156} Likewise what they report concerning permission is too weak to stand. Very often God is said to blind and harden the reprobate, to turn, incline, and impel, their hearts [e.g., ^{<230610>} Isaiah 6:10], as I have taught more fully elsewhere. ^{f157}

The nature of this activity is by no means explained if we take refuge in foreknowledge or permission. We therefore reply that it takes place in two ways. For after his light is removed, nothing but darkness and blindness remains. When his Spirit is taken away, our hearts harden into stones. When his guidance ceases, they are wrenched into crookedness. Thus it is properly said that he blinds, hardens, and bends those whom he has deprived of the power of seeing, obeying, and rightly following.

The second way, which comes much closer to the proper meaning of the words, is that to carry out his judgments through Satan as minister of his wrath, God destines men's purposes as he pleases, arouses their wills, and strengthens their endeavors. Thus Moses, when he relates that King Sihon did not give passage to the people because God had hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, immediately adds the purpose of His plan: that, as he says, "He might give him into our hands" [^{<050230>}Deuteronomy 2:30, cf. Comm.]. Therefore, because God willed that Sihon be destroyed, He prepared his ruin through obstinacy of heart.

4. SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES OF HOW GOD TREATS THE GODLESS

According to the first way this seems to have been said: "He takes away speech from the truthful, and deprives the elders of reason" [^{<181220>}Job 12:20; cf. ^{<260726>}Ezekiel 7:26]. "He takes the heart from those who are in authority over the people of the land, and makes them wander in trackless wastes." [^{<181224>}Job 12:24 p.; cf. ^{<19A740>}Psalms 107:40.] Likewise, "O Lord, why hast thou driven us mad and hardened our heart, that we may not fear thee?" [^{<236317>}Isaiah 63:17, cf. Vg.] These passages indicate what sort of men God makes by deserting them rather than how he carries out his work in them. Yet there are other testimonies that go beyond these. Such, for example, are those of the hardening of Pharaoh: "I will harden his heart... so that he may not hear you" [^{<020703>}Exodus 7:3-4] and let the people go" [^{<020421>}Exodus 4:21]. Afterward he said that he had made Pharaoh's heart "heavy" [^{<021001>}Exodus 10:1] and "stiffened" it [^{<021020>}Exodus 10:20,27; 11:10; 14:8]. Did he harden it by not softening it? This is indeed true, but he did something more. He turned Pharaoh over to Satan to be confirmed in the obstinacy of his breast. This is why he had previously said, "I will restrain his heart" [^{<020421>}Exodus 4:21]. The people go forth from Egypt; as enemies the inhabitants of the region come to meet them. What has stirred them up? Moses, indeed, declared to the people that it was the Lord who stiffened their hearts [^{<050230>}Deuteronomy 2:30]. The prophet, indeed, recounting the same history, says: "He turned their hearts to hate his people" [^{<19A525>}Psalms 105:25]. Now you cannot say that they stumbled from being deprived of God's counsel. For if they were "stiffened" and "turned," they were

deliberately bent to that very thing. Moreover, whenever it pleased him to punish the transgressions of the people, how did he carry out his work through the reprobate? So that anyone may see that the power of execution was with him while they merely provided service. Accordingly he threatens to call them forth by his whistle [^{<230526>} Isaiah 5:26; 7:18], then to use them as a snare to catch [^{<261213>} Ezekiel 12:13; 17:20], then as a hammer to shatter, the Israelites [^{<245023>} Jeremiah 50:23]. But he expressly declared that he did not idly stand by when he called Sennacherib an ax [^{<231015>} Isaiah 10:15] that was aimed and impelled by His own hand to cut them down. In another place Augustine rather well defines the matter as follows: “The fact that men sin is their own doing; that they by sinning do this or that comes from the power of God, who divides the darkness as he pleases.”^{f158}

5. SATAN ALSO MUST SERVE GOD

One passage will however be enough to show that Satan intervenes to stir up the reprobate whenever the Lord by his providence destines them to one end or another. For in Samuel it is often said that “an evil spirit of the Lord” and “an evil spirit from the Lord” has either “seized” or “departed from” Saul [^{<091614>} 1 Samuel 16:14; 18:10; 19:9]. It is unlawful to refer this to the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the impure spirit is called “spirit of God” because it responds to his will and power, and acts rather as God’s instrument than by itself as the author. At the same time we ought to add what Paul teaches: the working of error and seduction is divinely sent “that those who have not obeyed the truth may believe a lie” [^{<530210>} 2 Thessalonians 2:10-11, cf. Vg.]. Yet in the same work there is always a great difference between what the Lord does and what Satan and the wicked try to do. God makes these evil instruments, which he holds under his hand and can turn wherever he pleases, to serve his justice. They, as they are evil, by their action give birth to a wickedness conceived in their depraved nature. The other considerations that are concerned with vindicating God’s majesty from blame, or cutting off any excuses of the wicked, have already been discussed in the chapter on providence.^{f159} Here my sole intention was briefly to indicate how Satan reigns in a reprobate man, and how the Lord acts in both.

(God’s providence overrules men’s wills in external matters, 6-8)

6. IN ACTIONS OF THEMSELVES NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD, WE ARE NOT THROWN ON OUR OWN

Even though we have touched upon the matter above, ^{f160} we have not yet explained what freedom man may possess in actions that are of themselves neither righteous nor corrupt, and look toward the physical rather than the spiritual life. In such things some have conceded him free choice, ^{f161} more (I suspect) because they would not argue about a matter of no great importance than because they wanted to assert positively the very thing they grant. I admit that those who think they have no power to justify themselves hold to the main point necessary to know for salvation. Yet I do not think this part ought to be neglected: to recognize that whenever we are prompted to choose something to our advantage, whenever the will inclines to this, or conversely when ever our mind and heart shun anything that would otherwise be harmful — this is of the Lord's special grace.

The force of God's providence extends to this point: not only that things occur as he foresees to be expedient, but that men's wills also incline to the same end. Indeed, if we ponder the direction of external things, we shall not doubt that to this extent they are left to human judgment. But if we lend our ears to the many testimonies which proclaim that the Lord also rules men's minds in external things, these will compel us to subordinate decision itself to the special impulse of God. Who inclined the wills of the Egyptians toward the Israelites so that they should lend them all their most precious vessels [^{<021102>} Exodus 11:2-3]? They would never voluntarily have been so inclined. Therefore, their minds were more subject to the Lord than ruled by themselves.

Indeed, if Jacob had not been persuaded that God according to his pleasure variously disposes men, he would not have said of his son Joseph, whom he thought to be some heathen Egyptian,

“May God grant you to find mercy in this man's sight” [^{<014314>} Genesis 43:14]. Also, as the whole church confesses in the psalm, when God would have mercy upon his people, he tamed the hearts of the cruel nations to gentleness [cf. ^{<19A646>} Psalm 106:46]. On the other hand, when Saul so broke out into anger as to gird himself for war, the cause is stated: the Spirit of God impelled him [^{<091106>} 1 Samuel 11:6]. Who turned Absalom's mind from embracing Ahithophel's counsel, which was usually

regarded as an oracle [^{<101714>}2 Samuel 17:14]? Who inclined Rehoboam to be persuaded by the young men’s counsel [^{<111210>}1 Kings 12:10,14]? Who caused the nations previously very bold to tremble at the coming of Israel? Even the harlot Rahab confessed that this was done by God [^{<060209>}Joshua 2:9 ff.]. Again, who cast down the hearts of Israel with fear and dread, but he who threatened in the Law to give them “a trembling heart” [^{<052865>}Deuteronomy 28:65; cf. ^{<032636>}Leviticus 26:36]?

7. IN EACH CASE GOD’S DOMINION STANDS ABOVE OUR FREEDOM

Someone will object that these are particular examples to whose rule by no means all instances ought to be applied.^{f162} But I say that they sufficiently prove what I contend: God, whenever he wills to make way for his providence, bends and turns men’s wills even in external things; nor are they so free to choose that God’s will does not rule over their freedom. Whether you will or not, daily experience compels you to realize that your mind is guided by God’s prompting rather than by your own freedom to choose. That is, in the simplest matters judgment and understanding often fail you, while in things easy to do the courage droops. On the contrary, in the obscurest matters, ready counsel is immediately offered; in great and critical matters there is courage to master every difficulty.

In this way I understand Solomon’s words, “God made both the ear to hear and the eye to see” [^{<202012>}Proverbs 20:12 p.]. For he seems to me not to be speaking of their creation, but of the peculiar gift of their function.^{f163} When he writes, “In his hand the Lord holds the king’s heart as streams of water, and turns it wherever he will” [^{<202101>}Proverbs 21:1], Solomon actually comprehends the whole genus under a single species. If any man’s will has been released from all subjection, this privilege belongs above all to the kingly will, which in a measure exercises rule over others’ wills. But if the king’s will is bent by God’s hand, our wills are not exempt from that condition. On this point there is a notable saying of Augustine: “Scripture, if diligently searched, shows that not only the good wills which he has made out of evil ones and directs, once so made by him, to good actions and to eternal life are in God’s power; but so also are those wills which preserve the creatures of this world. And they are so in his power that he causes them to be inclined where and when he will, either to

bestow benefits, or to inflict punishments — indeed by his most secret but most righteous judgment.”^{f164}

8. THE QUESTION OF “FREE WILL” DOES NOT DEPEND ON WHETHER WE CAN ACCOMPLISH WHAT WE WILL, BUT WHETHER WE CAN WILL FREELY

Here let my readers remember that man’s ability to choose freely is not to be judged by the outcome of things, as some ignorant folk absurdly have it. For they seem to themselves neatly and cleverly to prove the bondage of men’s will from the fact that not even for the highest monarchs do all things go according to their liking. Anyhow, this ability of which we are speaking we must consider within man, and not measure it by outward success. In discussing free will we are not asking whether a man is permitted to carry out and complete, despite external hindrances, whatever he has decided to do; but whether he has, in any respect whatever, both choice of judgment and inclination of will that are free. If men have sufficient of both, Atilius Regulus, confined in a nail-studded wine cask, has no less of free will than Augustus Caesar, governing at his command a great part of the world.^{f165}

CHAPTER 5

REFUTATION OF THE OBJECTIONS COMMONLY PUT FORWARD IN DEFENSE OF FREE WILL

*(Answers to arguments for free will alleged on grounds
of common sense, 1-5)*

1. FIRST ARGUMENT: NECESSARY SIN IS NOT SIN; VOLUNTARY SIN IS AVOIDABLE

It would seem that enough had been said concerning the bondage of man's will, were it not for those who by a false notion of freedom try to cast down this conception and allege in opposition some reasons of their own to assail our opinion. First, they heap up various absurdities to cast odium upon it, as something abhorrent also to common sense; afterward with Scriptural testimonies they contend against it. We shall beat back both siege engines in turn. If sin, they say, is a matter of necessity, it now ceases to be sin; if it is voluntary, then it can be avoided.^{f166} These were also the weapons with which Pelagius assailed Augustine. Yet we do not intend to crush them by the weight of Augustine's name until we have satisfactorily treated the matter itself. I therefore deny that sin ought less to be reckoned as sin merely because it is necessary. I deny conversely the inference they draw, that because sin is voluntary it is avoidable. For if anyone may wish to dispute with God and escape judgment by pretending that he could not do otherwise, he has a ready reply, which we have brought forward elsewhere:^{f167} it is not from creation but from corruption of nature that men are bound to sin and can will nothing but evil. For whence comes that inability which the wicked would freely use as an excuse, but from the fact that Adam willingly bound himself over to the devil's tyranny? Hence, therefore, the corruption that enchains us: the first man fell away from his Maker. If all men are deservedly held guilty of this rebellion, let them not think themselves excused by the very necessity in which they have the most evident cause of their condemnation. I explained this clearly above, and gave the devil himself as an example; from which it

is clear that he who sins of necessity sins no less voluntarily. This is, conversely, true of the elect angels: although their will cannot turn away from good, yet it does not cease to be will. Bernard also aptly teaches the same thing: that we are the more miserable because the necessity is voluntary, a necessity which nevertheless having bound us to it, so constrains us that we are slaves of sin, as we have mentioned before.^{f168} The second part of their syllogism is defective because it erroneously leaps from “voluntary” to “free.” For we proved above that something not subject to free choice is nevertheless voluntarily done.

2. SECOND ARGUMENT: REWARD AND PUNISHMENT LOSE THEIR MEANING

They submit that, unless both virtues and vices proceed from the free choice of the will, it is not consistent that man be either punished or rewarded. I admit that this argument, even though it is Aristotle’s, is somewhere used by Chrysostom and Jerome. Yet Jerome himself does not hide the fact that it was a common argument of the Pelagians, and he even quotes their own words: “If it is the grace of God working in us, then grace, not we who do not labor, will be crowned.”^{f169}

Concerning punishments, I reply that they are justly inflicted upon us, from whom the guilt of sin takes its source. What difference does it make whether we sin out of free or servile judgment, provided it is by voluntary desire — especially since man is proved a sinner because he is under the bondage of sin? As for the rewards of righteousness, it is a great absurdity for us to admit that they depend upon God’s kindness rather than our own merits.

How often does this thought recur in Augustine: “God does not crown our merits but his own gifts”; “we call ‘rewards’ not what are due our merits, but what are rendered for graces already bestowed”!^{f170} To be sure, they sharply note this: that no place is now left for merits if they do not have free will as their source.^{f171} But in regarding this so much a matter for disagreement they err greatly. Augustine does not hesitate habitually to teach as an unavoidable fact what they think unlawful so to confess. For example, he says: “What are the merits of any men? When he comes not with a payment due but with free grace, he, alone free of sin and the

liberator from it, finds all men sinners.” Also: “If you shall be paid what you deserve, you must be punished. What then happens? God has not rendered you the punishment you deserve, but bestows undeserved grace. If you would be estranged from grace, boast of your own merits.” Again: “Of yourself you are nothing. Sins are your own, but merits are God’s. You deserve punishment, and when the reward comes he will crown his own gifts, not your merits.” In the same vein he teaches elsewhere that grace does not arise from merit, but merit from grace! And a little later Augustine concludes that God precedes all merits with his gifts, that from them he may bring forth his own merits; he gives them altogether free because he finds no reason to save man.^{f172}

Why, then, is it necessary to list more proofs when such sentences recur again and again in Augustine’s writings? Yet the apostle will even better free our adversaries from this error if they will hear from what principle he derives the glory of the saints. “Those whom he chose, he called; those whom he called, he justified; those whom he justified, he glorified.” [^{<450830>}Romans 8:30 p.] Why, then, according to the apostle, are believers crowned [^{<550408>}2 Timothy 4:8]? Because they have been chosen and called and justified by the Lord’s mercy, not by their own effort. Away, then, with this empty fear that there will be merit no longer if free will is not to stand! It is the height of foolishness to be frightened away and to flee from the very thing to which Scripture calls us. “If you received all things,” he says, “why do you boast as if it were not a gift?” [^{<460407>}1 Corinthians 4:7 p.] You see that Paul has taken everything away from free will in order not to leave any place for merits. But nevertheless, inexhaustible and manifold as God’s beneficence and liberality are, he rewards, as if they were our own virtues, those graces which he bestows upon us, because he makes them ours.

3. THIRD ARGUMENT: ALL DISTINCTION BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL WOULD BE OBLITERATED

Our opponents add an objection, which seems to have been drawn from Chrysostom: if to choose good or evil is not a faculty of our will, those who share in the same nature must be either all bad or all good.^{f173} Close to this point of view is the writer (whoever he was) of that work, *The Calling of the Gentiles*, which has been circulated under Ambrose’s name. He

reasons: no one would ever have departed from the faith if God's grace had not left us in a mutable condition.^{f174} Strange that such great men should have been so forgetful! For how did it not occur to Chrysostom that it is God's election which so distinguishes among men? Now we are not in the least afraid to admit what Paul asserts with great earnestness: all men are both depraved and given over to wickedness [cf. <450310> Romans 3:10]. But we add with him that it is through God's mercy that not all remain in wickedness. Therefore, though all of us are by nature suffering from the same disease, only those whom it pleases the Lord to touch with his healing hand will get well. The others, whom he, in his righteous judgment, passes over,^{f175} waste away in their own rottenness until they are consumed. There is no other reason why some persevere to the end, while others fall at the beginning of the course. For perseverance itself is indeed also a gift of God, which he does not bestow on all indiscriminately, but imparts to whom he pleases. If one seeks the reason for the difference — why some steadfastly persevere, and others fail out of instability — none occurs to us other than that the Lord upholds the former, strengthening them by his own power, that they may not perish; while to the latter, that they may be examples of inconstancy, he does not impart the same power.

4. FOURTH ARGUMENT: ALL EXHORTATION WOULD BE MEANINGLESS

Furthermore, they insist that it is vain to undertake exhortations, pointless to make use of admonitions, foolish to reprove, unless it be within the sinner's power to obey.^{f176} When Augustine long ago was met by similar objections, he was constrained to write his treatise *On Rebuke and Grace*. Even though in it he amply refutes those charges, he recalls his adversaries to this chief point: "O man! Learn by precept what you ought to do; learn by rebuke that it is by your own fault that you have it not; learn by prayer whence you may receive what you desire to have." In the book *On the Spirit and the Letter* he uses almost the same argument: God does not measure the precepts of his law according to human powers, but where he has commanded what is right, he freely gives to his elect the capacity to fulfill it.^{f177} And this matter does not require long discussion. First, we are not alone in this cause, but Christ and all the apostles are with us.

Let these men look to it how they may gain the upper hand in the struggle they are waging against such antagonists. Christ declares: “Without me you can do nothing.” [^{<431505>} John 15:5.] Does he for this reason any less reprove and chastise those who apart from him have been doing evil? Or does he for this reason any less urge everyone to devote himself to good works? How severely Paul inveighs against the Corinthians for their neglect of love [^{<460308>} 1 Corinthians 3:8; 16:14]! Yet he indeed prays that the Lord may give them love. Paul says in the letter to the Romans: “It depends not upon him who wills or upon him who runs, but upon God who shows mercy” [^{<450916>} Romans 9:16]. Still, he does not cease afterward to admonish as well as to urge and rebuke. Why do they not therefore importune the Lord not to labor in vain in requiring of men what he alone can give and in chastising what is committed out of lack of his grace? Why do they not warn Paul to spare those who do not have the power to will or to run, unless God’s mercy, which has now forsaken them, goes before? As if the best reason of his teaching, which readily offers itself to those who more fervently seek it, did not rest in the Lord himself Paul writes, “Neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but God who gives the growth alone acts effectively.” [^{<460807>} 1 Corinthians 8:7.] In this he indicates how much teaching, exhortation, and reproof do to change the mind! Thus we see how Moses placed the commandments of the law under severe sanctions [^{<053019>} Deuteronomy 30:19], and how the prophets bitterly menaced and threatened the transgressors. Yet they then confess that men become wise only when an understanding heart is given them [e.g., ^{<230524>} Isaiah 5:24; 24:5; ^{<240913>} Jeremiah 9:13 ff.; 16:11 ff.; 44:10 ff.; ^{<270911>} Daniel 9:11; ^{<300204>} Amos 2:4], and that it is God’s own work to circumcise hearts [cf. ^{<051016>} Deuteronomy 10:16; ^{<240404>} Jeremiah 4:4] and to give hearts of flesh for hearts of stone [cf. ^{<261119>} Ezekiel 11:19]; his to inscribe his law on our inward parts [cf. ^{<243133>} Jeremiah 31:33]; in fine, by renewing our souls [cf. ^{<263626>} Ezekiel 36:26], to make his teaching effective.

5. THE MEANING OF EXHORTATION

To what purpose then are exhortations? If rejected by the ungodly out of an obstinate heart, these shall be a testimony against them when they come to the Lord’s judgment seat. Even now these are striking and beating their

consciences. For, however much the most insolent person scoffs at them, he cannot condemn them. But, you ask, what will miserable little man do when softness of heart, which is necessary for obedience, is denied him? Indeed, what excuse will he have, seeing that he can credit hardness of heart to no one but himself? Therefore the impious, freely prepared to make sport of God's exhortations if they can, are, in spite of themselves, dumfounded by the power of them.

But we must consider their especial value for believers, in whom (as the Lord does all things through his Spirit) he does not neglect the instrument of his Word but makes effective use of it. Let this, then, be held true: all the righteousness of the pious rests upon God's grace. As the prophet said: "I will give them a new heart... that they may walk in my statutes" [^{<261119>}Ezekiel 11:19-20]. Yet you will object, bwhy are they now admonished about their duty, rather than left to the guidance of the Spirit? Why are they plied with exhortations, when they can hasten no more than the Spirit impels them? Why are they chastised whenever they stray from the path, when they have lapsed through the unavoidable weakness of the flesh?

O man, who are you to impose law upon God? If he wills to prepare us through exhortation to receive this very grace, by which we are made ready to obey the exhortation, what in this dispensation have you to carp or scoff at? If exhortations and reproofs profit the godly nothing except to convict them of sin, these ought not for this reason to be accounted utterly useless. Now, who would dare mock these exhortations as superfluous, since, with the Spirit acting within, they are perfectly able to kindle in us the desire for the good, to shake off sluggishness, to remove the lust for iniquity and its envenomed sweetness — on the contrary to engender hatred and loathing toward it?

If anyone wants a clearer answer, here it is: God works in his elect in two ways: within, through his Spirit; without, through his Word. ^{f178} By his Spirit, illuminating their minds and forming their hearts to the love and cultivation of righteousness, he makes them a new creation. By his Word, he arouses them to desire, to seek after, and to attain that same renewal. In both he reveals the working of his hand according to the mode of dispensation. When he addresses the same Word to the reprobate, though

not to correct them, he makes it serve another use: today to press them with the witness of conscience, and in the Day of Judgment to render them the more inexcusable. Thus, although Christ declares that no one except him whom the Father draws can come to him, and the elect come after they have “heard and learned from the Father” [^{<430644>} John 6:44-45], still Christ does not neglect the teacher’s office, but with his own voice unremittingly summons those who need to be taught within by the Holy Spirit in order to make any progress. Paul points out that teaching is not useless among the reprobate, because it is to them “a fragrance from death to death” [^{<470216>} 2 Corinthians 2:16], yet “a sweet fragrance to God” [^{<470215>} 2 Corinthians 2:15].

(Answers to arguments for free will based on interpretation of the law, promises and rebukes of Scripture, 6-11)

6. ARE GOD’S PRECEPTS “THE MEASURE OF OUR STRENGTH”?

Our opponents take great pains to heap up Scriptural passages: and they do this so unremittingly that, although they cannot prevail, in the numbers at least they can bear us down. But as in battle, when it comes to a hand-to-hand encounter an unwarlike multitude, however much pomp and ostentation it may display, is at once routed by a few blows and compelled to flee, so for us it will be very easy to disperse these adversaries with their host. All the passages that they misuse against us, when they have been sorted out into their classes, group themselves under a very few main headings. Hence one answer will suffice for several; it will not be necessary to dispose of each one individually.

They set chief stock by God’s precepts. These they consider to be so accommodated to our capacities that we are of necessity able to fulfill all their demonstrable requirements. Consequently, they run through the individual precepts, and from them take the measure of our strength. Either God is mocking us (they say) when he enjoins holiness, piety, obedience, chastity, love, gentleness; when he forbids uncleanness, idolatry, immodesty, anger, robbery, pride, and the like; or he requires only what is within our power.

Now we can divide into three classes almost all the precepts that they heap up. Some require man first to turn toward God; others simply speak of observing the law; others bid man to persevere in God's grace once it has been received. We shall discuss them all in general, then we shall get down to the three classes themselves.

A long time ago it became the common practice to measure man's capacities by the precepts of God's law, and this has some pretense of truth. But it arose out of the crassest ignorance of the law. For, those who deem it a terrible crime to say that it is impossible to observe the law press upon us as what is evidently their strongest reason that otherwise the law was given without purpose.^{f179} Indeed, they speak as if Paul had nowhere spoken of the law. What then, I ask, do these assertions mean: "The law was put forward because of transgressions" [[480319](#) Galatians 3:19, cf. Vg.]; "Through the law comes knowledge of sin" [[450320](#) Romans 3:20]; the law engenders sin [cf. [450707](#) Romans 7:7-8]; "Law slipped in to increase the trespass" [[450520](#) Romans 5:20, cf. Vg.]? Was the law to be limited to our powers so as not to be given in vain? Rather, it was put far above us, to show clearly our own weakness! Surely, according to Paul's definition of the law, its purpose and fulfillment is love [cf. [540105](#) 1 Timothy 1:5]. And yet when Paul prays for the hearts of the Thessalonians to abound with it [[520312](#) 1 Thessalonians 3:12] he fully admits that the law sounds in our ears without effect unless God inspires in our hearts the whole sum of the law [cf. [402237](#) Matthew 22:37-40].

7. THE LAW ITSELF POINTS OUR WAY TO GRACE

Of course, if Scripture taught nothing else than that the law is a rule of life to which we ought to direct our efforts, I, too, would yield to their opinion without delay. But since it faithfully and clearly explains to us the manifold use of the law,^{f180} it behooves us rather to consider from that interpretation what the law can do in man. With reference to the present question, as soon as the law prescribes what we are to do, it teaches that the power to obey comes from God's goodness. It thus summons us to prayers by which we may implore that this power be given us. If there were only a command and no promise, our strength would have to be tested whether it is sufficient to respond to the command. But since with the command are at once connected promises that proclaim not only that

our support, but our whole virtue as well, rests in the help of divine grace, they more than sufficiently demonstrate how utterly inept, not to say unequal, we are to observe the law. For this reason, let us no longer press this proportion between our strength and the precepts of the law, as if the Lord had applied the rule of righteousness, which he was to give in the law, according to the measure of our feebleness. We who in every respect so greatly need his grace must all the more reckon from the promises how ill-prepared we are.

But who will believe it plausible (they say) that the Lord intended his law for stocks and stones? ^{f181} No one is trying to argue thus. For the wicked are not rocks or stumps when they are taught through the law that their lusts are opposed to God and they become guilty on their own admission; nor are believers stocks and stones when they are warned of their own weakness and take refuge in grace. On this point these profound statements of Augustine are pertinent: “God bids us do what we cannot, that we may know what we ought to seek from him.” “The usefulness of the precepts is great if free will is so esteemed that God’s grace may be the more honored.” “Faith achieves what the law commands.” “Indeed, it is for this reason the law commands, that faith may achieve what had been commanded through the law. Indeed, God requires faith itself of us; yet he does not find something to require unless he has given something to find.” Again, “Let God give what he commands, and command what he will.” ^{f182}

8. THE SEVERAL KINDS OF THE COMMANDMENTS CLEARLY SHOW THAT WITHOUT GRACE WE CAN DO NOTHING

This will be more clearly seen in reviewing the three classes of precepts that we have touched on above. ^{f183}

(1) Oftentimes both in the Law and in the Prophets the Lord commands us to be converted to him [^{<290212>} Joel 2:12; ^{<261830>} Ezekiel 18:30-32; ^{<281402>} Hosea 14:2 f.]. On the other hand, the prophet answers: “Convert me, O Lord, and I will be converted... for after thou didst convert me I repented,” etc. [^{<243118>} Jeremiah 31:18-19, Vg.]. He bids us circumcise the foreskin of our heart [^{<051016>} Deuteronomy 10:16; cf. ^{<240404>} Jeremiah 4:4]. But through Moses he declares that this circumcision is done by His own hand [^{<053006>} Deuteronomy 30:6]. In some places he requires newness of

heart [^{<261831>}Ezekiel 18:31], but elsewhere he testifies that it is given by him [^{<261119>}Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26]. “But what God promises,” as Augustine says, “we ourselves do not do through choice or nature; but he himself does through grace.” This observation he lists in fifth place among the rules of Tychonius: we must distinguish carefully between the law and the promises, or between the commandments and grace.^{f184} Now away with those who infer from the precepts that man is perhaps capable of obedience, in order to destroy God’s grace through which the commandments themselves are fulfilled.

(2) The precepts of the second kind are simple: by them we are bidden to honor God, to serve his will and cleave to it, to observe his decrees, and to follow his teaching. But there are countless passages that bear witness that whatever righteousness, holiness, piety, and purity we can have are gifts of God.

(3) Of the third type is the exhortation of Paul and Barnabas to believers “to remain under God’s grace,” referred to by Luke [^{<441343>}Acts 13:43]. But Paul also in another place teaches the source from which that virtue of constancy is to be sought. “It remains, brethren,” he says, “for you to be strong in the Lord.” [^{<490610>}Ephesians 6:10 p.] Elsewhere he forbids us to “grieve the Spirit of God in whom we were sealed for the day of our redemption” [^{<490430>}Ephesians 4:30 p.]. Since men cannot fulfill what is there required, Paul asks of the Lord in behalf of the Thessalonians to “render them worthy of his holy calling and to fulfill every good resolve of his goodness and work of faith in them” [^{<530111>}2 Thessalonians 1:11 p.]. In the same way Paul, dealing in the second letter to the Corinthians with alms, often commends their good and devout will [cf. ^{<470811>}2 Corinthians 8:11]. Yet a little later he gives thanks to God, “who has put in the heart of Titus to receive exhortation” [^{<470816>}2 Corinthians 8:16 p.]. If Titus could not even make use of his mouth to exhort others except in so far as God prompted it, how could others be willing to act unless God himself directed their hearts?

9. THE WORK OF CONVERSION IS NOT DIVIDED BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

The craftier of our opponents quibble over all these testimonies, holding that nothing hinders us from bringing all our strength to bear while God supports our weak efforts. They also bring forward passages from the Prophets in which the carrying out of our conversion seems to be divided equally between God and ourselves. “Be converted to me and I shall be converted to you.” [^{<380103>}Zechariah 1:3.] What assistance the Lord provides us has been demonstrated above,^{f185} and there is no need to repeat it here. I wish this one thing at least to be conceded to me: it is pointless to require in us the capacity to fulfill the law, just because the Lord demands our obedience to it, when it is clear that for the fulfillment of all God’s commands the grace of the Lawgiver is both necessary and is promised to us.

Hence it is evident that at least more is required of us than we can pay. And that statement of Jeremiah cannot be refuted by any cavils: that the covenant of God made with the ancient people was invalid because it was only of the letter; moreover, that it is not otherwise established than when the Spirit enters into it to dispose their hearts to obedience [^{<243132>}Jeremiah 31:32-33]. Nor does this sentence lend support to their error: “Be converted to me and I shall be converted to you” [^{<380103>}Zechariah 1:3]. For God’s conversion there signifies not that by which he renews our hearts to repentance, but that by which he testifies through our material prosperity that he is kindly and well disposed toward us, just as by adverse circumstances he sometimes indicates his displeasure toward us. Since, therefore, the people, harassed by many sorts of miseries and calamities, complain that God is turned away from them, he replies that they will not lack his lovingkindness if they return to an upright life and to himself, who is the pattern of righteousness. Therefore they wrongly twist this passage when they infer from it that the work of conversion seems to be shared between God and men. We have touched this matter the more briefly because its proper place will be under the discussion of the law.^{f186}

10. THE BIBLICAL PROMISES SUPPOSE (ACCORDING TO OUR OPPONENTS' VIEW) THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL

The second class of arguments is very closely related to the first. They cite the promises in which the Lord makes a covenant with our will. Such are: “Seek good and not evil, and you will live.” [^{<300514>} Amos 5:14 p.] “If you will and hearken, you will eat of the good things of the earth; but if you will not,... a sword will devour you, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” [^{<230119>} Isaiah 1:19-20, Vg.] Again, “If you remove your abominations from my presence, you will not be cast out.” [^{<240401>} Jeremiah 4:1, cf. Comm.] “If you obey the voice of Jehovah your God, being careful to do all his commandments... the Lord will set you high above all the nations of the earth” [^{<052801>} Deuteronomy 28:1, cf. Vg.]; and other like passages [^{<032603>} Leviticus 26:3 ff.].

These blessings which the Lord offers us in his promises they think to be referred to our will unsuitably and in mockery, unless it is in our power either to realize them or make them void. And it is quite easy to amplify this matter with such eloquent complaints as: “We are cruelly deluded by the Lord, when he declares that his lovingkindness depends upon our will, if the will itself is not under our control. This liberality of God would be remarkable if he so unfolded his blessings to us that we had no capacity to enjoy them! Wonderfully certain promises these — dependent upon an impossible thing, never to be fulfilled!” ^{f187}

We shall speak elsewhere concerning such promises, which have a condition adjoined, ^{f188} so that it will become clear that there is nothing absurd in the impossibility of their fulfillment. In so far as this point is concerned, I deny that God cruelly deludes us when, though knowing us to be utterly powerless, he invites us to merit his blessings. Now since promises are offered to believers and impious alike, they have their usefulness for both groups.

As God by his precepts pricks the consciences of the impious in order that they, oblivious to his judgments, may not too sweetly delight in their sins, so in his promises he in a sense calls them to witness how unworthy they are of his loving-kindness. For who would deny that it is entirely fair and fitting that the Lord bless those who honor him, but punish according to his severity those who despise his majesty? God therefore acts duly

and in order when in his promises he lays down this law for the impious lettered by sin: only if they depart from wickedness will they at last receive his blessings, even for the simple purpose of having them understand that they are justly excluded from those blessings due the true worshipers of God.

On the other hand, since he strives in every way to spur believers to implore his grace, it will be not at all incongruous for him to attempt through his promises the same thing that, as we have shown, he has through his precepts already accomplished for their sake. When God by his precepts teaches us concerning his will, he apprizes us of our misery and how wholeheartedly we disagree with his will. At the same time he prompts us to call upon his Spirit to direct us into the right path. But because our sluggishness is not sufficiently aroused by precepts, promises are added in order, by a certain sweetness, to entice us to love the precepts. The greater our desire for righteousness, the more fervent we become to seek God's grace. That is how by these entreaties, "If you are willing," "If you hearken," the Lord neither attributes to us the free capacity to will or to hearken, nor yet does he mock us for our impotence.

11. THE REPROOFS IN SCRIPTURE, THEY FURTHER OBJECT, LOSE THEIR MEANING IF THE WILL BE NOT FREE

The third class of their arguments bears a close resemblance to the two preceding. For our opponents bring forward passages wherein God reproaches his ungrateful people that it was their own fault that they did not receive every sort of good thing from his tender mercy. Of this sort are the following passages: "Amalekites and Canaanites are before you, and you shall fall by their sword because you will not obey the Lord" [^{<041443>}Numbers 14:43, Vg.]. "Because... I called to you and you did not answer, I shall do to this house... as I did to Shiloh." [^{<240713>}Jeremiah 7:13-14, Vg.] Again, "This... nation... did not obey the voice of the Lord their God, and did not accept discipline" [^{<240728>}Jeremiah 7:28, Vg.]; for this reason it is rejected by the Lord [^{<240729>}Jeremiah 7:29]. Again, "Because you have hardened your heart and have not been willing to obey the Lord, all these evils have come upon you [cf. ^{<241915>}Jeremiah 19:15]."

How, they say, could such reproaches apply against those who may at once reply: We cherished prosperity, we feared adversity. If we have not obeyed the Lord, nor heeded his voice, to obtain prosperity and avoid adversity, this came about because we were not free from bondage to the domination of sin. We are therefore without reason reproached for evils that it was not in our power to escape.

But disregarding the pretext of necessity, a weak and futile defense, I ask whether they can excuse the fault. For if they are held guilty of any fault, the Lord with reason reproaches them for not feeling, because of their perversity, the benefit of his kindness. Let them therefore answer whether they can deny that the cause of their obstinacy was their own perverse will. If they find the source of evil within themselves, why do they strain after external causes so as not to seem the authors of their own destruction? But if it is true that sinners are through their own fault both deprived of divine blessings and chastened by punishments, there is good reason why they should hearken to these reproaches from God's mouth. It is that if they obstinately persist in vices, they may learn in calamities to accuse and loathe their own worthlessness rather than to charge God with unjust cruelty; that if they have not cast off teachableness and if they are wearied with their own sins (because of which they see themselves miserable and lost), they may return to the path and acknowledge with earnest confession this very thing, namely, that the Lord reminds them by reproof.

What use the reproofs of the prophets serve among the godly is clear from the magnificent prayer of Daniel, given in the ninth chapter [^{<270904>} Daniel 9:4-19]. We observe an example of the first use among the Jews, to whom God commanded Jeremiah to explain the cause of their miseries. Yet these things could not have happened in any other way than as the Lord had foretold: "You shall speak all these words to them, and they will not listen to you. You shall call to them, and they will not answer you" [^{<240727>} Jeremiah 7:27, Vg.]. To what purpose then did they sing to the deaf? That even against their will they might understand what they were hearing to be true: that it is wicked sacrilege to transfer to God the blame for their own misfortunes, which lay in themselves.

The enemies of God's grace customarily pile up these innumerable proofs, derived from his commandments and from his protestations against the transgressors of the law, to give the delusion of free will. But by these few explanations you can very easily free yourself from them. In a psalm the Jews are reproached as "a wicked generation... that kept not its heart straight" [^{<197808>} Psalm 78:8; 77:8, Vg.]. Also, in another psalm, the prophet urges the men of his age not to "harden their hearts" [^{<199508>} Psalm 95:8]. Surely this is because the blame for all stubbornness rests in the wickedness of men; but from this fact it is foolishly inferred that the heart, since the Lord has prepared it [cf. ^{<201601>} Proverbs 16:1], can be bent alike to either side. The prophet says: "I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes" [^{<19B9112>} Psalm 119:112], namely, because he had pledged himself willingly and with cheerful attitude of mind to God. And yet he does not boast of himself as the author of his inclination, which he confesses in the same psalm to be the gift of God [^{<19B936>} Psalm 119:36]. We ought therefore to heed Paul's warning, when he bids believers, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for God is at work... both to will and to accomplish" [^{<503512>} Philippians 2:12-13 p.]. Indeed, he assigns tasks to them to do so that they may not indulge the sluggishness of the flesh. But enjoining fear and carefulness, he so humbles them that they remember what they are bidden to do is God's own work. By it he clearly intimates that believers act passively, so to speak, seeing that the capacity is supplied from heaven, that they may claim nothing at all for themselves. Then, while Peter urges us "to supplement our faith with virtue" [^{<610105>} 2 Peter 1:5], he does not assign us secondary tasks as if we could do anything independently, but he is only arousing the indolence of the flesh, by which faith itself is very often choked. Paul's statement, "Do not quench the Spirit" [^{<520519>} 1 Thessalonians 5:19], means the same thing, because sloth continually steals upon believers unless it be corrected. Yet if anyone should conclude from this that it is in their choice to nourish the light given them, such stupidity will be easily refuted, for this very earnestness which Paul enjoins comes from God alone [^{<470701>} 2 Corinthians 7:1].

We are in fact often bidden to purge ourselves of all filthiness, even though the Spirit claims for himself alone the office of sanctifying. In fine, it is clear from John's words that what belongs to God is transferred by

concession to us: “Whoever is born of God keeps himself” [^{<620518>} 1 John 5:18]. The proclaimers of free will seize upon this verse, as if we were preserved partly by God’s power, partly by our own. As if we did not have from heaven this very preservation of which the apostle reminds us! Hence also Christ asks the Father to keep us from evil [^{<431715>} John 17:15, cf. Vg.]. And we know that the pious, while they are fighting against Satan, attain victory by God’s weapons alone [cf. ^{<490613>} Ephesians 6:13 ff.]. For this reason, Peter, when he enjoined us to purify our souls in obedience to truth, soon added by way of correction “through the Spirit” [^{<600122>} 1 Peter 1:22]. In short, John briefly shows how all human powers are of no avail in spiritual combat when he teaches that “they who are born of God cannot sin, for a seed of God abides in them” [^{<620309>} 1 John 3:9 p.]. And in another passage he gives the reason: “This is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith” [^{<620504>} 1 John 5:4].

*(Answers to arguments based on special passages
and incidents in Scripture, 12-19)*

12. ^{<053011>} DEUTERONOMY 30:11 FF.

Yet our opponents cite a passage from the law of Moses that seems to be strongly opposed to our explanation. For, after promulgating the law, Moses calls the people to witness in this manner: “For this commandment which I command you this day is not obscure, nor is it far off, nor is it in heaven... But it is near you... in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it” [^{<053011>} Deuteronomy 30:11-12, 14 p.].^{f189}

Now if these words be understood as spoken concerning the bare precepts, I admit that they are of no slight importance for the present case. For even though it would be an easy matter to dodge the issue by contending that this has to do with man’s capacity and disposition to understand the commandments, not with his ability to observe them, nevertheless perhaps some scruple would thus also remain. But the apostle, our sure interpreter, removes our every doubt when he declares that Moses here spoke of the teaching of the gospel [^{<451008>} Romans 10:8]. But suppose some obstinate person contends that Paul violently twisted these words to make them refer to the gospel. Although such a man’s boldness will not be lacking in impiety, yet we have a means of refuting him apart from the apostle’s

authority. For if Moses was speaking of the precepts only, he inspired in the people the vainest confidence. For what else would they have done but dash into ruin, if they had set out to keep the law by their own strength, as if it were easy for them? Where is that ready capacity to keep the law, when the only access to it lies over a fatal precipice? It is perfectly clear then that by these words Moses meant the covenant of mercy that he had promulgated along with the requirements of the law. For a few verses before he had also taught that our hearts must needs be circumcised by God's hand for us to love him [^{<053006>}Deuteronomy 30:6]. He therefore lodged that ability, of which he immediately thereafter speaks, not in the power of man, but in the help and protection of the Holy Spirit, who mightily carries out his work in our weakness. Nevertheless, we are not to understand this passage as referring simply to the precepts, but rather to the promises of the gospel; and they, far from establishing in us the capacity to obtain righteousness, utterly destroy it.

Paul confirms this testimony that in the gospel salvation is not offered under that hard, harsh, and impossible condition laid down for us by the law — that only those who have fulfilled all the commandments will finally attain it — but under an easy, ready, and openly accessible condition. Therefore this Scripture [Romans 10] has no value in establishing the freedom of the human will.

13. GOD'S "WAITING" UPON MEN'S ACTION IS HELD TO SUPPOSE FREEDOM OF THE WILL

By way of objection they commonly raise certain other passages, which show that God sometimes, having withdrawn the assistance of his grace, tries men and waits to see to what purpose they will turn their efforts. So Hosea says: "I shall go to my place, until they lay it upon their hearts to seek my face" [^{<280515>}Hosea 5:15 p.]. It would be a ridiculous thing, they say, for the Lord to consider whether Israel would seek his face, if their minds were not capable of inclining either way through their own natural ability. As if it were not extremely common for God through his prophets to appear as one despising and rejecting his people until they should change their lives for the betel But what finally will our opponents deduce from such threats? If they mean that this people, forsaken by God, can of themselves set their minds on a conversion, they are doing so in the teeth

of all Scripture. If they admit that God's grace is necessary for conversion, what quarrel do they have with us? Yet they concede grace to be necessary in such a way as to reserve to man his own ability.^{f190} On what basis do they prove it? Surely not from that passage or like passages. For it is one thing to withdraw from man, and to consider what he may do when left to his own devices. It is something else to aid his powers, such as they are, in proportion to their weakness.

What, then, someone will ask, do these expressions signify? I reply that their significance is as if God were to say: "Inasmuch as warning, urging, and rebuking have no effect upon this stubborn people, I shall withdraw for a little while and quietly permit them to be afflicted. I shall see whether at any time after long calamities the remembrance of me lays hold on them so that they seek my face." The Lord's going far away signifies his withdrawal of prophecy from them. His considering what men then might do means that for a time he quietly and as it were secretly tries them with various afflictions. He does both to make us more humble. For we would sooner be beaten down by the lashes of adversity than be corrected, if he did not by his Spirit render us teachable. Now, when the Lord, offended and even wearied by our obstinate stubbornness, leaves us for a short time — that is, removes his Word, in which he habitually reveals something of his presence — and makes trial of what we might do in his absence, from this we falsely gather that we have some power of free will for him to observe and test. For he does it for no other purpose than to compel us to recognize our own nothingness.^{f191}

14. ARE THESE WORKS THEN NOT "OUR" WORKS?

They also argue from the manner of speaking customary both in the Scripture and in the words of men: good works are indeed called "ours"; and we are credited just as much with doing what is holy and pleasing to the Lord, as with committing sins. But if sins are rightly imputed to us as coming from ourselves, surely for the same reason some part in righteous acts ought to be assigned to us. And it would not be consonant with reason to say that we do those things which we are incapable of carrying out by our own effort and are moved like stones by God to do. Therefore, although we give the primary part to God's grace, yet those expressions indicate that our effort holds second place.

If our opponents simply urge that good works are called “ours,” I will object in turn that the bread that we petition God to give us is also called “ours” [cf. ^{<400611>}Matthew 6:11]. What does the possessive pronoun “ours” signify to them but that what is otherwise by no means due us becomes ours by God’s lovingkindness and free gift? Therefore they must either ridicule the same absurdity in the Lord’s Prayer, or recognize that good works, in which we have nothing of our own save by God’s bounty, are not foolishly called “ours.”

Yet the second objection is a little stronger: Scripture often affirms that we ourselves worship God, preserve righteousness, obey the law, and are zealous in good works. Since these are the proper functions of the mind and will, how can one refer them to the Spirit and at the same time attribute them to ourselves, unless our zeal shares something of the divine power? We can easily dispose of these trifling objections if we duly reflect upon the way in which the Spirit of the Lord acts upon the saints.

That comparison which they spitefully throw at us does not apply. For who is such a fool as to assert that God moves man just as we throw a stone?^{f192} And nothing like this follows from our teaching. To man’s natural faculties we refer the acts of approving and rejecting, willing and not willing, striving and resisting. That is, approving vanity and rejecting perfect good; willing evil and not willing good; striving toward wickedness and resisting righteousness. What does the Lord do in this? If he wills to utilize such depravity as the instrument of his wrath, he directs and disposes it as he pleases to carry out his good works through man’s corrupt hand. Shall we then compare a wicked man, who thus serves God’s might while he strives to obey only his own lust, to a stone set in motion by an outside force, and borne along by no motion, sensation, or will of its own? We see how great the difference is.

But what about good men, concerning whom there is particular question here? When the Lord establishes his Kingdom in them, he restrains their will by his Spirit that it may not according to its natural inclination be dragged to and fro by wandering lusts. That the will may be disposed to holiness and righteousness, He bends, shapes, forms, and directs, it to the rule of his righteousness. That it may not totter and fall, he steadies and strengthens it by the power of his Spirit. In this vein Augustine says:

“You will say to me, ‘therefore we are acted upon and do not act ourselves.’ Yes, you act and are acted upon. And if you are acted upon by one who is good, then you act well. The Spirit of God who acts upon you is the helper of those who act. The name ‘helper’ indicates that you also do something.”^{f193} In the first part of the statement he indicates that man’s action is not taken away by the movement of the Holy Spirit, because the will, which is directed to aspire to good, is of nature. But when he directly adds that from the word “help” it can be inferred that we also do something, we must not so understand it as if something were to be attributed to each of us separately. But in order not to encourage indolence in us, he connects God’s action with our own in these words: “To will is of nature, but to will aright is of grace.”^{f194} Therefore he had said a little earlier, “Unless God helps, we shall be able neither to conquer nor even to fight.”

15. THE “WORKS” ARE OURS BY GOD’S GIFT, BUT GOD’S BY HIS PROMPTING

Hence it appears that God’s grace, as this word is understood in discussing regeneration, is the rule of the Spirit to direct and regulate man’s will. The Spirit cannot regulate without correcting, without reforming, without renewing. For this reason we say that the beginning of our regeneration is to wipe out what is ours. Likewise, he cannot carry out these functions without moving, acting, impelling, bearing, keeping. Hence we are right in saying that all the actions that arise from grace are wholly his. Meanwhile, we do not deny that what Augustine teaches is very true: “Grace does not destroy the will but rather restores it.”^{f195} The two ideas are in substantial agreement: the will of man is said to be restored when, with its corruption and depravity corrected, it is directed to the true rule of righteousness. At the same time a new will is said to be created in man, because the natural will has become so vitiated and corrupted that he considers it necessary to put a new nature within.

Nothing now prevents us from saying that we ourselves are fitly doing what God’s Spirit is doing in us, even if our will contributes nothing of itself distinct from his grace. Therefore we must keep in mind what we have elsewhere cited from Augustine:^{f196} in vain, people busy themselves with finding any good of man’s own in his will. For any mixture of the

power of free will that men strive to mingle with God's grace is nothing but a corruption of grace. It is just as if one were to dilute wine with muddy, bitter water. But even if there is something good in the will, it comes from the pure prompting of the Spirit. Yet because we are by nature endowed with will, we are with good reason said to do those things the praise for which God rightly claims for himself: first, because whatever God out of his lovingkindness does in us is ours, provided we understand that it is not of our doing; secondly, because ours is the mind, ours the will, ours the striving, which he directs toward the good.

16. <010407> **GENESIS 4:7**

The other evidence that they rake together from here and there will not much bother even those of moderate understanding who have duly absorbed the refutations just given. Our opponents cite this statement from Genesis: "Its appetite will be under you, and you shall master it" [<010407> Genesis 4:7 p., cf. Vg.]. This they apply to sin, as if the Lord had promised Cain that the power of sin would not have the upper hand in his mind, if he willed to work toward conquering it!^{f197} But we maintain that it is more in keeping with the order of the words that this verse should be applied to Abel. For there it is God's intention to reprove the wicked envy that Cain had conceived against his brother. God does this in two ways. First, Cain vainly planned a crime whereby he might excel his brother in the sight of God, before whom there is no honor except that of righteousness. Secondly, he was too ungrateful for the blessing that he had received of God, and could not bear his brother even though he was under his authority.

But lest we seem to espouse this interpretation because the other one is contrary to our view, well, let us concede to them that God was speaking here of sin. If this is so, then the Lord is either promising or commanding what he here declares. If he is commanding, we have already demonstrated that no proof of human capacity follows. If he is promising, where is the fulfillment of the promise when Cain yields to sin, which he ought to master? Will they say that there is a tacit condition included in the promise, as if it were said: "If you fight, you will achieve victory"? But who can stomach such evasions? For if this mastery refers to sin, no one can doubt that form of speech is imperative, defining not what we can do,

but what we ought to do — even if it is beyond our power. However, both the matter itself and the principles of grammar require that Cain and Abel be compared, for the first-born brother would not have been subordinate to the younger had he not been worse through his own crime.

17. <450916> ROMANS 9:16; <460309> 1 CORINTHIANS 3:9

They also use the testimony of the apostle: “So it depends not upon him who wills or upon him who runs but upon God who shows mercy” [<450916> Romans 9:16]. From this they derive the notion that there is something in man’s will and effort which, although feeble in itself, when aided by God’s mercy does not fail to yield a favorable outcome. ^{f198}

Now if they were soberly to weigh what matter Paul is discussing here, they would not misinterpret this statement so rashly. I know that they can cite Origen and Jerome in support of their exposition, I could in turn oppose Augustine ^{f199} to these. But what these hold makes no difference to us, provided we understand what Paul means. There he teaches that salvation has been prepared only for those whom the Lord deems worthy of his mercy, while ruin and death remain for all those whom He has not chosen. Paul had pointed out the destiny of the wicked by the example of Pharaoh [<450917> Romans 9:17]. He had also confirmed by the testimony of Moses the certainty of free election: “I shall have mercy on whom I shall have mercy” [<450915> Romans 9:15; <023319> Exodus 33:19]. He concludes, “It depends not upon him who wills or him who runs, but upon God who shows mercy.” [<450916> Romans 9:16.] But if it were understood in this way — that will and effort are not sufficient because they are unequal to such a load — what Paul said would have been inappropriate. Away then with these subtleties! It depends not upon him who wills or him who runs; therefore there is some will, there is some running.

Paul’s meaning is simpler: it is not the will; it is not the running that prepares the way to salvation for us. Only the mercy of the Lord is here. Paul speaks in this very way to Titus when he writes: “When the goodness and loving-kindness of God... appeared... not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own infinite mercy” [<560304> Titus 3:4-5 p.]. Some persons prattle that Paul hinted there was some will and some running because he denied that “it depends on him

who wills or upon him who runs” [^{<450916>}Romans 9:16 p.]. Yet not even they would grant me the right to reason along the same lines: that we do some good works, because Paul denies that we attain to God’s goodness by virtue of the works that we have done. But if they detect a flaw in this argument, let them open their eyes and they will perceive that their own suffers from a like fallacy, it is a firm reason that Augustine relies on: “If therefore it were said that, ‘It depends not upon him who wills or upon him who runs’ [^{<450916>}Romans 9:16] because willing or running alone is not sufficient, then one can turn the argument around: that it does not depend upon God’s mercy, because it would not act alone.” Since this second argument is absurd, Augustine rightly concludes: therefore this is said because man has no good will unless it be prepared by the Lord. Not that we ought not to will and to run; but because God accomplishes both in us. ^{f200}

Certain persons just as ignorantly twist that saying of Paul’s: “We are God’s co-workers” [^{<460309>}1 Corinthians 3:9]. ^{f201} This is without a doubt restricted to ministers alone. Moreover they are called “co-workers” not because they bring anything of themselves, but because God uses their work after he has rendered them capable of it and has furnished them with the necessary gifts.

18. ECCLESIASTICUS 15:14-17

They bring forth Ecclesiasticus, a writer whose authority is known to be in doubt. Granting that we do not reject this author — although we have a perfect right to do so — what does Ecclesiasticus testify on behalf of free will? He says: “Immediately after man was created, God left him in the power of his own counsel. Commandments were given to him. If he kept the commandments, they would keep him as well. God has set... life and death, good and evil... before man. And whichever he chooses will be given him” [Ecclesiasticus. 15:14, 15, 16, 17 p.; 15. 14-18, Vg.]. ^{f202} Granted that man received at his creation the capacity to obtain life or death. What if we reply on the other side that he has lost this capacity? Surely it is not my intention to contradict Solomon, who declares “that God made man upright, but he has sought out many devices for himself” [^{<210729>}Ecclesiastes 7:29 p.]. But because man, in his degeneration, caused the shipwreck both of himself and of all his possessions, whatever is

attributed to the original creation does not necessarily apply forthwith to his corrupt and degenerate nature. Therefore I am answering not only my opponents but also Ecclesiasticus himself, whoever he may be: If you wish to teach man to seek in himself the capacity to acquire salvation, we do not esteem your authority so highly that it may in the slightest degree raise any prejudice against the undoubted Word of God. But suppose you strive simply to repress the evil inclination of the flesh, which tries vainly to defend itself by transferring its vices to God, and for this reason you answer that uprightness was implanted in man that thereby it might be clear that he is the cause of his own ruin. I willingly assent to this, provided you and I agree that man has now been deprived through his own fault of those adornments with which the Lord in the beginning arrayed him. Thus let us alike confess that man now needs a physician, not an advocate.

19. ^{<421030>}LUKE 10:30

They have nothing more constantly on their lips than Christ's parable of the traveler, whom thieves cast down half alive on the road [^{<422030>} Luke 20:30]. I know that almost all writers commonly teach that the calamity of the human race is represented in the person of the traveler. From this our opponents take the argument that man is not so disfigured by the robbery of sin and the devil as not to retain some vestiges of his former good, inasmuch as he is said to have been left "half alive." For unless some portion of right reason and will remained, how could there be a "half life"?
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First, suppose I do not want to accept their allegory. What, pray, will they do? For no doubt the fathers devised this interpretation without regard to the true meaning of the Lord's words. Allegories ^{f204} ought not to go beyond the limits set by the rule of Scripture, let alone suffice as the foundation for any doctrines. And I do not lack reasons, if I so please, to uproot this falsehood. The Word of God does not leave a "half life" to man, but it teaches that he has utterly died as far as the blessed life is concerned. Paul does not call the saints "half alive" when he speaks of our redemption, "Even when we were dead ... he made us alive" [^{<490205>} Ephesians 2:5]. He does not call upon the half alive to receive the illumination of Christ, but those who are asleep and buried

[<490514> Ephesians 5:14]. In the same way the Lord himself says, “The hour has come when the dead rise again at his voice” [<430525> John 5:25 p.]. How shameless of them to oppose a slight allusion to so many clear statements!

Yet, suppose this allegory of theirs serves as a sure testimony, what can they nevertheless wrest from us? Man is half alive, they say; therefore he has something safe. Of course he has a mind capable of understanding, even if it may not penetrate to heavenly and spiritual wisdom. He has some judgment of honesty. He has some awareness of divinity, even though he may not attain a true knowledge of God. But what do these qualities amount to? Surely they cannot make out that we are to abandon Augustine’s view, approved by the common consent of the schools: the free goods upon which salvation depends were taken away from man after the Fall, while the natural endowments were corrupted and defiled. ^{f205} Therefore let us hold this as an undoubted truth which no siege engines can shake: the mind of man has been so completely estranged from God’s righteousness that it conceives, desires, and undertakes, only that which is impious, perverted, foul, impure, and infamous. The heart is so steeped in the poison of sin, that it can breathe out nothing but a loathsome stench. But if some men occasionally make a show of good, their minds nevertheless ever remain enveloped in hypocrisy and deceitful craft, and their hearts bound by inner perversity.

CHAPTER 6

FALLEN MAN OUGHT TO SEEK REDEMPTION^{f206} IN CHRIST

(Through the Mediator, God is seen as a gracious Father, 1-2)

1. ONLY THE MEDIATOR HELPS FALLEN MAN

The whole human race perished in the person of Adam. Consequently that original excellence and nobility^{f207} which we have recounted would be of no profit to us but would rather redound to our greater shame, until God, who does not recognize as his handiwork men defiled and corrupted by sin, appeared as Redeemer in the person of his only-begotten Son. Therefore, since we have fallen from life into death, the whole knowledge of God the Creator that we have discussed^{f208} would be useless unless faith also followed, setting forth for us God our Father in Christ. The natural order was that the frame of the universe^{f209} should be the school in which we were to learn piety, and from it pass over to eternal life and perfect felicity. But after man's rebellion, our eyes — wherever they turn — encounter God's curse. This curse, while it seizes and envelops innocent creatures through our fault, must overwhelm our souls with despair. For even if God wills to manifest his fatherly favor to us in many ways, yet we cannot by contemplating the universe infer that he is Father.^{f210} Rather, conscience presses us within and shows in our sin just cause for his disowning us and not regarding or recognizing us as his sons. Dullness and ingratitude follow, for our minds, as they have been blinded, do not perceive what is true. And as all our senses have become perverted, we wickedly defraud God of his glory.

We must, for this reason, come to Paul's statement: "Since in the wisdom of God the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of preaching to save those who believe" [^{<460121>} 1 Corinthians 1:21]. This magnificent theater^{f211} of heaven and earth, crammed with innumerable miracles, Paul calls the "wisdom of God."

Contemplating it, we ought in wisdom to have known God. But because we have profited so little by it, he calls us to the faith of Christ, which, because it appears foolish, the unbelievers despise.

Therefore, although the preaching of the cross does not agree with our human inclination, if we desire to return to God our Author and Maker, from whom we have been estranged, in order that he may again begin to be our Father, we ought nevertheless to embrace it humbly. Surely, after the fall of the first man no knowledge of God apart from the Mediator ^{f212} has had power unto salvation [cf. ^{<450116>}Romans 1:16; ^{<460124>}1 Corinthians 1:24]. For Christ not only speaks of his own age, but comprehends all ages when he says: “This is eternal life, to know the Father to be the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent” [^{<431703>}John 17:3 p.]. Thus, all the more vile is the stupidity of those persons who open heaven to all the impious and unbelieving without the grace ^{f213} of him whom Scripture commonly teaches to be the only door whereby we enter into salvation [^{<431009>}John 10:9]. But if anyone would like to restrict this statement of Christ to the publishing of the gospel, there is a ready refutation: it was the common understanding of all ages and all nations that men who have become estranged from God [cf. ^{<490418>}Ephesians 4:18] and have been declared accursed [cf. ^{<480310>}Galatians 3:10] and children of wrath [cf. ^{<490203>}Ephesians 2:3] without reconciliation cannot please God.

Besides this, Christ answered the Samaritan woman: “You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know; for salvation is from the Jews” [^{<430422>}John 4:22]. In these words he both condemns all pagan religions as false and gives the reason that under the law the Redeemer was promised to the chosen people alone. From this it follows that no worship has ever pleased God except that which looked to Christ. On this basis, also, Paul declares that all heathen were “without God and bereft of hope of life” [^{<490212>}Ephesians 2:12 p.]. Now since John teaches that life was in Christ from the beginning [^{<430104>}John 1:4], and all the world fell away from it [cf. ^{<430110>}John 1:10], it is necessary to return to that source. So also, Christ, inasmuch as he is the propitiator, declares himself to be “life” [^{<431125>}John 11:25; 14:6]. To be sure, the inheritance of heaven belongs only to the children of God [cf. ^{<400509>}Matthew 5:9-10]. Moreover, it is quite unfitting that those not engrafted into the body of the only-begotten Son are considered to have the place and rank of children. And John clearly

declares: “Those who believe in his name become children of God” [^{<430112>} John 1:12 p.]. But because it is not yet my purpose exhaustively to discuss faith in Christ, it will be sufficient to touch upon it in passing.

2. EVEN THE OLD COVENANT DECLARED THAT THERE IS NO FAITH IN THE GRACIOUS GOD APART FROM THE MEDIATOR

Accordingly, apart from the Mediator, God never showed favor toward the ancient people, nor ever gave hope of grace to them. I pass over the sacrifices of the law, which plainly and openly taught believers to seek salvation nowhere else than in the atonement that Christ alone carries out. I am only saying that the blessed and happy state of the church always had its foundation in the person of Christ. For even if God included all of Abraham’s offspring in his covenant [cf. ^{<011704>} Genesis 17:4], Paul nevertheless wisely reasons that Christ was properly that seed in whom all the nations were to be blessed [^{<480314>} Galatians 3:14], since we know that not all who sprang from Abraham according to the flesh were reckoned among his offspring [^{<480316>} Galatians 3:16]. For, to say nothing of Ishmael and others, how did it come about that of the two sons of Isaac, the twin brothers Esau and Jacob, while they were yet in their mother’s womb, one was chosen, the other rejected [^{<450911>} Romans 9:11]? Indeed, how did it happen that the firstborn was set aside while the younger alone kept his status? How, also, did it come about that the majority was disinherited? It is therefore clear that Abraham’s seed is to be accounted chiefly in one Head, and that the promised salvation was not realized until Christ appeared, whose task is to gather up what has been scattered. So, then, the original adoption of the chosen people depended upon the Mediator’s grace. Even if in Moses’ writings this was not yet expressed in clear words, still it sufficiently appears that it was commonly known to all the godly. For before a king had been established over the people, Hannah, the mother of Samuel, describing the happiness of the godly, already says in her song: “God will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his Messiah” [^{<090210>} 1 Samuel 2:10]. By these words she means that God will bless his church. To this corresponds the prophecy that is added a little later: “The priest whom I shall raise up... will walk in the presence of my Christ” [^{<090235>} 1 Samuel 2:35, cf. Vg.]. And there is no doubt that our Heavenly Father willed that we perceive in David and his descendants the

living image of Christ. Accordingly David, wishing to urge the pious to fear God, commands them to “kiss the Son” [^{<190212>} Psalm 2:12, cf. RV and marg.]. To this corresponds the saying of the Gospel: “He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father” [^{<430523>} John 5:23]. Therefore, although the Kingdom collapsed because of the revolt of the ten tribes, yet the covenant that God made with David and his successors had to stand, just as he spoke through the prophets: “I will not tear away all the Kingdom... for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen... but to your son one tribe will remain” [^{<111113>} 1 Kings 11:13,32]. This same promise is repeated a second and a third time. It is expressly stated: “I will... afflict David’s descendants, but not eternally” [^{<111139>} 1 Kings 11:39]. Some time later it is said: “For the sake of David his servant, God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, to raise himself up a son and to protect Jerusalem” [^{<111504>} 1 Kings 15:4, cf. Vg.]. Then, although affairs verged on ruin, it was again said: “The Lord was unwilling to destroy Judah, for the sake of David his servant, since he promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever” [^{<120819>} 2 Kings 8:19].

To sum up: while all others were passed over, David alone was chosen, as he in whom God’s good pleasure should rest, just as it is said elsewhere: “He rejected the tent of Shiloh, and the tent of Joseph; and he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim” [^{<197860>} Psalm 78:60,67, conflated], “but he chose the tribe of Judah, Mr. Zion, which he loved” [^{<197868>} Psalm 78:68]. “He chose David his servant,... to shepherd Jacob his people, Israel his inheritance” [^{<197870>} Psalm 78:70-71]. To conclude: God thus willed to preserve his church that its soundness and safety might depend upon that Head. Therefore David proclaims: “Jehovah is the strength of his people, the saving power of his Christ” [^{<192808>} Psalm 28:8, cf. RV marg.]. Immediately he adds the petition: “Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance” [^{<192809>} Psalm 28:9], meaning that the condition of the church is joined by an indissoluble bond to Christ’s authority. Another passage expresses the same idea: “Save us, O Jehovah; let the King hear us in the day that we shall call upon him” [^{<192909>} Psalm 29:9].^{f214} By these words he clearly teaches that believers have sought refuge in God’s help with no other assurance than that they were sheltered under the King’s protection. This is implied in another psalm: “Save... O Jehovah!... Blessed be he who comes in the name of Jehovah” [^{<19B825>} Psalm 118:25-26]. There, it is

sufficiently clear, believers are being called back to Christ, that they may hope to be saved by God's hand. Another petition expresses the same idea, where the whole church implores God's mercy: "Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou hast preserved (or fashioned) for thyself" [^{<198017>}Psalm 80:17, Comm.]. For although the author of the psalm bewails the scattering of the whole people, yet he begs for their restoration in the Head alone. But when, after the people have been carried off into exile, the land laid waste, and everything seemingly destroyed, Jeremiah sorrows for the calamity of the church, he especially bewails the fact that in the ruin of the Kingdom hope has been cut off from believers. "The anointed," he says, "the breath of our mouths, has been taken captive in our sins, he to whom we said, 'Under tiny shadow we shall live among the heathen.'" [^{<250420>}Lamentations 4:20, cf. Vg.] From this it is now clear enough that, since God cannot without the Mediator be propitious toward the human race, under the law Christ always set before the holy fathers as the end to which they should direct their faith.

(Christ essential to the covenant and to true faith, 3-4)

3. THE FAITH AND HOPE OF THE OLD COVENANT FED UPON THE PROMISE

Now, where solace is promised in affliction, especially where the deliverance of the church is described, the banner of trust and hope in Christ himself is prefigured. "God went forth for the salvation of his people with his Messiah," says Habakkuk. [^{<350313>}Habakkuk 3:13 p.] And as often as the prophets mention the restoration of the church, they recall the people to the promise made to David that his kingdom would be everlasting [cf. ^{<120819>}2 Kings 8:19]. And no wonder, for otherwise there would have been no stability in the covenant! To this, Isaiah's reply is especially pertinent. For inasmuch as he saw that the unbelieving King Ahaz rejected his testimony concerning the lifting of the siege of Jerusalem and its immediate safety, he rather abruptly passes on to the Messiah: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son" [^{<230714>}Isaiah 7:14]. By this he indirectly indicates that although king and people wickedly rejected the promise offered them, as if they were purposely trying to discredit

God's pledge, yet the covenant would not be invalidated, for the Redeemer would come at his appointed time.

In short, to show God merciful, all the prophets were constantly at pains to proclaim that kingdom of David upon which both redemption and eternal salvation depended. Thus Isaiah says: "I will make with you a... covenant, my steadfast mercies for David. Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples" [^{<235503>}Isaiah 55:3-4]. That is, under such adverse conditions believers could have no hope except when this witness was put forward that God would be compassionate to them. In the same way to lift up the despairing, Jeremiah says: "Behold, the days are coming when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch... and then Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely" [^{<242305>}Jeremiah 23:5-6]. Ezekiel, moreover, says: "I will set over my sheep one shepherd... namely, my servant David... I, Jehovah, will be their God, and my servant David shall be shepherd... and I will make with them a covenant of peace." [^{<263423>}Ezekiel 34:23-25 p.] Elsewhere, likewise, after discussing this incredible renewal, he says: "David, my servant, shall be their king, and shall be the one shepherd over all,... and I will make an everlasting covenant of peace with them." [^{<263724>}Ezekiel 37:24,26 p.]

Here I am gathering a few passages of many because I merely want to remind my readers that the hope of all the godly has ever reposed in Christ alone. All the other prophets also agree. For example, in Hosea it is said: "And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head" [^{<280111>}Hosea 1:11]. This he afterward explains more clearly: "The children of Israel shall return and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king" [^{<280305>}Hosea 3:5]. Micah, also, referring to the people's return, clearly expresses it: "Their king will pass on before them, Jehovah at their head" [^{<330213>}Micah 2:13]. So, too, Amos — meaning to foretell the renewal of the people — says: "In that day I will raise up the tent of David that is fallen, and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins" [^{<300911>}Amos 9:11]. This signifies: "I will raise up once more the royal glory in the family of David, the sole standard of salvation, now fulfilled in Christ." Hence, Zechariah, as his era was closer to the manifestation of Christ, more openly proclaims: "Rejoice, daughter of Zion! Be jubilant, daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; righteous and unharmed is he" [^{<380909>}Zechariah 9:9,

cf. Comm.]. This agrees with the verse of the psalm already quoted: “Jehovah is... the saving power of his Christ. Save,... O Jehovah” [¹⁹²⁸⁰⁸Psalm 28:8-9, cf. RV marg.]. Here salvation flows from the Head to the whole body.

4. FAITH IN GOD IS FAITH IN CHRIST

God willed that the Jews should be so instructed by these prophecies that they might turn their eyes directly to Christ in order to seek deliverance. Even though they had shamefully degenerated, they still could not efface the memory of that general principle: that, as had been promised to David, God would be through the hand of Christ the deliverer of the church; and that his freely given covenant, whereby God had adopted his elect, would stand fast. From this it came about that when Christ entered Jerusalem a little before his death this song was on the children’s lips: “Hosanna to the son of David” [⁴⁰²¹⁰⁹Matthew 21:9]. The hymn sung by the children apparently was commonly and widely known, and in accordance with the general notion that the sole pledge of God’s mercy rested upon the coming of the Redeemer. For this reason Christ himself bade his disciples believe in him, that they might clearly and perfectly believe in God: “You believe in God; believe also in me” [⁴³¹⁴⁰¹John 14:1]. For even if, properly speaking, faith mounts up from Christ to the Father, yet he means this: although faith rests in God, it will gradually disappear unless he who retains it in perfect firmness intercedes as Mediator. Otherwise, God’s majesty is too lofty to be attained by mortal men, who are like grubs crawling upon the earth.

For this reason I subscribe to the common saying that God is the object of faith, ^{f215} yet it requires qualification. For Christ is not without reason called “the image of the invisible God” [⁵¹⁰¹¹⁵Colossians 1:15]. This title warns us that, unless God confronts us in Christ, we cannot come to know that we are saved. Among the Jews the scribes obscured with false glosses what the prophets had taught concerning the Redeemer. Yet in spite of this, Christ took to be commonly known, as if received by general agreement, that there is no other remedy for a hopeless condition, no other way of freeing the church, than the appearance of the Mediator. Indeed, Paul’s teaching was not commonly known — as it ought to have been — that “Christ is the end of the law” [⁴⁵¹⁰⁰⁴Romans 10:4]. ^{f216} Yet this is

true and certain, as is perfectly clear from the Law itself and the Prophets. I am not yet discussing faith because there will be a more suitable place for it elsewhere. ^{f217} Only let the readers agree on this point: let the first step toward godliness be to recognize that God is our Father to watch over us, govern and nourish us, until he gather us unto the eternal inheritance of his Kingdom. Hence, what we have recently said becomes clear, ^{f218} that apart from Christ the saving knowledge of God does not stand. From the beginning of the world he had consequently been set before all the elect that they should look unto him and put their trust in him.

In this sense Irenaeus writes that the Father, himself infinite, becomes finite in the Son, for he has accommodated himself to our little measure lest our minds be overwhelmed by the immensity of his glory. ^{f219} Fanatics, not reflecting upon this, twist a useful statement into an impious fantasy, as if there were in Christ only a portion of divinity, outflowing from the whole perfection of God. ^{f220} Actually, it means nothing else than that God is comprehended in Christ alone. John's saying has always been true: "He that does not have the Son does not have the Father" [^{<620223>} 1 John 2:23 p.]. For even if many men once boasted that they worshiped the Supreme Majesty, the Maker of heaven and earth, yet because they had no Mediator it was not possible for them truly to taste God's mercy, and thus be persuaded that he was their Father.

Accordingly, because they did not hold Christ as their Head, they possessed only a fleeting knowledge of God. From this it also came about that they at last lapsed into crass and foul superstitions and betrayed their own ignorance. So today the Turks, although they proclaim at the top of their lungs that the Creator of heaven and earth is God, still, while repudiating Christ, substitute an idol in place of the true God.

CHAPTER 7

THE LAW WAS GIVEN, ^{F221} NOT TO RESTRAIN
THE FOLK OF THE OLD COVENANT
UNDER ITSELF,

**BUT TO FOSTER HOPE OF SALVATION IN CHRIST
UNTIL HIS COMING**

(The moral and ceremonial law significant as leading to Christ, 1-2)

1. THE MEDIATOR HELPS ONLY FALLEN MAN

The law was added about four hundred years after the death of Abraham [cf. ^{<480317>} Galatians 3:17]. From that continuing succession of witnesses which we have reviewed it may be gathered that this was not done to lead the chosen people away from Christ; but rather to hold their minds in readiness until his coming; even to kindle desire for him, and to strengthen their expectation, in order that they might not grow faint by too long delay. I understand by the word “law” not only the Ten Commandments, which set forth a godly and righteous rule of living, but the form of religion handed down by God through Moses. And Moses was not made a lawgiver to wipe out the blessing promised to the race of Abraham. Rather, we see him repeatedly reminding the Jews of that freely given covenant made with their fathers of which they were the heirs. It was as if he were sent to renew it.

This fact was very clearly revealed in the ceremonies. For what is more vain or absurd than for men to offer a loathsome stench from the fat of cattle in order to reconcile themselves to God? Or to have recourse to the sprinkling of water and blood to cleanse away their filth? In short, the whole cultus of the law, taken literally and not as shadows and figures corresponding to the truth, will be utterly ridiculous. Therefore, with good reason, both in Stephen’s speech [^{<440744>} Acts 7:44] and in The Letter to the Hebrews [^{<580805>} Hebrews 8:5] very careful consideration is given to

that passage where God orders Moses to make everything pertaining to the Tabernacle in accordance with the pattern shown to him on the mountain [^{<022540>}Exodus 25:40]. For if something spiritual had not been set forth to which they were to direct their course, the Jews would have frittered away their effort in those matters, just as the Gentiles did in their trifles. Irreligious men, who have never exerted themselves in zeal for piety, cannot bear to hear about such complicated rites without aversion. Not only do they wonder why God wearied the ancient people with such a mass of ceremonies, but they also despise these and ridicule them as child's play. That is, they do not pay attention to the purpose of the law; if the forms of the law be separated from its end, one must condemn it as vanity.

Yet that very type ^{f222} shows that God did not command sacrifices in order to busy his worshipers with earthly exercises. Rather, he did so that he might lift their minds higher. This also can be clearly discerned from his own nature: for, as it is spiritual, only spiritual worship delights him. Many statements of the prophets attest to this and charge the Jews with stupidity; for they think some sacrifice or other has value in God's sight. Is that because they intend to detract something from the law? Not at all. But, since they were true interpreters of it, they desired in this way to direct men's eyes to the objective from which the common people were straying. Now from the grace offered the Jews we can surely deduce that the law was not devoid of reference to Christ. For Moses proposed to them as the purpose of adoption, that they should be a priestly kingdom unto God [^{<021906>}Exodus 19:6]. This they could not have attained if a greater and more excellent reconciliation than that procured by the blood of beasts had not intervened [cf. ^{<580912>}Hebrews 9:12 ff.]. Because of hereditary taint, all of Adam's children are born in bondage to sin. What, then, is less fitting than for them to be elevated to royal dignity, and in this way to become partners in God's glory, unless such pre-eminent good come to them from some other quarter? Also, how could the right of priesthood thrive among them, abominable as they were to God in the filth of their vices, were they not consecrated in the sacred Head? For this reason, Peter neatly turns that saying of Moses', teaching that the fullness of grace that the Jews had tasted under the law has been shown forth in Christ: "You are a chosen race," he says, "a royal priesthood" [^{<600209>} 1

Peter 2:9]. In inverting the words, he means that those to whom Christ has appeared through the gospel have obtained more than their fathers did. For all have been endowed with priestly and kingly honor, so that, trusting in their Mediator, they may freely dare to come forth into God's presence.

2. THE LAW CONTAINS A PROMISE

We must here note in passing that the kingdom finally established within the family of David is a part of the law, and contained under the administration of Moses. From this it follows that both among the whole tribe of Levi and among the posterity of David, Christ was set before the eyes of the ancient folk as in a double mirror. For, as I have just said, men enslaved by sin and death and polluted by their own corruption could not otherwise have been kings and priests before God. Hence, Paul's statement appears to be very true: that the Jews were kept under the charge of a "tutor" [^{<480324>} Galatians 3:24] until the seed should come for whose sake the promise had been given. For, since they had not yet come to know Christ intimately, they were like children ^{f223} whose weakness could not yet bear the full knowledge of heavenly things. How these ceremonies guided them to Christ has been stated above. This can be better understood from the many testimonies of the prophets. For even though they had to come forward daily with new sacrifices to appease God, yet Isaiah promises that all their evil deeds will be atoned for by a single sacrifice [^{<235305>} Isaiah 53:5]. Daniel agrees with this [^{<270926>} Daniel 9:26-27]. Priests designated from the tribe of Levi customarily entered the sanctuary. But of only one priest it was once said that he was divinely chosen with a solemn oath to be "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" [^{<19B004>} Psalm 110:4; cf. ^{<580506>} Hebrews 5:6; 7:21]. There was then an anointing with visible oil; in a vision Daniel proclaimed that there would be another sort of anointing [^{<270924>} Daniel 9:24]. Not to dwell upon too many examples, the author of The Letter to the Hebrews points out fully and clearly in chs. 4 to 11 that the ceremonies are worthless and empty until the time of Christ is reached.

With regard to the Ten Commandments we ought likewise to heed Paul's warning: "Christ is the end of the law unto salvation to every believer" [^{<451004>} Romans 10:4 p.]. Another: Christ is the Spirit [^{<470317>} 2 Corinthians 3:17] who quickens the letter that of itself is death-dealing

[<470306> 2 Corinthians 3:6]. By the former statement he means that righteousness is taught in vain by the commandments until Christ confers it by free imputation and by the Spirit of regeneration. For this reason, Paul justly calls Christ the fulfillment or end of the law. For it would be of no value to know what God demands of us if Christ did not succor those laboring and oppressed under its intolerable yoke and burden. Elsewhere he teaches that “the law was put forward because of transgressions” [<480319> Galatians 3:19]; that is, in order to humble men, having convinced them of their own condemnation. But because this is the true and only preparation for seeking Christ, all his variously expressed teachings well agree. He was disputing with perverse teachers who pretended that we merit righteousness by the works of the law. Consequently, to refute their error he was sometimes compelled to take the bare law in a narrow sense, even though it was otherwise graced with the covenant of free adoption.

(We cannot fulfill the moral law, 3-5)

3. THE LAW RENDERS US INEXCUSABLE AND DRIVES US INTO DESPAIR

But, in order that our guilt may arouse us to seek pardon, it behooves us, briefly, to know how by our instruction in the moral law we are rendered more inexcusable. If it is true that in the law we are taught the perfection of righteousness, this also follows: the complete observance of the law is perfect righteousness before God. By it man would evidently be deemed and reckoned righteous before the heavenly judgment seat. Therefore Moses, after he had published the law, did not hesitate to call heaven and earth to witness that he had “set before Israel life and death, good and evil” [<053019> Deuteronomy 30:19 p.]. We cannot gainsay that the reward of eternal salvation awaits complete obedience to the law, as the Lord has promised. On the other hand, it behooves us to examine whether we fulfill that obedience, through whose merit we ought to derive assurance of that reward. What point is there to see in the observance of the law the proffered reward of eternal life if, furthermore, it is not clear whether by this path we may attain eternal life.

At this point the feebleness of the law shows itself. Because observance of the law is found in none of us, we are excluded from the promises of life,

and fall back into the mere curse. I am telling not only what happens but what must happen. For since the teaching of the law is far above human capacity, a man may indeed view from afar the proffered promises, yet he cannot derive any benefit from them. Therefore this thing alone remains: that from the goodness of the promises he should the better judge his own misery, while with the hope of salvation cut off he thinks himself threatened with certain death. On the other hand, horrible threats hang over us, constraining and entangling not a few of us only, but all of us to a man. They hang over us, I say, and pursue us with inexorable harshness, so that we discern in the law only the most immediate death.

4. NEVERTHELESS THE PROMISES IN THE LAW ARE NOT WITHOUT MEANING

Therefore if we look only upon the law, we can only be despondent, confused, and despairing in mind, since from it all of us are condemned and accursed [^{<480310>} Galatians 3:10]. And it holds us far away from the blessedness that it promises to its keepers. Is the Lord, you will ask, mocking us in this way? How little different from mockery is it to show forth the hope of happiness, to invite and attract us to it, to assure us that it is available, when all the while it is shut off and inaccessible? I reply: even if the promises of the law, in so far as they are conditional, depend upon perfect obedience to the law — which can nowhere be found — they have not been given in vain. For when we have learned that they will be fruitless and ineffectual for us unless God, out of his free goodness, shall receive us without looking at our works, and we in faith embrace that same goodness held forth to us by the gospel, the promises do not lack effectiveness even with the condition attached. For the Lord then freely bestows all things upon us so as to add to the full measure of his kindness this gift also: that not rejecting our imperfect obedience, but rather supplying what is lacking to complete it, he causes us to receive the benefit of the promises of the law as if we had fulfilled their condition. But since we will have to discuss this question more fully under the heading of justification by faith, ^{f224} we will not pursue it farther for the present.

5. THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR US

We have said that the observance of the law is impossible. Since this is commonly looked upon as a very absurd opinion — Jerome does not hesitate to anathematize it ^{f225} — we ought at once to explain and confirm it in a few words. I do not tarry over what Jerome thinks; let us rather inquire what is true. Here I shall not weave long circumlocutions of various kinds of possibilities. I call “impossible” what has never been, and what God’s ordination and decree prevents from ever being. If we search the remotest past, I say that none of the saints, clad in the body of death [cf. ^{<450724>}Romans 7:24], has attained to that goal of love so as to love God “with all his heart, all his mind, all his soul, and all his might” [^{<411230>}Mark 12:30, and parallels]. I say furthermore, there was no one who was not plagued with concupiscence. Who will contradict this? Indeed, I see what sort of saints we imagine in our foolish superstition; the heavenly angels can scarcely compare with them in purity! But this goes against both Scripture and the evidence of experience. I further say that there will be no one hereafter who will reach the goal of true perfection without sloughing off the weight of the body.

For this point there are enough manifest testimonies of Scripture. “There is no righteous man upon the earth who... does not sin,” said Solomon [^{<210721>}Ecclesiastes 7:21, Vg.; cf. ^{<110846>}1 Kings 8:46 p.]. Moreover, David says: “Every man living will be unrighteous before thee” [^{<19E302>}Psalm 143:2]. Job affirms the same idea in many passages [cf. ^{<180902>}Job 9:2; 25:4]. Paul expresses it most clearly of all: “The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit lusts against the flesh” [^{<480517>}Galatians 5:17]. That all those under the law are accursed he proves by no other reason, except that “it is written, ‘Cursed be every one who will not abide by all things written in the book of the law’” [^{<480310>}Galatians 3:10; ^{<052726>}Deuteronomy 27:26]. Here he is obviously intimating, in fact assuming, that no one can so abide. But whatever has been declared in Scripture it is fitting to take as perpetual, even as necessary. The Pelagians plagued Augustine with such subtleties as these. They claimed that it was doing an injustice to God to assume that he demanded more of believers than they were able to carry out through his grace. He, to escape their slander, admitted that the Lord could indeed, if he so willed, elevate mortal

man to angelic purity; but that he had never done, nor ever would do, anything contrary to what he had declared in the Scriptures. ^{f226}

And I do not deny this, but yet add that it is ill-advised to pit God's might against his truth. Therefore, if someone says that what the Scriptures declare will not be, cannot be, such a statement is not to be scoffed at. But suppose they dispute about the Word itself. The Lord, when his disciples asked, "Who can be saved?" [^{<401925>} Matthew 19:25], replied: "With men this is indeed impossible, but with God all things are possible" [^{<401926>} Matthew 19:26]. Also, Augustine compellingly contends that in this flesh we never render to God the love we lawfully owe him. He says: "Love so follows knowledge that no one can love God perfectly who does not first fully know his goodness. While we wander upon the earth, 'we see in a mirror dimly' [^{<461312>} 1 Corinthians 13:12]. Therefore, it follows that our love is imperfect." ^{f227} Let us be quite agreed, then, that the law cannot be fulfilled in this life of the flesh, if we observe the weakness of our own nature; as will, moreover, be shown from another passage of Paul [^{<450803>} Romans 8:3]. ^{f228}

(The law shows the righteousness of God, and as a mirror discloses our sinfulness, leading us to implore divine help, 6-9)

6. THE SEVERITY OF THE LAW TAKES AWAY FROM US ALL SELF-DECEPTION

But to make the whole matter clearer, let us survey briefly the function and use of what is called the "moral law." ^{f229} Now, so far as I understand it, it consists of three parts. ^{f230}

The first part is this: while it shows God's righteousness, that is, the righteousness alone acceptable to God, it warns, informs, convicts, and lastly condemns, every man of his own unrighteousness. For man, blinded and drunk with self-love, must be compelled to know and to confess his own feebleness and impurity.

If man is not clearly convinced of his own vanity, he is puffed up with insane confidence in his own mental powers, and can never be induced to recognize their slenderness as long as he measures them by a measure of his own choice. But as soon as he begins to compare his powers with the

difficulty of the law, he has something to diminish his bravado. For, however remarkable an opinion of his powers he formerly held, he soon feels that they are panting under so heavy a weight as to stagger and totter, and finally even to fall down and faint away. Thus man, schooled in the law, sloughs off the arrogance that previously blinded him.

Likewise, he needs to be cured of another disease, that of pride, with which we have said that he is sick. So long as he is permitted to stand upon his own judgment, he passes off hypocrisy as righteousness; pleased with this, he is aroused against God's grace by I know not what counterfeit acts of righteousness. But after he is compelled to weigh his life in the scales of the law, laying aside all that presumption of fictitious righteousness, he discovers that he is a long way from holiness, and is in fact teeming with a multitude of vices, with which he previously thought himself undefiled. So deep and tortuous are the recesses in which the evils of covetousness lurk that they easily deceive man's sight. The apostle has good reason to say: "I should not have known covetousness, if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet'" [[450707](#) Romans 7:7]. For if by the law covetousness is not dragged from its lair, it destroys wretched man so secretly that he does not even feel its fatal stab.

7. THE PUNITIVE FUNCTION OF THE LAW DOES NOT DIMINISH ITS WORTH

The law is like a mirror. In it we contemplate our weakness, then the iniquity arising from this, and finally the curse coming from both — just as a mirror shows us the spots on our face. For when the capacity to follow righteousness fails him, man must be mired in sins. After the sin forthwith comes the curse. Accordingly, the greater the transgression of which the law holds us guilty, the graver the judgment to which it makes us answerable. The apostle's statement is relevant here: "Through the law comes knowledge of sin" [[450320](#) Romans 3:20]. There he notes only its first function, which sinners as yet unregenerate experience. Related to this are these statements: "Law slipped in, to increase the trespass" [[450520](#) Romans 5:20], and thus it is "the dispensation of death" [[470307](#) 2 Corinthians 3:7] that "brings wrath" [[450415](#) Romans 4:15], and slays. There is no doubt that the more clearly the conscience is struck with awareness of its sin, the more the iniquity grows. For stubborn

disobedience against the Lawgiver is then added to transgression. It remains, then, to the law to arm God's wrath for the sinner's downfall, for of itself the law can only accuse, condemn, and destroy. As Augustine writes: "If the Spirit of grace is absent, the law is present only to accuse and kill us."^{f231}

But when we say that, we neither dishonor the law, nor detract at all from its excellence. Surely if our will were completely conformed and composed to obedience to the law, its knowledge alone would suffice to gain salvation. Yet, since our carnal and corrupted nature contends violently against God's spiritual law and is in no way corrected by its discipline, it follows that the law which had been given for salvation, provided it met with suitable hearers, turns into an occasion for sin and death.^{f232} For, since all of us are proved to be transgressors, the more clearly it reveals God's righteousness, conversely the more it uncovers our iniquity. The more surely it confirms the reward of life and salvation as dependent upon righteousness, the more certain it renders the destruction of the wicked.

These maxims — far from abusing the law — are of the greatest value in more clearly commending God's beneficence. Thus it is clear that by our wickedness and depravity we are prevented from enjoying the blessed life set openly before us by the law. Thereby the grace of God, which nourishes us without the support of the law, becomes sweeter, and his mercy, which bestows that grace upon us, becomes more lovely. From this we learn that he never tires in repeatedly benefiting us and in heaping new gifts upon us.

8. THE PUNITIVE FUNCTION OF THE LAW IN ITS WORK UPON BELIEVERS AND UNBELIEVERS

The wickedness and condemnation of us all are sealed by the testimony of the law. Yet this is not done to cause us to fall down in despair or, completely discouraged, to rush headlong over the brink — provided we duly profit by the testimony of the law. It is true that in this way the wicked are terrified, but because of their obstinacy of heart. For the children of God the knowledge of the law should have another purpose. The apostle testifies that we are indeed condemned by the judgment of the law, "so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be

held accountable to God” [^{<450319>}Romans 3:19]. He teaches the same idea in yet another place: “For God has shut up all men in unbelief,” not that he may destroy all or suffer all to perish, but “that he may have mercy upon all” [^{<451132>}Romans 11:32]. This means that, dismissing the stupid opinion of their own strength, they come to realize that they stand and are upheld by God’s hand alone; that, naked and empty-handed, they flee to his mercy, repose entirely in it, hide deep within it, and seize upon it alone for righteousness and merit. For God’s mercy is revealed in Christ to all who seek and wait upon it with true faith, bin the precepts of the law, God is but the rewarder of perfect righteousness, which all of us lack, and conversely, the severe judge of evil deeds. But in Christ his face shines, full of grace and gentleness, even upon us poor and unworthy sinners. ^{f233}

9. THE LAW, AS AUGUSTINE STATES, BY ACCUSING MOVES US TO SEEK GRACE

Augustine often speaks of the value of calling upon the grace of His help. For example, he writes to Hilary: “The law bids us, as we try to fulfill its requirements, and become wearied in our weakness under it, to know how to ask the help of grace.” He writes similarly to Asellius: “The usefulness of the law lies in convicting man of his infirmity and moving him to call upon the remedy of grace which is in Christ.” Again, to Innocent of Rome: “The law commands; grace supplies the strength to act.” Again, to Valentinus: “God commands what we cannot do that we may know what we ought to seek from him.” Again: “The law was given to accuse you; that accused you might fear; that fearing you might beg forgiveness; and that you might not presume on your own strength.” Again: “The law was given for this purpose: to make you, being great, little; to show that you do not have in yourself the strength to attain righteousness, and for you, thus helpless, unworthy, and destitute, to flee to grace.” Afterward he addresses God: “So act, O Lord; so act, O merciful Lord. Command what cannot be fulfilled. Rather, command what can be fulfilled only through thy grace so that, since men are unable to fulfill it through their own strength, every mouth may be stopped, and no one may seem great to himself. Let all be little ones, and let all the world be guilty before God.” ^{f234} But it is silly of me to amass so many testimonies, since that holy man has written a work specifically on this topic, entitled *On the Spirit and the*

Letter. ^{f235} He does not as expressly describe the second value of the law, either because he knew that it depended upon the first, or because he did not grasp it thoroughly, or because he lacked words to express its correct meaning distinctly and plainly enough.

Yet this first function of the law is exercised also in the reprobate. For, although they do not proceed so far with the children of God as to be renewed and bloom again in the inner man after the abasement of their flesh, but are struck dumb by the first terror and lie in despair, nevertheless, the fact that their consciences are buffeted by such waves serves to show forth the equity of the divine judgment. For the reprobate always freely desire to evade God's judgment. Now, although that judgment is not yet revealed, so routed are they by the testimony of the law and of conscience, that they betray in themselves what they have deserved.

(The law restrains malefactors and those who are not yet believers, 10-11)

10. THE LAW AS PROTECTION OF THE COMMUNITY FROM UNJUST MEN

The second function of the law is this: at least by fear of punishment to restrain certain men who are untouched by any care for what is just and right unless compelled by hearing the dire threats in the law. But they are restrained, not because their inner mind is stirred or affected, but because, being bridled, so to speak, they keep their hands from outward activity, and hold inside the depravity that otherwise they would wantonly have indulged. Consequently, they are neither better nor more righteous before God. Hindered by fright or shame, they dare neither execute what they have conceived in their minds, nor openly breathe forth the rage of their lust. Still, they do not have hearts disposed to fear and obedience toward God. Indeed, the more they restrain themselves, the more strongly are they inflamed; they burn and boil within, and are ready to do anything or burst forth anywhere — but for the fact that this dread of the law hinders them. Not only that — but so wickedly do they also hate the law itself, and curse God the Lawgiver, that if they could, they would most certainly abolish him, for they cannot bear him either when he commands them to do right, or when he takes vengeance on the despisers of his majesty, all

who are still unregenerate feel — some more obscurely, some more openly — that they are not drawn to obey the law voluntarily, but impelled by a violent fear do so against their will and despite their opposition to it.

But this constrained and forced righteousness is necessary for the public community of men,^{f236} for whose tranquillity the Lord herein provided when he took care that everything be not tumultuously confounded. This would happen if everything were permitted to all men. Nay, even for the children of God, before they are called and while they are destitute of the Spirit of sanctification [^{<450104>}Romans 1:4, Vg. etc.], so long as they play the wanton in the folly of the flesh, it is profitable for them to undergo this tutelage.^{f237} While by the dread of divine vengeance they are restrained at least from outward wantonness, with minds yet untamed they progress but slightly for the present, yet become partially broken in by bearing the yoke of righteousness. As a consequence, when they are called, they are not utterly untutored and uninitiated in discipline as if it were something unknown. The apostle seems specially to have alluded to this function of the law when he teaches “that the law is not laid down for the just but for the unjust and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of parents, for manslayers, fornicators, pervers, kidnapers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else runs counter to sound doctrine” [^{<540209>}1 Timothy 2:9-20]. He shows in this that the law is like a halter to check the ragtag and otherwise limitlessly ranging lusts of the flesh.

11. THE LAW A DETERRENT TO THOSE NOT YET REGENERATE

What Paul says elsewhere, that “the law was for the Jews a tutor unto Christ” [^{<480324>}Galatians 3:24], may be applied to both functions of the law. There are two kinds of men whom the law leads by its tutelage to Christ.

Of the first kind we have already spoken: because they are too full of their own virtue or of the assurance of their own righteousness, they are not fit to receive Christ’s grace unless they first be emptied. Therefore, through the recognition of their own misery, the law brings them down to humility in order thus to prepare them to seek what previously they did not realize they lacked.

Men of the second kind have need of a bridle to restrain them from so slackening the reins on the lust of the flesh as to fall clean away from all pursuit of righteousness. For where the Spirit of God does not yet rule, lusts sometimes so boil that there is danger lest they plunge the soul bound over to them into forgetfulness and contempt of God. And such would happen if God did not oppose it with this remedy. Therefore, if he does not immediately regenerate those whom he has destined to inherit his Kingdom, until the time of his visitation, he keeps them safe through the works of the law under fear [cf. ^{<600212>} 1 Peter 2:12]. This is not that chaste and pure fear such as ought to be in his sons, but a fear useful in teaching them true godliness according to their capacity. We have so many proofs of this matter that no example is needed. For all who have at any time groped about in ignorance of God will admit that it happened to them in such a way that the bridle of the law restrained them in some fear and reverence toward God until, regenerated by the Spirit, they began wholeheartedly to love him. ^{f238}

*(Principally it admonishes believers and urges them on
in well-doing, 12-13)*

12. EVEN THE BELIEVERS HAVE NEED OF THE LAW

The third and principal use, which pertains more closely to the proper purpose of the law, finds its place among believers in whose hearts the Spirit of God already lives and reigns. ^{f239} For even though they have the law written and engraved upon their hearts by the finger of God [^{<243133>} Jeremiah 31:33; ^{<581016>} Hebrews 10:16], that is, have been so moved and quickened through the directing of the Spirit that they long to obey God, they still profit by the law in two ways.

Here is the best instrument for them to learn more thoroughly each day the nature of the Lord's will to which they aspire, and to confirm them in the understanding of it. It is as if some servant, already prepared with all earnestness of heart to commend himself to his master, must search out and observe his master's ways more carefully in order to conform and accommodate himself to them. And not one of us may escape from this necessity. For no man has heretofore attained to such wisdom as to be

unable, from the daily instruction of the law, to make fresh progress toward a purer knowledge of the divine will.

Again, because we need not only teaching but also exhortation, the servant of God will also avail himself of this benefit of the law: by frequent meditation upon it to be aroused to obedience, be strengthened in it, and be drawn back from the slippery path of transgression. In this way the saints must press on; for, however eagerly they may in accordance with the Spirit strive toward God's righteousness, the listless flesh always so burdens them that they do not proceed with due readiness. The law is to the flesh like a whip to an idle and balky ass, to arouse it to work. Even for a spiritual man not yet free of the weight of the flesh the law remains a constant sting that will not let him stand still. Doubtless David was referring to this use when he sang the praises of the law: "The law of the Lord is spotless, converting souls;... the righteous acts of the Lord are right, rejoicing hearts; the precept of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes," etc. [^{<191808>}Psalm 18:8-9, Vg.; 19:7-8, EV]. Likewise: "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" [^{<19B9105>}Psalm 119:105], and innumerable other sayings in the same psalm [e.g., ^{<19B905>}Psalm 119:5]. These do not contradict Paul's statements, which show not what use the law serves for the regenerate, but what it can of itself confer upon man. But here the prophet proclaims the great usefulness of the law: the Lord instructs by their reading of it those whom he inwardly instills with a readiness to obey. He lays hold not only of the precepts, but the accompanying promise of grace, which alone sweetens what is bitter. For what would be less lovable than the law if, with importuning and threatening alone, it troubled souls through fear, and distressed them through fright? David especially shows that in the law he apprehended the Mediator, without whom there is no delight or sweetness.

13. WHOEVER WANTS TO DO AWAY WITH THE LAW ENTIRELY FOR THE FAITHFUL, UNDERSTANDS IT FALSELY

Certain ignorant persons, ^{f240} not understanding this distinction, rashly cast out the whole of Moses, and bid farewell to the two Tables of the Law. For they think it obviously alien to Christians to hold to a doctrine that contains the "dispensation of death" [cf. ^{<470307>}2 Corinthians 3:7]. Banish this wicked thought from our minds! For Moses has admirably taught that

the law, which among sinners can engender nothing but death, ought among the saints to have a better and more excellent use. When about to die, he decreed to the people as follows: “Lay to your hearts all the words which this day I enjoin upon you, that you may command them to your children, and teach them to keep, do, and fulfill all those things written in the book of this law. For they have not been commanded to you in vain, but for each to live in them” [^{<053246>}Deuteronomy 32:46-47, cf. Vg.]. But if no one can deny that a perfect pattern of righteousness stands forth in the law, either we need no rule to live rightly and justly, or it is forbidden to depart from the law.

There are not many rules, but one everlasting and unchangeable rule to live by. For this reason we are not to refer solely to one age David’s statement that the life of a righteous man is a continual meditation upon the law [^{<190102>}Psalms 1:2], for it is just as applicable to every age, even to the end of the world.

We ought not to be frightened away from the law or to shun its instruction merely because it requires a much stricter moral purity than we shall reach while we bear about with us the prison house of our body. For the law is not now acting toward us as a rigorous enforcement officer who is not satisfied unless the requirements are met. But in this perfection to which it exhorts us, the law points out the goal toward which throughout life we are to strive. In this the law is no less profitable than consistent with our duty. If we fail not in this struggle, it is well. Indeed, this whole life is a race [cf. ^{<460924>}1 Corinthians 9:24-26]; when its course has been run, the Lord will grant us to attain that goal to which our efforts now press forward from afar.

(Its so-called “abrogation” has reference to the liberation of the conscience, and the discontinuance of the ancient ceremonies, 14-17)

14. TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE LAW BEEN ABROGATED FOR BELIEVERS?

Now, the law has power to exhort believers. This is not a power to bind their consciences with a curse, but one to shake off their sluggishness, by repeatedly urging them, and to pinch them awake to their imperfection. Therefore, many persons, wishing to express such liberation from that

curse, say that for believers the law — I am still speaking of the moral law — has been abrogated. ^{f241} Not that the law no longer enjoins believers to do what is right, but only that it is not for them what it formerly was: it may no longer condemn and destroy their consciences by frightening and confounding them.

Paul teaches clearly enough such an abrogation of the law [cf. ^{<450706>}Romans 7:6]. That the Lord also preached it appears from this: he would not have refuted the notion that he would abolish the law [^{<400517>}Matthew 5:17] if this opinion had not been prevalent among the Jews. But since without some pretext the idea could not have arisen by chance, it may be supposed to have arisen from a false interpretation of his teaching, just as almost all errors have commonly taken their occasion from truth. But to avoid stumbling on the same stone, let us accurately distinguish what in the law has been abrogated from what still remains in force. When the Lord testifies that he “came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it” and that “until heaven and earth pass away... not a jot will pass away from the law until all is accomplished” [^{<400517>}Matthew 5:17-18], he sufficiently confirms that by his coming nothing is going to be taken away from the observance of the law. And justly — inasmuch as he came rather to remedy transgressions of it. Therefore through Christ the teaching of the law remains inviolable; by teaching, admonishing, reproof, and correcting, it forms us and prepares us for every good work [cf. ^{<550316>}2 Timothy 3:16-17].

15. THE LAW IS ABROGATED TO THE EXTENT THAT IT NO LONGER CONDEMNS US

What Paul says of the curse unquestionably applies not to the ordinance itself but solely to its force to bind the conscience. The law not only teaches but forthrightly enforces what it commands. If it be not obeyed — indeed, if one in any respect fail in his duty — the law unleashes the thunderbolt of its curse. For this reason the apostle says: “All who are of the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed be every one who does not fulfill all things’” [^{<480310>}Galatians 3:10; ^{<052726>}Deuteronomy 27:26 p.]. He describes as “under the works of the law” those who do not ground their righteousness in remission of sins, through which we are released from the rigor of the law. He therefore

teaches that we must be released from the bonds of the law, unless we wish to perish miserably under them.

But from what bonds? The bonds of harsh and dangerous requirements, which remit nothing of the extreme penalty of the law, and suffer no transgression to go unpunished. To redeem us from this curse, I say, Christ was made a curse for us. “For it is written: ‘Cursed be every one who hangs on a tree.’” [^{<480313>} Galatians 3:13; ^{<052123>} Deuteronomy 21:23.] In the following chapter Paul teaches that Christ was made subject to the law [^{<480404>} Galatians 4:4] “that he might redeem those under the law” [^{<480405>} Galatians 4:5a, Vg.]. This means the same thing, for he continues: “So that we might receive by adoption the right of sons” [^{<480405>} Galatians 4:5b]. What does this mean? That we should not be borne down by an unending bondage, which would agonize our consciences with the fear of death. Meanwhile this always remains an unassailable fact: no part of the authority of the law is withdrawn without our having always to receive it with the same veneration and obedience.

16. THE CEREMONIAL LAW

The ceremonies are a different matter: they have been abrogated not in effect but only in use. Christ by his coming has terminated them, but has not deprived them of anything of their sanctity; rather, he has approved and honored it. Just as the ceremonies would have provided the people of the Old Covenant with an empty show if the power of Christ’s death and resurrection had not been displayed therein; so, if they had not ceased, we would be unable today to discern for what purpose they were established.

Consequently Paul, to prove their observance not only superfluous but also harmful, teaches that they are shadows whose substance exists for us in Christ [^{<510217>} Colossians 2:17]. Thus we see that in their abolition the truth shines forth better than if they, still far off and as if veiled, figured the Christ, who has already plainly revealed himself. At Christ’s death “the curtain of the temple was torn in two” [^{<402751>} Matthew 27:51] because now the living and express image of heavenly blessings was manifested, which before had been begun in indistinct outline only, as the author of The Letter to the Hebrews states [^{<581001>} Hebrews 10:1]. To this applies Christ’s utterance: “The law and the prophets were until John;

since then the good news of the Kingdom of God is preached” [^{<421616>}Luke 16:16]. Not that the holy patriarchs were without the preaching that contains the hope of salvation and of eternal life, but that they only glimpsed from afar and in shadowy outline what we see today in full daylight. John the Baptist explains why the church of God had to pass quite beyond these rudiments: “The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” [^{<430117>}John 1:17]. For even though atonement for sins had been truly promised in the ancient sacrifices, and the Ark of the Covenant was a sure pledge of God’s fatherly favor, all this would have been but shadow ^{f242} had it not been grounded in the grace of Christ, in whom one finds perfect and everlasting stability. Let it be regarded as a fact that, although the rites of the law have ceased to be observed, by their termination one may better recognize how useful they were before the coming of Christ, who in abrogating their use has by his death sealed their force and effect.

17. “THE WRITTEN BOND AGAINST US” IS BLOTTED OUT

Of slightly greater difficulty is the point noted by Paul: “And you, when you were dead through sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven you all your sins, having canceled the written bond which was against us in the decrees, which was contrary to us. And he bore it from our midst, fixing it to the cross,” etc. [^{<510213>}Colossians 2:13-14, cf. Vg.]. This statement seems to extend the abolition of the law to the point that we now have nothing to do with its decrees. They are mistaken who understand it simply of the moral law, whose inexorable severity rather than its teaching they interpret as abolished. ^{f243} Others, more carefully weighing Paul’s words, perceive that these apply properly speaking to the ceremonial law; and they point out that the word “decree” is used in Paul more than once. For he also addresses the Ephesians thus: “He is our peace, who has made us both one... abolishing... the law of commandments resting upon decrees, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two” [^{<490214>}Ephesians 2:14-15, cf. Vg.]. ^{f244} There is no doubt that this statement concerns the ceremonies, for he speaks of them as a wall that divides the Jews from the Gentiles [^{<490214>}Ephesians 2:14]. Hence, I admit that the second group of expositors rightly criticizes the first. But the

second group also still does not seem to explain the meaning of the apostle very well. For I am not at all happy about comparing the two passages in every detail. When Paul would assure the Ephesians of their adoption into the fellowship of Israel, he teaches that the hindrance which once held them back has now been removed. That was in the ceremonies. For the ritual cleansings and sacrifices, whereby the Jews were consecrated to the Lord, separated them from the Gentiles. Now who cannot see that a loftier mystery is referred to in the letter to the Colossians? The question there concerns the Mosaic observances, to which the false apostles were trying to drive the Christian people. But as in the letter to the Galatians he carries that discussion deeper — reverting, so to speak, to its starting point — so he does in this passage. For if you consider nothing else in the rites than the necessity of performing them, what is the point in calling them “the written bond ^{f245} against us” [^{<510214>} Colossians 2:14]? Moreover, why lodge nearly the whole of our redemption in the fact that they are “blotted out”? Therefore, the thing itself cries out that we should consider it as something more inward.

But I am sure that I have come upon the true understanding of it — provided the truth be granted of what Augustine somewhere most truly writes, or rather takes from the apostle’s clear words: in the Jewish ceremonies there was confession of sins rather than atonement for them [cf. ^{<581001>} Hebrews 10:1 ff.; also ^{<031621>} Leviticus 16:21]. ^{f246} What else did the Jews accomplish with their sacrifices than to confess themselves guilty of death, since they substituted purification in place of themselves? What else did they accomplish with their cleansings but confess themselves unclean? They thus repeatedly renewed the “written bond” of their sin and impurity. But in giving such proof there was no release from it. The apostle, for this reason, writes: “Since Christ’s death has occurred, redemption from the transgressions which remained under the old covenant has been accomplished” [^{<580915>} Hebrews 9:15 p.]. The apostle rightly, therefore, calls the ceremonies “written bonds against” [^{<510214>} Colossians 2:14] those observing them, since through such rites they openly certify their own condemnation and uncleanness [cf. ^{<581003>} Hebrews 10:3].

There is no contradiction in the fact that they also were partakers in the same grace with us. For they attained that in Christ; not in the ceremonies that the apostle in that passage distinguishes from Christ, inasmuch as

these, then in use, obscured Christ's glory. We hold that ceremonies, considered in themselves, are very appropriately called "written bonds against" the salvation of men. For they were, so to speak, binding legal documents, ^{f247} which attested men's obligation. When the false apostles wanted to bind the Christian church again to observe them, Paul with good reason, more profoundly restating their ultimate purpose, warned the Colossians into what danger they would slip back if they allowed themselves to be subjugated to the ceremonial law in this way [^{<510216>} Colossians 2:16 ff.]. For at the same time they were deprived of the benefit of Christ, since, when once he had carried out the eternal atonement, he abolished those daily observances, which were able only to attest sins but could do nothing to blot them out.

CHAPTER 8

EXPLANATION OF THE MORAL LAW (THE TEN COMMANDMENTS)

(The written moral law a statement of the natural law, 1-2)

1. WHAT ARE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS TO US?

Here I think it will not be out of place to introduce the Ten Commandments of the law with a short explanation of them.^{f248} Thus, the point I have touched upon^{f249} will also be made clearer: that the public worship that God once prescribed is still in force. Then will come the confirmation of my second point: that the Jews not only learned from the law what the true character of godliness was; but also that, since they saw themselves incapable of observing the law, they were in dread of judgment drawn inevitably though unwillingly to the Mediator. Now in summarizing what is required for the true knowledge of God, we have taught that we cannot conceive him in his greatness without being immediately confronted by his majesty, and so compelled^{f250} to worship him. In our discussion of the knowledge of ourselves we have set forth this chief point: that, empty of all opinion of our own virtue, and shorn of all assurance of our own righteousness — in fact, broken and crushed by the awareness of our own utter poverty — we may learn genuine humility and self-abasement.^{f251} Both of these the Lord accomplishes in his law. First, claiming for himself the lawful power to command, he calls us to reverence his divinity, and specifies wherein such reverence lies and consists. Secondly, having published the rule of his righteousness, he reproves us both for our impotence and for our unrighteousness. For our nature, wicked and deformed, is always opposing his uprightness; and our capacity, weak and feeble to do good, lies far from his perfection.

Now that inward law,^{f252} which we have above described as written, even engraved, upon the hearts of all, in a sense asserts the very same things that are to be learned from the two Tables. For our conscience does not

allow us to sleep a perpetual insensible sleep without being an inner witness and monitor of what we owe God, without holding before us the difference between good and evil and thus accusing us when we fail in our duty. But man is so shrouded in the darkness of errors that he hardly begins to grasp through this natural law what worship is acceptable to God. Surely he is very far removed from a true estimate of it. Besides this, he is so puffed up with haughtiness and ambition, and so blinded by self-love, that he is as yet unable to look upon himself and, as it were, to descend within himself, ^{f253} that he may humble and abase himself and confess his own miserable condition. Accordingly (because it is necessary both for our dullness and for our arrogance), the Lord has provided us with a written law to give us a clearer witness of what was too obscure in the natural law, shake off our listlessness, and strike more vigorously our mind and memory.

2. THE INEXORABLENESS OF THE LAW

Now what is to be learned from the law can be readily understood: that God, as he is our Creator, has toward us by right the place of Father and Lord; for this reason we owe to him glory, reverence, love, and fear; verily, that we have no right to follow the mind's caprice wherever it impels us, but, dependent upon his will, ought to stand firm in that alone which is pleasing to him; then, that righteousness and uprightness are pleasing to him, but he abominates wickedness; and that, for this reason, unless we would turn away from our Creator in impious ingratitude, we must cherish righteousness all our life. For if only when we prefer his will to our own do we render to him the reverence that is his due, it follows that the only lawful worship of him is the observance of righteousness, holiness, and purity. And we cannot pretend the excuse that we lack ability and, like impoverished debtors, are unable to pay. It is not fitting for us to measure God's glory according to our ability; for whatever we may be, he remains always like himself: the friend of righteousness, the foe of iniquity. Whatever he requires of us (because he can require only what is right), we must obey out of natural obligation. But what we cannot do is our own fault. If our lust in which sin reigns [cf. ^{<450612>}Romans 6:12] so holds us bound that we are not free to obey our Father, there is no reason why we

should claim necessity as a defense, for the evil of that necessity is both within us and to be imputed to us.

(We learn from it that God is our Father; that he is merciful and all-holy, and in kindness requires obedience, 3-5)

3. THE SEVERITY OF THE LAW HAS A POSITIVE GOAL

When we have profited by the teaching of the law to this extent, we must then under its instruction descend into ourselves. From this we may at length infer two things. First, by comparing the righteousness of the law with our life, we learn how far we are from conforming to God's will. And for this reason we are unworthy to hold our place among his creatures — still less to be accounted his children. Secondly, in considering our powers, we learn that they are not only too weak to fulfill the law, but utterly nonexistent. From this necessarily follows mistrust of our own virtue, then anxiety and trepidation of mind. For the conscience cannot bear the weight of iniquity without soon coming before God's judgment. Truly, God's judgment cannot be felt without evoking the dread of death. So also, constrained by the proofs of its impotence, conscience cannot but fall straightway into deep despair of its own powers. Both these emotions engender humility and self-abasement. Thus it finally comes to pass that man, thoroughly frightened by the awareness of eternal death, which he sees as justly threatening him because of his own unrighteousness, betakes himself to God's mercy alone, as the only haven of safety. Thus, realizing that he does not possess the ability to pay to the law what he owes, and despairing in himself, he is moved to seek and await help from another quarter.

4. PROMISES AND THREATS

But the Lord is not content with having obtained reverence for his righteousness. In order to imbue our hearts with love of righteousness and with hatred of wickedness, he has added promises and threats. For because the eye of our mind is too blind to be moved solely by the beauty of the good, our most merciful Father out of his great kindness has willed to attract us by sweetness of rewards to love and seek after him. He announces, therefore, that the rewards for virtues are stored up with him,

and that the man who obeys his commandments does not do so in vain. Conversely, he proclaims that unrighteousness is not only hateful to him but will not escape punishment because he himself will avenge contempt of his majesty. And to urge us in every way, he promises both blessings in the present life and everlasting blessedness to those who obediently keep his commandments. He threatens the transgressors no less with present calamities than with the punishment of eternal death. For that promise (“He who does these things shall live in them” [^{<031805>} Leviticus 18:5 p.]) and its corresponding threat (“The soul that sins shall itself die” [^{<261804>} Ezekiel 18:4, 20, Vg.]) without doubt have reference to either never-ending future immortality or death. Wherever God’s benevolence or wrath is mentioned, under the former is contained eternal life, under the latter eternal perdition. Nevertheless, a long list of present blessings and curses is also enumerated in the law [^{<032603>} Leviticus 26:3-39; Deuteronomy ch. 28]. And in the penalties God’s supreme purity is manifest, which cannot bear wickedness. But in the promises, besides his supreme love for righteousness, which he does not allow to be cheated of its reward, his wonderful generosity is also attested. For since we, with all that is ours, are deep in debt to his majesty, whatever he requires of us he claims with perfect right as a debt. But the payment of a debt deserves no reward. He therefore yields his own right when he offers a reward for our obedience, which we do not render voluntarily or as something not due. But what those promises of themselves bring to us has partly been stated, partly will more clearly appear in its proper place. ^{f254} It suffices for the present if we hold and reckon that, in order to make more evident how much God is pleased by the observance of it, in the promises of the law there is no ordinary commendation of righteousness; and that the penalties are imposed in order that unrighteousness may be the more detested, lest the sinner, steeped in the blandishments of vices, forget the Lawgiver’s judgment prepared for him.

5. THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE LAW

On the other hand, the Lord, in giving the rule of perfect righteousness, has referred all its parts to his will, thereby showing that nothing is more acceptable to him than obedience. The more inclined the playfulness of the human mind is to dream up various rites with which to deserve well of

him, the more diligently ought we to mark this fact. In all ages this irreligious affectation of religion, because it is rooted in man's nature, has manifested itself and still manifests itself; for men always delight in contriving some way of acquiring righteousness apart from God's Word. Hence, among what are commonly considered good works the commandments of the law are accorded too narrow a place, while that innumerable throng of human precepts occupies almost the whole space. Yet what else did Moses intend but to restrain such wantonness, when after the proclamation of the law he addressed the people as follows: "Observe and heed all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and with your children after you forever, when you do what is good and pleasing in the sight of your God" [^{<051228>}Deuteronomy 12:28, cf. Vg.]. "What I command you, this only you are to do... ; you shall not add to it or take from it." [^{<051232>}Deuteronomy 12:32, cf. Vg.] Previously, Moses had testified that the wisdom and understanding of Israel before all other nations was that it accepted judgments, precepts, and ceremonies from the Lord. Then he had added: "Guard yourself, then, and watch over your soul, lest you forget the words which your eyes have seen, and lest at any time they depart from your heart" [^{<050409>}Deuteronomy 4:9, cf. Vg.]. Surely God foresaw that the Israelites would not rest, once they had received the law, but would thereafter bring forth new precepts, unless they were severely restrained. Here, he declares, perfection of righteousness is comprehended. This ought to have been the strongest of restraints; yet they did not desist from that utterly forbidden presumption.

What about us? Surely we are constrained by the same utterance. There is no doubt that the perfect teaching of righteousness that the Lord claims for the law has a perpetual validity. Not content with it, however, we labor mightily to contrive and forge good works upon good works. The best remedy to cure that fault will be to fix this thought firmly in mind: the law has been divinely handed down to us to teach us perfect righteousness; there no other righteousness is taught than that which conforms to the requirements of God's will; in vain therefore do we attempt new forms of works to win the favor of God, whose lawful worship consists in obedience alone; rather, any zeal for good works that wanders outside God's law is an intolerable profanation of divine and true righteousness.

Augustine also very truly calls the obedience that is paid to God sometimes the mother and guardian of all virtues, sometimes their source.
 ¶255

(It is to be spiritually understood and interpreted with reference to the purpose of the Lawgiver, 6-10)

6. SINCE THE LAW IS GOD'S LAW, IT MAKES A TOTAL CLAIM UPON US

But after we have had the law of the Lord expounded more fully, then what I have already set forth concerning its function and use^{¶256} will be more fittingly and profitably confirmed. Yet before we proceed to treat individual articles, it behooves us only to hold in view what constitutes a general knowledge of the law. First, let us agree that through the law man's life is molded not only to outward honesty but to inward and spiritual righteousness. Although no one can deny this, very few duly note it. This happens because they do not look to the Lawgiver, by whose character the nature of the law also is to be appraised. If some king by edict forbids fornication, murder, or theft, I admit that a man who merely conceives in his mind the desire to fornicate, to kill, or to steal, but does not commit such acts, will not be bound by the penalty. That is, because the mortal lawgiver's jurisdiction extends only to the outward political order, his ordinances are not violated, except when actual crimes are committed. But God, whose eye nothing escapes, and who is concerned not so much with outward appearance as with purity of heart, under the prohibition of fornication, murder, and theft, forbids lust, anger, hatred, coveting a neighbor's possessions, deceit, and the like. For since he is a spiritual lawgiver, he speaks no less to the soul than to the body. But murder that is of the soul consists in anger and hatred; theft, in evil covetousness and avarice; fornication, in lust.

Human laws also, someone will say, are concerned with purposes and intentions, not chance happenings.^{¶257} I agree, but they are intentions that come forth into the open. They determine with what intent each crime has been committed; but they do not search out secret thoughts. Human laws, then, are satisfied when a man merely keeps his hand from wrongdoing. On the contrary, because the heavenly law has been given for our souls, they

must at the outset be constrained, that it may be justly observed. Yet the common folk, even when they strongly conceal their contempt of the law, compose their eyes, feet, hands, and all parts of the body to some observance of the law. Meanwhile they keep the heart utterly aloof from all obedience, and think themselves well acquitted if they virtuously hide from men what they do in the sight of God. They hear: “You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal.” They do not unsheathe a sword for slaughter; they do not join their bodies to prostitutes; they do not lay hands on another’s goods. So far so good. But wholeheartedly they breathe out slaughter, burn with lust, look with jaundiced eye upon the goods of all others and devour them with covetousness. They are now lacking in the chief point of the law. Whence, I ask, comes such gross stupidity, unless, disregarding the Lawgiver, they accommodate righteousness rather to their own predilection? Against them Paul strongly protests, affirming that “the law is spiritual” [^{<450714>}Romans 7:14]. ^{f258} By this he means that it not only demands obedience of soul, mind, and will, but requires an angelic purity, which, cleansed of every pollution of the flesh, savors of nothing but the spirit.

7. CHRIST HIMSELF HAS RESTORED THE RIGHT UNDERSTANDING OF THE LAW

When we say that this is the meaning of the law, we are not thrusting forward a new interpretation of our own, but we are following Christ, its best interpreter. The Pharisees had infected the people with a perverse opinion: that he who has committed nothing by way of outward works against the law fulfills the law. Christ reproves this most dangerous error, and he declares an unchaste glance at a woman to be adultery [^{<400528>}Matthew 5:28]. He testifies that “anyone who hates his brother is a murderer” [^{<620315>}1 John 3:15]. For he makes him “liable to judgment,” who even conceives anger in his heart; he makes “liable to the council” those who by muttering and grumbling have given any indication of being offended; he makes “liable to hell-fire” those who with railings and cursings burst forth into open anger [^{<400521>}Matthew 5:21-22 p.; cf. ch. 5:43 ff.]. Those who did not comprehend these teachings fancied Christ another Moses, the giver of the law of the gospel, which supplied what was lacking in the Mosaic law. Whence that common saying about the

perfection of the law of the gospel, that it far surpasses the old law ^{f259} — in many respects a most pernicious opinion! Subsequently, when we gather together the sum of his precepts, it will be clear from Moses himself with what undeserved abuse this view brands God's law. It implies that the sanctity of the fathers was not far removed from hypocrisy, and lures us away from that sole and everlasting rule of righteousness. It is very easy to refute this error. They have thought that Christ added to the law when he only restored it to its integrity, in that he freed and cleansed it when it had been obscured by the falsehoods and defiled by the leaven of the Pharisees [cf. ^{<401606>} Matthew 16:6, 11, and parallels].

8. WAYS TO THE RIGHT MEANING

Let this be our second observation: the commandments and prohibitions always contain more than is expressed in words. But we ought so to temper this principle that it may not be for us like the Lesbian rule, ^{f260} on which we rely to twist Scripture without restraint, thus making anything we please out of anything. By this wild, precipitate license, they degrade the authority of the law among some men; for others they dash the hope of understanding it. We must if possible, therefore, find some way to lead us with straight, firm steps to the will of God. We must, I say, inquire how far interpretation ought to overstep the limits of the words themselves so that it may be seen to be, not an appendix added to the divine law from men's glosses, but the Lawgiver's pure and authentic meaning faithfully rendered. Obviously, in almost all the commandments there are such manifest synecdoches that he who would confine his understanding of the law within the narrowness of the words deserves to be laughed at. Therefore, plainly a sober interpretation of the law goes beyond the words; but just how far remains obscure unless some measure be set. Now, I think this would be the best rule, if attention be directed to the reason of the commandment; that is, in each commandment to ponder why it was given to us. For example, every precept either commands or forbids. The truth of each sort comes to mind at once, if we look into the reason or purpose. The purpose of the Fifth Commandment is that honor ought to be paid to those to whom God has assigned it. This, then, is the substance of the commandment: that it is right and pleasing to God for us to honor those on whom he has bestowed some excellence; and that he abhors

contempt and stubbornness against them. The intent of the First Commandment is that God alone be worshiped [cf. ^{<022002>}Exodus 20:2-3; ^{<050604>}Deuteronomy 6:4-5]. Therefore the substance of the precept will be that true piety — namely, the worship of his divinity — is pleasing to God; and that he abominates impiety. Thus in each commandment we must investigate what it is concerned with; then we must seek out its purpose, until we find what the Lawgiver testifies there to be pleasing or displeasing to himself. Finally, from this same thing we must derive an argument on the other side, in this manner: if this pleases God, the opposite displeases him; if this displeases, the opposite pleases him; if he commands this, he forbids the opposite; if he forbids this, he enjoins the opposite.

9. COMMANDMENT AND PROHIBITION

What we are now touching on obscurely will become clear in practice as we expound the commandments. It is sufficient, therefore, to have touched upon it, except that we must briefly confirm the last point with a separate proof. Otherwise it would not be understood, or if understood, might perchance seem at first absurd. We do not need to prove that when a good thing is commanded, the evil thing that conflicts with it is forbidden. There is no one who does not concede this. That the opposite duties are enjoined when evil things are forbidden will also be willingly admitted in common judgment. Indeed, it is a commonplace that when virtues are commended, their opposing vices are condemned. But we demand something more than what these phrases commonly signify. For by the virtue contrary to the vice, men usually mean abstinence from that vice.^{f264} We say that the virtue goes beyond this to contrary duties and deeds. Therefore in this commandment, “You shall not kill,” men’s common sense will see only that we must abstain from wronging anyone or desiring to do so. Besides this, it contains, I say, the requirement that we give our neighbor’s life all the help we can. To prove that I am not speaking unreasonably: God forbids us to hurt or harm a brother unjustly, because he wills that the brother’s life be dear and precious to us. So at the same time he requires those duties of love which can apply to its preservation. And thus we see how the purpose of the commandment always discloses to us whatever it there enjoins or forbids us to do.

10. BY ITS STRONG LANGUAGE, THE LAW SHOCKS US INTO GREATER DETESTATION OF SIN

But why did God, as it were by half commandments, signify through synecdoche what he willed, rather than express it? While other reasons are also commonly given, this one especially satisfies me: the flesh ever tries to wash away the foulness of sins, except when it is palpable, and to overlay it with plausible excuses. Hence, God has set forth by way of example the most frightful and wicked element in every kind of transgression, at the hearing of which our senses might shudder, in order that he might imprint upon our minds a greater detestation of every sort of sin. In appraising our vices we are quite often deceived by this into making light of those which are somewhat concealed. The Lord disabuses us of these deceptions when he accustoms us to refer the whole mass of vices to these categories which best represent how heinous each kind is. For example, when called by their own names, we do not consider anger and hatred as things to be cursed. Yet when they are forbidden under the name “murder,” we better understand how abominable they are in the sight of God, by whose Word they are relegated to the level of a dreadful crime. Thus moved by his judgment, we ourselves become accustomed better to weigh the gravity of transgressions, which previously seemed light to us.

(The two Tables of the Law, and the commandments rightly assigned to each, 11-12)

11. THE TWO TABLES

In the third place we ought to ponder what the division of the divine law into two Tables meant. ^{f262} This is impressively mentioned at various times with good reason, as all sane men will agree. And there is a ready reason for us not to remain uncertain on this matter. God has so divided his law into two parts, which contain the whole of righteousness, as to assign the first part to those duties of religion which particularly concern the worship of his majesty; the second, to the duties of love that have to do with men.

Surely the first foundation of righteousness is the worship of God. When this is overthrown, all the remaining parts of righteousness, like the pieces of a shattered and fallen building, are mangled and scattered. What kind of

righteousness will you call it not to harass men with theft and plundering, if through impious sacrilege you at the same time deprive God's majesty of its glory? Or that you do not defile your body with fornication, if with your blasphemies you profane God's most holy name? Or that you do not slay a man, if you strive to kill and to quench the remembrance of God? It is vain to cry up righteousness without religion. This is as unreasonable as to display a mutilated, decapitated body as something beautiful. Not only is religion the chief part but the very soul, whereby the whole breathes and thrives. And apart from the fear of God men do not preserve equity and love among themselves. Therefore we call the worship of God the beginning and foundation of righteousness. When it is removed, whatever equity, continence, or temperance men practice among themselves is in God's sight empty and worthless. We call it source and spirit because from it men learn to live with one another in moderation and without doing injury, if they honor God as Judge of right and wrong. Accordingly, in the First Table, God instructs us in piety and the proper duties of religion, by which we are to worship his majesty. The Second Table prescribes how in accordance with the fear of his name we ought to conduct ourselves in human society. In this way our Lord, as the Evangelists relate, summarizes the whole law under two heads: that "we should love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our powers"; and "that we should love our neighbor as ourselves" [^{<421027>}Luke 10:27 p.; ^{<402237>}Matthew 22:37,39]. You see that of the two parts in which the law consists, one he directs to God; the other he applies to men.

12. THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE COMMANDMENTS IN THE TWO TABLES

The whole law is contained under two heads. Yet our God, to remove all possibility of excuse, willed to set forth more fully and clearly by the Ten Commandments everything connected with the honor, fear, and love of him, and everything pertaining to the love toward men, which he for his own sake enjoins upon us. The effort to gain familiarity with the divisions of the commandments is not ill-directed, provided you remember that it is a matter wherein each man ought to have free judgment, and ought not to strive in a contentious spirit with one who differs from him. We are of necessity obliged to touch upon this point in order that our readers may

not either laugh or wonder at the division we are about to put forward as if it were new and recently devised.

That the law is divided into ten words is beyond doubt, for on the authority of God himself this has often been confirmed. Thus we are uncertain, not about the number, but about the way of dividing the Decalogue. Those who so divide them as to give three precepts to the First Table and relegate the remaining seven to the Second, erase from the number the commandment concerning images, or at least hide it under the First. There is no doubt that the Lord gave it a distinct place as a commandment, yet they absurdly tear in two the Tenth Commandment about not coveting the possessions of one's neighbor.^{f263} Besides, their division of the commandments was unknown in a purer age, as we shall soon see. Others, with us, count four articles in the First Table, but in place of the First Commandment they put a promise without a commandment. But I, unless convinced only by the clearest contrary evidence, take the ten words mentioned by Moses to be the Ten Commandments; and they seem to me to be arranged in quite the most beautiful order. Granting them their opinion, I shall follow what seems more probable to me, namely, that what they take as the First Commandment should occupy the place of the preface to the whole law. Then the commandments follow, four to the First Table, six to the Second. We shall take them up in this order. Origen set forth this division without controversy, as if commonly received in his day.^{f264} Augustine also supports it in a letter to Boniface, and in enumerating them keeps this order: to serve the one God with religious obedience, not to worship idols, not to take the name of the Lord in vain. He had already separately spoken about the commandment of the Sabbath as foreshadowing the spiritual reality.^{f265} Elsewhere, indeed, that first division pleases him, but for a very insufficient reason: that in the number three (if the First Table consists of three commandments) the mystery of the Trinity more clearly shines forth. Nevertheless, in the same place he admits that in other respects our division suits him better.^{f266} Besides these men, the author of the unfinished commentary on Matthew is on our side.^{f267} Josephus, no doubt according to the common agreement of his age, assigns five commandments to each Table.^{f268} This is contrary to reason in that it confuses religion and charity; furthermore, it is refuted by authority of the Lord, who according

to Matthew puts the commandment to honor one's parents in the canon of the Second Table [^{<401919>}Matthew 19:19]. Now let us hearken to God himself as he speaks in his own words.

(Detailed exposition of the individual commandments, 13-50)

FIRST COMMANDMENT

“I am Jehovah, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before my face.” [^{<022002>}Exodus 20:2-3, cf. Vg.]

13. THE PREFACE (“I AM JEHOVAH, YOUR GOD... “)

Whether you make the first sentence a part of the First Commandment or read it separately makes no difference to me, provided you do not deny to me that it is a sort of preface to the whole law. First, in framing laws, care must be taken that they be not abrogated out of contempt. God therefore especially provides that the majesty of the law he is about to give may not at any time fall into contempt. To secure this he uses a threefold proof. He claims for himself the power and right of authority in order to constrain the chosen people by the necessity of obeying him. He holds out the promise of grace to draw them by its sweetness to a zeal for holiness. He recounts his benefits to the Jews that he may convict them of ingratitude should they not respond to his kindness. The name “Jehovah” signifies God's authority and lawful domination. If, then, “from him are all things and in him all things abide,” it is right that all things should be referred to him, as Paul says [^{<451136>}Romans 11:36 p.]. With this word alone, therefore, we are sufficiently brought under the yoke of God's majesty, because it would be monstrous for us to want to withdraw from his rule when we cannot exist apart from him.

14. “I AM JEHOVAH YOUR GOD”

God first shows himself to be the one who has the right to command and to whom obedience is due. Then, in order not to seem to constrain men by necessity alone, he also attracts them with sweetness by declaring himself God of the church. For underlying this expression is a mutual correspondence contained in the promise: “I will be their God, and they

shall be my people” [^{<243133>}Jeremiah 31:33]. Hence, Christ confirms the immortality of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob from the fact that the Lord has declared himself their God [^{<402232>}Matthew 22:32]. It is as if he had spoken as follows: “I have chosen you as my people, not only to benefit you in the present life, but also to bestow upon you the blessedness of the life to come.”^{f269} The end to which this looks is attested in various passages in the law. For since the Lord by his mercy renders us worthy to be reckoned among the company of his people, “he has chosen us,” as Moses says, “to be his very own people, a holy people, and we are to keep all his commandments” [^{<050706>}Deuteronomy 7:6; 14:2; 26:18-19, conflated]. Hence that exhortation: “You shall be holy, for I... am holy” [^{<031144>}Leviticus 11:44; Cf. ch. 19:2]. From these two statements is derived that protestation of the prophet: “A son honors his father, and a servant his lord... If I am a lord, where is your fear?... If I am a father, where is your love?” [Malachi 1:6 p.].

15. “WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, OUT OF THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE”

The recital of his benefit follows. This ought more powerfully to move us in the same degree as the crime of ingratitude is more despicable even among men. Indeed, he was then reminding Israel of his recent benefit, a benefit of such marvelous and everlastingly memorable greatness as also to remain in force for posterity. Moreover, it is most appropriate to the present matter. For the Lord means that they have been freed from miserable bondage that they may, in obedience and readiness to serve, worship him as the author of their freedom. He also habitually, in order to keep us in the true worship of him, makes himself known by certain titles by which he distinguishes his sacred presence from all idols and invented gods. For, as I have said before, such is our inclination to vanity, joined with rash boldness that, as soon as God’s name is mentioned, our mind is unable to refrain from lapsing into some absurd invention.^{f270} Therefore God, willing to provide a remedy for this evil, adorns his divinity with sure titles, and so fences us in, as it were, that we may not wander hither and thither and rashly contrive for ourselves some new god — if, having abandoned the living God, we set up an idol. For this reason, the prophets, whenever they wish to designate him properly, clothe him with, and as it

were, confine him to, those marks under which he had manifested himself to the people of Israel. For when he is called “the God of Abraham” or “the God of Israel” [^{<020806>}Exodus 8:6], when he is set in the Temple of Jerusalem [^{<300102>}Amos 1:2; ^{<350220>}Habakkuk 2:20] “between the cherubim” [^{<198001>}Psalms 80:1; 99:1; ^{<233716>}Isaiah 37:16], these and like expressions do not bind him to one place or people. Rather, they are put forward merely for this purpose: to keep the thoughts of the pious upon that God who by his covenant that he has made with Israel has so represented himself that it is in no wise lawful to turn aside from such a pattern.

Yet let this point be agreed upon: deliverance is mentioned in order that the Jews may give themselves over more eagerly to God, who by right claims them for himself. But, in order that it may not seem that this has nothing to do with us, we must regard the Egyptian bondage of Israel as a type of the spiritual captivity in which all of us are held bound, until our heavenly Vindicator, having freed us by the power of his arm, leads us into the Kingdom of freedom. At a former time, God, intending to gather the scattered Israelites to worship his name, released them from the intolerable dominion of Pharaoh by which they were oppressed. So today all those to whom he professes himself their God he releases from the devil’s deadly power — foreshadowed by that physical bondage. For this reason there is no one whose mind ought not to be kindled to heed the law, which has come forth, he hears, from the highest King. As all things take their beginning from him, it is reasonable that they should in turn determine and direct their end to him. There is no one, I say, who ought not to be captivated to embrace the Lawgiver, in the observance of whose commandments he is taught to take especial delight; from whose kindness he expects both an abundance of all good things and the glory of immortal life; by whose marvelous power and mercy he knows himself freed from the jaws of death.

16. THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

Having founded and established the authority of his law, he sets forth the First Commandment, “Let us have no strange gods before him” [^{<022003>}Exodus 20:3 p.]. The purpose of this commandment is that the Lord wills alone to be pre-eminent among his people, and to exercise

complete authority over them. To effect this, he enjoins us to put far from us all impiety and superstition, which either diminish or obscure the glory of his divinity. For the same reason he commands us to worship and adore him with true and zealous godliness. The very simplicity of the words well-nigh expresses this. For we cannot “have” God without at the same time embracing the things that are his. Therefore, in forbidding us to have strange gods, he means that we are not to transfer to another what belongs to him. Even though there are innumerable things that we owe to God, yet they may be conveniently grouped in four headings:

- (1) adoration (to which is added as an appendix, spiritual obedience of the conscience),
- (2) trust,
- (3) invocation,
- (4) thanksgiving.

(1) “Adoration” I call the veneration and worship that each of us, in submitting to his greatness, renders to him. For this reason, I justly consider as a part of adoration the fact that we submit our consciences to his law.

(2) “Trust” is the assurance of reposing in him that arises from the recognition of his attributes, when — attributing to him all wisdom, righteousness, might, truth, and goodness — we judge that we are blessed only by communion with him.

(3) “Invocation” is that habit of our mind, whenever necessity presses us, of resorting to his faithfulness and help as our only support.

(4) “Thanksgiving” is that gratitude with which we ascribe praise to him for all good things. As the Lord suffers nothing of these to be transferred to another, so he commands that all be rendered wholly to himself.

And it will not be enough to abstain from a strange god. You must restrain yourself from doing what certain wicked despisers commonly do, who summarily dismiss all religions with derision. But true religion must come first, to direct our minds to the living God. Thus, steeped in the knowledge of him, they may aspire to contemplate, fear, and worship, his majesty; to

participate in his blessings; to seek his help at all times; to recognize, and by praises ^{f271} to celebrate, the greatness of his works — as the only goal of all the activities of this life. Then let us beware of wicked superstition, by which our minds, turning aside from the true God, are drawn away hither and thither to various gods. If we are content, therefore, with one God, let us remember what was said before: ^{f272} that we are to drive away all invented gods and are not to rend asunder the worship that the one God claims for himself. For it is unlawful to take away even a particle from his glory; rather, all things proper to him must remain with him. ^{f273}

The phrase that follows, “before my face,” makes the offense more heinous because God is provoked to jealousy as often as we substitute our own inventions in place of him. This is like a shameless woman who brings in an adulterer before her husband’s very eyes only to vex his mind the more. Therefore, when God by his present power and grace testified that he kept watch over the people whom he had chosen, he warned them — to keep them even more from the crime of rebellion — that they could introduce no new gods without his witnessing and observing their sacrilege. To this boldness is added much impiety: man judges himself able in his desertions to pull the wool over God’s eyes. On the contrary, God proclaims that whatever we undertake, whatever we attempt, whatever we make, comes into his sight. Therefore, let our conscience be clean even from the most secret thoughts of apostasy, if we wish our religion approved of the Lord. For the Lord requires that the glory of his divinity remain whole and uncorrupted not only in outward confession, but in his own eyes, which gaze upon the most secret recesses of our hearts.

SECOND COMMANDMENT

“You shall not make yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters which are under the earth; you shall not adore or worship them.” [^{<022004>}Exodus 20:4-5, cf. Vg.]

17. SPIRITUAL WORSHIP OF THE INVISIBLE GOD

In the previous commandment, he declared himself the one God, apart from whom no other gods are to be imagined or had. Now he declares more

openly what sort of God he is, and with what kind of worship he should be honored, lest we dare attribute anything carnal to him. The purpose of this commandment, then, is that he does not will that his lawful worship be profaned by superstitious rites. To sum up, he wholly calls us back and withdraws us from petty carnal observances, which our stupid minds, crassly conceiving of God, are wont to devise. And then he makes us conform to his lawful worship, that is, a spiritual worship established by himself. Moreover, he marks the grossest fault in this transgression, outward idolatry.

The commandment has two parts. The first restrains our license from daring to subject God, who is incomprehensible, to our sense perceptions, or to represent him by any form. The second part forbids us to worship any images in the name of religion. But he briefly lists all the forms with which profane and superstitious peoples customarily represent God. By those things which are in heaven he means the sun, moon, other luminaries, and perhaps birds; as in Deuteronomy chapter 4, expressing his mind, he mentions both birds and stars [^{<050417>} Deuteronomy 4:17,19]. I would not have noted this if I had not observed that some undiscerningly apply the expression to the angels.^{f274} Therefore I pass over the remaining parts because they are known of themselves, we have already taught with sufficient clarity in Book I that whatever visible forms of God man devises are diametrically opposed to His nature; therefore, as soon as idols appear, true religion is corrupted and adulterated.^{f275}

18. THREATENING WORDS IN THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

The warning that is added ought to be of no little avail in shaking off our sloth. He threatens that:

“I, Jehovah your God, am a God (or, ‘mighty’; for this name of God is derived from ‘might’),^{f276} [who is] jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and the fourth generation of those who hate my name, but showing mercy to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.”
[^{<022005>} Exodus 20:5-6 p.]^{f277}

This is as if he were saying that it was he alone to whom we ought to hold fast. To bring us to that point, he makes known his power, which does not

allow itself to be despised or disparaged with impunity. Here we have the name EL, which means “God,” but because it is derived from “might,” in order better to express my meaning. I have not hesitated so to translate it and introduce it into the text. Secondly, he calls himself “jealous,” being unable to bear any partner. Thirdly, he declares that he will vindicate his majesty and glory against any who may transfer it to creatures or graven images. And that is by no brief and simple revenge, but one that will extend to the children, the grandchildren, and the great-grandchildren, who obviously will become imitators of their fathers’ impiety. In like manner also he manifests his lasting mercy and kindness to those who love him and keep his law, to remote posterity. God very commonly takes on the character of a husband to us. Indeed, the union by which he binds us to himself when he receives us into the bosom of the church is like sacred wedlock, which must rest upon mutual faithfulness [^{<490529>} Ephesians 5:29-32]. As he performs all the duties of a true and faithful husband, of us in return he demands love and conjugal chastity. That is, we are not to yield our souls to Satan, to lust, and to the filthy desires of the flesh, to be defiled by them. Hence, when he rebukes the apostasy of the Jews, he complains that they have cast away shame and become defiled with adulteries [Jeremiah chapter 3; ^{<280204>} Hosea 2:4 ff.; cf. ^{<236204>} Isaiah 62:4-5]. The more holy and chaste a husband is, the more wrathful he becomes if he sees his wife inclining her heart to a rival. In like manner, the Lord, who has wedded us to himself in truth [cf. ^{<280219>} Hosea 2:19-20], manifests the most burning jealousy whenever we, neglecting the purity of his holy marriage, become polluted with wicked lusts. But he especially feels this when we transfer to another or stain with some superstition the worship of his divine majesty, which deserved to be utterly uncorrupted. In this way we not only violate the pledge given in marriage, but also defile the very marriage bed by bringing adulterers to it.

19. “WHO VISITS THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN...”

We ought to see what he means when he threatens that he “will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation.” For apart from the fact that it is foreign to divine justice and equity to punish the innocent for another’s offense, God himself also

declares that he will not compel the son to bear the father's iniquity [^{<261820>}Ezekiel 18:20]. Yet this sentence is often repeated about the punishments of the grandfather's sins being held over to future generations. For Moses often so addresses him: "Jehovah, Jehovah, who visitest the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation" [^{<041418>}Numbers 14:18; ^{<023406>}Exodus 34:6-7, cf. Vg.]. Likewise Jeremiah: "Who showest mercy to thousands, but repayest the iniquity of the fathers upon the bosom of the children after them" [^{<243218>}Jeremiah 32:18, Vg.]. Some, while they in their distress sweat over resolving this difficulty, think it is to be understood only of temporal punishments; these, they hold, it is not absurd for the children to bear for their parents' transgressions, since they are often inflicted for the sake of their salvation. This is indeed true. For Isaiah declared to Hezekiah that his sons would be deprived of the kingdom, and be taken away into captivity because of the sin committed by him [^{<233906>}Isaiah 39:6-7]. The houses of Pharaoh and Abimelech were afflicted for the injury done to Abraham [^{<011217>}Genesis 12:17; 20:3, 18; etc.]. But when this point is brought forward to solve our question, it is more an evasion than a true interpretation. For here and in like passages he proclaims a heavier punishment than one limited to the present life. So, then, it is to be understood that the Lord's righteous curse weighs not only upon the wicked man's head but also upon his whole family. Where the curse lies, what else can be expected but that the father, shorn of the Spirit of God, will live most disgracefully? Or that the son, forsaken by the Lord on account of the father's iniquity, will follow the same ruinous path? Finally, that the grandson and great-grandson, the accursed offspring of detestable men, will rush headlong after them?

20. DOES NOT THE VISITATION OF THE SINS OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN RUN COUNTER TO GOD'S JUSTICE?

First let us examine whether such revenge is unbecoming to divine justice. If the whole nature of men, whom the Lord does not deem worthy to share in his grace, is condemnable, we know that destruction is prepared for them. Nevertheless, they perish by their own iniquity, not by any unjust hatred on God's part. There is no basis for complaining about why they are not helped like others to salvation by God's grace. Inasmuch, then, as

this punishment is inflicted upon the wicked and the infamous for their crimes, so that for many generations their houses are deprived of God's grace, who can blame God for this perfectly just revenge? Yet the Lord declares, on the other hand, that the punishment of the father's sin will not pass on to the child [^{<261820>}Ezekiel 18:20]. Observe what is being discussed here. The Israelites, troubled long and persistently by many misfortunes, began to make much of the proverb "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" [^{<261802>}Ezekiel 18:2]. By this they meant that, even though they were otherwise righteous and did not deserve it, their fathers committed sins for which they had to suffer punishment, more on account of God's implacable wrath than his tempered severity. The prophet announces to them that this is not so; for they are punished for their own offenses. Nor does it accord with God's justice for a righteous son to pay the penalty of a wicked father, and this is not implied in the present threat; for if the visitation now under discussion is consummated when the Lord removes his grace, the light of his truth, and the other aids to salvation, from the family of the wicked — in that the children, blinded and forsaken by him, follow in their parents' footsteps — they bear God's curses for their fathers' evil deeds. But the fact that they are also subjected to temporal miseries, and at last to eternal destruction, is the punishment inflicted by God's righteous judgment, not for another's sins, but for their own wickedness.

21. "AND SHOWS MERCY UNTO THOUSANDS..."

On the other hand the promise is offered of extending God's mercy unto a thousand generations.^{f278} This is frequently met with in Scripture [^{<050510>}Deuteronomy 5:10; ^{<243218>}Jeremiah 32:18], and has been inserted in the solemn covenant of the church, "I shall be your God, and the God of your descendants after you" [^{<011707>}Genesis 17:7, cf. Vg.]. Regarding this, Solomon writes, "Blessed are the sons of the righteous after their fathers' death" [^{<202007>}Proverbs 20:7 p.]. This is not only because of their holy upbringing, which is surely of no little importance; but because of this blessing promised in the covenant, that God's grace shall everlastingly abide in the families of the pious. Hence, especial comfort for believers, but great terror for the wicked. For if after death the memory both of righteousness and of wickedness has such value in God's sight that the

blessing of the one and the curse of the other redound to their posterity, much more will it rest on the heads of the doers themselves. This is not, however, contradicted by the fact that the offspring of the wicked sometimes reform; those of believers sometimes degenerate. For the Lawgiver desired here to frame no such perpetual rule as might detract from his election. To comfort the righteous and to frighten the sinner it is enough that this is no empty or ineffective forewarning, even though it does not always take effect. For the temporal punishments inflicted upon a few scoundrels are testimonies of the divine wrath against sin, and of the judgment someday coming to all sinners, though many go unpunished till the end of this life. Thus, when the Lord gives one example of this blessing to show his mercy and kindness to the son for the father's sake, he gives proof of his constant and perpetual favor toward those who worship him. When once he pursues the iniquity of the father in the son, he teaches what sort of judgment awaits all the wicked for their own offenses. In this passage he was particularly concerned with the certainty of the latter. Also, in passing he commends to us the largeness of his mercy, which he extends to a thousand generations, while he has assigned only four generations to his vengeance.

THIRD COMMANDMENT

“You shall not take the name of Jehovah your God in vain.”

[<022007>Exodus 20:7.]

22. INTERPRETATION OF THE COMMANDMENT

The purpose of this commandment is: God wills that we hallow the majesty of his name. Therefore, it means in brief that we are not to profane his name by treating it contemptuously and irreverently. To this prohibition duly corresponds the commandment that we should be zealous and careful to honor his name with godly reverence. Therefore we ought to be so disposed in mind and speech that we neither think nor say anything concerning God and his mysteries, without reverence and much soberness that in estimating his works we conceive nothing but what is honorable to him.

We must, in my opinion, diligently observe the three following points: First, whatever our mind conceives of God, whatever our tongue utters, should savor of his excellence, match the loftiness of his sacred name, and lastly, serve to glorify his greatness. Secondly, we should not rashly or perversely abuse his Holy Word and worshipful mysteries either for the sake of our own ambition, or greed, or amusement; but, as they bear the dignity of his name imprinted upon them, they should ever be honored and prized among us. Finally, we should not defame or detract from his works, as miserable men are wont abusively to cry out against him; but whatever we recognize as done by him we should speak of with praise of his wisdom, righteousness, and goodness. That is what it means to hallow God's name.

When we do otherwise, it is polluted with empty and wicked abuse. For, drawn away from the lawful use to which alone it had been dedicated, and though nothing else ensues, yet shorn of its dignity, it is little by little rendered contemptible. But if there is so much evil in this rash readiness violently to misuse God's name, it is a much greater sin if it be put to abominable uses, as those do who make it serve the superstitions of necromancy, frightful curses, unlawful exorcisms, and other wicked incantations. But, the commandment has particular reference to the oath, wherein the perverse abuse of the Lord's name is in the highest degree detestable, that thereby we maybe better frightened away altogether from all profaning of it [cf. ^{<050511>}Deuteronomy 5:11]. In this commandment we are enjoined concerning the worship of God and the reverence of his name, rather than the equity that we are to keep among men. It should be useless repetition if this commandment also treated concerning the duty of love, which is reserved for the Second Table where he will condemn perjury and false witness, which harm human society. The division of the law also requires it, because, as has been said, God did not arrange his law into two tables without reason. From this we conclude that in this commandment he vindicates his own right, protects the holiness of his name, but does not here teach what men owe to men.

23. THE OATH AS CONFESSION TO GOD

In the first place, we must state what an oath is. It is calling God as witness to confirm the truth of our word. Those curses which contain

manifest insults to God are unfit to be regarded as oaths. Many passages of Scripture show that such an attestation, duly performed, is a sort of divine worship. For example, when Isaiah prophesies about calling the Assyrians and Egyptians into a covenant relationship with Israel, he says: “They shall speak the language of Canaan and shall swear in the name of the Lord” [^{<231918>} Isaiah 19:18]. That is, by swearing in the Lord’s name they will profess his religion. Likewise, when he speaks of the extension of his Kingdom: “He who will bless himself... shall bless himself by the God of believers; and he who takes an oath in the land, shall swear by the God of truth” [^{<236516>} Isaiah 65:16 p.]. Jeremiah says, “If the learned will diligently teach my people to swear in my name,... even as they taught them to swear by Baal, then they shall be built up in the midst of my house.” [^{<241216>} Jeremiah 12:16 p.] And we are justly said to witness to our religion in invoking the name of the Lord as our witness. For thus we confess him to be eternal and immutable truth; and we call upon him not only the fit witness of truth above all others, but also the only affirmer of it, who is able to bring hidden things to light; then as the knower of hearts [^{<460405>} 1 Corinthians 4:5]. For when men’s testimonies fail, we flee to God as our witness — especially when something that lies hidden in the conscience is to be declared. For this reason, the Lord is bitterly angry against those who

swear by strange gods, and interprets that sort of swearing as a proof of open treason. “Your children have forsaken me, and swear by those who are no gods.” [^{<240507>} Jeremiah 5:7, Vg.] And he declares the gravity of this offense in the threat of punishment: “I will cut off... those who swear by the name of the Lord, and yet swear by Milcom” [^{<360104>} Zephaniah 1:4-5 p.].

24. THE FALSE OATH AS A DESECRATION OF GOD’S NAME

We see how the Lord wills that worship of his name inheres in our oaths. Consequently we ought to be all the more diligent that they contain neither insolence nor contempt and low esteem instead of worship. It is no small affront to swear falsely by his name; in the law this is called “profanation” [^{<031912>} Leviticus 19:12]. What remains to the Lord when he is despoiled of his truth? He will then cease to be God. But he is indeed despoiled of it when he is made a supporter and approver of falsehood. Therefore Joshua,

wishing to make Achan confess the truth, says: “My son, give glory to the Lord of Israel” [^{<060719>} Joshua 7:19], obviously implying that the Lord is most gravely dishonored if perjury be committed in his name. And no wonder! For it is not on our account that his sacred name is not to be branded with any kind of falsehood. It is evident from the similar manner of calling God to witness used by the Pharisees in the Gospel of John [^{<430924>} John 9:24] that this was the usual form among the Jews whenever anyone was called to take an oath. The modes of expression used in Scripture instruct us in this caution: “The Lord lives” [^{<091439>} 1 Samuel 14:39]; “The Lord do so to me and more also” [^{<090404>} 1 Samuel 4:44; cf. 2 Sam. 3:9; ^{<120631>} 2 Kings 6:31]; “God be witness upon my soul” [^{<450109>} Romans 1:9; ^{<470123>} 2 Corinthians 1:23, conflated]. These sayings suggest that we cannot call God to be the witness of our words without asking him to be the avenger of our perjury if we deceive.

25. THE IDLE OATH

God’s name is rendered cheap and common when it is used in true but needless oaths. For it is then also taken in vain. Thus it does not suffice for us to refrain from perjury, unless at the same time we remember that oath-taking was permitted and established not for the sake of lust or desire, but because of necessity. Hence, those who apply it to unnecessary things depart from its lawful use. Now, no other necessity can be pretended than to serve either religion or love. In this matter men today sin quite unrestrainedly, and all the more intolerably because by very custom it has ceased to be considered an offense. Surely this is deemed no slight offense before God’s judgment seat! God’s name is commonly and promiscuously profaned in idle talk. This is not regarded as an evil because men have come into the practice of this great depravity by long and unpunished boldness. Yet the Lord’s commandment remains unalterable; the warning remains firm, and will someday have its effect. By it a peculiar vengeance is proclaimed against those who use his name in vain.

This commandment is transgressed in another respect: with manifest wickedness in oaths we substitute God’s holy servants in place of him, thus transferring to them the glory of his divinity [^{<022313>} Exodus 23:13]. With good reason, then, the Lord has, by special commandment, enjoined us to swear by his name [^{<050613>} Deuteronomy 6:13; 10:20]; by special

prohibition he has forbidden us to be heard swearing by strange gods [^{<022313>}Exodus 23:13]. The apostle likewise clearly testifies to this when he writes: “Men swear by a greater than themselves”; God, because he had none greater than his glory, swore by himself [^{<580616>}Hebrews 6:16-17 p.].

26. DOES NOT THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT FORBID THIS KIND OF OATH?

The Anabaptists, not content with this moderation in swearing oaths, condemn all oaths without exception, since Christ’s prohibition of them is general. “I say to you, Do not swear at all... but let what you say be simply, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; anything more than this comes from evil.” [^{<400534>}Matthew 5:34,37; cf. ^{<590512>}James 5:12.]^{f279} But in this way they heedlessly dash against Christ; making him the Father’s enemy as if he had come down to earth to set aside God’s decrees. Now the eternal God not only permits oaths as a legitimate thing under the law (which should be sufficient), but commands their use in case of necessity [^{<022210>}Exodus 22:10-11]. But Christ declares that he is one with the Father [^{<431030>}John 10:30]; that he brings nothing but what the Father has commanded [^{<431018>}John 10:18]; that his teaching is not from himself [^{<430716>}John 7:16], etc. What then? Will they make God contradict himself so that he afterward forbids and condemns what he once approved by enjoining it upon men’s behavior?

But because there is some difficulty in Christ’s words, let us spend a little time on them. Here, however, we shall never attain the truth unless we fix our eyes upon Christ’s intention and give to what he is driving at in that passage. It was not his purpose either to slacken or tighten the law, but to bring back to a true and genuine understanding what had been quite corrupted by the false devisings of the scribes and Pharisees. If we understand this, we will not think that Christ condemned oaths entirely, but only those which transgress the rule of the law. From these words it is clear that the people then commonly avoided perjury only, while the law forbids not only perjuries but also empty and superfluous oaths. Therefore the Lord, the surest interpreter of the law, warns that it is evil not only to swear falsely but also to swear [^{<400534>}Matthew 5:34]. Why “to swear”? Surely he means “to swear in vain.” But the oaths that are commended in the law, he leaves untouched and free. Our opponents think

that they argue more compellingly when they doggedly seize upon the expression “at all.”^{f280} Yet this does not refer to the word “to swear,” but to the forms of oaths following thereafter. For this, also, was a part of their error, that while they swore by heaven and earth they thought they did not touch the name of God. After the chief instance of transgression, therefore, the Lord also cuts off all excuses from them in order that they may not suppose they have escaped by calling on heaven and earth, while suppressing God’s name. We ought also to note this in passing: although the name of God is not expressed, yet men swear by him in indirect forms; as when they swear by the light of life, by the bread they eat, by their baptism, or by other tokens of God’s generosity toward them. Christ, in that passage forbidding men to swear by heaven and earth and Jerusalem [Matthew 5: 34-35], is not correcting superstition, as some falsely think. Rather, he is refuting the wily sophistry of those who see nothing wrong in idly tossing about indirect oaths — as if they spared God’s sacred name, when it is actually engraved upon all his benefits. It is another matter when some mortal, or deceased person, or angel is substituted in place of God; just as among the heathen nations that loathsome form of swearing by the life or by the genius of the king was devised by way of adulation. For then such false deification obscures and lessens the glory of the one God. But when we intend only to seek confirmation of our statements from God’s holy name, although it be done indirectly, injury is done to his majesty by all such trifling oaths. Christ deprives this license of vain excuse, forbidding us to “swear at all,” James, repeating those words of Christ which I have cited, has the same intent [^{<590512>} James 5:12].

For such rashness, although it is a desecration of God’s name, has always been widespread in the world. If you should refer the expression “at all” to the substance, as if it were without exception unlawful to swear any oath, how would you explain what is immediately added: “Neither by heaven, nor by the earth,” etc.? From these words it is sufficiently clear that Christ has met the quibbles whereby the Jews thought their fault lightened.

27. THE EXTRAJUDICIAL OATH IS THEREFORE NECESSARILY ADMISSIBLE

To men of sound judgment there can then be no doubt that the Lord in that passage disapproved only of those oaths forbidden by the law. For he, who in his life gave an example of the perfection that he taught, did not shrink from oaths whenever circumstances required. And the disciples, who, we may be sure, obeyed their Master in all things, followed the same example. Who would dare say that Paul would have sworn if the taking of oaths had been utterly forbidden? But when circumstances demanded it, he swore without any hesitation, sometimes even adding a curse [^{<450109>}Romans 1:9; ^{<470123>}2 Corinthians 1:23].

Yet the question is still not settled. For some think public oaths alone excepted from this prohibition, such as those we take which are administered and required by a magistrate; such, also, as those commonly used by princes in solemnizing treaties, or a people swearing in the name of their prince, or a soldier, when he is bound by an oath of service, and the like. In this category they also place, and justly, those statements in Paul which assert the dignity of the gospel, inasmuch as the apostles in their duties are not private citizens but public ministers of God. ^{f281} Of course I do not deny that these are the safest oaths, because they are supported by the firmer testimonies of Scripture. In doubtful matters, the magistrate is bidden to compel the witness to swear; the latter in turn is to reply under oath; the apostle speaks of human quarrels as resolved by this means [^{<580616>}Hebrews 6:16]. In this commandment each has sound approval for what he does.

Also, one can observe among the ancient heathen that public and solemn oath-taking was held in great reverence. Common oaths, however, which were indiscriminately sworn, were considered either of very little or no importance, as if it were thought that God's majesty did not enter into them.

But it would be too dangerous to condemn private oaths undertaken soberly, with holy intent, reverently, and in necessary circumstances, supported as they are both by reason and by examples. For if it is lawful in a grave and serious matter for private persons to call upon God as a judge between them [^{<092412>}1 Samuel 24:12], there is even greater reason

to call upon him as a witness. Your brother will accuse you of breach of faith; as a duty of love you will try to clear yourself. On no terms will he admit himself satisfied. If your reputation is imperiled because of his stubborn ill will, you can without offense call upon God's judgment to make manifest your innocence in due time. If we weigh the terms "judgment" and "witness," it is a lesser matter to call God to witness. I do not, therefore, see why we should declare unlawful this calling of God to witness. We have very many examples of this. If Abraham and Isaac's oath with Abimelech is alleged as a public one [^{<012124>}Genesis 21:24; 26:31], yet surely Jacob and Laban were private persons who confirmed their alliance by a mutual oath [^{<013153>}Genesis 31:53-54]. Boaz was a private person who confirmed his promised marriage to Ruth in the same way [^{<080313>}Ruth 3:13]. Obadiah was a private person, a righteous, God-fearing man, who affirmed under oath what he wished to persuade Elijah to believe [^{<111810>}1 Kings 18:10].

Thus I have no better rule than for us so to control our oaths that they may not be rash, indiscriminate, wanton, or trifling; but that they may serve a just need — either to vindicate the Lord's glory, or to further a brother's edification. ^{f282} Such is the purpose of this commandment of the law.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT

"Remember to keep holy the Sabbath Day. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to Jehovah your God. In it you shall not do any work," etc.

[^{<022008>}Exodus 20:8-10, cf. Vg.]

28. GENERAL INTERPRETATION

The purpose of this commandment is that, being dead to our own inclinations and works, we should meditate on the Kingdom of God, and that we should practice that meditation in the ways established by him. But, since this commandment has a particular consideration distinct from the others, it requires a slightly different order of exposition. The early fathers customarily called this commandment a foreshadowing because it contains the outward keeping of a day which, upon Christ's coming, was

abolished with the other figures.^{f283} This they say truly, but they touch upon only half the matter. Hence, we must go deeper in our exposition, and ponder three conditions in which, it seems to me, the keeping of this commandment consists.

First, under the repose of the seventh day the heavenly Lawgiver meant to represent to the people of Israel spiritual rest, in which believers ought to lay aside their own works to allow God to work in them. Secondly, he meant that there was to be a stated day for them to assemble to hear the law and perform the rites,^{f283x} or at least to devote it particularly to meditation upon his works, and thus through this remembrance to be trained in piety. Thirdly, he resolved to give a day of rest to servants and those who are under the authority of others, in order that they should have some respite from toil.

29. THE SABBATH COMMANDMENT AS PROMISE

Nevertheless we are taught in many passages that this fore-shadowing of spiritual rest^{f284} occupied the chief place in the Sabbath. The Lord enjoined obedience to almost no other commandment as severely as to this [^{<041532>}Numbers 15:32-36; cf. ^{<023113>}Exodus 31:13 ff.; 35:2]. When he wills through the prophets to indicate that all religion has been overturned, he complains that his Sabbaths have been polluted, violated, not kept, not hallowed — as if, with this homage omitted, nothing more remained in which he could be honored [^{<262012>}Ezekiel 20:12-13; 22:8; 23:38; ^{<241721>}Jeremiah 17:21,22,27; ^{<235602>}Isaiah 56:2]. He bestows highest approbation upon its observance. Hence, also, believers greatly esteemed the revelation of the Sabbath among the other oracles. For in The Book of Nehemiah the Levites thus spoke in public assembly: “Thou didst make known to our fathers thy holy Sabbath, and gavest them commandments and ceremonies and a law by the hand of Moses” [^{<160914>}Nehemiah 9:14 p.]. You see how it is held in singular esteem among all the precepts of the law. All these precepts serve to exalt the dignity of the mystery, which Moses and Ezekiel have most beautifully expressed. Thus you have in Exodus: “See that you keep my Sabbath, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you” [^{<263113>}ch. 31:13-14; cf. Vg.; cf. ch. 35:2]. “Let the Children of Israel keep

the Sabbath, and let them observe it throughout their generations; it is a perpetual covenant between me and the Children of Israel, and a sign forever.” [^{<263116>} Ch. 31:16-17, Cf. Vg.] Ezekiel expresses it still more fully, but the sum of his statement comes to this: that the Sabbath is a sign whereby Israel may recognize that God is their sanctifier [^{<262012>} Ezekiel 20:12]. If our sanctification consists in mortifying our own will, then a very close correspondence appears between the outward sign and the inward reality. We must be wholly at rest that God may work in us; we must yield our will; we must resign our heart; we must give up all our fleshly desires. In short, we must rest from all activities of our own contriving so that, having God working in us [^{<581321>} Hebrews 13:21], we may repose in him [^{<580409>} Hebrews 4:9], as the apostle also teaches.

30. THE SEVENTH DAY

For the Jews the observance of one day in seven customarily represented this eternal cessation. The Lord commended it by his example that they might observe it with greater piety. To know that he is trying to imitate the Creator has no little value in arousing man’s zeal.

If anyone is looking for some secret meaning in the number seven, in Scripture the number of perfection, it has been chosen with good reason to denote perpetuity. A statement of Moses’ supports this. He concludes his description of the succession of days and nights on the day when, as he relates, “the Lord rested from his works” [^{<010203>} Genesis 2:3]. One can also interpret the number in another way: the Lord thus indicated that the Sabbath would never be perfected until the Last Day should come. For we here begin our blessed rest in him; daily we make fresh progress in it. But because there is still a continual warfare with the flesh, it will not be consummated until Isaiah’s saying is fulfilled about “new moon following new moon and Sabbath following Sabbath” [^{<236613>} Isaiah 66:13]; until, that is, God shall be “all in all” [^{<461528>} 1 Corinthians 15:28]. It would seem, therefore, that the Lord through the seventh day has sketched for his people the coming perfection of his Sabbath in the Last Day, to make them aspire to this perfection by unceasing meditation upon the Sabbath throughout life. ^{f285}

31. IN CHRIST THE PROMISE OF THE SABBATH COMMANDMENT IS FULFILLED.

If anyone dislikes this interpretation of the number seven as too subtle, I have no objection to his taking it more simply, thus: the Lord ordained a certain day on which his people might, under the tutelage of the law, practice constant meditation upon the spiritual rest. And he assigned the seventh day, either because he foresaw that it would be sufficient; or that, by providing a model in his own example, he might better arouse the people; or at least point out to them that the Sabbath had no other purpose than to render them conformable to their Creator's example. Which interpretation we accept makes little difference, provided we retain the mystery that is principally set forth: that of perpetual repose from our labors. The prophets repeatedly recalled the Jews to the consideration of this in order that they might not think they had performed their whole duty merely by ceasing from physical labor. Besides the passages already cited, you have the following in Isaiah: "If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, so as not to do your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord of glory; if you glory in it, not going your own ways, and do not find your pleasure in your own talk; then you shall take delight in the Lord," etc. [^{<235813>} Isaiah 58:13-14, cf. Vg.].

But there is no doubt that by the Lord Christ's coming the ceremonial part of this commandment was abolished. For he himself is the truth, with whose presence all figures vanish; he is the body, at whose appearance the shadows are left behind. He is, I say, the true fulfillment of the Sabbath. "We were buried with him by baptism, we were engrafted into participation in his death, that sharing in his resurrection we may walk in newness of life." [^{<450604>} Romans 6:4-5 p.] For this: reason the apostle elsewhere writes that the Sabbath [^{<510216>} Colossians 2:16] was "a shadow of what is to come; but the body belongs to Christ" [^{<510217>} Colossians 2:17], that is, the very substance of truth, which Paul well explained in that passage. This is not confined within a single day but extends through the whole course of our life, until, completely dead to ourselves, we are filled with the life of God. Christians ought therefore to shun completely the superstitious observance of days.

32. HOW FAR DOES THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT GO BEYOND EXTERNAL REGULATION?

The two latter reasons for the Sabbath ought not to be relegated to the ancient shadows, but are equally applicable to every age. Although the Sabbath has been abrogated, there is still occasion for us: to assemble on stated days for the hearing of the Word, the breaking of the mystical bread, and for public prayers [cf. ^{<440242>} Acts 2:42]; (2) to give surcease from labor to servants and workmen. ^{f286} There is no doubt that in enjoining the Sabbath the Lord was concerned with both. There is ample evidence for the first, if only in the usage of the Jews. Moses in Deuteronomy pointed out the second reason, in these words: “That your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you, remember that you also were a servant... in Egypt” [^{<050514>} Deuteronomy 5:14-15, Vg.]. Also, in Exodus: “That your ox and your ass may have rest; and the son of your bondmaid... may be refreshed” [^{<022312>} Exodus 23:12]. Who can deny that these two things apply as much to us as to the Jews? Meetings of the church are enjoined upon us by God’s Word; and from our everyday experience we well know how we need them. But how can such meetings be held unless they have been established and have their stated days? According to the apostle’s statement, “all things should be done decently and in order” among us [^{<461440>} 1 Corinthians 14:40]. It is so impossible to maintain decency and order — otherwise than by this arrangement and regulation — that immediate confusion and ruin threaten the church if it be dissolved. But if we are subject to the same necessity as that to alleviate which the Lord established the Sabbath for the Jews, let no one allege that this has nothing to do with us. For our most provident and merciful Father willed to see to our needs not less than those of the Jews.

Why do we not assemble daily, you ask, so as to remove all distinction of days? If only this had been given us! Spiritual wisdom truly deserved to have some portion of time set apart for it each day. But if the weakness of many made it impossible for daily meetings to be held, and the rule of love does not allow more to be required of them, why should we not obey the order we see laid upon us by God’s will?

33. WHY DO WE CELEBRATE SUNDAY?

I am compelled to dwell longer on this because at present some restless spirits are stirring up tumult over the Lord's Day.^{f287} They complain that the Christian people are nourished in Judaism because they keep some observance of days. But I reply that we transcend Judaism in observing these days because we are far different from the Jews in this respect. For we are not celebrating it as a ceremony with the most rigid scrupulousness, supposing a spiritual mystery to be figured thereby. Rather, we are using it as a remedy needed to keep order in the church. Yet Paul teaches that no one ought to pass judgment on Christians over the observance of this day, for it is only "a shadow of what is to come" [^{<510217>}Colossians 2:17]. For this reason, he fears that he "labored in vain" among the Galatians because they still "observed days" [^{<480410>}Galatians 4:10-11]. And he declares to the Romans that it is superstitious for anyone to distinguish one day from another [^{<451405>}Romans 14:5]. Who but madmen cannot see what observance the apostle means? For [those whom he was addressing] did not regard the purpose to be political and ecclesiastical order; but, retaining Sabbaths as foreshadowing things spiritual, they obscured to that extent the glory of Christ and the light of the gospel. They therefore abstained from manual tasks not because these are a diversion from sacred studies and meditations, but with a certain scrupulousness they imagined that by celebrating the day they were honoring mysteries once commended. The apostle inveighs, I say, against this absurd distinction of days, not against the lawful selection that serves the peace of the Christian fellowship. Indeed, in the churches founded by him, the Sabbath was retained for this purpose. For he prescribes that day to the Corinthians for gathering contributions to help the Jerusalem brethren [^{<461602>}1 Corinthians 16:2]. If one fears superstition, there was more danger in the Jewish holy days than in the Lord's days that Christians now keep. For, because it was expedient to overthrow superstition, the day sacred to the Jews was set aside,^{f288} because it was necessary to maintain decorum, order, and peace in the church, another was appointed for that purpose.

34. SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCE OF THE SACRED DAY

However, the ancients did not substitute the Lord's Day (as we call it) for the Sabbath without careful discrimination. The purpose and fulfillment of

that true rest, represented by the ancient Sabbath, lies in the Lord's resurrection. Hence, by the very day that brought the shadows to an end, Christians are warned not to cling to the shadow rite. Nor do I cling to the number "seven" so as to bind the church in subjection to it. And I shall not condemn Churches that have other solemn days for their meetings, provided there be no superstition. This will be so if they have regard solely to the maintenance of discipline and good order. To sum up: as truth was delivered to the Jews under a figure, so is it set before us without shadows. First, we are to meditate throughout life upon an everlasting Sabbath rest from all our works, that the Lord may work in us through his Spirit. Secondly, ^{f286x} each one of us privately, whenever he has leisure, is to exercise himself diligently in pious meditation upon God's works. Also, we should all observe together the lawful order set by the church for the hearing of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, and for public prayers. In the third place, we should not inhumanly oppress those subject to us. ^{f289}

Thus vanish the trifles of the false prophets, who in former centuries infected the people with a Jewish opinion. They asserted that nothing but the ceremonial part of this commandment has been abrogated (in their phraseology the "appointing" of the seventh day), but the moral part remains — namely, the fixing of one day in seven. ^{f290} Yet this is merely changing the day as a reproach to the Jews, while keeping in mind the same sanctity of the day. For we still retain the same significance in the mystery of the days as pertained among the Jews. And we really see how they profit by such teaching. For those of them who cling to their constitutions surpass the Jews three times over in crass and carnal Sabbatarian superstition. ^{f291} Hence the reproaches that we read in the Book of Isaiah apply to them today just as much as they did to those whom the prophet rebuked in his own time [chs. 1:13-15; 58:13]. But we ought especially to hold to this general doctrine: that, in order to prevent religion from either perishing or declining among us, we should diligently frequent the sacred meetings, and make use of those external aids which can promote the worship of God.

FIFTH COMMANDMENT

“Honor your father and your mother that you may be long-lived on the land which Jehovah your God shall give you.”

[<022012> Exodus 20:12, cf. Vg.]

35. THE WIDE SCOPE OF THIS COMMANDMENT

The purpose is: since the maintenance of his economy^{f292} pleases the Lord God, the degrees of pre-eminence established by him ought to be inviolable for us. This, then, is the sum: that we should look up to those whom God has placed over us, and should treat them with honor, obedience, and gratefulness. It follows from this that we are forbidden to detract from their dignity either by contempt, by stubbornness, or by ungratefulness. For the word “honor” has a wide meaning in Scripture. Thus, when the apostle says: “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor” [<540517> 1 Timothy 5:17], he refers not only to the reverence due them, but to the remuneration to which their ministry entitles them. Now this precept of subjection strongly conflicts with the depravity of human nature which, swollen with the longing for lofty position, bears subjection grudgingly. Accordingly, he has put forward as an example that kind of superiority which is by nature most amiable and least invidious, because he could thus more easily soften and bend our minds to the habit of submission. By that subjection which is easiest to tolerate, the Lord therefore gradually accustoms us to all lawful subjection, since the reason of all is the same. Indeed, he shares his name with those to whom he has given pre-eminence, so far as it is necessary to preserve this. The titles “Father,” “God,” and “Lord” so belong to him alone that as often as we hear any one of these our mind cannot fail to be struck with an awareness of his majesty. Those persons, therefore, with whom he shares these titles he lights up with a spark of his splendor so that each may be distinguished according to his degree. Thus, in him who is our father we should recognize something divine because he does not bear the divine title without cause. He who is a “prince” or a “lord” has some share in God’s honor.

36. THE DEMAND

For this reason, we ought not to doubt that the Lord has here established a universal rule. That is, knowing that someone has been placed over us by the Lord's ordination, we should render to him reverence, obedience, and gratefulness, and should perform such other duties for him as we can. It makes no difference whether our superiors are worthy or unworthy of this honor, for whatever they are they have attained their position through God's providence — a proof that the Lawgiver himself would have us hold them in honor. However, he has expressly bidden us to reverence our parents, who have brought us into this life. Nature itself ought in a way to teach us this. Those who abusively or stubbornly violate parental authority are monsters, not men! Hence the Lord commands that all those disobedient to their parents be put to death. For since they do not recognize those whose efforts brought them into the light of day, they are not worthy of its benefits. What we have noted is clearly true from various additions to the law, that there are three parts of the honor here spoken of: reverence, obedience, and gratefulness. The Lord confirms the first — reverence — when he enjoins that one who curses his father or mother be killed [^{<022117>}Exodus 21:17; ^{<032009>}Leviticus 20:9; ^{<202020>}Proverbs 20:20]: there he punishes contempt and abuse. He confirms the second — obedience — when he decrees the penalty of death for disobedient and rebellious children [^{<052118>}Deuteronomy 21:18-21]. What Christ says in Matthew chapter 5, refers to the third kind of honor, gratefulness: it is of God's commandment that we do good to our parents [verses 4-6]. And whenever Paul mentions this commandment, he interprets it as requiring obedience [^{<490601>}Ephesians 6:1-3; ^{<510320>}Colossians 3:20].

37. THE PROMISE

A promise is added by way of recommendation. This is to show us better how pleasing to God is the submission that is here enjoined upon us. Paul pricks us out of our apathy with this needle when he says: "This is the first commandment with a promise" [^{<490602>}Ephesians 6:2]. For the promise already given in the First Table was not confined to one particular commandment, but was extended to the whole law. Now we ought to understand this as follows: the Lord particularly spoke to the Israelites of the land that he had promised them as an inheritance. If, then, the

possession of the land was a guarantee of God's bounty, we ought not to wonder if the Lord willed to attest his favor by promising length of life, through which they could long enjoy his benefits. The meaning therefore is: "Honor your father and mother, that you may enjoy through a long period of life the possession of the land, which is to be yours as a testimony of my favor." Moreover, because to believers the whole earth is blessed, we rightly include the present life among God's blessings. Therefore, this promise similarly has reference to us, in so far as length of present life is indeed a proof of God's benevolence toward us. For neither is it promised to us nor was it promised to the Jews as if it contained blessedness in itself; but because for the pious it is a customary symbol of God's kindness. Therefore, if it happens that a son obedient to his parents is snatched from life before attaining maturity, a frequent occurrence, the Lord unwaveringly perseveres in the fulfillment of His promise no less than if He furnished a hundred acres of land to one to whom He had promised only one. The whole point lies here: we should reflect that we are promised long life in so far as it is a blessing of God; and that it is a blessing only in so far as it is an evidence of God's favor, which he testifies to his servants far more richly and substantially through death, and proves it in the reality.

38. THE THREAT

Besides, while the Lord promises the blessing of the present life to those children who duly honor their parents, at the same time he implies that an inevitable curse threatens all stubborn and disobedient children. To assure that this commandment be carried out, he has, through his law, declared them subject to the sentence of death, and commanded that they undergo punishment. If they elude that judgment, he himself takes vengeance upon them in some way or other. For we see how many men of this sort perish either in battles or in quarrels; others are cast down in ways less common. Nearly all offer proof that this threatening is not an vain. Some people may escape punishment until extreme old age. Yet in this life they are bereft of God's blessing, and can only miserably pine away, being reserved for greater punishments to come. Far indeed, then, are they from sharing in the blessing promised to godly children!

But we also ought in passing to note that we are bidden to obey our parents only “in the Lord” [^{<490601>}Ephesians 6:1]. This is apparent from the principle already laid down. For they sit in that place to which they have been advanced by the Lord, who shares with them a part of his honor. Therefore, the submission paid to them ought to be a step toward honoring that highest Father. Hence, if they spur us to transgress the law, we have a perfect right to regard them not as parents, but as strangers who are trying to lead us away from obedience to our true Father. So should we act toward princes, lords, and every kind of superiors. ^{f293} It is unworthy and absurd for their eminence so to prevail as to pull down the loftiness of God. On the contrary, their eminence depends upon God’s loftiness and ought to lead us to it.

SIXTH COMMANDMENT

“You shall not kill.” [^{<022013>}Exodus 20:13, Vg.]

39. THE COMMANDMENT

The purpose of this commandment is: the Lord has bound mankind together by a certain unity; hence each man ought to concern himself with the safety of all. To sum up, then, all violence, injury, and any harmful thing at all that may injure our neighbor’s body are forbidden to us. We are accordingly commanded, if we find anything of use to us in saving our neighbors’ lives, faithfully to employ it; if there is anything that makes for their peace, to see to it; if anything harmful, to ward it off; if they are in any danger, to lend a helping hand. If you recall that God is so speaking as Lawgiver, ponder at the same time that by this rule he wills to guide your soul. For it would be ridiculous that he who looks upon the thoughts of the heart and dwells especially upon them, should instruct only the body in true righteousness. Therefore this law also forbids murder of the heart, and enjoins the inner intent to save a brother’s life. The hand, indeed, gives birth to murder, but the mind when infected with anger and hatred conceives it. See whether you can be angry against your brother without burning with desire to hurt him. If you cannot be angry with him, then you cannot hate him, for hatred is nothing but sustained anger. Although you dissimulate, and try to escape by vain shifts — where there is either anger or hatred, there is the intent to do harm. If you keep trying to evade the

issue, the Spirit has already declared that “he who hates a brother in his heart is a murderer” [^{<620315>} 1 John 3:15 p.]; the Lord Christ has declared that “whoever is angry with his brother is liable to judgment; whoever says ‘Raca’ is liable to the council; whoever says ‘You fool!’ is liable to the hell of fire” [^{<400522>} Matthew 5:22 p.].

40. THE REASON FOR THIS COMMANDMENT

Scripture notes that this commandment rests upon a twofold basis: man is both the image of God, and our flesh. Now, if we do not wish to violate the image of God, we ought to hold our neighbor sacred. And if we do not wish to renounce all humanity, we ought to cherish his as our own flesh. We shall elsewhere discuss how this exhortation is to be derived from the redemption and grace of Christ. ^{f294} The Lord has willed that we consider those two things which are naturally in man, and might lead us to seek his preservation: to reverence his image imprinted in man, and to embrace our own flesh in him. He who has merely refrained from shedding blood has not therefore avoided the crime of murder. If you perpetrate anything by deed, if you plot anything by attempt, if you wish or plan anything contrary to the safety of a neighbor, you are considered guilty of murder. Again, unless you endeavor to look out for his safety according to your ability and opportunity, you are violating the law with a like heinousness. But if there is so much concern for the safety of his body, from this we may infer how much zeal and effort we owe the safety of the soul, which far excels the body in the Lord’s sight.

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

“You shall not commit adultery.” [^{<022014>} Exodus 20:14, Vg.]

41. GENERAL INTERPRETATION

The purpose of this commandment is: because God loves modesty and purity, all uncleanness must be far from us. To sum up, then: we should not become defiled with any filth or lustful intemperance of the flesh. To this corresponds the affirmative commandment that we chastely and continently regulate all parts of our life. But he expressly forbids fornication, to which all lust tends, in order through the foulness of

fornication, which is grosser and more palpable, in so far as it brands the body also with its mark, to lead us to abominate all lust.

Man has been created in this condition that he may not lead a solitary life, but may enjoy a helper joined to himself [cf. ^{<010218>}Genesis 2:18]; then by the curse of sin he has been still more subjected to this necessity.

Therefore, the Lord sufficiently provided for us in this matter when he established marriage, the fellowship of which, begun on his authority, he also sanctified by his blessing. From this it is clear that any other union apart from marriage is accursed in his sight; and that the companionship of marriage has been ordained as a necessary remedy to keep us from plunging into unbridled lust. Let us not delude ourselves, then, when we hear that outside marriage man cannot cohabit with a woman without God's curse.

42. CELIBACY?

Now, through the condition of our nature, and by the lust aroused after the Fall, we, except for those whom God has released through special grace, are doubly subject to women's society. Let each man, then, see what has been given to him. Virginity, I agree, is a virtue not to be despised.

However, it is denied to some and granted to others only for a time. Hence, those who are troubled with incontinence and cannot prevail in the struggle should turn to matrimony to help them preserve chastity in the degree of their calling. For those who do not receive this precept [cf.

^{<401911>}Matthew 19:11], if they do not have recourse to the remedy offered and conceded them for their intemperance, are striving against God and resisting his ordinance. Let no one cry out against me — as many do today — that with God's help he can do all things. ^{f295} For God helps only those who walk in his ways, that is, in his calling [cf. ^{<199101>}Psalm 91:1,147].

All who, neglecting God's help, strive foolishly and rashly to overcome and surmount their necessities, depart from their calling. The Lord affirms that continence is a special gift of God, one of a kind that is bestowed not indiscriminately, not upon the body of the church as a whole, but upon a few of its members. For first of all, the Lord distinguishes a class of men who have castrated themselves for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven [^{<401912>}Matthew 19:12] — that is, to permit them to devote themselves more unreservedly and freely to the affairs of the Kingdom of Heaven. Yet

lest anyone think that such castration lies in a man's power, he pointed out just before that not all men can receive this precept, but only those to whom it is especially "given" from heaven [^{<401911>} Matthew 19:11]. From this he concludes: "He who is able to receive this, let him receive it" [^{<401912>} Matthew 19:12]. Paul declares it even more clearly when he writes: "Each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another" [^{<460707>} 1 Corinthians 7:7].

43. MARRIAGE AS RELATED TO THIS COMMANDMENT

We are informed by an open declaration, that it is not given to every man to keep chastity in celibacy, even if he aspires to it with great zeal and effort, and that it is a special grace which the Lord bestows only upon certain men, in order to hold them more ready for his work. Do we not, then, contend against God and the nature ordained by him, if we do not accommodate our mode of life to the measure of our ability? Here the Lord forbids fornication. He therefore requires purity and modesty of us. There is but one way to preserve it: that each man measure himself by his own standard. ^{f296} Let no man rashly despise marriage as something unprofitable or superfluous to him; let no man long for celibacy unless he can live without a wife. Also, let him not provide in this state for the repose and convenience of the flesh, but only that, freed of this marriage bond, he may be more prompt and ready for all the duties of piety. And since this blessing is conferred on many persons only for a time, let every man abstain from marriage only so long as he is fit to observe celibacy. If his power to tame lust fails him, let him recognize that the Lord has now imposed the necessity of marriage upon him. The apostle proves this when he enjoins that to flee fornication "each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband" [^{<460702>} 1 Corinthians 7:2]. Again: "If they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry" in the Lord [^{<460709>} 1 Corinthians 7:9]. First, he means that the greater part of men are subject to the vice of incontinence; secondly, of those who are so subject he enjoins all without exception to take refuge in that sole remedy with which to resist unchastity. Therefore if those who are incontinent neglect to cure their infirmity by this means, they sin even in not obeying this command of the apostle. And let him who does not touch a woman not flatter himself, as if he could not be accused of immodesty, while in the

meantime his heart inwardly burns with lust. For Paul defines modesty as “purity of heart joined with chastity of body.” “The unmarried woman,” he says, “is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit.” [^{<460734>} 1 Corinthians 7:34.] Thus while he confirms by reason that precept mentioned above, he says not only that it is better to take a wife than to pollute oneself by associating with a harlot [cf. ^{<460615>} 1 Corinthians 6:15 ff.], but he says that “it is better to marry than to burn” [^{<460709>} 1 Corinthians 7:9].

44. MODESTY AND CHASTITY

Now if married couples recognize that their association is blessed by the Lord, they are thereby admonished not to pollute it with uncontrolled and dissolute lust. For even if the honorableness of matrimony covers the baseness of incontinence, it ought not for that reason to be a provocation thereto. Therefore let not married persons think that all things are permitted to them, but let each man have his own wife soberly, and each wife her own husband. So doing, let them not admit anything at all that is unworthy of the honorableness and temperance of marriage. For it is fitting that thus wedlock contracted in the Lord be recalled to measure and modesty so as not to wallow in extreme lewdness. Ambrose censures this wantonness with a severe but not undeserved judgment: he has called the man who has no regard for shame or honorableness in his marriage practices an adulterer toward his own wife. ^{f297}

Finally, let us consider who the Lawgiver is who here condemns fornication. It is he who, since he ought to possess us completely in his own right, requires integrity of soul, spirit, and body. Therefore, while he forbids us to commit fornication, at the same time he does not permit us to seduce the modesty of another with wanton dress and obscene gestures and foul speech. There is a good point in Archelaus’ statement to a youth wearing excessively wanton and dainty clothing that it does not matter in what member he is unchaste; ^{f298} for we look to God, who loathes all uncleanness, in whatever part of our soul or body it may appear. And lest there be any doubt, remember that God is here commending modesty. If the Lord requires modesty of us, he condemns whatever opposes it. Consequently, if you aspire to obedience, let neither your heart burn with wicked lust within, nor your eyes wantonly run into corrupt desires, nor

your body be decked with bawdy ornaments, nor your tongue seduce your mind to like thoughts with filthy words, nor your appetite inflame it with intemperance. For all vices of this sort are like blemishes, which besmirch the purity of chastity.

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

“You shall not steal.” [^{<022015>}Exodus 20:15, Vg.]

45. GENERAL INTERPRETATION

The purpose of this commandment is: since injustice is an abomination to God, we should render to each man what belongs to him [^{<451307>}Romans 13:7].^{f299} To sum up: we are forbidden to pant after the possessions of others, and consequently are commanded to strive faithfully to help every man to keep his own possessions.

We must consider that what every man possesses has not come to him by mere chance but by the distribution of the supreme Lord of all. For this reason, we cannot by evil devices deprive anyone of his possessions without fraudulently setting aside God’s dispensation. Now there are many kinds of thefts. One consists in violence, when another’s goods are stolen by force and unrestrained brigandage. A second kind consists in malicious deceit, when they are carried off through fraud. Another lies in a more concealed craftiness, when a man’s goods are snatched from him by seemingly legal means. Still another lies in flatteries, when one is cheated of his goods under the pretense of a gift.

Let us not stop too long to recount the kinds of theft. Let us remember that all those arts whereby we acquire the possessions and money of our neighbors — when such devices depart from sincere affection to a desire to cheat or in some manner to harm — are to be considered as thefts, Although such possessions may be acquired in a court action, yet God does not judge otherwise. For he sees the intricate deceptions with which a crafty man sets out to snare one of simpler mind, until he at last draws him into his nets. He sees the hard and inhuman laws with which the more powerful oppresses and crushes the weaker person. He sees the lures with which the wiler man baits, so to speak, his hooks to catch the unwary. All these things elude human judgment and are not recognized. And such

injustice occurs not only in matters of money or in merchandise or land, but in the right of each one; for we defraud our neighbors of their property if we repudiate the duties by which we are obligated to them.^{f300} If a shiftless steward or overseer devours his master's substance, and fails to attend to household business; if he either unjustly spends or wantonly wastes the properties entrusted to him; if the servant mocks his master; if he divulges his secrets; if in any way he betrays his life or goods; if the master, on the other hand, savagely harasses his household — all these are deemed theft in God's sight. For he who does not carry out what he owes to others according to the responsibility of his own calling both withholds and appropriates what is another's.

46. THIS COMMANDMENT OBLIGATES US TO CARE FOR OTHERS' GOOD

We will duly obey this commandment, then, if, content with our lot, we are zealous to make only honest and lawful gain; if we do not seek to become wealthy through injustice, nor attempt to deprive our neighbor of his goods to increase our own; if we do not strive to heap up riches cruelly wrung from the blood of others; if we do not madly scrape together from everywhere, by fair means or foul, whatever will feed our avarice or satisfy our prodigality. On the other hand, let this be our constant aim: faithfully to help all men by our counsel and aid to keep what is theirs, in so far as we can; but if we have to deal with faithless and deceitful men, let us be prepared to give up something of our own rather than to contend with them. And not this alone: but let us share the necessity of those whom we see pressed by the difficulty of affairs, assisting them in their need with our abundance.

Finally, let each one see to what extent he is in duty bound to others, and let him pay his debt faithfully. For this reason let a people hold all its rulers in honor, patiently bearing their government, obeying their laws and commands, refusing nothing that can be borne without losing God's favor [^{<451301>}Romans 13:1 ff.; ^{<600213>}1 Peter 2:13 ff.; ^{<560301>}Titus 3:1]. Again, let the rulers take care of their own common people, keep the public peace, protect the good, punish the evil. So let them manage all things as if they are about to render account of their services to God, the supreme Judge [cf. ^{<051719>}Deuteronomy 17:19; ^{<141906>}2 Chronicles 19:6-7]. Let the ministers

of churches faithfully attend to the ministry of the Word, not adulterating the teaching of salvation [cf. <470217> 2 Corinthians 2:17], but delivering it pure and undefiled to God's people. And let them instruct the people not only through teaching, but also through example of life. In short, let them exercise authority as good shepherds over their sheep [cf. 1 Timothy chapter 3; 2 Timothy chapters 2,4; <560106> Titus 1:6 ff.; 1 Peter 5]. Let the people in their turn receive them as messengers and apostles of God, render to them that honor of which the highest Master has deemed them worthy, and give them those things necessary for their livelihood [cf. <401010> Matthew 10:10 ff.; <451015> Romans 10:15 and 15:15 ff.; 1 Corinthians 9; <480606> Galatians 6:6; <520512> 1 Thessalonians 5:12; <540517> 1 Timothy 5:17-18]. Let parents undertake to nourish, govern, and teach, their children committed to them by God, not provoking their minds with cruelty or turning them against their parents [<490604> Ephesians 6:4; <510321> Colossians 3:21]; but cherishing and embracing their children with such gentleness and kindness as becomes their character as parents. As we have already said, children owe obedience to their parents. Let youth reverence old age, as the Lord has willed that age to be worthy of honor. Also, let the aged guide the insufficiency of youth with their own wisdom and experience wherein they excel the younger, not railing harshly and loudly against them but tempering their severity with mildness and gentleness. Let servants show themselves diligent and eager to obey their masters — not for the eye, but from the heart, as if they were serving God. Also, let masters not conduct themselves peevishly and intractably toward their servants, oppressing them with undue rigor, or treating them abusively. Rather, let them recognize them as their brothers, their coservants under the Lord of heaven, whom they ought to love mutually and treat humanely [cf. <490605> Ephesians 6:5-9; <510322> Colossians 3:22-25; <560209> Titus 2:9-10; <600218> 1 Peter 2:18-20; <510401> Colossians 4:1; <570116> Philemon 1:16].

In this manner, I say, let each man consider what, in his rank and station, he owes to his neighbors, and pay what he owes. Moreover, our mind must always have regard for the Lawgiver, that we may know that this rule was established for our hearts as well as for our hands, in order that men may strive to protect and promote the well-being and interests of others.

NINTH COMMANDMENT

“You shall not be a false witness against your neighbor.”

[^{<022016>}Exodus 20:16.]

47. GENERAL INTERPRETATION

The purpose of this commandment is: since God (who is truth) abhors a lie, we must practice truth without deceit toward one another. To sum up, then: let us not malign anyone with slanders or false charges, nor harm his substance by falsehood, in short, injure him by unbridled evilspeaking and impudence. To this prohibition the command is linked that we should faithfully help everyone as much as we can in affirming the truth, in order to protect the integrity of his name and possessions. It seems that the Lord intended to express the meaning of this commandment in Exodus chapter 23, in these words: “You shall not utter a false report. You shall not join hands [with a wicked man] to be a malicious witness” [^{<022301>}Exodus 23:1]. Likewise, “Flee falsehood” [^{<022307>}Exodus 23:7 p.]. Also, in another passage he warns us against lying not only in the sense of being slanderers and talebearers among the people [Leviticus 19: 16], but also against deceiving our brother [^{<031911>}Leviticus 19:11]. He prohibits both in specific commandments. Surely there is no doubt that, as he forbade cruelty, shamelessness, and avarice in the preceding commandments, here he bars falsehood. As we have just noted, this has two parts. For either we injure our neighbors’ reputation by evil intent and vicious backbiting, or we deprive them of their goods by lying and even by defamation. But it makes no difference whether you understand here a solemn and judicial testimony, or a common one couched in private conversation. For we must always come back to this: one particular vice is singled out from various kinds as an example, and the rest are brought under the same category, the one chosen being an especially foul vice. Yet it is more generally expedient to extend it to include slanders and perverse detraction by which our neighbors are unfairly hurt. For falsity of court testimony always involves perjury. Perjuries, in so far as they profane and violate God’s name, are sufficiently dealt with in the Third Commandment. Hence this commandment is lawfully observed when our tongue, in declaring the truth, serves both the good repute and the advantage of our neighbors. The equity of this is quite evident. For if a

good name is more precious than all riches [^{<202201>}Proverbs 22:1], we harm a man more by despoiling him of the integrity of his name than by taking away his possessions. In plundering his substance, however, we sometimes do as much by false testimony as by snatching with our hands.

48. THE GOOD REPUTATION OF OUR NEIGHBOR

And yet it is wonderful with what thoughtless unconcern we sin in this respect time and again! Those who do not markedly suffer from this disease are rare indeed. We delight in a certain poisoned sweetness experienced in ferreting out and in disclosing the evils of others. And let us not think it an adequate excuse if in many instances we are not lying. For he who does not allow a brother's name to be sullied by falsehood also wishes it to be kept unblemished as far as truth permits. Indeed, although he may guard it against lying only, he yet implies by this that it is entrusted to his care. That God is concerned about it should be enough to prompt us to keep safe our neighbor's good name. Hence, evilspeaking is without a doubt universally condemned. Now, we understand by "evilspeaking" not reproof made with intent to chastise; not accusation or judicial denunciation to remedy evil. Nor does evilspeaking mean public correction, calculated to strike other sinners with terror; nor disclosure before those who need to be forewarned lest they be endangered through ignorance. By "evilspeaking" we mean hateful accusation arising from evil intent and wanton desire to defame.

Indeed, this precept even extends to forbidding us to affect a fawning politeness barbed with bitter taunts under the guise of joking. Some do this who crave praise for their witticisms, to others' shame and grief, because they sometimes grievously wound their brothers with this sort of impudence. Now if we turn our eyes to the Lawgiver, who must in his own right rule our ears and heart no less than our tongue, we shall surely see that eagerness to hear detractions, and unbecoming readiness to make unfavorable judgments, are alike forbidden. For it is absurd to think that God hates the disease of evilspeaking in the tongue, but does not disapprove of evil intent in the heart. Therefore, if there is any true fear and love of God in us, let us take care, as far as is possible and expedient and as love requires, not to yield our tongue or our ears to evilspeaking and caustic wit, and not to give our minds without cause to sly suspicion. But

as fair interpreters of the words and deeds of all, let us sincerely keep their honor safe in our judgment, our ears, and our tongue.

TENTH COMMANDMENT

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house,” etc.
 [<022017>Exodus 20:17, Vg.]

49. THE MEANING OF THIS COMMANDMENT

The purpose of this commandment is: since God wills that our whole soul be possessed with a disposition to love, we must banish from our hearts all desire contrary to love. To sum up, then: no thought should steal upon us to move our hearts to a harmful covetousness that tends to our neighbor’s loss. To this corresponds the opposite precept: whatever we conceive, deliberate, will, or attempt is to be linked to our neighbor’s good and advantage. But here an apparently great and perplexing difficulty confronts us. We previously said that under the terms “adultery” and “theft” are included the desire to commit adultery and the intention to harm and deceive. If this is true, it may seem superfluous that we are afterward separately forbidden to covet another’s goods. But the distinction between intent and coveting will readily resolve this difficulty for us.^{f301} For intent, as we spoke of it under the preceding commandments, is deliberate consent of will where lust subjects the heart. But covetousness can exist without such deliberation or consent when the mind is only pricked or tickled by empty and perverse objects. The Lord has previously commanded that the rule of love govern our wills, our endeavors, and our actions. Now he enjoins that the thoughts of our mind be so controlled to the same end that none of them may become depraved or twisted and thus drive the mind in the opposite direction. As he has forbidden our minds to be inclined and led into anger, hatred, adultery, robbery, and lying, he now prohibits them from being prompted thereto.

50. INNERMOST RIGHTEOUSNESS!

He demands such great uprightness with good reason. For who can deny that it is right for all the powers of the soul to be possessed with love? But if any soul wander from the goal of love, who will not admit that it is

diseased? Now how does it happen that desires hurtful to your brother enter your heart, unless it is that you disregard him and strive for yourself alone? For if your whole heart were steeped in love, not one particle of it would lie open to such imaginings. The heart, then, in so far as it harbors covetousness, must be empty of love.

Someone will object that fantasies, flitting aimlessly about the mind and then vanishing, cannot be condemned as instances of covetousness, whose seat is in the heart. I reply: here it is a question of fantasies of a kind which, while they occupy our minds, at the same time bite and strike our hearts with greed, for nothing desirable ever comes into our mind without our heart leaping with excitement. God therefore commands a wonderful ardor of love, which he does not allow one particle of covetousness to hinder. He requires a marvelously tempered heart, and does not permit the tiniest pinprick to urge it against the law of love. Do you think my view lacks authority? It was Augustine who first opened the way for me to understand this commandment. ^{f302}

It was the Lord's plan to forbid all evil desire. Nevertheless, by way of example, he has put forward those objects whose false image of delight most frequently captivates us. Thus he leaves nothing to our desire when he deprives it of those very things which prompt it to rave and revel.

Here, then, is the Second Table of the Law, which amply teaches us what we owe men for the sake of God, upon the contemplation of whom the whole of love depends. Hence, you will fruitlessly inculcate all those duties taught in this Table, unless your teaching has fear and reverence toward God as its foundation. Without any help from me, the wise reader will judge those who, by perversely splitting what was one commandment, would find two commandments in the prohibition of covetousness. ^{f303}

The repetition of the expression "You shall not covet" a second time does not oppose our view. For after mentioning "house," he lists its parts, beginning with "wife." From this it is quite clear that we are to read this as a whole, as the Hebrews rightly do; and that God, in short, commands us to keep the possessions of others untouched and safe, not only from injury

or the wish to defraud, but even from the slightest covetousness that may trouble our hearts.

51. THE SUM OF THE LAW

Now it will not be difficult to decide the purpose of the whole law: the fulfillment of righteousness to form human life to the archetype of divine purity. For God has so depicted his character in the law that if any man carries out in deeds whatever is enjoined there, he will express the image of God, as it were, in his own life. For this reason, Moses, wishing to remind the Israelites of the gist of the law, said: "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord... , to walk in his ways, to love him, to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep his commandments?" [^{<051012>}Deuteronomy 10:12-13, cf. Vg.]. And Moses did not cease to harp on this same thought to them whenever he had to point out the aim of the law. Here is the object of the teaching of the law: to join man by holiness of life to his God, and, as Moses elsewhere says, to make him cleave to God [cf. ^{<051122>}Deuteronomy 11:22 or 30:20].

Now the perfection of that holiness comes under the two headings already mentioned: "That we should love the Lord God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength" [^{<050605>}Deuteronomy 6:5 p.; cf. ch. 11:13], "and our neighbor as ourselves" [^{<031918>}Leviticus 19:18 p.; cf. ^{<402237>}Matthew 22:37,39]. First, indeed, our soul should be entirely filled with the love of God. From this will flow directly the love of neighbor. This is what the apostle shows when he writes that "the aim of the law is love from a pure conscience and a faith unfeigned" [^{<540105>}1 Timothy 1:5 p.]. You see how conscience and sincere faith are put at the head. In other words, here is true piety, from which love is derived.

It would, therefore, be a mistake for anyone to believe that the law teaches nothing but some rudiments and preliminaries of righteousness by which men begin their apprenticeship, and does not also guide them to the true goal, good works, since you cannot desire a greater perfection than that expressed in the statements of Moses and Paul. For whither, I submit, will any man wish to go who will not be content to be taught to fear God, to worship spiritually, to obey the commandments, to follow the Lord's upright way, and lastly, to have a pure conscience, sincere faith, and love?

From this is confirmed that interpretation of the law which seeks and finds in the commandments of the law all the duties of piety and love. For those who follow only dry and bare rudiments — as if the law taught them only half of God’s will — do not at all understand its purpose, as the apostle testifies.

52. WHY DOES SCRIPTURE SOMETIMES MENTION ONLY THE SECOND TABLE?

But because, in summarizing the law, Christ and the apostles sometimes leave out the First Table, many persons are deceived into trying to apply their words to both Tables. In the Gospel of Matthew, Christ calls “mercy, judgment, and faith the weightier matters of the law” [^{<402323>}Matthew 23:23 p.]. Under the term “faith” it is clear to me that he means truthfulness toward men. Yet some interpret the expression as piety toward God so as to extend it to the whole law. ^{f304}

Surely this is foolish. For Christ is speaking of those works by which man ought to prove himself righteous. If we note this reason, we shall also stop wondering why in another passage to a young man asking what those commandments are by whose observance we enter into life, he replies in these words only [^{<401916>}Matthew 19:16-17]: “You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. Honor your father and your mother... Love your neighbor as yourself” [^{<401918>}Matthew 19:18-19; with some wording from ^{<022012>}Exodus 20:12-16]. For obedience to the First Table was usually either in the intention of the heart, or in ceremonies. The intention of the heart did not show itself, and the hypocrites continually busied themselves with ceremonies. Yet the works of love are such that through them we witness real righteousness.

This occurs so often in the Prophets as to be familiar even to a reader moderately versed in them. For almost every time the prophets exhort men to repentance they omit the First Table, and urge faith, judgment, mercy, and equity. In this way they do not overlook the fear of God, but they demand through signs real evidence of it. This indeed is well known: when they discuss the observance of the law, they usually dwell upon the Second Table, for there one especially sees zeal for righteousness and

integrity. There is no need to list the passages, for everyone can easily verify what I am saying [e.g., ^{<230118>}Isaiah 1:18].

53. FAITH AND LOVE

But you will ask: “Does the essence of righteousness lie more in living innocently with men than in honoring God with piety?” Not at all! But because a man does not easily maintain love in all respects unless he earnestly fears God, here is proof also of his piety. Besides, since the Lord well knows, and also attests through his prophets, that no benefit can come from us to him, he does not confine our duties to himself, but he exercises us “in good works toward our neighbor” [cf. ^{<191502>}Psalm 15:2-3, Vg.; 16:2, EV]. The apostle consequently has good reason to place the whole perfection of the saints in love [^{<490319>}Ephesians 3:19; 1:5; ^{<510314>}Colossians 3:14]. Elsewhere he quite rightly calls it the “fulfillment of the law,” adding that “he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law” [^{<451308>}Romans 13:8]. Again, “The whole law is comprehended in one word, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” [^{<480514>}Galatians 5:14 p.] Paul teaches only what Christ himself teaches when he says: “Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets” [^{<400712>}Matthew 7:12]. It is certain that the Law and the Prophets give first place to faith and whatever pertains to the lawful worship of God, relegating love to a subordinate position. But the Lord means that the law only enjoins us to observe right and equity toward men, that thereby we may become practiced in witnessing to a pious fear of him, if we have any of it in us.

54. LOVE OF NEIGHBOR

Here, therefore, let us stand fast: our life shall best conform to God’s will and the prescription of the law when it is in every respect most fruitful for our brethren. In the entire law we do not read one syllable that lays a rule upon man as regards those things which he may or may not do, for the advantage of his own flesh. And obviously, since men were born in such a state that they are all too much inclined to self-love — and, however much they deviate from truth, they still keep self-love — there was no need of a law that would increase or rather enkindle this already excessive love. ^{f305} Hence it is very clear that we keep the commandments not by loving

ourselves but by loving God and neighbor; that he lives the best and holiest life who lives and strives for himself as little as he can, and that no one lives in a worse or more evil manner than he who lives and strives for himself alone, and thinks about and seeks only his own advantage. ^{f306}

Indeed, to express how profoundly we must be inclined to our neighbors [^{<031918>}Leviticus 19:18], the Lord measured it by the love of ourselves because he had at hand no more violent or stronger emotion than this. And we ought diligently to ponder the force of this expression. For he does not concede the first place to self-love ^{f307} as certain Sophists stupidly imagine, and assign the second place to love. ^{f308} Rather, he transfers to others the emotion of love that we naturally feel toward ourselves. Hence, the apostle states that “love does not seek its own” [^{<461305>}1 Corinthians 13:5]. The reasoning of these Sophists is not to be considered worth a hair: that the thing ruled is always inferior to its rule. Indeed, the Lord has not established a rule regarding love of ourselves to which charity toward others should be subordinate. But he shows that the emotion of love, which out of natural depravity commonly resides within ourselves, must now be extended to another, that we may be ready to benefit our neighbor with no less eagerness, ardor, and care than ourselves.

55. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

Now, since Christ has shown in the parable of the Samaritan that the term “neighbor” includes even the most remote person [^{<421036>}Luke 10:36], we are not expected to limit the precept of love to those in close relationships. I do not deny that the more closely a man is linked to us, the more intimate obligation we have to assist him. It is the common habit of mankind that the more closely men are bound together by the ties of kinship, of acquaintanceship, or of neighborhood, the more responsibilities for one another they share. This does not offend God; for his providence, as it were, leads us to it. But I say: we ought to embrace the whole human race without exception in a single feeling of love; here there is no distinction between barbarian and Greek, worthy and unworthy, friend and enemy, since all should be contemplated in God, not in themselves. ^{f309} When we turn aside from such contemplation, it is no wonder we become entangled in many errors. Therefore, if we rightly direct our love, we must first turn our eyes not to man, the sight of whom would more often engender hate

than love, but to God, who bids us extend to all men the love we bear to him, that this may be an unchanging principle: whatever the character of the man, we must yet love him because we love God.

56. “EVANGELICAL COUNSELS”?

These commandments — “Do not take vengeance; love your enemies,” which were once delivered to all Jews and then to all Christians in common — have been turned by the Schoolmen into “counsels,” which we are free either to obey or not to obey. What pestilential ignorance or malice is this! Moreover, they have saddled the requirement to obey these “counsels” upon the monks, even more righteous in this one respect than simple Christians because they voluntarily bound themselves to keep these “counsels,” and the reason they assign for not receiving them as laws is that they seem too burdensome and heavy, especially for Christians who are under the law of grace.^{f310} Do they dare thus to abolish God’s eternal law that we are to love our neighbor? Does such a distinction appear on any page of the law? Rather, do not commandments commonly occur there that very strictly require us to love our enemies? What sort of commandment is this: to feed a hungry enemy [^{<202521>}Proverbs 25:21]; to lead his stray oxen or asses back to the right path, or to assist them when they are overburdened [^{<022304>}Exodus 23:4-5]? Shall we do good to our enemy’s beasts for his sake without showing good will to the man himself? What? Is not the Lord’s word everlasting: “Vengeance is mine, I will repay” [^{<581030>}Hebrews 10:30; cf. ^{<053235>}Deuteronomy 32:35]. This is more plainly expressed in another place: “You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against... your own people” [^{<031918>}Leviticus 19:18]. Either let them blot out these things from the law or recognize that the Lord was Lawgiver, and let them not falsely represent him as a mere giver of counsel.

57. THE COMMANDMENT TO LOVE OUR ENEMY IS A GENUINE COMMANDMENT

And what, I ask you, do these statements mean, which they, have dared to mock with their absurd glosses? “Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; pray for those who persecute you; bless those who curse you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.”

[^{<400544>}Matthew 5:44-45, conflated with ^{<420627>}Luke 6:27-28.] Who will not here conclude conclude with Chrysostom that the obligatory character of these utterances reveals them clearly to be not exhortations but imperatives?^{f311} What is left for us when we are erased from the number of the sons of God? Yet in their view monks alone will be the sons of the Heavenly Father; they alone will dare call upon God the Father. In the meantime what will become of the church? According to this same reasoning, it will be relegated to the heathen and publicans. For Christ says: “If you are kind to your friends, what favor do you expect? Do not even the heathen and publicans do the same?” [^{<400546>}Matthew 5:46-47, conflated with ^{<420632>}Luke 6:32 and ^{<401817>}Matthew 18:17.] We shall indeed be fortunate if the mere name of Christians be left to us, though the inheritance of the Heavenly Kingdom be taken away from us! Augustine’s argument is no less convincing: “When the Lord forbids us to commit adultery, he prohibits us from touching the wife of an enemy just as much as that of a friend. When he forbids theft, he allows us to steal nothing at all, whether from a friend or from an enemy.”^{f312} Paul relates these two commandments — “Do not steal” and “Do not commit adultery” — to the rule of love. In fact, he teaches that they are included in the commandment “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” [^{<451309>}Romans 13:9]. Therefore, either Paul must have been a false interpreter of the law, or it necessarily follows from the commandment that we are to love our enemies just as our friends. For this reason, those who so wantonly shake off the common yoke of the sons of God truly betray themselves as sons of Satan. Now, you may doubt whether they spread this dogma abroad more out of stupidity or out of shamelessness. Every one of the church fathers declares as a fact that these are actual commandments. Even in Gregory’s time it was not doubted, as he stoutly affirms. That these are commandments he considers indisputable.^{f313} And how stupidly they argue! This would, they say, be a burden too heavy for Christians! As if we could think of anything more difficult than to love God with all our heart, all our soul, and all our strength! Compared with this law, everything ought to be considered easy — whether the requirement to love our enemy or to banish all desire for revenge from our hearts. All these are indeed hard and difficult for our feebleness, even to the least detail of the law [cf. ^{<400528>}Matthew 5:28; Luke 26:17]. It is the Lord in whom we act virtuously. “Let him give what he commands, and command what he will.”

^{f314} To be Christians under the law of grace does not mean to wander unbridled outside the law, but to be engrafted in Christ, by whose grace we are free of the curse of the law, and by whose Spirit we have the law engraved upon our hearts [^{<243133>}Jeremiah 31:33]. This grace Paul called “law,” not in the strict sense but alluding to the law of God, with which he was contrasting it [^{<450802>}Romans 8:2]. Under the term “law” these men are philosophizing about nothing. 58. *Distinction of mortal and venial sins invalid!*

What they call “venial sin” is something of the same sort: either secret ungodliness, which violates the First Table, or direct transgression of the last commandment. Here is their definition: venial sin is desire without deliberate assent, which does not long remain in the heart. ^{f315} But I say: it cannot even steal into the heart except for lack of those things which are required in the law. We are forbidden “to have other gods.” When the mind, laid low by the crafty devices of unbelief, looks around elsewhere; when it is assailed by a sudden desire to transfer its blessedness to another place — where do these fleeting impulses come from but from some empty place in the soul, ready to receive such temptations? And not to prolong the argument farther, we have been commanded to “love God with all our heart, with all our mind, and with all our soul.” Unless, then, all the powers of the soul are intent on loving God, we have already abandoned obedience to the law. For the enemies who rise up in our conscience against his Kingdom and hinder his decrees prove that God’s throne is not firmly established therein. It has been demonstrated that the last commandment properly applies to this. ^{f316} Has some desire pricked our heart? We are already guilty of covetousness and consequently are transgressors of the law. For the Lord forbids us not only to resolve upon and to plot something that involves another’s loss, but even to be kindled and burn with covetousness. But God’s curse ever presses upon the transgression of the law. There is no reason, then, for us to exempt any covetings, however light, from the judgment of death. Augustine says: In weighing sins “let us not bring forward false balances to weigh what we please and as we please, according to our own opinion, saying, ‘This is heavy’; ‘This is light.’ But let us bring forward the divine balance of the Holy Scriptures, as from the Lord’s treasury, and in that balance let us weigh what is heavier. No — not weigh; rather, let us recognize what the

Lord has already weighed.”^{f317} What does Scripture have to say on this matter? Surely when Paul calls death “the wages of sin” [^{<450623>}Romans 6:23], he shows that this loathsome distinction was unknown to him. Since we are unduly inclined to hypocrisy, this palliative ought by no means to be added to soothe our sluggish consciences.

59. EVERY SIN IS A DEADLY SIN!

Would that they might ponder what that saying of Christ means: “Whoever transgresses one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, will be esteemed nobody in the Kingdom of Heaven” [^{<400519>}Matthew 5:19 p.!] Are they not of this number when they dare so to extenuate the transgression of the law as if it did not merit the death penalty? But they ought to have weighed not simply what the law commands but who it is that commands. For in every little transgression of the divinely commanded law, God’s authority is set aside. Do they deem it a small matter to violate his majesty in anything? Then, if God has revealed his will in the law, whatever is contrary to the law displeases him. Do they fancy God’s wrath so feeble that the death penalty will not immediately follow? And he has clearly declared this, if they could take it upon their hearts to listen to his voice rather than to becloud the clear truth with their senseless subtleties. He says: “The soul that sins shall surely die.” [^{<261804>}Ezekiel 18:4,20, Vg.] Likewise the passage just cited:^{f318} “The wages of sin is death” [^{<450623>}Romans 6:23]. What they confess to be sin because they cannot deny it they nevertheless contend is not mortal sin. But because they have heretofore indulged too much in their own folly, let them at least for once learn to become wise. But if they persist in their ravings, we bid them farewell. Let the children of God hold that all sin is mortal. For it is rebellion against the will of God, which of necessity provokes God’s wrath, and it is a violation of the law, upon which God’s judgment is pronounced without exception. The sins of the saints are pardonable, not because of their nature as saints, but because they obtain pardon from God’s mercy.

CHAPTER 9

CHRIST, ALTHOUGH HE WAS KNOWN TO THE
 JEWS UNDER THE LAW, WAS AT LENGTH
 CLEARLY REVEALED ONLY IN THE GOSPEL ^{F319}

(The grace of Christ anticipated and manifested, 1-2)

1. THE ADVANTAGE OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE NEW COVENANT

It was not in vain that God of old willed, through expiations and sacrifices, to attest that he was Father, ^{f320} and to set apart for himself a chosen people. Hence, he was then surely known in the same image in which he with full splendor now appears to us. Accordingly, after Malachi has bidden the Jews heed the law of Moses, and continue in it earnestly because after his death there was to be an interruption of the prophetic office, he immediately afterward declares: “The sun of righteousness shall rise” [^{<390402>} Malachi 4:2]. By these words he teaches that while the law serves to hold the godly in expectation of Christ’s coming, at his advent they should hope for far more light. For this reason, Peter says: “The prophets ...searched and diligently inquired about this salvation,” which has now been made manifest by the gospel [^{<600110>} 1 Peter 1:10]. And “it was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves,” or their age, “but us, in the things which have ...been announced” through the gospel [^{<600112>} 1 Peter 1:12 p.]. Not that the teaching of these things was useless to the ancient people or without value for the prophets themselves, but because they did not come to possess that treasure which God has transmitted to us by their hand! For today the grace of which they bore witness is put before our very eyes. They had but a slight taste of it; we can more richly enjoy it. Accordingly, Christ declares that Moses bore witness to him [^{<430546>} John 5:46], yet He extols the measure of grace in which we surpass the Jews. For he addresses his disciples: “Blessed are the eyes which see what you see; and blessed are the ears which hear what

you hear. For many kings and prophets longed for this and did not attain it” [^{<421023>}Luke 10:23-24; ^{<401316>}Matthew 13:16-17; conflated]. That God has preferred us to the holy patriarchs, who were men of rare piety, is no slight commendation of the gospel revelation. In close agreement with this thought is another passage, where Abraham is said to have seen Christ’s day and to have rejoiced [^{<430856>}John 8:56]. Even if the sight of something far off was rather indistinct, Abraham nevertheless had assurance of good hope. From this came that joyousness which accompanied the holy patriarch even to his death. And John the Baptist’s statement — “No one has ever seen God; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, has made him known” [^{<430118>}John 1:18] — does not exclude the pious who died before Christ from the fellowship of the understanding and light that shine in the person of Christ. But, by comparing their lot with ours, he teaches that those mysteries which they but glimpsed in shadowed outline are manifest to us. The author of The Letter to the Hebrews clearly explains this: “In many and various ways God spoke of old ..., by the prophets ...but now by his beloved Son” [^{<580101>}Hebrews 1:1-2 p.]. That only-begotten Son, who today is for us “the splendor of the glory of God the Father and the very stamp of his nature” [^{<580103>}Hebrews 1:3 p.], became known of old to the Jews. In another place we have quoted Paul’s view that Christ was the leader of the former deliverance [cf. ^{<461004>}1 Corinthians 10:4]. ^{f321} It is, moreover, true, as Paul elsewhere teaches, that God, who “ordered light to shine out of darkness, now has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” [^{<470406>}2 Corinthians 4:6 p.]. For when he appeared in this, his image, he, as it were, made himself visible; whereas his appearance had before been indistinct and shadowed. All the more detestable and base, then, is the ungratefulness and depravity of those who are blind at midday! And Paul says their minds have been darkened by Satan that they may not see the glory of Christ shining in the gospel without an intervening veil [^{<470314>}2 Corinthians 3:14-15; cf. ch. 4:4].

2. THE GOSPEL PREACHES THE REVEALED CHRIST

Now I take the gospel to be the clear manifestation of the mystery of Christ. I recognize, of course, that since Paul calls the gospel “the doctrine

of faith” [^{<540406>} 1 Timothy 4:6], all those promises of free remission of sins which commonly occur in the law, whereby God reconciles men to himself, are counted as parts it. For he contrasts faith with the terrors that would trouble and vex the conscience if salvation were to be sought in works. From this it follows that the word “gospel,” taken in the broad sense, includes those testimonies of his mercy and fatherly favor which God gave to the patriarchs of old. In a higher sense, however, the word refers, I say, to the proclamation of the grace manifested in Christ. This is not only accepted as a matter of common usage, but rests upon the authority of Christ and the apostles [^{<400417>} Matthew 4:17,23; 9:35]. Hence, the fact that he preached the gospel of the Kingdom is properly attributed to him. And Mark prefaces his Gospel with: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ” [^{<410101>} Mark 1:1]. There is no need to heap up passages to prove something so fully known. “By his advent Christ ...has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” [^{<550110>} 2 Timothy 1:10 p.] Paul does not mean by these words that the patriarchs were shrouded in the shadows of death until the Son of God took flesh. Rather, he claims this privilege of honor for the gospel, teaching that it is a new and unusual sort of embassy [cf. ^{<470520>} 2 Corinthians 5:20] by which God has fulfilled what he had promised: that the truth of his promises would be realized in the person of the Son. Believers have found to be true Paul’s saying that “all the promises of God find their yea and amen in Christ” [2 Corinthians 1: 20 p.], for these promises had been sealed in their hearts. [Cf. ^{<470122>} 2 Corinthians 1:22.] Nevertheless, because he has in his flesh accomplished the whole of our salvation, this living manifestation of realities has justly won a new and singular commendation. From this derives Christ’s saying: “Afterward you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man” [^{<430151>} John 1:51 p.]. Although he seems here to allude to the ladder shown in a vision to the patriarch Jacob [^{<012812>} Genesis 28:12], how excellent his advent is he has marked through opening by it the gate of heaven, that each one of us may enter there.

(Refutation of errors on the relation of law and gospel: intermediate position of John the Baptist, 3-5)

3. THE PROMISES ARE NOT ABROGATED FOR US

Yet we ought to beware of the devilish imagination of Servetus, who — while he wishes to extol the greatness of Christ’s grace or at least pretends to wish this — entirely abolishes the promises, as if they had ended at the same time as the law. He pretends that by faith in the gospel we share in the fulfillment of all the promises.^{f322} As if there were no difference between us and Christ!

I just declared that Christ left unfinished nothing of the sum total of our salvation. But it is wrong to assume from this that we already possess the benefits imparted by him — as if that statement of Paul’s, that “our salvation is hidden in hope” [^{<510303>}Colossians 3:3 p.; cf. ^{<450824>}Romans 8:24], were false! I admit, indeed, that in believing Christ we at once pass from death into life. But at the same time we must remember that saying of John’s: although we know that “we are the children of God, it does not yet appear ...until we shall become like him, when we shall see him as he is” [1 John :2 p.]. Although, therefore, Christ offers us in the gospel a present fullness of spiritual benefits, the enjoyment thereof ever lies hidden under the guardianship of hope, until, having put off corruptible flesh, we be transfigured in the glory of him who goes before us. Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit bids us rely upon the promises, whose authority with us ought to silence all the barkings of that unclean dog. For, according to Paul, “Godliness ...holds promise for the life to come as well as for the present life” [^{<540408>}1 Timothy 4:8]. For this reason, Paul boasts of himself as “an apostle of Christ ...according to the promise of the life which is in him” [^{<550101>}2 Timothy 1:1 p.]. And in another passage he teaches that we have the same promises [^{<470701>}2 Corinthians 7:1; cf. ^{<470616>}2 Corinthians 6:16-18] as were given to the holy men of old. Finally, he considers it the height of felicity that we are sealed with the “Holy Spirit of promise” [^{<490113>}Ephesians 1:13 p.]. We enjoy Christ only as we embrace Christ clad in his own promises. Thus it comes to pass that he indeed dwells in our hearts [cf. ^{<490317>}Ephesians 3:17], and yet: “We are absent from him. For we walk by faith, not by sight” [^{<470505>}2 Corinthians 5:5-7]. Now these two things agree rather well with each other: we possess in Christ all that pertains to the perfection of heavenly life, and yet faith is the vision of good things not seen [cf. ^{<581101>}Hebrews 11:1]. Only, we must note a

difference in the nature or quality of the promises: the gospel points out with the finger what the law foreshadowed under types.

4. THE OPPOSITION BETWEEN LAW AND GOSPEL OUGHT NOT TO BE EXAGGERATED

Hence, also, we refute those who always erroneously compare the law with the gospel by contrasting the merit of works with the free imputation of righteousness. This is indeed a contrast not at all to be rejected. For Paul often means by the term “law” the rule of righteous living by which God requires of us what is his own, giving us no hope of life unless we completely obey him, and adding on the other hand a curse if we deviate even in the slightest degree. This Paul does when he contends that we are pleasing to God through grace and are accounted righteous through his pardon, because nowhere is found that observance of the law for which the reward has been promised. Paul therefore justly makes contraries of the righteousness of the law and of that of the gospel from. 3:21 ff.; ^{<480310>} Galatians 3:10 ff.; etc.].

But the gospel did not so supplant the entire law as to bring forward a different way of salvation. Rather, it confirmed and satisfied whatever the law had promised, and gave substance to the shadows.^{f323} When Christ says, “The Law and the Prophets were until John” [^{<421616>} Luke 16:16; Cf. ^{<401113>} Matthew 11:13], he does not subject the patriarchs to the curse that the slaves of the law cannot escape. He means: they had been trained in rudiments only, thus remaining far beneath the height of the gospel teaching. Hence Paul, calling the gospel “the power of God unto salvation for every believer” [^{<450116>} Romans 1:16 p.], presently adds: “The Law and the Prophets bear witness to it” [^{<450321>} Romans 3:21]. And at the end of the same letter, although he teaches that “the preaching of Jesus Christ is the revelation of the mystery kept in silence through times eternal” [^{<451625>} Romans 16:25 p.], he qualifies this statement by adding an explanation, teaching that he was “made known through the prophetic writings” [^{<451626>} Romans 16:26 p.]. From this we infer that, where the whole law is concerned, the gospel differs from it only in clarity of manifestation. Still, because of the inestimable abundance of grace laid open for us in Christ, it is said with good reason that through his advent

God's Heavenly Kingdom was erected upon earth [cf. ^{<401228>}Matthew 12:28].

5. JOHN THE BAPTIST

John stood between the law and the gospel, holding an intermediate office related to both. He called Christ the "Lamb of God" and the sacrifice for the cleansing of sins [^{<430129>}John 1:29], thus setting forth the sum of the gospel. Yet he did not express that incomparable power and glory which at length shone forth in the resurrection. Hence, Christ said that he was not equal to the apostles; this is the meaning of his words: "John excels among the sons of women, yet he who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he" [^{<401111>}Matthew 11:11 p.]. He does not commend here the persons of men, but after setting John ahead of all the prophets, he raises the preaching of the gospel to the highest rank. As we have seen elsewhere, he denotes this preaching by "Kingdom of Heaven." Now John answers that he himself is only a "voice" [^{<430123>}John 1:23; cf. ^{<234003>}Isaiah 40:3], as if he were beneath the prophets. He does not do this out of reigned humility, but he wishes to teach the real ambassadorship was not entrusted to him, but that he performed the office of harbinger, as Malachi had foretold: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah comes" [^{<390405>}Malachi 4:5]. Indeed, during the whole course of his ministry he did nothing else than prepare disciples for Christ. He even proves from Isaiah that this task was enjoined upon him by God. In this sense Christ calls him "a burning and shining lamp" [^{<430535>}John 5:35], because full daylight had not yet come. Yet this does not prevent him from being numbered among the preachers of the gospel, for he actually used the same baptism as was afterward entrusted to the apostles [^{<430133>}John 1:33]. But what John began the apostles carried forward to fulfillment, with greater freedom, only after Christ was received into heaven.

CHAPTER 10

THE SIMILARITY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

(The covenant in the Old Testament really the same as that of the New, 1-6)

1. THE QUESTION

Now we can clearly see from what has already been said that all men adopted by God into the company of his people since the beginning of the world were covenanted to him by the same law and by the bond of the same doctrine as obtains among us.^{f324} It is very important to make this point. Accordingly I shall add, by way of appendix, how far the condition of the patriarchs in this fellowship differed from ours, even though they participated in the same inheritance and hoped for a common salvation with us by the grace of the same Mediator. The testimonies that we have gathered from the Law and the Prophets to prove this make plain that God's people have never had any other rule of reverence and piety. Nevertheless, because writers often argue at length about the difference between the Old and the New Testament, thus arousing some misgiving in the simple reader's mind, we shall rightly devote a special section to a fuller and more precise discussion of this matter. Indeed, that wonderful rascal Servetus and certain madmen of the Anabaptist sect, who regard the Israelites as nothing but a herd of swine, make necessary what would in any case have been very profitable for us. For they babble of the Israelites as fattened by the Lord on this earth without any hope of heavenly immortality.^{f325} So, then, to keep this pestilential error away from godly minds, and at the same time to remove all the difficulties that usually rise up immediately when mention is made of the difference between the Old and the New Testament, let us look in passing at the similarities and differences between the covenant that the Lord made of old with the Israelites before Christ's advent, and that which God has now made with us after his manifestation.

2. CHIEF POINTS OF AGREEMENT

Both can be explained in one word. The covenant made with all the patriarchs is so much like ours in substance and reality that the two are actually one and the same. Yet they differ in the mode of dispensation. But because no one can gain a clear understanding from such a short statement, a fuller explanation is required if we wish to make any progress. Now, in showing their similarity — or rather, unity — it would be superfluous to examine afresh the details that have already been reviewed; and it would be inappropriate here to mingle matters to be discussed elsewhere.

Here we must take our stand on three main points. First, we hold that carnal prosperity and happiness did not constitute the goal set before the Jews to which they were to aspire. Rather, they were adopted into the hope of immortality; and assurance of this adoption was certified to them by oracles, by the law, and by the prophets. Secondly, the covenant by which they were bound to the Lord was supported, not by their own merits, but solely by the mercy of the God who called them. Thirdly, they had and knew Christ as Mediator, through whom they were joined to God and were to share in his promises. The second of these, because perhaps we do not yet sufficiently understand it, will be explained at length in its place.^{f326} For by numerous clear testimonies of the prophets we shall confirm the truth that all those blessings which the Lord has ever given or promised to his people arose solely out of his goodness and kindness. Here and there we have also given clear proofs of the third point; and we have not left even the first point untouched.

3. THE OLD TESTAMENT LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

The first point especially refers to the present question; over it our opponents raise more controversy with us. Let us therefore give it closer attention. But we shall do this in such a way that if any gap occurs in the explanation, we can supply it as we proceed or add it at an opportune place. The apostle surely relieves us of every doubt on these three points when he says: “Long beforehand through his prophets God the Father promised in the Holy Scriptures the gospel,” which he proclaimed “concerning his Son” at the appointed time [^{<450102>}Romans 1:2-3 p.]. Likewise, the Law and the Prophets bear witness to the righteousness of

faith, which is taught through the gospel itself [^{<450321>}Romans 3:21]. Surely the gospel does not confine men's hearts to delight in the present life, but lifts them to the hope of immortality. It does not fasten them to earthly pleasures, but by announcing a hope that rests in heaven it, so to speak, transports them thither. Elsewhere Paul expresses it thus: "After you believed in the gospel, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance unto the redemption of the acquired possession" [^{<490113>}Ephesians 1:13-14]. Again: "We have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and love toward the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard in the truth-telling word, the gospel" [^{<510104>}Colossians 1:4-5 p.]. Likewise, "He called us through the gospel to share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." [^{<530214>}2 Thessalonians 2:14 p.] Hence it is called "the word of salvation" [^{<441326>}Acts 13:26], "the power of God to save believers" [^{<450116>}Romans 1:16 p.], and "the Kingdom of Heaven" [^{<400302>}Matthew 3:2; ch. 13]. But if the doctrine of the gospel is spiritual, and gives us access to the possession of incorruptible life, let us not think that those to whom it had been promised and announced omitted and neglected the care of the soul, ^{f327} and sought after fleshly pleasures like stupid beasts. Let no one perversely say here that the promises concerning the gospel, sealed in the Law and the Prophets, were intended for the new people. ^{f328} For the apostle, shortly after saying that the gospel was promised in the law, adds: "Whatever the law contains is without doubt intended specifically for those under the law" [^{<450319>}Romans 3:19 p.]. I admit that Paul said this in another context. But when he said that whatever the law teaches applies properly to the Jews, he was not so forgetful as to overlook what he had affirmed a few verses before concerning the gospel promised in the law [^{<450102>}Romans 1:2; cf. ch. 3:21]. When the apostle says that the promises of the gospel are contained in it, he proves with utter clarity that the Old Testament was particularly concerned with the future life.

4. EVEN IN THE OLD COVENANT JUSTIFICATION DERIVES ITS VALIDITY FROM GRACE ALONE

For the same reason it follows that the Old Testament was established upon the free mercy of God, and was confirmed by Christ's intercession. For the gospel preaching, too, declares nothing else than that sinners are

justified apart from their own merit by God's fatherly kindness; and the whole of it is summed up in Christ. Who, then, dares to separate the Jews from Christ, since with them, we hear, was made the covenant of the gospel, the sole foundation of which is Christ? Who dares to estrange from the gift of free salvation ^{f329} those to whom we hear the doctrine of the righteousness of faith was imparted? Not to dispute too long about something obvious — we have a notable saying of the Lord: “Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it and was glad” [^{<430856>} John 8:56]. And what Christ there testified concerning Abraham, the apostle shows to have been universal among the believing folk when he says: “Christ remains, yesterday and today and forever” [^{<581308>} Hebrews 13:8]. Paul is not speaking there simply of Christ's everlasting divinity but of his power, a power perpetually available to believers. Therefore, both the blessed Virgin and Zacharias in their songs called the salvation revealed in Christ the manifestation of the promises that the Lord had formerly made to Abraham and the patriarchs [^{<420154>} Luke 1:54-55, 72-73]. If the Lord, in manifesting his Christ, discharged his ancient oath, one cannot but say that the Old Testament always had its end in Christ and in eternal life. ^{f330}

5. SIMILAR SIGNS OF THE COVENANT

Indeed, the apostle makes the Israelites equal to us not only in the grace of the covenant but also in the signification of the sacraments. In recounting examples of the punishments with which, according to Scripture, the Israelites were chastised of old, his purpose was to deter the Corinthians from falling into similar misdeeds. So he begins with this premise: there is no reason why we should claim any privilege for ourselves, to deliver us from the vengeance of God, which they underwent, since the Lord not only provided them with the same benefits but also manifested his grace among them by the same symbols [cf. ^{<461001>} 1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 11]. ^{f331} It is as if he said: “Suppose you trust that you are out of danger because both Baptism, with which you have been sealed, and the Supper, of which you partake daily, possess excellent promises, but at the same time you hold God's goodness in contempt and play the wanton. Know that the Jews did not lack such symbols, and yet the Lord carried out his harsh judgments against them. They were baptized in crossing the sea and in the cloud that protected them from the sun's heat.” Our opponents call that

crossing a carnal baptism, which corresponds in a certain measure to our spiritual baptism. But if that were accepted as true, the apostle's argument would not be effective. For Paul here means to disabuse Christians of thinking they are superior to the Jews through the privilege of baptism. Nor is what immediately follows subject to this cavil: "They ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink" [^{<461003>} 1 Corinthians 10:3-4]. This he interprets as referring to Christ. ^{f332}

6. REFUTATION OF AN OBJECTION BASED ON ^{<430649>} JOHN 6:49, 54

To overthrow this statement of Paul's, they make an objection of what Christ says: "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died" [^{<430649>} John 6:49]. "He who eats my flesh, shall not die forever" [^{<430654>} John 6:54]. These two passages can be made to agree without any trouble. Because the Lord was then talking to hearers who were trying only to fill their bellies with food, but were not concerned about the true food of the soul, he accommodated his language somewhat to their capacity; especially making the comparison of manna and their bodies in accordance with their understanding. They demanded that, to gain authority for himself, he prove his power by some miracle, such as Moses performed in the wilderness when he obtained manna from heaven. But by "manna" they understood nothing but the remedy for the physical hunger that then afflicted the people. They did not penetrate into that deeper mystery with which Paul was concerned. To show how much greater benefit they ought to expect of him than what they said their fathers had received from Moses, Christ therefore made this comparison. Suppose you consider it a great and memorable miracle that the Lord gave heavenly food to his people through Moses that they might not starve in the desert, and sustained them by it for a short time. From this, then, infer how much more excellent is the food that imparts immortality. We see why the Lord passed over the principal feature of manna and noted only its lowest use. It is because the Jews, trying to reproach him, had pitted Moses against him, because with manna he had succored the people in their need. To this he replies that he is the minister of a far higher grace, in comparison with which the physical sustenance of the people, which alone they highly esteemed, deserved to be despised. Paul knew that when the Lord rained

man from heaven he did not do so merely to feed their bellies, but also bestowed it as a spiritual mystery, to foreshadow the spiritual quickening we have in Christ [^{<461001>} 1 Corinthians 10:1-5]. Therefore he did not neglect this aspect, the one principally worth considering. From this we can conclude with full certainty that the Lord not only communicated to the Jews the same promises of eternal and heavenly life as he now deigns to give us, but also sealed them with truly spiritual sacraments. Augustine debates this matter at length in his work *Against Faustus the Manichee*.^{f333}

(Argument concerning the hope of eternal life, showing that the Old Testament patriarchs looked for fulfillment of the promises in the life to come, 7-14)

7. THE FATHERS HAD THE WORD; WITH IT THEY ALSO HAD ETERNAL LIFE,

But my readers may prefer to have testimonies cited from the Law and the Prophets, to prove to them that, as we have heard from Christ and the apostles, the spiritual covenant was also common to the patriarchs. Well then, I shall comply with their desire, and the more willingly because our adversaries will thus be more surely refuted; and afterward be quite unable to evade the issue.

I shall then begin with this proof — even though I know the Anabaptists will disdainfully consider it pointless and even ridiculous — yet it will be most valuable for sound and teachable folk. I take it for granted that there is such life energy in God's Word that it quickens the souls of all to whom God grants participation in it. For Peter's saying has always been valid, that it is an imperishable seed, which abides forever [^{<600123>} 1 Peter 1:23], as he also infers from Isaiah's words [^{<600124>} 1 Peter 1:24; ^{<234006>} Isaiah 40:6]. Now since God of old bound the Jews to himself by this sacred bond, there is no doubt that he set them apart to the hope of eternal life. When I say they embraced the Word to be united more closely to God, I do not mean that general mode of communication which is diffused through heaven and earth and all the creatures of the world. For although it quickens all things — each according to the measure of its nature — it still does not free them from the exigency of corruption. Rather, I mean that special mode which both illumines the souls of the pious into the

knowledge of God and, in a sense, joins them to him. Adam, Abel, Noah, Abraham, and the other patriarchs cleaved to God by such illumination of the Word. Therefore I say that without any doubt they entered into God's immortal Kingdom. For theirs was a real participation in God, which cannot be without the blessing of eternal life.

8. IN THE OLD COVENANT, GOD GAVE HIS PEOPLE FELLOWSHIP WITH HIMSELF AND THUS ETERNAL LIFE

Does this still seem a little unclear? Well, then, let us pass on to the very formula of the covenant. This will not only satisfy calm spirits but will also abundantly demonstrate the ignorance of those who try to contradict it. For the Lord always covenanted with his servants thus: "I will be your God, and you shall be my people" [^{<032612>}Leviticus 26:12]. The prophets also commonly explained that life and salvation and the whole of blessedness are embraced in these words. For with good reason David often declares: "Blessed the people whose God is the Lord" [Psalm 144: 15]; "Blessed ...the nation whom he has chosen as his heritage" [^{<193312>}Psalm 33:12]. This is not for the sake of earthly happiness, but because he delivers them from death, he preserves forever and keeps in his everlasting mercy those whom he has chosen as his people. The other prophets speak similarly: "Thou art our God; we shall not die" [^{<350112>}Habakkuk 1:12 p.]. "The Lord is our king, our lawgiver; he will save us" [^{<233322>}Isaiah 33:22]. "Blessed are you, O Israel for in the Lord God you are saved" [^{<053329>}Deuteronomy 33:29 p.].

But not to belabor superfluous matters, this admonition repeatedly occurs in the Prophets: we lack nothing for an abundance of all good things and for assurance of salvation so long as the Lord is our God. And rightly so! For if his face, the moment that it has shone forth, is a very present pledge of salvation, how can he manifest himself to a man as his God without also opening to him the treasures of His salvation? He is our God on this condition: that he dwell among us, as he has testified through Moses [^{<032611>}Leviticus 26:11]. But one cannot obtain such a presence of him without, at the same time, possessing life. And although nothing further was expressed, they had a clear enough promise of spiritual life in these words: "I am ...your God" [^{<020607>}Exodus 6:7]. For he did not declare that he would be a God to their bodies alone, but especially to their souls. Still,

souls, unless they be joined to God through righteousness, remain estranged from him in death. On the other hand, such a union when present will bring everlasting salvation with it.

9. EVEN IN THE OLD COVENANT, GOD’S GOODNESS WAS STRONGER THAN DEATH

Besides this, he not only testified that he was, but also promised that he would ever be, their God. This he did that their hope, not content with present benefits, might be extended to eternity. Many passages show that this characterization of the future life was so understood among them, when believers were comforted not only amid present misfortunes but for the future by the thought that God would never fail them. Now, in the second part of the promise, he even more clearly assured them that God’s blessing would for their sake extend beyond the limits of earthly life: “I shall be the God of your seed after you” [^{<011707>}Genesis 17:7 p.]. For if he was going to declare his benevolence toward the dead by benefiting their offspring, much less was his favor to fail toward themselves. For God is not like men, who transfer their love to their friends’ children because their opportunity to perform their duties toward those to whom they wish to do well is broken off by death. God, however, whose beneficence is not hindered by death, does not withdraw the fruit of his mercy from the dead, but for their sake “conveys it to a thousand generations” [^{<022006>}Exodus 20:6 p.]. By this splendid proof, therefore, the Lord willed to commend to them the greatness and abundance of his goodness, which they were to experience after death, when he described it as overflowing to all their posterity. The Lord then sealed the truth of this promise, bringing about its fulfillment, so to speak, when he called himself “the God of Abraham ... Isaac, and ... Jacob” long after their death [^{<020306>}Exodus 3:6]. Why? Was this not an absurd title if they had perished? Then it would have been as if he had said: “I am the God of those who do not exist.” Hence, the Evangelists relate that Christ confuted the Sadducees by this one proof [^{<402223>}Matthew 22:23-32; ^{<422027>}Luke 20:27-38]; so that they could not even deny that Moses had testified to the resurrection of the dead, that is, those who had learned from Moses himself that “all the saints are in His hand” [^{<053303>}Deuteronomy 33:3 p.]. From this it was easy to conclude

that they whom he, who is judge of death and life, had received into his tutelage, care, and protection are not snuffed out even by death.

10. THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE ANCIENT PEOPLE WAS NOT EARTHLY

Now let us examine the chief point in this controversy: whether or not the believers were so taught by the Lord as to perceive that they had a better life elsewhere; and, disregarding the earthly life, to meditate upon the heavenly. First, the manner of life divinely enjoined upon them was a continual exercise by which they were reminded that they were the most miserable of all men if they were happy in this life only. Adam, most unhappy from the mere remembrance of his lost happiness, meagerly sustained his need with anxious toil. And as if it were not enough to be weighed down with physical labor by God's curse [^{<010317>}Genesis 3:17], he sustained extreme sorrow in such solace as remained to him. Of his two sons one was wickedly murdered by the other [^{<010408>}Genesis 4:8]. Adam had good reason to detest and recoil from the sight of his surviving son. Abel, cruelly slaughtered in the flower of his age, is an example of human calamity. While the whole earth lives in carefree pleasures, Noah spends a good part of his life in great weariness building the ark [^{<010622>}Genesis 6:22]. He escapes death by that which brings greater troubles than if he had died a hundred deaths. Besides the fact that the ark was a sort of grave for him for ten months, there can be nothing more unpleasant than to be confined so long — almost immersed in the dung of animals! Having surmounted such great difficulties, he falls into new occasions for grief. He sees himself held in derision by his own son, and is obliged to curse with his own mouth him whom by God's great benefit he had received safe from the Flood [^{<010924>}Genesis 9:24-25].

11. THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM

We ought to esteem Abraham as one equal to a hundred thousand if we consider his faith, which is set before us as the best model of believing; to be children of God, we must be reckoned as members of his tribe [^{<011203>}Genesis 12:3]. Now what could be more absurd than for Abraham to be the father of all believers [cf. ^{<011705>}Genesis 17:5] and yet not to possess even the remotest corner among them? But he cannot be removed

from their number — not even from the very highest rank of honor — without wiping out the whole church. Now as for the experiences of his life — when he is first called by God’s command [^{<011201>}Genesis 12:1], he is taken away from his country, parents, and friends, considered by men the sweetest things in life, as if God deliberately intended to strip him of all life’s delights. As soon as he has reached the land in which he has been bidden to dwell, he is driven from it by famine [^{<011210>}Genesis 12:10]. Seeking aid, he flees to a place where he has to prostitute his wife to save his life [^{<011211>}Genesis 12:11 ff.], an act probably more bitter than many deaths. When he has returned to the land of his abode, he is again driven from it by famine. What sort of happiness this — to dwell in a land where you often have to go hungry, even perish from hunger, unless you flee from it? He is reduced to the same straits in the land of Abimelech, so that to save his own head he has to suffer the loss of his wife [^{<012001>}Genesis 20:1 ff.]. While in uncertainty he wanders about hither and thither for many years, he is compelled by the continual quarreling of his servants to dismiss his nephew whom he cherished as his own son [^{<011305>}Genesis 13:5-9]. Doubtless he bore this separation as if he had undergone the amputation of a limb. Shortly thereafter, Abraham hears that his nephew has been taken captive by enemies [^{<011414>}Genesis 14:14-16]. Wherever he goes, he finds terribly barbarous neighbors who do not even let him drink water out of the wells that he had dug with great labor. For he would not have recovered the use of them from King Gerar had he not first been denied it [^{<012125>}Genesis 21:25-31]. Now when he has reached a worn-out old age, he finds himself childless [^{<011502>}Genesis 15:2] — the most unpleasant and bitter feature of age. Finally, beyond all hope, he begets Ishmael [^{<011615>}Genesis 16:15], but the birth of this son costs him dear. For he is wearied by Sarah’s reproaches, as if he, by encouraging the handmaid’s arrogance, were himself the cause of domestic strife [^{<011605>}Genesis 16:5]. Finally, Isaac is born [^{<012102>}Genesis 21:2], but with this condition — Ishmael, the first-born, is to be driven out and forsaken almost like an enemy [^{<012109>}Genesis 21:9 ff.]. When Isaac alone is left, in whom the weary old age of the good man may repose, he is shortly after ordered to sacrifice him [^{<012201>}Genesis 22:1 ff.]. What more frightful thing can the human mind imagine than for a father to become the executioner of his own son? If Isaac had died of sickness, who would not have thought Abraham the most miserable of old men — given a son in jest

— on whose account his grief of childlessness should be doubled? If he had been killed by some stranger, the calamity would have been much increased by the indignity. But for a son to be slaughtered by his own father's hand surpasses every sort of calamity. In short, throughout life he was so tossed and troubled that if anyone wished to paint a picture of a calamitous life, he could find no model more appropriate than Abraham's! Let no man object that he was not completely unhappy, because he finally came safely through so many great tempests. We will not say that he leads a happy life who struggles long and hard through infinite difficulties, but he who calmly enjoys present benefits without feeling misfortune.

12. THE FAITH OF ISAAC AND JACOB

Isaac is afflicted by lesser ills, but has scarcely even the least taste of sweetness. He also experiences such troubles as do not permit a man to be happy on earth. Famine drives him from the Land of Canaan [^{<012601>}Genesis 26:1]. His wife is torn from his bosom [^{<012607>}Genesis 26:7 ff.]. His neighbors repeatedly molest him and oppress him in every way, compelling him also to fight over water [^{<012612>}Genesis 26:12 ff.]. At home his daughters-in-law cause him great annoyance [^{<012634>}Genesis 26:34-35]. His children's strife afflicts him [^{<012741>}Genesis 27:41 ff.], and to remedy this great evil he has to exile the son whom he blessed [^{<012801>}Genesis 28:1,5].

As for Jacob, he is a notable example of nothing but extreme unhappiness. ^{f334} He passes a most troubled boyhood at home in dread of his elder brother's threats, to which he is finally compelled to yield [^{<012741>}Genesis 27:41-45]. When he flees from his parents native soil — besides the bitterness of such banishment — he is no more kindly or gently received by his uncle Laban [^{<012915>}Genesis 29:15 ff.]. It is not enough for Jacob to spend seven years in the hardest and cruelest kind of servitude [^{<012920>}Genesis 29:20] — he is also cheated of a wife by an evil trick [^{<012923>}Genesis 29:23-26]! For his second wife he has to undergo new servitude [^{<012927>}Genesis 29:27], scorched all day under the sun's heat, and pained all the wakeful night with frost and cold, as he himself complains [^{<013140>}Genesis 31:40]. While enduring this very harsh life for twenty years, he is daily afflicted by the unjust acts of his father-in-law [^{<013141>}Genesis 31:41]. And in his own household he is not quiet, for he

sees it distracted and almost scattered by the hatred, quarreling, and rivalry of his wives [^{<013001>}Genesis 30:1 ff.]. Commanded to return to his country, he has to take his departure as if in ignominious flight [^{<013117>}Genesis 31:17 ff.]. And yet he cannot escape the wickedness of his father-in-law without being plagued in the midst of his journey by the latter's insults and abuses [^{<013123>}Genesis 31:23]. Soon much more cruel distress overtakes him. For when he approaches his brother, he sees as many deaths before him as a cruel enemy could devise. Therefore, he is tortured beyond measure and wracked with terrible fears while waiting for Esau to come [^{<013207>}Genesis 32:7,11]. When Jacob sees Esau, he falls down half dead at his brother's feet, until he perceives him more favorable than he had dared hope [^{<013301>}Genesis 33:1 ff.]. Thereupon, when first entering the land, he loses Rachel, his dearly beloved wife [^{<013516>}Genesis 35:16-20]. Afterward he hears that the son whom he had by her, and whom for that reason he loves more than the rest, has been torn by a wild beast [^{<013731>}Genesis 37:31-32]. He is so overcome with grief at his son's death that after long weeping he obstinately refuses all consolation, leaving no course open to himself, he declares, but to go down, sorrowing, into the grave to his son. In the meantime his daughter has been seized and raped [^{<013402>}Genesis 34:2,5], and his sons in their bold revenge of this [^{<013425>}Genesis 34:25] not only make him hateful to all the inhabitants of the country but put him in ever-present peril of murder [^{<013430>}Genesis 34:30]. What great causes for anxiety, for grief, and for loathing are these! There follows that heinous crime of Reuben, his first-born son; nothing more serious than this could happen [^{<013522>}Genesis 35:22]. The defiling of a man's wife is considered among the greatest misfortunes — but what is to be said when that crime has been committed by his own son? Shortly thereafter the family is again polluted by incest [^{<013818>}Genesis 38:18]. So many shameful experiences ought to break a mind otherwise very stanch and un-bowed by calamities! Near the end of his life, when he seeks to allay his own hunger and that of his family, he is struck by the announcement of a new misfortune: he learns that another of his sons has been put in prison. To get him back, Jacob is compelled to commit Benjamin, his one and only joy, to the care of others [^{<014234>}Genesis 42:34,38]. Who can imagine that in such a flood of misfortunes he would have a single moment to breathe in peace? Accordingly, as his own best witness, he declares to Pharaoh that his days upon the earth have been

short and evil [^{<014709>}Genesis 47:9]. He asserts that he has passed his life in continual misery, and absolutely denies that he has experienced the prosperity which the Lord had promised him. Therefore, either Jacob was a hostile and ungrateful appraiser of God's favor, or he truly professed that he had been miserable on earth. If this affirmation was true, it follows that he did not have his hope set upon earthly things.

13. THE PATRIARCHS SOUGHT FOR EVERLASTING LIFE

If these holy patriarchs looked for a blessed life, as they undoubtedly did, from God's hand, they both conceived and saw it as a blessedness other than that of earthly life. The apostle very beautifully shows this: "By faith," he says, "Abraham sojourned in the Land of Promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For they looked forward to the well-founded city, whose builder and maker is God ... These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and believed them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. By this they mean that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been struck with desire of that land which they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. But ... they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city" [^{<581109>}Hebrews 11:9-10,13-16 p.]. For they would have been more stupid than blocks of wood to keep on pursuing the promises when no hope of these appeared on earth, unless they expected them to be fulfilled elsewhere. And Paul very rightly insists, first of all, that they call this life a "sojourn," just as Moses also speaks of it [^{<014709>}Genesis 47:9]. For if they are strangers and sojourners in the Land of Canaan, where is the promise of the Lord that made them heirs of Abraham? Obviously, then, the Lord's promise of possession to them refers to something far different. Therefore, "they did not acquire even a foot's length" [^{<440705>}Acts 7:5 p.] in the Land of Canaan, except for a grave. By this they testified that they hoped to receive the fruit of the promise only after death. And this is the reason why Jacob so esteemed being buried there as to bind his son Joseph by an oath to this promise [^{<014729>}Genesis 47:29-30]; this is why Joseph commanded that his own bones were to be transferred there at a time some centuries later, long after they had fallen into dust [^{<015025>}Genesis 50:25].

14. DEATH FOR THE SAINTS THE ENTRANCE TO LIFE

Finally, it is clearly established that in all their efforts in this life they set before themselves the blessedness of the future life. If Jacob was not intent upon a higher blessing, why did he desire so much and seek at such great risk the right of the first-born, which was to procure him exile and almost disinheritance, but bring no good at all [^{<012741>} Genesis 27:41]? With his last breath he declared that this was his intent: “I shall wait for thy salvation, O Lord” [^{<014918>} Genesis 49:18, Vg.]. What salvation could he have waited for, when he knew he was dying, unless he discerned in death the beginning of a new life? Why are we debating concerning holy men and children of God when even one who was otherwise trying to assail the truth had some inkling of such understanding? What did Balaam mean when he said: “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like theirs” [^{<042310>} Numbers 23:10 p.] — unless he felt what David afterward declared: “Precious in the Lord’s sight is the death of the saints” [^{<19B615>} Psalm 116:15], but “the death of the impious is very evil” [^{<193322>} Psalm 33:22, Vg.; 34:21, EV]? If the final boundary and goal were in death ^{f335} in it no difference could be observed between just and unjust. But they differ from each other in what awaits them after death.

(This argument continued with references to passages from David, Job, Ezekiel, and others, 15-22)

15. DAVID AS PROCLAIMER OF HOPE

We have not yet progressed beyond Moses. According to our opponents, he performed no other office than to induce carnal folk to worship God by promising them fertile fields and an abundance of all things. Yet, unless we willfully shun the proffered light, we already possess a clear affirmation of the spiritual covenant. If we proceed to the prophets, in them eternal life and Christ’s Kingdom are revealed in fullest splendor.

First David, as he preceded the others in time, also represented the heavenly mysteries according to the order of divine dispensation more obscurely than the rest. Nevertheless, with what great clearness and certainty he directs all his words to that goal! This sentence testifies how much he values any earthly habitation: “Here I am a stranger, a sojourner, like all my fathers” [^{<193912>} Psalm 39:12]. “Every living man is vanity!

Each one goes about as a shadow” [^{<193905>}Psalm 39:5-6 p.]! “And now, Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in thee!” [^{<193907>}Psalm 39:7.] Surely he who has confessed that there is nothing solid or stable on earth, yet holds fast to a firm faith in God, contemplates his happiness as reposing elsewhere. David habitually calls believers back to that contemplation whenever he wishes to bring them true consolation. For in another passage, after he has spoken of the brevity and the fleeting and transitory image of man’s life, he adds: “But the mercy of the Lord is everlasting upon those who fear him” [^{<19A317>}Psalm 103:17]. This is similar to what he says in Psalm 102: “In the beginning, O Lord, thou didst found the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They will perish, but thou dost endure; they will all wear out like a garment, and thou wilt change them like raiment But thou art the same, and thy years will not fail. The children of thy servants shall dwell; their posterity shall be established before thee” [^{<19A225>}Psalm 102:25-28; cf. ^{<19A102>}Psalm 101:26-29, Vg.]. If the godly do not cease to be established before the Lord despite the destruction of heaven and earth, it follows that their salvation is joined to God’s eternity.

Yet this hope cannot stand at all unless it rests on the promise that is set forth in Isaiah: “The heavens,” says the Lord, “will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die like these; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never fail” [^{<195106>}Psalm 51:6, Vg.]. There perpetuity is attributed to righteousness and salvation, not in so far as these reside in God, but as they are experienced by men.

16. ADDITIONAL PASSAGES APPLICABLE TO THE FUTURE LIFE

And what he sings in many passages in the Psalms about the prosperity of believers may not otherwise be grasped unless it be applied to the manifestation of heavenly glory. Such passages are these: “The Lord ...preserves the souls of his saints; from the sinner’s hand he will free them” [^{<199710>}Psalm 97:10]. “Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.” [Psalm 97:11.] Likewise, “The righteousness of the godly endures forever; his horn will be exalted in glory.” [^{<19B109>}Psalm 111:9, Vg.; 112:9, EV.] “The desire of the wicked man will come to nought.” [^{<19B110>}Psalm 111:10, Vg.; 112:10, EV.] Also, “Surely the

righteous shall confess thy name; the upright shall dwell in thy presence.” [^{<19D914>}Psalm 139:14, Vg.; ^{<19E003>}Psalm 140:3, EV.] Again, “The righteous ... will be remembered forever.” [^{<19B206>}Psalm 112:6.] And another, “The Lord will redeem the souls of his servants.” [^{<193422>}Psalm 34:22.] For the Lord often leaves his servants not only to be troubled by the lust of the wicked but to be torn and destroyed. He lets good men languish in darkness and filth, while the wicked almost shine among the stars. And he does not so cheer them with the brightness of his countenance that they enjoy lasting happiness. For this reason not even David disguises the fact that if believers keep their eyes fastened upon the present state of things, they will be smitten by very grievous temptation, as if there were for innocence neither favor nor reward with God. So very greatly does impiety prosper and flourish, while the company of the godly is oppressed by disgrace, poverty, contempt, and every kind of cross! ^{f336} “My foot,” David said, “had almost stumbled, my steps had well-nigh slipped ... while I was envious of the prosperity of fools, while I saw the good fortune of the wicked.” [^{<197302>}Psalm 73:2-3 P.] Yet he concludes his statement: “I pondered whether I could understand this, but it is a torment to my spirit, until I shall go into the sanctuary of the Lord and perceive their end” [^{<197316>}Psalm 73:16-17 p.].

17. THE HOPE OF THE GODLY RISES ABOVE PRESENT CALAMITIES TO THE FUTURE LIFE

Let us, therefore, learn from this confession of David’s that the holy patriarchs under the Old Testament were aware how rarely or never God fulfills in this world what he promises to his servants; and that they therefore lifted up their hearts to God’s sanctuary, in which they found hidden what does not appear in the shadows of the present life. This place was the Last Judgment of God, which, although they could not discern it with their eyes, they were content to understand by faith. Relying upon this assurance, they did not doubt that, whatever might happen in the world, the time would nevertheless come when God’s promises would be fulfilled. So these statements witness: “I shall behold thy face in righteousness ... I shall be satisfied with thy countenance” [^{<191715>}Psalm 17:15 p.]. Again, “I am like a green olive tree in the house of the Lord.” [^{<195208>}Psalm 52:8 p.] Again: “The righteous shall flourish like the palm

tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Planted in the house of the Lord, they shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit; in old age they shall be fat and green” [^{<199212>} Psalm 92:12-14 p.]. A little before, he had said: “How deep are thy thoughts, O Jehovah, ...while evildoers flourish and sprout like grass, that they may perish forever” [^{<199205>} Psalm 92:5,7 p.]. Where does that beauty and grace of believers appear save when this world of appearances is overturned by the manifestation of God’s Kingdom? When they cast their eyes upon that eternity, they despised the momentary harshness of present calamities and burst forth fearlessly in these words: “Thou wilt not allow the righteous to die. But thou ...wilt cast the wicked down into the pit of destruction” [^{<195522>} Psalm 55:22-23 p., cf. Comm.]. Where in this world is there a pit of eternal destruction that swallows up the wicked, in whose felicity another passage includes also the following: “They end their days in a moment without much languishing” [^{<182113>} Job 21:13, cf. Comm.]. Where is that great stability of the saints who, as David himself everywhere laments, not only are violently shaken, but utterly oppressed and consumed? That is, he set before his eyes not what the changing course of the world brings — more unstable than the ocean tides — but what the Lord will do when he will one day sit in judgment to determine the permanent state of heaven and earth.

The psalmist aptly describes this in another passage: “Fools trust in their wealth, and boast of the abundance of their riches. And yet no one, however much he may excel in dignity, can redeem his brother from death; no one can pay to God the price of redemption ...Even when they see that the wise die, the wicked and the foolish alike perish and leave their wealth to others, they still think that their houses will abide forever and their dwellings will last eternally, and they sing the praises of their own names on earth. But man will not remain in honor: he will be like the beasts that perish. It is the height of folly for them to think this way, yet their posterity avidly copy them. They will be gathered in hell like a flock; death shall rule over them. When the light dawns, the righteous shall rule over them; their beauty shall perish; hell shall be their home” [^{<194906>} Psalm 49:6-14 p., cf. Comm.].

This mockery of fools for reposing in the slippery and fleeting “blessings” of the world shows in the first place that the wise should seek a far

different kind of happiness. But then David more clearly discloses the mystery of the resurrection when he raises up the Kingdom of the godly after the wicked have been lost and destroyed. What, I ask you, shall we call that “coming of the morning” ^{f337} [cf. ^{<193005>} Psalm 30:5] but the revelation of the new life that follows the end of the present age?

18. THEIR HAPPY DESTINY CONTRASTED WITH THAT OF THE WICKED

Hence arose that aspiration which believers used as a solace of misery and as a remedy for suffering: “The Lord’s anger is but for a moment, but his mercy is for a lifetime” [^{<193005>} Psalm 30:5]. How could they end their afflictions in a moment when they were afflicted almost throughout life? Where could they see such long-lasting divine generosity, when they had scarcely tasted it? If they had clung to the earth, they could have found nothing like this. But because they looked up to heaven, they acknowledged that the saints suffer the cross at the Lord’s hands “only for a moment”; “the mercies” they receive “are everlasting” [^{<235407>} Isaiah 54:7-8 p.]. On the other hand, they foresaw an eternal and never-ending ruin of the wicked who had for one day been happy as in a dream. Thus these statements: “The memory of the righteous will be a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot” [^{<201007>} Proverbs 10:7]. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints” [^{<19B615>} Psalm 116:15]; “the death of the wicked is most evil” [^{<193421>} Psalm 34:21 p.]. Likewise, in Samuel, “The Lord will guard the feet of his holy ones; but the wicked shall become silent in darkness” [^{<090209>} 1 Samuel 2:9, Vg.].

These passages show the ancient fathers to have known well that, however the saints were buffeted about, their final end was to be life and salvation, while the way of the wicked is a pleasant felicity by which they gradually slip into the whirlpool of death. They therefore called the death of the wicked “the destruction of the uncircumcized” [^{<262810>} Ezekiel 28:10; cf. chs. 31:18; 32:19 ff.; etc.], meaning that they had been cut off from the hope of resurrection. David, therefore, could think of no graver curse than this: “Let them be blotted out of the book of life; let them not be enrolled among the righteous” [^{<196928>} Psalm 69:28].

19. JOB AS WITNESS OF IMMORTALITY

More remarkable than the other passages is this saying of Job's: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and I shall be resurrected from the earth on the Last Day; ...and in my flesh I shall see God my Savior. This my hope abides in my breast" [^{<181925>}Job 19:25-27, Vg.]. They who wish to parade their cleverness, cavil that this is not to be understood as referring to the final resurrection, but to the first day on which Job hoped that God would deal more kindly with him. ^{f338} This we concede in part. Still, we shall force them to admit, whether they are willing or not, that Job could not have attained this lofty hope if his aspiration had rested on earth. We must therefore acknowledge that he lifted up his eyes to a future immortality, for he saw that his Redeemer would be with him even as he lay in the tomb. Indeed, for those who think only of the present life death is the final despair, but this could not cut off Job's hope. "Even if he slay me," he said, "I shall nonetheless hope in him." [^{<181315>}Job 13:15, Vg., cf. Comm.]

Let no quibbler cry out upon me that these are the statements of a few persons, quite insufficient to prove that the Jews held such a doctrine. I will at once answer him: these few people did not manifest in such statements any secret wisdom to which only excellent spirits might individually and privately be admitted. But, as they had been appointed the teachers of the common people by the Holy Spirit, they widely published the mysteries of God that were appointed to be learned and that ought to be the principles of the religion of the people. Therefore, when we hear the public oracles of the Holy Spirit, in which he so clearly and plainly discussed spiritual life in the church of the Jews, it would be intolerable stubbornness to relegate them solely to a carnal covenant, wherein mention is made only of the earth and of earthly riches.

20. THE WITNESS OF THE PROPHETS TO IMMORTALITY

Coming down to the later prophets, we can walk freely, as it were, in our own field. For, if we proved our point without difficulty as far as David, Job, and Samuel were concerned, in the Prophets it is much easier. The Lord held to this orderly plan in administering the covenant of his mercy: as the day of full revelation approached with the passing of time, the more he increased each day the brightness of its manifestation. ^{f339} Accordingly,

at the beginning when the first promise of salvation was given to Adam [^{<010315>}Genesis 3:15] it glowed like a feeble spark. Then, as it was added to, the light grew in fullness, breaking forth increasingly and shedding its radiance more widely. At last — when all the clouds were dispersed — Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, fully illumined the whole earth [cf. Malachi chapter 4]. We need not fear lest the prophets fail us when we seek their support to prove our point. A huge forest of material, I see, looms before us. Over this we should have to tarry much longer than the plan of this work permits; for this would require a large volume, but for the fact that I have, I believe, blazed a trail for the moderately discerning reader through this forest whereby he may go forward without stumbling. Hence I shall avoid a prolixity here unnecessary.

Nevertheless, I shall warn my readers beforehand to remember to open up their way with the key that I previously put into their hands. ^{f340} That is, whenever the prophets recount the believing people's blessedness, hardly the least trace of which is discerned in the present life, ^{f341} let them take refuge in this distinction: the better to commend God's goodness, the prophets represented it for the people under the lineaments, so to speak, of temporal benefits. But they painted a portrait such as to lift up the minds of the people above the earth, above the elements of this world [cf. ^{<480403>}Galatians 4:3] and the perishing age, and that would of necessity arouse them to ponder the happiness of the spiritual life to come.

21. THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES IN EZEKIEL

We shall confine ourselves to one example. When the Israelites had been carried off to Babylon they realized that their dispersion was very much like death. Accordingly, they took Ezekiel's prophecy of their restoration as a mere fable. To disabuse them of this view was difficult, for they understood his announcement literally to mean that decaying corpses were to be restored to life! The Lord, to demonstrate that even this difficulty could not prevent him from making room for his benefaction, showed the prophet a vision of a field full of dry bones to which he imparted life and growth in a moment solely by the power of his Word [^{<263701>}Ezekiel 37:1-14]. Indeed, the vision served to correct the unbelief of that time, but in the meantime it impressed upon the Jews how much the Lord's power extended beyond the restoration of the people, since at but a nod it could

readily bring to life these dry and scattered bones. For this reason, you will duly compare Ezekiel's words with a passage from Isaiah: "The dead shall live, my corpse, they shall rise again. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For the dew of the green field is thy dew; and you shall drag the land of the giants into ruin. Come, my people, enter into your tents; shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the wrath is past. For behold, the Lord will come from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose her blood, and will no longer cover her slain" [^{<232619>}Isaiah 26:19-21 p., cf. Comm.].

22. ADDITIONAL PASSAGES FROM OTHER PROPHETS

If someone should try to reduce all the other passages to this sort of formula, he would be acting absurdly. For there are some passages that show without concealment the future immortality prepared for believers in the Kingdom of God. We have recounted some of these. Most of the rest are of the same kind, especially these two. The first is from Isaiah: "As the new heaven and the new earth, which I make to stand before me ...so shall your seed ...stand. From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, says the Lord. And they shall go forth and look on the corpses of the men that have rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched" [^{<236622>}Isaiah 66:22-24, Vg.]. The other passage is from Daniel: "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the children of God's people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since the nations began ...And at that time all your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book. And of those who sleep in the dust of the earth, some shall awake to everlasting life, and some to everlasting contempt" [^{<271201>}Daniel 12:1-2, Vg., slightly altered].

23. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION: THE AGREEMENT OF THE TESTAMENTS ON ETERNAL LIFE

There are two remaining points: that the Old Testament fathers

(1) had Christ as pledge of their covenant, and

(2) put in him all trust of future blessedness.

These I shall not labor to prove because they are less controversial and clearer. Let us, therefore, boldly establish a principle unassailable by any stratagems of the devil: the Old Testament or Covenant that the Lord had made with the Israelites had not been limited to earthly things, but contained a promise of spiritual and eternal life. The expectation of this must have been impressed upon the hearts of all who truly consented to the covenant. But away with this insane and dangerous opinion — that the Lord promised the Jews, or that they sought for themselves, nothing but a full belly, delights of the flesh, flourishing wealth, outward power, fruitfulness of offspring, and whatever the natural man prizes! Christ the Lord promises to his followers today no other “Kingdom of Heaven” than that in which they may “sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” [^{<400811>} Matthew 8:11]. Peter declared that the Jews of his day were heirs of the grace of the gospel because they were “the sons of the prophets, included in the covenant which the Lord of old made with his people” [^{<440325>} Acts 3:25 p.]. That this might not be attested in words only, the Lord also approved it by deed. At the moment of his resurrection, he deemed many of the saints worthy of sharing in his resurrection and let them be seen in the city of Jerusalem [^{<402752>} Matthew 27:52-53]. In this he has given a sure pledge that whatever he did or suffered in acquiring eternal salvation pertains to the believers of the Old Testament as much as to ourselves. Truly, as Peter testifies, they were endowed with the same Spirit of faith whereby we are reborn into life [^{<441508>} Acts 15:8]. We hear that that Spirit who is like a spark of immortality in us, and for this reason is called in another place the “guarantee of our inheritance” [^{<490114>} Ephesians 1:14], dwelt in like manner in them. How, then, dare we deprive them of the inheritance of life? All the more amazing that the Sadducees of old fell into such stupidity as to deny both the resurrection [^{<402223>} Matthew 22:23; ^{<442308>} Acts 23:8] and the existence of souls, ^{f342} after the Scripture had sealed both doctrines with such clear testimonies!

Nor would the obtuseness of the whole Jewish nation today in awaiting the Messiah’s earthly kingdom be less monstrous, had the Scriptures not foretold long before that they would receive this punishment for having rejected the gospel. For it so pleased God in righteous judgment to strike blind the minds of those who by refusing the offered light of heaven

voluntarily brought darkness upon themselves. Therefore, they read Moses and continually ponder his writings, but they are hampered by a veil from seeing the light shining in his face [^{<470313>} 2 Corinthians 3:13-15]. Thus, Moses' face will remain covered and hidden from them until it be turned to Christ, from whom they now strive to separate and withdraw it as much as they can.

CHAPTER 11

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO TESTAMENTS

(1. The Old Testament differs from the New in five respects: representation of spiritual blessings by temporal, 1-3)

1. STRESS ON EARTHLY BENEFITS WHICH, HOWEVER, WERE TO LEAD TO HEAVENLY CONCERNS

What then? You will ask: will no difference remain between the Old and New Testaments? What is to become of the many passages of Scripture wherein they are contrasted as utterly different?

I freely admit the differences in Scripture, to which attention is called, but in such a way as not to detract from its established unity. This will become apparent when we have discussed them in their order. Those chief differences, as far as I can note or remember, are four in number. If anyone wants to add a fifth difference, I shall not object at all. I say that all these pertain to the manner of dispensation rather than to the substance, and I undertake to show this. In this way there will be nothing to hinder the promises of the Old and New Testaments from remaining the same, nor from having the same foundation of these very promises, Christ! ^{f343}

Now this is the first difference: the Lord of old willed that his people direct and elevate their minds to the heavenly heritage; yet, to nourish them better in this hope, he displayed it for them to see and, so to speak, taste, under earthly benefits. But now that the gospel has more plainly and clearly revealed the grace of the future life, the Lord leads our minds to meditate upon it directly, laying aside the lower mode of training that he used with the Israelites.

Those who do not pay attention to this plan of God think that the ancient people did not transcend those benefits promised to the body. They hear that the Land of Canaan is very often characterized as the excellent and

even sole reward for the keepers of God's law. They hear that the Lord threatens the transgressors of his law with nothing harsher than expulsion from possession of this land, and dispersion into foreign regions [cf. ^{<032633>} Leviticus 26:33; ^{<052836>} Deuteronomy 28:36]. They see herein almost the sum total of the blessings and curses uttered by Moses. From such evidence they unhesitatingly conclude that the Jews were set apart from all other peoples not for their own benefit but for that of others, in order that the Christian church might have an outward image in which it might discern proofs of spiritual things. But Scripture sometimes shows that God, in conferring all these earthly benefits on them, determined to lead them by his own hand to the hope of heavenly things. Hence it was the height of ignorance — nay, blockishness — not to consider this sort of dispensation.

The point of our quarrel with men of this sort is this: they teach that the Israelites deemed the possession of the Land of Canaan their highest and ultimate blessedness, and that after the revelation of Christ it typified for us the heavenly inheritance.^{f344} We contend, on the contrary, that, in the earthly possession they enjoyed, they looked, as in a mirror, upon the future inheritance they believed to have been prepared for them in heaven.

2. THE EARTHLY PROMISES CORRESPONDED TO THE CHILDHOOD OF THE CHURCH IN THE OLD COVENANT; BUT WERE NOT TO CHAIN HOPE TO EARTHLY THINGS

This will be more apparent from the comparison that Paul made in the letter to the Galatians. He compares the Jewish nation to a child heir, not yet fit to take care of himself, under the charge of a guardian or tutor to whose care he has been entrusted [^{<480401>} Galatians 4:1-2]. Although Paul applies this comparison chiefly to the ceremonies, nothing prevents us from applying it most appropriately here as well. Therefore the same inheritance was appointed for them and for us, but they were not yet old enough^{f345} to be able to enter upon it and manage it. The same church existed among them, but as yet in its childhood. Therefore, keeping them under this tutelage, the Lord gave, not spiritual promises unadorned and open, but ones foreshadowed, in a measure, by earthly promises. When, therefore, he adopted Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants into the hope of immortality, he promised them the Land of Canaan as an

inheritance. It was not to be the final goal of their hopes, but was to exercise and confirm them, as they contemplated it, in hope of their true inheritance, an inheritance not yet manifested to them. And that they might not be deceived, a higher promise was given, attesting that the land was not God's supreme benefit. Thus Abraham is not allowed to sit idly by when he receives the promise of the land, but his mind is elevated to the Lord by a greater promise. For he hears: "I am your protector, Abraham; your reward shall be very great" [^{<011501>}Genesis 15:1 p.].

Here we see that for Abraham his final reward is put in the Lord alone — so as not to seek a fleeting and elusive reward in the elements of this world [cf. ^{<480403>}Galatians 4:3], but an imperishable one.

Then he adds the promise of the land, solely as a symbol of his benevolence and as a type of the heavenly inheritance. The saints testify in their own words that they have experienced it. David thus mounts up from temporal blessings to that highest and ultimate blessing. "My heart," he says, "and my flesh fail for desire of thee God is... my portion forever." [^{<197326>}Psalm 73:26 p.; cf. ^{<198402>}Psalm 84:2.] Again, "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup; thou holdest my inheritance." [^{<191605>}Psalm 16:5 p.] Again, "I cried to thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my hope, my portion in the land of the living." [^{<19E205>}Psalm 142:5.]

Those who dare speak thus surely profess that in their hope they transcend the world and all present benefits. Yet the prophets more often represent the blessedness of the age to come through the type that they had received from the Lord. In this sense we are to understand these sayings: "The godly will possess the land" by inheritance [^{<200221>}Proverbs 2:21 p.], but "the wicked will perish from the earth" [^{<181817>}Job 18:17 p.; cf. ^{<200222>}Proverbs 2:22; cf. Ecclesiasticus. 41:9, Vg.; cf. ch. 41:6, EV]. In many passages of Isaiah we read that Jerusalem will abound with all kinds of riches, and Zion shall overflow with plenty of all things [cf. ^{<233510>}Isaiah 35:10; 52:1 ff.; 60:4 ff.; ch. 62]. We see that all these things cannot properly apply to the land of our pilgrimage, or to the earthly Jerusalem, but to the true homeland of believers, that heavenly city wherein "the Lord has ordained blessing and life forevermore" [^{<19D303>}Psalm 133:3].

3. PHYSICAL BENEFITS AND PHYSICAL PUNISHMENTS AS TYPES

This is why we read that the saints under the Old Testament esteemed mortal life and its blessings more than we ought today. Even though they well knew they were not to stop there as at the end of their race, yet because they recognized what the Lord had imprinted on them to be marks of divine grace to train them according to the measure of their weakness, they were attracted by its sweetness more than if they had contemplated his grace directly. But as the Lord, in testifying his benevolence toward believers by present good things, then foreshadowed spiritual happiness by such types and symbols, so on the other hand he gave, in physical punishments, proofs of his coming judgment against the wicked. Thus, as God's benefits were more conspicuous in earthly things, so also were his punishments. The ignorant, not considering this analogy and congruity, to call it that, between punishments and rewards, wonder at such great change-ableness in God. He, who once was prompt to mete out stern and terrifying punishments for every human transgression, now seems to have laid aside his former wrathful mood and punishes much more gently and rarely. Why, on that account they even go so far as to imagine different Gods for the Old and New Testaments, like the Manichees! ^{f346} But we shall readily dispose of these misgivings if we turn our attention to this dispensation of God which I have noted. He willed that, for the time during which he gave his covenant to the people of Israel in a veiled form, the grace of future and eternal happiness be signified and figured under earthly benefits, the gravity of spiritual death under physical punishments.

(ii. Truth in the Old Testament conveyed by images and ceremonies, typifying Christ, 4-6)

4. THE MEANING OF THIS DIFFERENCE

The second difference between the Old and New Testaments consists in figures: that, in the absence of the reality, it showed but an image and shadow in place of the substance; the New Testament reveals the very substance of truth as present. This difference is mentioned almost wherever the New Testament is contrasted with the Old, but a fuller discussion of it is to be found in The Letter to the Hebrews than anywhere

else.^{f347} There the apostle argues against those who thought that the observances of the Mosaic law could not be abolished without ruining the whole religion along with them. In order to refute this error, he assumes what the prophet David foretold concerning Christ's priesthood [^{<19B004>}Psalm 110:4; ^{<580711>}Hebrews 7:11]. For since Christ was given an eternal priesthood, it is certain that that priesthood, in which day after day one priest succeeded another, was abolished [^{<580723>}Hebrews 7:23]. He proves that the institution of this new priesthood will prevail because it has been established by an oath [^{<580721>}Hebrews 7:21]. Afterward he adds that in this transformation of the priesthood the covenant was also changed [^{<580806>}Hebrews 8:6-13].^{f348} He declares that this was necessary because the law in its weakness could not lead to perfection [^{<580719>}Hebrews 7:19]. Then he deals with the nature of this weakness: the law had outward physical acts of righteousness that could not make those who observed them perfect according to conscience. For through animal sacrifices it could neither blot out sins nor bring about true sanctification. He therefore concludes that there was in the law "the shadow of good things to come," not "the living likeness of the things themselves" [^{<581001>}Hebrews 10:1 p.]. Therefore its sole function was to be an introduction to the better hope that is manifested in the gospel [^{<580719>}Hebrews 7:19, and ^{<191004>}Psalm 10:4; ^{<580711>}Hebrews 7:11; 9:9;10:1].

Here we are to observe how the covenant of the law compares with the covenant of the gospel, the ministry of Christ with that of Moses. For if the comparison had reference to the substance of the promises, then there would be great disagreement between the Testaments. But since the trend of the argument leads us in another direction, we must follow it to find the truth. Let us then set forth the covenant that he once established as eternal and never-perishing. Its fulfillment, by which it is finally confirmed and ratified, is Christ. While such confirmation was awaited, the Lord appointed, through Moses, ceremonies that were, so to speak, solemn symbols of that confirmation. A controversy arose over whether or not the ceremonies that had been ordained in the law ought to give way to Christ. Now these were only the accidental properties of the covenant, or additions and appendages, and in common parlance, accessories of it. Yet because they were means of administering it, they bear the name

“covenant,” just as is customary in the case of other sacraments. To sum up, then, in this passage “Old Testament” means the solemn manner of confirming the covenant, comprised in ceremonies and sacrifices.

Because nothing substantial underlies this unless we go beyond it, the apostle contends that it ought to be terminated and abrogated, to give place to Christ, the Sponsor and Mediator of a better covenant [cf.

<580722> Hebrews 7:22]; whereby he imparts eternal sanctifications once and for all to the elect, blotting out their transgressions, which remained under the law. Or, if you prefer, understand it thus: the Old Testament of the Lord was that covenant wrapped up in the shadowy ^{f349} and ineffectual observance of ceremonies and delivered to the Jews; it was temporary because it remained, as it were, in suspense until it might rest upon a firm and substantial confirmation. It became new and eternal only after it was consecrated and established by the blood of Christ. Hence Christ in the Supper calls the cup that he gives to his disciples “the cup of the New Testament in my blood” [^{<422220>} Luke 22:20 p.]. By this he means that the Testament of God attained its truth when sealed by his blood, and thereby becomes new and eternal.

5. CHILDHOOD AND MANHOOD OF THE CHURCH

Hence it is clear in what sense the apostle said that the Jews were led to Christ by the tutelage of the law before he appeared in the flesh [^{<480324>} Galatians 3:24; cf. ^{<480401>} Galatians 4:1-2]. He also confesses that they were sons and heirs of God, but because of their youth they had to be under the charge of a tutor. It was fitting that, before the sun of righteousness had arisen, there should be no great and shining revelation, no clear understanding. The Lord, therefore, so meted out the light of his Word to them that they still saw it afar off and darkly. Hence Paul expresses this slenderness of understanding by the word “childhood.” It was the Lord’s will that this childhood be trained in the elements of this world and in little external observances, as rules for children’s instruction, until Christ should shine forth, through whom the knowledge of believers was to mature [cf. ^{<490413>} Ephesians 4:13].

Christ himself implied this distinction when he said: “The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the Kingdom of

God is preached” [^{<421616>}Luke 16:16; Cf. ^{<401113>}Matthew 11:13]. What did the Law and the Prophets teach to the men of their own time? They gave a foretaste of that wisdom which was one day to be clearly disclosed, and pointed to it twinkling afar off. But when Christ could be pointed out with the finger, the Kingdom of God was opened. In him have been revealed “all the treasures of wisdom and understanding” [^{<510203>}Colossians 2:3], whereby we attain almost to the inmost sanctuary of heaven.

6. EVEN THE GREAT MEN OF FAITH REMAINED WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE OLD COVENANT

This view is not affected by the fact that almost no one can be found in the Christian church who in excellence of faith is to be compared with Abraham; and that the prophets so excelled in the power of the Spirit as to illumine the whole world through it even today. Here we are not asking what grace the Lord has bestowed upon a few, but what ordinary dispensation he has followed in teaching his people; such as is seen even in the teaching of the prophets themselves, who were endowed with a peculiar insight above the others. For even their preaching is both obscure, like something far off, and is embodied in types. Besides, however remarkable the knowledge in which they excelled, inasmuch as they had, of necessity, to submit to the common tutelage of the people, they also are to be classed as children. Finally, no one then possessed discernment so clear as to be unaffected by the obscurity of the time. For this reason, Christ said: “Many kings and prophets longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it” [^{<421024>}Luke 10:24, cf. Vg. and Comm.]. Therefore, “Blessed are your eyes, for they see ...and your ears, for they hear.” [^{<401316>}Matthew 13:16, cf. Vg.] And it is stately right that in this privilege the presence of Christ should be pre-eminent so that from it a clearer revelation of the heavenly mysteries might come. To this also applies what we quoted before from The First Letter of Peter: that, as revealed to them, their labors were useful chiefly to our age [I Peter 1:12].^{f350}

(iii. The Old Testament is literal; the New, spiritual, 7-8)

7. BIBLICAL ORIGIN AND MEANING OF THIS DIFFERENCE

I come to the third difference, taken from Jeremiah. His words are: “Behold, the days will come, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the agreement which I made with your fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I ruled over them ... But this will be the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel ... I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts ... and I will forgive their iniquity. And each will not teach his neighbor, each man his brother. For all will know me, from the least to the greatest” [^{<243131>} Jeremiah 31:31-34, Vg., with a slight change in order]. From these words the apostle took occasion to make a comparison between the law and the gospel, calling the former literal, the latter spiritual doctrine; the former he speaks of as carved on tablets of stone, the latter as written upon men’s hearts; the former is the preaching of death, the latter of life; the former of condemnation, the latter of righteousness; the former to be made void, the latter to abide [^{<470306>} 2 Corinthians 3:6-11]. Since the apostle intended to interpret the prophet’s meaning, to understand the purport of both it will be enough to examine the words of one alone. However, there is some difference between them. For the apostle speaks more opprobriously of the law than the prophet does — not simply in respect to the law itself, but, because of certain wretches who aped the law ^{f351} and, by their perverse zeal for ceremonies, obscured the clarity of the gospel. Their error and stupid predilection prompt Paul to discuss the nature of the law. It behooves us therefore to note that particular point in Paul. But both Jeremiah and Paul, because they are contrasting the Old and New Testaments, consider nothing in the law except what properly belongs to it. For example: the law contains here and there promises of mercy, but because they have been borrowed from elsewhere, they are not counted part of the law, when only the nature of the law is under discussion. They ascribe to it only this function: to enjoin what is right, to forbid what is wicked; to promise a reward to the keepers of righteousness, and threaten transgressors with punishment; but at the same time not to change or correct the depravity of heart that by nature inheres in all men.

8. THE DIFFERENCE IN DETAIL, ACCORDING TO 2 CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 3

Now let us explain the apostle's comparison, item by item. The Old Testament is of the letter, for it was published without the working of the Spirit. The New is spiritual because the Lord has engraved it spiritually upon men's hearts [^{<470306>} 2 Corinthians 3:6a]. The second antithesis is by way of clarification of the first. The Old brings death, for it can but envelop the whole human race in a curse. The New is the instrument of life, for it frees men from the curse and restores them to God's favor [^{<470306>} 2 Corinthians 3:6b]. The Old is the ministry of condemnation, for it accuses all the sons of Adam of unrighteousness. The New is the ministry of righteousness because it reveals God's mercy, through which we are justified [^{<470309>} 2 Corinthians 3:9].

The final contrast is to be referred to the ceremonial law. For because the Old bore the image of things absent, it had to die and vanish with time. The gospel, because it reveals the very substance, stands fast forever [^{<470310>} 2 Corinthians 3:10-11]. Indeed, Jeremiah calls even the moral law a weak and fragile covenant [^{<243132>} Jeremiah 31:32]. But that is for another reason: by the sudden defection of an ungrateful people it was soon broken off. However, because the people were to blame for such a violation, it cannot properly be charged against the covenant. Now the ceremonies, because by their own weakness they were abrogated at Christ's advent, had the cause of their weakness ^{f352} within themselves. We are not to surmise from this difference between letter and spirit that the Lord had fruitlessly bestowed his law upon the Jews, and that none of them turned to him. But it was put forward by way of comparison to commend the grace abounding, wherewith the same Lawgiver — assuming, as it were, a new character — honored the preaching of the gospel. For suppose we reckon the multitude of those whom he gathers into the communion of his church from all peoples, men regenerated by his Spirit through the preaching of the gospel. Then we will say that in ancient Israel there were very few — almost none — who embraced the Lord's covenant with their whole hearts and minds. Yet, reckoned by themselves without comparison, there were many.

*(iv. Bondage of the Old Testament and freedom of the New, 9-10)***9. PAUL'S TEACHING**

The fourth difference arises out of the third. Scripture calls the Old Testament one of "bondage" because it produces fear in men's minds; but the New Testament, one of "freedom" because it lifts them to trust and assurance. So Paul states in the eighth chapter of Romans: "You did not receive the spirit of slavery again unto fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship, through which we cry, 'Abba! Father!'" [^{<450815>}Romans 8:15 p.]. The passage in Hebrews is also applicable here: that believers "have not come to a physical mountain, a blazing fire, whirlwind, gloom, and tempest," where nothing is heard or seen that does not strike minds with terror, so that when that terrible voice resounded, which they all begged not to hear, even Moses became terrified. "But they have come to Matthew Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," etc. [^{<581218>}Hebrews 12:18-22, cf. Vg.]

Paul briefly touches on this in the statement that we quoted from the letter to the Romans but explains it more fully in the letter to the Galatians, where he allegorically interprets Abraham's two sons in this way: Hagar, the bondwoman, is the type of Matthew Sinai where the Israelites received the law; Sarah, the free woman, is the figure of the heavenly Jerusalem whence flows the gospel. Hagar's offspring were born in bondage, never to arrive at the inheritance; Sarah's, free and entitled to it. In like manner, we are subjected to bondage through the law, but are restored to freedom through the gospel alone [^{<480422>}Galatians 4:22-31]. To sum up: the Old Testament struck consciences with fear and trembling, but by the benefit of the New they are released into joy. The Old held consciences bound by the yoke of bondage; the New by its spirit of liberality emancipates them into freedom.

But suppose that our opponents object that, among the Israelites, the holy patriarchs were an exception: since they were obviously endowed with the same Spirit of faith as we, it follows that they shared the same freedom and joy. To this we reply: neither of these arose from the law. But when through the law the patriarchs felt themselves both oppressed by their enslaved condition, and wearied by anxiety of conscience, they fled for

refuge to the gospel. It was therefore a particular fruit of the New Testament that, apart from the common law of the Old Testament, they were exempted from those evils. Further, we shall deny that they were so endowed with the spirit of freedom and assurance as not in some degree to experience the fear and bondage arising from the law. For, however much they enjoyed the privilege that they had received through the grace of the gospel, they were still subject to the same bonds and burdens of ceremonial observances as the common people. They were compelled to observe those ceremonies punctiliously, symbols of a tutelage resembling bondage [cf. ^{<480402>} Galatians 4:2-3]; and the written bonds [cf. ^{<510214>} Colossians 2:14], ^{f353} whereby they confessed themselves guilty of sin, did not free them from obligation. Hence, they are rightly said, in contrast to us, to have been under the testament of bondage and fear, when we consider that common dispensation by which the Lord at that time dealt with the Israelites.

10. LAW AND GOSPEL

The three latter comparisons to which we have referred ^{f354} are of the law and the gospel. In them the law is signified by the name “Old Testament,” the gospel by “New Testament.” The first ^{f355} extends more widely, for it includes within itself also the promises published before the law. Augustine, however, said that these should not be reckoned under the name “Old Testament.” This was very sensible. He meant the same thing as we are teaching: for he was referring to those statements of Jeremiah and Paul wherein the Old Testament is distinguished from the word of grace and mercy. In the same passage he very aptly adds the following: the children of the promise [^{<450908>} Romans 9:8], reborn of God, who have obeyed the commands by faith working through love [^{<480506>} Galatians 5:6], have belonged to the New Covenant since the world began. This they did, not in hope of carnal, earthly, and temporal things, but in hope of spiritual, heavenly, and eternal benefits. For they believed especially in the Mediator; and they did not doubt that through him the Spirit was given to them that they might do good, and that they were pardoned whenever they sinned. ^{f356} It is that very point which I intended to affirm: all the saints whom Scripture mentions as being peculiarly chosen of God from the beginning of the world have shared with us the same blessing unto eternal

salvation. This, then, is the difference between our analysis and his: ours distinguishes between the clarity of the gospel and the obscurer dispensation of the Word that had preceded it, according to that statement of Christ, “The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the Kingdom of God is proclaimed” [^{<421616>}Luke 16:16, cf. Vg.]; Augustine’s division simply separates the weakness of the law from the firmness of the gospel.

We must also note this about the holy patriarchs: they so lived under the Old Covenant as not to remain there but ever to aspire to the New, and thus embraced a real share in it. The apostle condemns as blind and accursed those who, content with present shadows, did not stretch their minds to Christ. Not to mention the other matters — what greater blindness could be imagined than to hope for expiation of sin from a slaughtered beast? Or to seek to cleanse the soul by an outward sprinkling with water? Or to try to please God with cold ceremonies, as if he were greatly delighted by them? Those who adhere to the observances of the law without regard to Christ fall into all these absurd practices.

*(v. The Old Testament has reference to one nation,
the New to all nations, 11-12)*

11. THE WALL IS TORN DOWN IN CHRIST

The fifth difference, which may be added, lies in the fact that until the advent of Christ, the Lord set apart one nation within which to confine the covenant of his grace. ^{f357} “When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam,” says Moses, “his people became his possession; Jacob was the cord of his inheritance.” [^{<053208>}Deuteronomy 32:8-9 p.] Elsewhere he addresses the people as follows: “Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and... earth with all that is in it. Yet he cleaved only to your fathers, loved them so that he chose their descendants after them, namely, you out of all peoples” [^{<051014>}Deuteronomy 10:14,15 p., cf. Vg.]. He, therefore, bestowed the knowledge of his name solely upon that people as if they alone of all men belonged to him. He lodged his covenant, so to speak, in their bosom; he manifested the presence of his majesty to them; he showered every privilege upon them. But — to pass over the remaining blessings — let us

consider the one in question. In communicating his Word to them, he joined them to himself, that he might be called and esteemed their God. In the meantime, “he allowed all other nations to walk” in vanity [[441416](#)> Acts 14:16], as if they had nothing whatsoever to do with him. Nor did he give them the sole remedy for their deadly disease — the preaching of his Word. Israel was then the Lord’s darling son; the others were strangers. Israel was recognized and received into confidence and safekeeping; the others were left to their own darkness. Israel was hallowed by God; the others were profaned. Israel was honored with God’s presence; the others were excluded from all approach to him. “But when the fullness of time came” [[480404](#)> Galatians 4:4] which was appointed for the restoration of all things, he was revealed as the reconciler of God and men; “the wall” that for so long had confined God’s mercy within the boundaries of Israel “was broken down” [[490214](#)> Ephesians 2:14]. “Peace was announced to those who were far off, and to those who were near” [[490217](#)> Ephesians 2:17] that together they might be reconciled to God and welded into one people [[490216](#)> Ephesians 2:16]. Therefore there is now no difference between Jew and Greek [[480318](#)> Galatians 3:18], between circumcision and uncircumcision [[480615](#)> Galatians 6:15], but “Christ is all in all” [[510311](#)> Colossians 3:11, cf. Vg.]. “The nations have been made his inheritance, and the ends of the earth his property” [[190208](#)> Psalm 2:8 p.], that “he may have unbroken dominion from sea to sea, and from the rivers even to the ends of the earth” [[197208](#)> Psalm 72:8 p.; cf. [380910](#)> Zechariah 9:10].

12. THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES

The calling of the Gentiles, therefore, is a notable mark of the excellence of the New Testament over the Old. ^{f358} Indeed, this had been attested before by many very clear utterances of the prophets, but in such a way that its fulfillment was postponed until the Kingdom of the Messiah. Even Christ at the beginning of his preaching made no immediate progress toward it. He deferred it until, having completed the work of our redemption and finished the time of his humiliation, he received from the Father “the name which is above every name ...before which every knee should bow” [[502609](#)> Philippians 2:9-10 p.]. For this reason, since the time was not yet ripe, he denied to the woman of Canaan that he had been sent to any but

“the lost sheep of the house of Israel” [Matthew 15: 24]; and he did not permit the apostles on their first mission to go beyond the boundaries of Israel. He said: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

[<401005> Matthew 10:5.] But however many testimonies of Scripture proclaimed the calling of the Gentiles, when the apostles were about to undertake it the call seemed so new and strange to them that they shrank back from it as a monstrous thing. At last they set about it tremblingly and not without misgiving. And no wonder! For it seemed completely unreasonable that the Lord, who for so many ages had singled out Israel from all other nations, should suddenly change his plan and abandon that choice. Prophecies had indeed foretold this. But men could not heed these prophecies without being startled by the newness of the thing that met their eyes. And these evidences of the future calling of the heathen which God had given them of old were not sufficient to convince them. Besides the fact that he had called very few, he in a manner engrafted them into Abraham’s family, thus adding them to his people. But by this public calling the Gentiles not only were made equal to the Jews, but it also was manifest that they were, so to speak, taking the place of dead Jews. Besides this, all those strangers whom God had previously received into the body of the church had never been made equal to the Jews. Paul with good reason, therefore, proclaims this a great “mystery hidden for ages and generations” [<510126> Colossians 1:26; cf. <490309> Ephesians 3:9], and says that it is wonderful even to the angels [cf. <600112> 1 Peter 1:12].

(Reply to objections regarding God’s justice and consistency on these differences of administration, 13-14)

13. WHY, IN GENERAL, THE DIFFERENCES?

In these four or five points I think that I have explained faithfully and well the whole difference between the Old and the New Testament, as far as a simple statement of doctrine demands. But because some persons hold up to ridicule this variableness in governing the church, this diverse manner of teaching, these great changes of rites and ceremonies, ^{f359} we must also answer them before we pass on to other matters. But this can be done briefly because their objections are not so firm as to require painstaking refutation. It is not fitting, they say, that God, always self-consistent,

should permit such a great change, disapproving afterward what he had once commanded and commended. I reply that God ought not to be considered changeable merely because he accommodated diverse forms to different ages, as he knew would be expedient for each. If a farmer sets certain tasks for his household in the winter, other tasks for the summer, we shall not on this account accuse him of inconstancy, or think that he departs from the proper rule of agriculture, which accords with the continuous order of nature. In like manner, if a householder instructs, rules, and guides, his children one way in infancy, another way in youth, and still another in young manhood, we shall not on this account call him fickle and say that he abandons his purpose. Why, then, do we brand God with the mark of inconstancy because he has with apt and fitting marks distinguished a diversity of times? The latter comparison ought to satisfy us fully. Paul likens the Jews to children, Christians to young men [^{<480401>}Galatians 4:1 ff.]. What was irregular about the fact that God confined them to rudimentary teaching commensurate with their age, but has trained us through a firmer and, so to speak, more manly discipline? Thus, God's constancy shines forth in the fact that he taught the same doctrine to all ages, and has continued to require the same worship of his name that he enjoined from the beginning. In the fact that he has changed the outward form and manner, he does not show himself subject to change. Rather, he has accommodated himself to men's capacity, which is varied and changeable.

14. GOD'S FREEDOM TO DEAL WITH ALL MEN AS HE WILLS

But they reply, Whence does this diversity arise unless God willed it to be so? Could not God just as well have revealed eternal life in clear words, without any figures, at the beginning as after Christ's advent? Could he not at the outset have instructed his people by a few clear sacraments, bestowed the Holy Spirit, and diffused his grace throughout the earth? This is as if they were to quarrel with God because he created the world so late, when he could have done it from the first; or because he willed to alternate winter and summer, day and night. But let us not doubt that God has done everything wisely and justly — as all godly persons ought to believe — even if we often do not know the reason why it should have

been so done. It would be claiming too much for ourselves not to concede to God that he may have reasons for his plan that are hidden from us.

But it is remarkable, they say, that he now despises and abominates animal sacrifices and all the trappings of the Levitical priesthood that of old delighted him. As if these external, fleeting things could delight God or affect him in any way! It has already been said,^{f360} that God did none of these things for his own sake, but arranged them all for the salvation of men. If a physician cures a young man of disease in the best way, but uses another sort of remedy on the same person when he is old, shall we then say that he has rejected the method of cure that had pleased him before? No — while he perseveres in it, he takes into account the factor of age. Thus it was necessary with one kind of sign to represent Christ absent and to proclaim him about to come; but it is fitting that, now revealed, he be represented with another. Since the advent of Christ, God's call has gone forth more widely through all peoples, and the graces of the Spirit have been more abundantly poured out than before. Who then, I pray, will say it is not meet that God should have in his own hand and will the free disposing of his graces, and should illuminate such nations as he wills? To evoke the preaching of his Word at such places as he wills? To give progress and success to his doctrine in such way and measure as he wills? To deprive the world, because, of its ungratefulness, of the knowledge of his name for such ages as he wills, and according to his mercy to restore it when he again wills? We see these, then, as too disgraceful slanders, used by impious men to trouble the simple-minded and to make them doubt either the righteousness of God or the trustworthiness of Scripture.

CHAPTER 12

CHRIST HAD TO BECOME MAN IN ORDER TO FULFILL THE OFFICE OF MEDIATOR

(Reasons why it was necessary that the Mediator should be God and should become man, 1-3)

1. ONLY HE WHO WAS TRUE GOD AND TRUE MAN COULD BRIDGE THE GULF BETWEEN GOD AND OURSELVES

Now it was of the greatest importance for us that he who was to be our Mediator be both true God and true man. If someone asks why this is necessary, there has been no simple (to use the common expression) or absolute necessity. Rather, it has stemmed from a heavenly decree, on which men's salvation depended. Our most merciful Father decreed what was best for us. Since our iniquities, like a cloud cast between us and him, had completely estranged us from the Kingdom of Heaven [cf. ^{<235902>}Isaiah 59:2], no man, unless he belonged to God, could serve as the intermediary to restore peace. But who might reach to him? Any one of Adam's children? No, like their father, all of them were terrified at the sight of God [^{<010308>}Genesis 3:8]. One of the angels? They also had need of a head, ^{f361} through whose bond they might cleave firmly and undividedly to their God [cf. ^{<490122>}Ephesians 1:22; ^{<510210>}Colossians 2:10]. What then? The situation would surely have been hopeless had the very majesty of God not descended to us, since it was not in our power to ascend to him. Hence, it was necessary for the Son of God to become for us "Immanuel, that is, God with us" [^{<230714>}Isaiah 7:14; ^{<400123>}Matthew 1:23], and in such a way that his divinity and our human nature might by mutual connection grow together. Otherwise the nearness would not have been near enough, nor the affinity sufficiently firm, for us to hope that God might dwell with us. So great was the disagreement between our uncleanness and God's perfect purity! Even if man had remained free from all stain, his condition would have been too lowly for him to reach God without a Mediator. What, then, of man: plunged by his mortal ruin into

death and hell, defiled with so many spots, befouled with his own corruption, and overwhelmed with every curse? In undertaking to describe the Mediator, Paul then, with good reason, distinctly reminds us that He is man: "One mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ" [^{<540205>} 1 Timothy 2:5]. He could have said "God"; or he could at least have omitted the word "man" just as he did the word "God." But because the Spirit speaking through his mouth knew our weakness, at the right moment he used a most appropriate remedy to meet it: he set the Son of God familiarly among us as one of ourselves. Therefore, lest anyone be troubled about where to seek the Mediator, or by what path we must come to him, the Spirit calls him "man," thus teaching us that he is near us, indeed touches us, since he is our flesh. Here he surely means the same thing that is explained elsewhere at greater length: "We have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning" [^{<580415>} Hebrews 4:15].^{f362}

2. THE MEDIATOR MUST BE TRUE GOD AND TRUE MAN

This will become even clearer if we call to mind that what the Mediator was to accomplish was no common thing. His task was so to restore us to God's grace as to make of the children of men, children of God; of the heirs of Gehenna, heirs of the Heavenly Kingdom. Who could have done this had not the selfsame Son of God become the Son of man, and had not so taken what was ours as to impart what was his to us, and to make what was his by nature ours by grace? Therefore, relying on this pledge, we trust that we are sons of God, for God's natural Son fashioned for himself a body from our body, flesh from our flesh, bones from our bones, that he might be one with us [^{<010223>} Genesis 2:23-24, mediated through ^{<490529>} Ephesians 5:29-31]. Ungrudgingly he took our nature upon himself to impart to us what was his, and to become both Son of God and Son of man in common with us. Hence that holy brotherhood which he commends with his own lips when he says: "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God" [^{<432017>} John 20:17]. In this way we are assured of the inheritance of the Heavenly Kingdom; for the only Son of God, to whom it wholly belongs, has adopted us as his brothers. "For if brothers, then also fellow heirs with him." [^{<450817>} Romans 8:17 p.]

For the same reason it was also imperative that he who was, to become our Redeemer be true God and true man. It was his task to swallow up death. Who but the Life could do this? It was his task to conquer sin. Who but very Righteousness could do this? but was his task to rout the powers of world and air. Who but a power higher than world and air could do this? Now where does life or righteousness, or lordship and authority of heaven lie but with God alone? Therefore our most merciful God, when he willed that we be redeemed, made himself our Redeemer in the person of his only-begotten Son [cf. ^{<450508>}Romans 5:8].

3. ONLY HE WHO WAS TRUE GOD AND TRUE MAN COULD BE OBEDIENT IN OUR STEAD

The second requirement of our reconciliation with God was this: that man, who by his disobedience had become lost, should by way of remedy counter it with obedience, satisfy God's judgment, and pay the penalties for sin. Accordingly, our Lord came forth as true man and took the person and the name of Adam in order to take Adam's place in obeying the Father, to present our flesh as the price of satisfaction to God's righteous judgment, and, in the same flesh, to pay the penalty that we had deserved. In short, since neither as God alone could he feel death, nor as man alone could he overcome it, he coupled human nature with divine that to atone for sin he might submit the weakness of the one to death; and that, wrestling with death by the power of the other nature, he might win victory for us. Those who despoil Christ of either his divinity or his humanity diminish his majesty and glory, or obscure his goodness. On the other hand, they do just as much wrong to men whose faith they thus weaken and overthrow, because it cannot stand unless it rests upon this foundation.

Besides, the hoped-for Redeemer was to be that son of Abraham and David whom God had promised in the Law and the Prophets. From this, godly minds derive another benefit: on the basis of his descent from David and Abraham they are more certain that he is the Anointed One who had been hailed by so many oracles. But we should especially espouse what I have just explained: our common nature with Christ is the pledge of our fellowship with the Son of God; and clothed with our flesh he vanquished death and sin together that the victory and triumph might be ours. He

offered as a sacrifice the flesh he received from us, that he might wipe out our guilt by his act of expiation and appease the Father's righteous wrath.

(Objections to this doctrine answered, 4-7)

4. THE SOLE PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S INCARNATION WAS OUR REDEMPTION

He who ponders these matters with the diligent attention they require will readily have done with the vague speculations that captivate the frivolous and the seekers after novelty. One such speculation is that Christ would still have become man ^{f363} even if no means of redeeming mankind had been needed. Of course I admit that in the original order of creation and the unfallen state of nature Christ was set over angels and men as their Head. Paul for this reason calls him "the first-born of all creation" [^{<510115>} Colossians 1:15]. But since all Scripture proclaims that to become our Redeemer he was clothed with flesh, it is too presumptuous to imagine another reason or another end. We well know why Christ was promised from the beginning: to restore the fallen world and to succor lost men. Therefore, under the law, Christ's image was set forth in sacrifices to give believers the hope that God would be gracious toward them, after having been reconciled to them through atonement made for their sins. Surely, since in every age, even when the law had not yet been published, the Mediator never was promised without blood, we infer that he was appointed by God's eternal plan to purge the uncleanness of men; for shedding of blood is a sign of expiation [cf. ^{<580922>} Hebrews 9:22]. Thus, the prophets in preaching about him promised that he would be the reconciler of God and man. Of all the testimonies to this, Isaiah's famous one will be enough: "He was to be smitten by God's hand ...for the transgressions of the people ...that the chastisement of peace should be upon him" [^{<235304>} Isaiah 53:4-5], and he would be the high priest who would offer himself as a victim [^{<580911>} Hebrews 9:11-12]; "from his stripes there would be healing for others"; because "all ...have gone astray" and been scattered "like sheep," it pleased God to afflict him that he might bear "the iniquities of all" [^{<235305>} Isaiah 53:5-6 p.]. Since we learn that Christ himself was divinely appointed to help miserable sinners, whoever leaps over these bounds too much indulges foolish curiosity. When he himself appeared, he declared that the reason for his advent was

by appeasing God to gather us from death unto life. The apostles testified to the same thing concerning him. So John, before he teaches that “the Word was made flesh [^{<430114>} John 1:14], of man’s rebellion [^{<430109>} John 1:9-11]. But we ought especially to heed what Christ himself declares concerning his office: “God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him may not perish but have eternal life” [^{<430316>} John 3:16]. Also, “The hour has come that the dead may hear the voice of the Son of God, and that those who hear may live.” [^{<430525>} John 5:25 p.] “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he has died, yet shall he live.” [^{<431125>} John 11:25.] Again, “For the Son of Man came to save what has been lost.” [^{<401811>} Matthew 18:11.] Again, “Those who are well have no need of a physician.” [^{<400912>} Matthew 9:12 p.] There would be no end of passages if we wished to refer to all of them!

The apostles with one consent call us back to this fountain. Surely, if he had not come to reconcile God and man, the honor of his priesthood would have fallen away, since a priest is appointed as an intermediary to intercede between God and men [^{<580501>} Hebrews 5:1]; he would not be our righteousness, for he became a sacrifice for us that “God might not count our trespasses against us” [^{<470519>} 2 Corinthians 5:19 p.]. Finally, he will be deprived of all titles that Scripture bestows upon him. Paul’s statement, too, will fall: “To make satisfaction in our behalf, God has sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh — something the law could not do” [^{<450803>} Romans 8:3-4 p., with omissions]. And what Paul teaches in another place will not stand: in this mirror “the goodness of God” and his boundless love “appeared to ...men” when Christ was given as our Redeemer [cf. ^{<560211>} Titus 2:11]. In short, the only reason given in Scripture that the Son of God willed to take our flesh, and accepted this commandment from the Father, is that he would be a sacrifice to appease the Father on our behalf. “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer ...and that repentance ...should be preached in his name.” [^{<422446>} Luke 24:46-47.] “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life for my sheep.... This commandment he gave me.” [John 10:17,15, 18 p.] “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up.” [^{<430314>} John 3:14.] Another passage: “‘Father, save me from this hour.’ ...But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father,

glorify thy Son” [^{<431227>} John 12:27-28, conflated with 5:23]. Here he clearly indicates why he assumed flesh: that he might become a sacrifice and expiation to abolish our sins. In the same way Zechariah declares that He came in accordance with the promise made to the patriarchs “to give light to those who sit in ...the shadow of death” [^{<420179>} Luke 1:79]. We remember that all these things have been said of the Son of God, “in whom” — as Paul elsewhere testifies — “are hid all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom” [^{<510203>} Colossians 2:3], and apart from whom Paul glories that he himself knows nothing [^{<460202>} 1 Corinthians 2:2].

5. WOULD CHRIST HAVE ALSO BECOME MAN IF ADAM HAD NOT SINNED?

Suppose someone objects that none of these things prevents Christ — who has redeemed condemned men — from being able also to show his love toward those who are saved and safe, by taking on their flesh.^{f364} My answer is brief: Since the Spirit declares that these two were joined together by God’s eternal decree, it is not lawful to inquire further how Christ became our Redeemer and the partaker of our nature. For he who is tickled with desire to know something more, not content with God’s unchangeable ordinance, also shows that he is not even content with this very Christ who was given to us as the price of our redemption. Paul, indeed, not only recounts for what purpose he was sent, but soars to the lofty mystery of predestination and fitly restrains all the wantonness and itching curiosity of human nature. “The Father has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world” [^{<490104>} Ephesians 1:4] to adopt us as sons “according to the purpose of his will” [Ephesians 1:5, cf. Vg.]; ...and “he has made us accepted in his beloved Son” [^{<490106>} Ephesians 1:6, cf. KJV], “in whom we have redemption through his blood” [Ephesians 1:7, Vg.]. Here, surely, the fall of Adam is not presupposed as preceding God’s decree in time; but it is what God determined before all ages that is shown, when he willed to heal the misery of mankind.^{f365} Suppose our adversary again objects that this plan of God depended on the ruin of man, which he foresaw. It is quite enough for me to say that all those who propose to inquire or seek to know more about Christ than God ordained by his secret decree are breaking out in impious boldness to fashion some new sort of Christ. And Paul, having so discussed the true office of Christ, justly

prays that the Ephesians be given the spirit of understanding [^{<490314>}Ephesians 3:14-17], “to comprehend ...what is the length and height, the breadth and depth ...,” that is, “the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge” [^{<490318>}Ephesians 3:18-19 p.]. It is as if he were purposely setting bars about our minds so that whenever Christ is mentioned we should not in the least depart from the grace of reconciliation. According to Paul’s testimony, therefore, “the saying is sure ...that Christ ...came ...to save sinners” [^{<540115>}1 Timothy 1:15], I willingly agree to this. And since the same apostle elsewhere teaches that the grace that has now been revealed in the gospel was given to us “in Christ... before time’ began” [^{<550109>}2 Timothy 1:9], I resolve to abide constantly in it to the very end.

Osiander unjustly raises an outcry against this modesty. He has unhappily stirred up anew in our time this question, lightly touched on earlier by a few persons. ^{f366} He accuses of presumption those who deny that the Son of God would have appeared in the flesh if Adam had not fallen, because no testimony of Scripture refutes this fabrication. As if Paul does not bridle perverse curiosity when, after speaking of the redemption acquired through Christ, he presently enjoins us to “avoid stupid questions” [^{<560309>}Titus 3:9]! The madness of certain persons can riot to such an extent that, while they sought in their absurd way to appear witty, they raised the question whether the Son of God could have taken upon himself the nature of an ass. ^{f367} Let Osiander excuse this monstrous thing — which all godly men justly abominate as detestable — with the pretext that it is nowhere specifically refuted in Scripture. As if Paul, by considering nothing precious or worth knowing “except ...Christ ...crucified” [^{<460202>}1 Corinthians 2:2], admitted that an ass is the Author of salvation! Therefore he who elsewhere preaches that by his Father’s eternal plan Christ was appointed Head to gather all things together [^{<490110>}Ephesians 1:10, cf. V. 22] will never recognize another who has not been entrusted with the task of redemption.

6. OSIANDER’S DOCTRINE OF THE IMAGE OF GOD

But the principle of which Osiander boasts is completely trifling. He asserts that man was created in God’s image because he was fashioned according to the pattern of the Messiah to come, that man might conform

to him whom the Father had already determined to clothe with flesh. From this, Osiander infers that if Adam had never fallen from his original and upright condition, Christ would still have become man. All men endowed with sound judgment understand of themselves how trivial and distorted this is. Meanwhile, Osiander thinks that he has been the first to see what the image of God was: that God's glory shone not only in the exceptional gifts with which Adam had been adorned, but that God dwelt essentially in him.

I admit that Adam bore God's image, in so far as he was joined to God (which is the true and highest perfection of dignity). Nevertheless, I maintain that this likeness ought to be sought only in those marks of excellence with which God had distinguished Adam over all other living creatures. All men unanimously admit that Christ was even then the image of God. Hence: whatever excellence was engraved upon Adam, derived from the fact that he approached the glory of his Creator through the only-begotten Son. "So man was created in the image of God" [^{<010127>} Genesis 1:27 p.]; in him the Creator himself willed that his own glory be seen as in a mirror. Adam was advanced to this degree of honor, thanks to the only-begotten Son. But I add: the Son himself was the common Head over angels and men. Thus the dignity that had been conferred upon man belonged also to the angels. When we hear the angels called "children of God" [^{<198206>} Psalm 82:6] it would be inappropriate to deny that they were endowed with some quality resembling their Father. But if he willed that his glory be represented both in angels and in men and manifested in both natures, Osiander is ignorantly babbling when he says that angels were set beneath men because they did not bear the figure of Christ. For they could not continually enjoy the direct vision of God unless they were like him. And Paul similarly teaches that "men are renewed ...after the image of God" [^{<510310>} Colossians 3:10 p.] only if they consort with the angels so as to cleave together under one head. To sum up: if we believe in Christ, we shall take on the form of angels [^{<402230>} Matthew 22:30] when we are received into heaven, and this will be our final happiness. But if Osiander is allowed to infer that the first pattern of God's image was in the man Christ, with the same justification anyone can contend that Christ had to partake of the angelic nature because the image of God belongs to them also.

7. POINT-BY-POINT REFUTATION OF OSIANDER

There is consequently no reason for Osiander to fear that unless there was in His mind a fixed and immutable decree concerning the incarnation of the Son, God can be made out a liar. For if Adam's uprightness had not failed, he along with the angels would have been like God; and it would not have been necessary for the Son of God to become either man or angel. Groundless also, and absurd, was his fear that unless, according to God's immutable plan before the creation of man, Christ was to be born not as Redeemer but as the First Man, he would have fallen from his privileged place; since he would then not have been born but for the historical contingency that he was to restore the lost human race, implying from this that he was created in the image of Adam. For why will Osiander shudder at what Scripture teaches so clearly, that Christ was made like us in all respects except sin [^{<580415>} Hebrews 4:15]? For this reason, Luke also does not hesitate to reckon him as a descendant of Adam [^{<420338>} Luke 3:38]. I should also like to know why Paul calls Christ the "Second Adam" [^{<461547>} 1 Corinthians 15:47], unless the human condition was ordained for him in order that he might lift Adam's descendants out of ruin. For if Christ came before creation, then he ought to be called the "first Adam." Osiander blithely declares that because Christ as man had been foreknown in the mind of God, he was the pattern to which men were formed. But Paul, calling Christ the "Second Adam," sets the Fall, from which arose the necessity of restoring nature to its former condition, between man's first origin and the restoration that we obtain through Christ. It follows, then, that it was for this same cause that the Son of God was born to become man. Meanwhile, Osiander reasons badly and inappropriately that so long as Adam remained upright he would have been the image of himself, not of Christ. I answer, on the contrary, that even if the Son of God had never taken human flesh, the image of God would nonetheless have shone in his body and soul. For in the radiance of this image, it is always manifest that Christ is truly the Head and holds the primacy in all things. Thus we dispose of this futile subtlety, which Osiander spreads abroad, that the angels would have lacked this Head if God had not determined to clothe his Son with flesh, even apart from Adam's guilt.

Now Osiander too rashly snatches at something no sane person would admit. He asserts that except in so far as he is man Christ possesses no

primacy over the angels whereby they may enjoy him as their leader. On the contrary, true inferences come readily from Paul's words. First, in so far as he is God's eternal Word he is "the first-born of all creation" [^{<510115>}Colossians 1:15]. This is not because he was created or ought to be numbered among the creatures, but because the world, in its unimpaired state — adorned as it was at the beginning with the highest beauty — had no other origin but him. Secondly, in so far as he was made man, he was "the first-born from the dead" [^{<510118>}Colossians 1:18]. The apostle in one short passage sets forth two things to be considered:

(1) "through the Son all things have been created," that he may rule over the angels [^{<510116>}Colossians 1:16 p.];

(2) he was made man that he might begin to be our Redeemer [cf. ^{<510114>}Colossians 1:14].

Osiander shows the same ignorance in saying that if Christ had not been man, men would have been without him as their king. As if the Kingdom of God could not stand had the eternal Son of God — though not endued with human flesh — gathered together angels and men into the fellowship of his heavenly glory and life, and himself held the primacy over all! But Osiander is always deceived — or tricks himself — in the false principle that the church would have been without a head ^{f369} if Christ had not appeared in the flesh. As the angels enjoyed his Headship, why could Christ not rule over men also by his divine power, quicken and nourish them like his own body by the secret power of his Spirit until, gathered up into heaven, they might enjoy the same life as the angels!

Osiander considers these trivialities, which I have by now refuted, to be the firmest of oracles! Drunk with the sweetness of his own speculations, he is wont to intone his absurd paeans over nothing! He brings forth afterward what he calls a far firmer proof: the "prophecy of Adam," who when he saw his wife said, "This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" [^{<010223>}Genesis 2:23 p.]. But how does Osiander prove this a prophecy? Because, in Matthew, Christ attributes the same word to God. As if everything God spoke through men contained some prophecy! Let Osiander seek prophecies in the several precepts of the law that clearly have come from God as their Author! Besides, Christ would have been crude and earthly if he had confined himself to the literal sense

[^{<401904>} Matthew 19:4-6]. Here he is not discussing the mystical union with which he graced the church, but only fidelity in marriage. For this reason he teaches that God declared man and wife to be one flesh in order that no one should try to break by divorce that insoluble bond. If Osiander dislikes this simplicity, let him blame Christ for not leading his disciples into a mystery by more subtly interpreting his Father's words. Nor does Paul support Osiander's delusion. When Paul has said that we are flesh of the flesh of Christ [^{<490530>} Ephesians 5:30-31], he adds at once: "This is a mystery" [^{<490532>} Ephesians 5:32]. For Paul did not mean to tell in what sense Adam uttered the words, but to set forth under the figure and likeness of marriage the holy union that makes us one with Christ. Even the words themselves express this! For when he informs us that he is speaking of Christ and the church, by way of correction he distinguishes between the rule of marriage and the spiritual union of Christ and the church. Thus this silly contention readily vanishes. And I believe it unnecessary to deal further with such rubbish as this. For this very short refutation will expose the emptiness of it all. This sober truth is more than enough to nourish perfectly the children of God: "When the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law" [^{<480404>} Galatians 4:4-5].

CHAPTER 13

CHRIST ASSUMED THE TRUE SUBSTANCE OF HUMAN FLESH

(Referring to ancient heresies, Calvin answers Menno Simons, 1-2)

1. PROOF OF CHRIST'S TRUE MANHOOD

The divinity of Christ has been proved elsewhere by clear and firm testimonies. ^{f370} Hence, unless I am mistaken, it would be superfluous to discuss it again here. It remains, then, for us to see how, clothed with our flesh, he fulfilled the office of Mediator. Indeed, the genuineness of his human nature was impugned long ago by both the Manichees and the Marcionites. ^{f371} The Marcionites fancied Christ's body a mere appearance, while the Manichees dreamed that he was endowed with heavenly flesh. But many strong testimonies of Scripture stand against both. For the blessing is promised neither in heavenly seed nor in a phantom of a man, but in the seed of Abraham and Jacob [^{<011203>}Genesis 12:3;17:2,7; 18:18; 22:18;26:4]. Nor is an eternal throne promised to a man of air, but to the Son of David and the fruit of his loins [^{<194506>}Psalms 45:6;132:11]. Hence, when he was manifested in the flesh, he was called "the Son of David and of Abraham" [^{<400101>}Matthew 1:1]. This is not only because he was born of the virgin's womb, although created in the air, but because, according to Paul's interpretation, he "was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" [^{<450103>}Romans 1:3 p.]. Similarly, the same apostle in another passage teaches that he descended from the Jews [^{<450905>}Romans 9:5]. For this reason the Lord himself, not content with the name "man," frequently calls himself also "Son of man," meaning thereby to explain more clearly that he is a man truly begotten of human seed. Since the Holy Spirit has often declared this plain fact by many instruments and with very great diligence and simplicity, who would have supposed that any would be so shameless as to dare besmirch it with deceptions? Yet we have other testimonies ready at hand, if we should want to amass more of them. One of these is Paul's statement: "God sent

forth his Son, born of woman” [^{<480404>}Galatians 4:4]. And there are innumerable other evidences that show him to have been subject to hunger, thirst, cold, and other infirmities of our nature. From these numerous testimonies we must choose those particular ones which serve to edify our minds in true confidence. Such are these: when it is said that he did not so concern himself with angels [^{<580216>}Hebrews 2:16] as to take their nature, but took ours, that “in flesh and blood ...he might through death destroy him who had the power of death” [^{<580214>}Hebrews 2:14 p.]. Another: we are reckoned his brethren by the benefit of association with him [cf. ^{<580211>}Hebrews 2:11]. Again: “He had to be made like his brethren ...so that he might be a merciful and faithful intercessor.” [^{<580217>}Hebrews 2:17 p.]. “We have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our infirmities.” [^{<580415>}Hebrews 4:15a.] And like passages, What we touched on a little while ago pertains to this same point: ^{f372} the sins of the world had to be expiated in our flesh, as Paul clearly declares [^{<450803>}Romans 8:3]. Surely, for this reason, whatever the Father bestowed upon Christ pertains to us because he is the Head “from whom the whole body, knit together through joints,” grows into one [^{<490416>}Ephesians 4:16]. Yes, otherwise this statement will not fit. “The Spirit was given to him [Christ] without measure” [^{<430334>}John 3:34 p.] so that “we should all receive from his fullness” [John 1:16 p.]. Nothing is more absurd than that God should be enriched in his essence by some accidental gift! For this reason, also, Christ himself says in another place, “For their sake I sanctify myself” [^{<431719>}John 17:19].

2. AGAINST THE OPPONENTS OF CHRIST’S TRUE MANHOOD

They grossly distort the passages that they put forward to confirm their error. And they accomplish nothing with the trifling subtleties by which they try to do away with what I have already adduced. Marcion imagines that Christ put on a phantom instead of a body because Paul elsewhere says that Christ was “made in the likeness of man, ...being found in fashion as a man” [^{<502007>}Philippians 2:7-8, KJV/RV]. But he wholly overlooks Paul’s intention there: Paul does not mean to teach what sort of body Christ assumes. Rather, although Christ could justly have shown forth his divinity, he manifested himself as but a lowly and despised man. For, to exhort us to submission by his example, he showed that although

he was God and could have set forth his glory directly to the world he gave up his right and voluntarily “emptied himself.” He took the image of a servant, and content with such lowness, allowed his divinity to be hidden by a “veil of flesh” [cf. ^{<501405>}Philippians 2:5-7]. there Paul is really teaching not what Christ was, but how he conducted himself. From the whole context we may easily infer that Christ emptied himself in a nature truly human. For what does “being found in fashion as a man” mean [^{<502308>}Philippians 2:8], save that for a time the divine glory did not shine, but only human likeness was manifest in a lowly and abased condition. Peter’s statement that “Christ was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit” [^{<600318>}1 Peter 3:18 p.] would not otherwise make sense unless the Son of God in human nature had been weak. Paul explains this more clearly, declaring that Christ suffered according to the infirmity of the flesh [^{<471304>}2 Corinthians 13:4]. Christ is expressly said to have obtained new glory after he had humbled himself. Herein lies his exaltation. This could not very well apply except to a man endowed with human body and soul.

Man forged him a body of air, because Christ is called “the Second Adam of heaven, heavenly” [^{<461547>}1 Corinthians 15:47]. But in this passage the apostle is introducing no heavenly essence of Christ’s body, but a spiritual force that, poured out by Christ, quickens us. Now, as we have seen, Peter and Paul separate that force from Christ’s flesh. Rather, the doctrine concerning Christ’s flesh that flourishes among the orthodox is remarkably buttressed by this passage. For unless Christ had one bodily nature with us, the reasoning that Paul pursues with such vehemence would be meaningless: “If Christ arose, we also shall arise from the dead; if we do not arise, neither did Christ arise” [^{<461512>}1 Corinthians 15:12-20 p., substance]. Whatever the subtleties with which the ancient Manichees or their modern disciples try to evade [this proof], they do not succeed.

Their nonsense, that Christ is called “Son of Man” in so far as he was promised to men, ^{f373} is a base evasion. For it is plain that in Hebrew idiom true man is called “son of man.” Now, Christ undoubtedly retained this phrase of his own language. Also, the commonly accepted understanding of “Son of Adam” ought to be beyond controversy. Not to go too far afield, the Eighth Psalm, which the apostles apply to Christ, will amply suffice: “What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that

thou visitest him?” [^{<190804>} Psalm 8:4; ^{<580206>} Hebrews 2:6]. Christ’s true humanity is expressed by this figure. For even though he was not immediately begotten of a mortal father, his origin derived from Adam. Otherwise the passage that I have already cited would not stand: “Christ shared in flesh and blood” that he might gather his children unto himself to obey God [^{<580214>} Hebrews 2:14 p.]. In these words Christ is clearly declared to be comrade and partner in the same nature with us. In this sense he also says that “the Author of sanctification and those who are sanctified have all one origin” [^{<580211>} Hebrews 2:11 a]. The context shows that this expression refers to the fellowship of nature, for he immediately adds: “That is why he is not ashamed to call them brethren” [^{<580211>} Hebrews 2:11 b]. For if he had previously said that believers are of God, in such great dignity what reason would there have been for shame? But because Christ of his boundless grace joins himself to base and ignoble men, it is said that “he is not ashamed” [^{<580211>} Hebrews 2:11 b]. Moreover, baseless is their objection that in this way the impious would be Christ’s brethren. For we know that the children of God are not born of flesh and blood [cf. ^{<430113>} John 1:13] but of the Spirit through faith. Hence flesh alone does not make the bond of brotherhood. Even though the apostle assigns to believers alone the honor of being one with Christ, it does not follow that unbelievers cannot be born of the same source. For example, when we say that Christ was made man that he might make us children of God, this expression does not extend to all men. For faith intervenes, to engraft us spiritually into the body of Christ.

They also bunglingly stir up contention over the expression “first-born.” They allege that Christ should have been born of Adam at the very beginning, to “be the first-born among the brethren” [^{<450829>} Romans 8:29 p.]. “First-born” here refers not to age but to degree of honor and loftiness of power!

Even less plausible is their babbling that Christ assumed human, not angelic, nature [^{<580216>} Hebrews 2:16], meaning that he received humankind into grace. To enhance the honor that Christ deigned to give us, Paul compares us with the angels, to whom in this respect we were preferred. If we carefully weigh Moses’ testimony — where he says that the seed of the woman will crush the serpent’s head [^{<010315>} Genesis 3:15] — the controversy will be completely resolved. For the statement there concerns

not only Christ but the whole of mankind. Since we must acquire victory through Christ, God declares in general terms that the woman's offspring is to prevail over the devil. Hence it follows that Christ was begotten of mankind, for in addressing Eve it was God's intention to raise her hope that she should not be overwhelmed with despair.

(The human descent and true humanity of Christ, 3-4)

3. CHRIST'S DESCENT THROUGH THE VIRGIN MARY: AN ABSURDITY EXPOSED

Our opponents both foolishly and wickedly entangle in allegories those testimonies wherein Christ is called the seed of Abraham and the fruit of David's loins. For if the term "seed" had been allegorically intended, Paul surely would not have remained silent about this when he affirmed, clearly and unfiguratively, that there are not many redeemers among the children of Abraham, but only one, Christ [^{<480316>}Galatians 3:16]. Of the same stuff is their pretense that Christ was called "son of David" only because he had been promised and at last was revealed in his own time [^{<450103>}Romans 1:3]. For when Paul named him "Son of David," and then immediately added "according to the flesh," he surely designates his human nature by this. Thus in the ninth chapter, after calling Christ "blessed God," he asserts separately that he descended from the Jews "according to the flesh" [^{<450905>}Romans 9:5]. Now, if he had not truly been begotten of the seed of David, what will be the point of this expression that he is "the fruit of her womb" [cf. ^{<420142>}Luke 1:42]? What is this promise, "From your loins will descend one who will remain upon your throne" [cf. ^{<19D211>}Psalms 132:11 p.; also, ^{<100712>}2 Samuel 7:12; ^{<440230>}Acts 2:30]?

Now they sophistically disport themselves over Matthew's version of the genealogy of Christ. Matthew does not list Mary's ancestors, but Joseph's [^{<400116>}Matthew 1:16]. Still, because he is mentioning something well known at the time, he considers it sufficient to show that Joseph sprang from the seed of David, since it was clear enough that Mary came from the same family. Luke emphasizes this even more, teaching that the salvation provided by Christ is common to all mankind. For Christ, the Author of salvation, was begotten of Adam, the common father of us all [^{<420338>}Luke 3:38]. I admit that one can gather from the genealogy that

Christ was the son of David solely in so far as he was begotten of the virgin. But in order to disguise their error — to prove that Christ took his body out of nothing — the new Marcionites too haughtily contend that women are “without seed.”^{f374} Thus they overturn the principles of nature.

But this is not a theological issue, and such is the futility of the reasons they bring forward that these can be refuted without trouble. Accordingly, I shall not touch upon matters that belong to philosophy and medicine. It will be enough to refute the objections that they derive from Scripture, namely: Aaron and Jehoiada took wives from the tribe of Judah [^{<020623>}Exodus 6:23; ^{<142211>}2 Chronicles 22:11], and so the distinction of tribes would then have been confused if women possessed the seed of generation. But it is sufficiently well known that descent is reckoned by the male line as far as the political order is concerned; yet this preferential position of the male sex does not gainsay the fact that the woman’s seed must share in the act of generation.

This solution also extends to all genealogies. Often when Scripture sets out a list of human beings, it names only the males. Must we then say that women are nothing? Why, even children know that women are included under the term “men”! Women are said to bear children to their husbands because the family name always rests in the possession of the males. Now as the superiority of the male sex is conceded in the fact that children are reckoned noble or ignoble from their father’s status, conversely, in slavery, “the offspring follows the womb,” as lawyers say.^{f375} From this we shall have to infer that the offspring is engendered from the mother’s seed; for a long time it has been the common custom of nations to call mothers “engenderers.”^{f376} And this agrees with God’s law, which would otherwise wrongly forbid the marriage of a maternal uncle with his niece because there would then be no consanguinity. Also, it would have been right for a man to marry his maternal half sister, provided she were begotten of another father. But while I admit that a passive force is ascribed to women, I reply that the same thing is indiscriminately said of women as of men. For Christ himself is not said to have been made by woman, but from woman [^{<480404>}Galatians 4:4]. Some of their tribe, however, casting shame aside, too wantonly ask whether we mean that Christ was engendered of

the virgin's menstrual seed. ^{f377} In return I shall ask them whether he did not unite with his mother's blood — which they will have to admit.

Therefore, it is readily inferred from Matthew's words that because Christ was begotten of Mary, he was engendered from her seed, just as when Boaz is said to have been begotten of Rahab [^{<400105>} Matthew 1:5] a similar generation is meant. And Matthew does not here describe the virgin as a channel through which Christ flowed. Rather, he differentiates this wonderful manner of generation from the common sort in stating that through her Christ was begotten of the seed of David. In the same way that Isaac was begotten of Abraham, Solomon of David, Joseph of Jacob, Christ is said to have been begotten of his mother. For the Evangelist so arranges the order of his words. Meaning to prove that Christ took his origin from David, he was satisfied with this one thing: Christ was begotten of Mary. From this it follows that he took it as generally acknowledged that Mary was related to Joseph. ^{f378}

4. TRUE MAN — AND YET SINLESS! TRUE MAN — AND YET ETERNAL GOD!

The absurdities with which they wish to weigh us down are stuffed with childish calumnies. They consider it shameful and dishonorable to Christ if he were to derive his origin from men, for he could not be exempted from the common rule, which includes under sin all of Adam's offspring without exception. But the comparison that we read in Paul readily disposes of this difficulty: "As sin came in ... through one man, and death through sin ... so through the righteousness of one man grace abounded" [^{<450512>} Romans 5:12,18,15 p.]. Another comparison of Paul's agrees with this: "The first Adam was of the earth, an earthly and natural man, the Second of the heaven, heavenly" [^{<461547>} 1 Corinthians 15:47 p.]. The apostle teaches the same thing in another passage, that Christ was sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh" to satisfy the law [^{<450803>} Romans 8:3-4]. Thus, so skillfully does he distinguish Christ from the common lot that he is true man but without fault and corruption. But they babble childishly: if Christ is free from all spot, and through the secret working of the Spirit was begotten of the seed of Mary, then woman's seed is not unclean, but only man's. For we make Christ free of all stain not just because he was begotten of his mother without copulation with man, but because he was sanctified by the

Spirit that the generation might be pure and undefiled as would have been true before Adam's fall. And this remains for us an established fact: whenever Scripture calls our attention to the purity of Christ, it is to be understood of his true human nature, for it would have been superfluous to say that God is pure. Also, the sanctification of which John, chapter 17, speaks would have no place in divine nature [^{<431719>} John 17:19]. Nor do we imagine that Adam's seed is twofold, even though no infection came to Christ. For the generation of man is not unclean and vicious of itself, but is so as an accidental quality arising from the Fall. No wonder, then, that Christ, through whom integrity was to be restored, was exempted from common corruption. They thrust upon us as something absurd the fact that if the Word of God became flesh, then he was confined within the narrow prison of an earthly body. This is mere impudence! For even if the Word in his immeasurable essence united with the nature of man into one person, we do not imagine that he was confined therein. Here is something marvelous: the Son of God descended from heaven in such a way that, without leaving heaven, he willed to be borne in the virgin's womb, to go about the earth, and to hang upon the cross; yet he continuously filled the world even as he had done from the beginning!

CHAPTER 14

HOW THE TWO NATURES OF THE MEDIATOR MAKE ONE PERSON

(Explanation of the human and divine natures in Christ, 1-3)

1. DUALITY AND UNITY

On the other hand, we ought not to understand the statement that “the Word was made flesh” [^{<430114>} John 1:14] in the sense that the Word was turned into flesh or confusedly mingled with flesh. Rather, it means that, because he chose for himself the virgin’s womb as a temple in which to dwell, he who was the Son of God became the Son of man — not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For we affirm his divinity so joined and united with his humanity that each retains its distinctive nature unimpaired, and yet these two natures constitute one Christ. ^{f379}

If anything like this very great mystery can be found in human affairs, the most apposite parallel seems to be that of man, whom we see to consist of two substances. Yet neither is so mingled with the other as not to retain its own distinctive nature. For the soul is not the body, and the body is not the soul. Therefore, some things are said exclusively of the soul that can in no wise apply to the body; and of the body, again, that in no way fit the soul; of the whole man, that cannot refer — except inappropriately — to either soul or body separately. Finally, the characteristics of the mind ^{f380} are [sometimes] transferred to the body, and those of the body to the soul. Yet he who consists of these parts is one man, not many. Such expressions signify both that there is one person in man composed of two elements joined together, and that there are two diverse underlying natures that make up this person. ^{f381} Thus, also, the Scriptures speak of Christ: they sometimes attribute to him what must be referred solely to his humanity, sometimes what belongs uniquely to his divinity; and sometimes what embraces both natures but fits neither alone. And they so earnestly express this union of the two natures that is in Christ as sometimes to

interchange them. This figure of speech is called by the ancient writers “the communicating of properties.”^{f382}

2. DIVINITY AND HUMANITY IN THEIR RELATION TO EACH OTHER

These things would be quite unconvincing if many and oft-recurring phrases of Scripture did not prove none of them to have been humanly devised. What Christ said about himself — “Before Abraham was, I am” [^{<430858>} John 8:58] — was far removed from his humanity, I am quite aware of the captious argument with which erring spirits corrupt this passage: that he was before all ages because he was already foreknown as Redeemer, both in the Father’s plan and in the minds of the godly.^{f383} But since he clearly distinguishes the day of his manifestation from his eternal essence, and expressly commends his own authority as excelling Abraham’s in antiquity, there is no doubt that he is claiming for himself what is proper to his divinity. Paul declares him to be “the first-born of all creation ... who was before all things and in whom all things hold together” [^{<510115>} Colossians 1:15,17]. Also, he says that he was “glorious in his Father’s presence before the world was made” [^{<431705>} John 17:5 p.]; and that he is working together with his Father [^{<430517>} John 5:17]. These qualities are utterly alien to man. Therefore they and their like apply exclusively to his divinity.

But he is called “the servant of the Father” [^{<234201>} Isaiah 42:1, and other passages]; he is said to have “increased in age and wisdom... God and men” [^{<420252>} Luke 2:52], and not to “seek his own glory” [^{<430850>} John 8:50]; “not to know the Last Day” [^{<411332>} Mark 13:32; cf. ^{<402436>} Matthew 24:36]; not to “speak by himself” [^{<431410>} John 14:10], and not to “do his own will” [^{<430638>} John 6:38 p.]; he is said to have been “seen and handled” [^{<422439>} Luke 24:39]. All these refer solely to Christ’s humanity. In so far as he is God, he cannot increase in anything, and does all things for his own sake; nothing is hidden from him; he does all things according to the decision of his will, and can be neither seen nor handled. Yet he does not ascribe these qualities solely to his human nature, but takes them upon himself as being in harmony with the person of the Mediator.

But the communicating of characteristics or properties consists in what Paul says: “God purchased the church with his blood” [^{<442028>} Acts 20:28 p.], and “the Lord of glory was crucified” [^{<460208>} 1 Corinthians 2:8 p.]. John says the same: “The Word of life was handled” [^{<620101>} 1 John 1:1 p.]. Surely God does not have blood, does not suffer, cannot be touched with hands. But since Christ, who was true God and also true man, was crucified and shed his blood for us, the things that he carried out in his human nature are transferred improperly, although not without reason, to his divinity, Here is a similar example: John teaches “that God laid down his life for us” [^{<620316>} 1 John 3:16 p.]. Accordingly, there also a property of humanity is shared with the other nature. Again, when Christ, still living on earth, said: “No one has ascended into heaven but the Son of man who was in heaven” [^{<430313>} John 3:13 p.], surely then, as man, in the flesh that he had taken upon himself, he was not in heaven. But because the selfsame one was both God and man, for the sake of the union of both natures he gave to the one what belonged to the other.

3. THE UNITY OF THE PERSON OF THE MEDIATOR

But the passages that comprehend both natures at once, very many of which are to be found in John’s Gospel, set forth his true substance most clearly of all. For one reads there neither of deity nor of humanity alone, but of both at once: he received from the Father the power of remitting sins [^{<430129>} John 1:29], of raising to life whom he will, of bestowing righteousness, holiness, salvation; he was appointed judge of the living and the dead in order that he might be honored, even as the Father [^{<430521>} John 5:21-23]. Lastly, he is called the “light of the world” [^{<430905>} John 9:5; 8:12], the “good shepherd,” the “only door” [^{<431011>} John 10:11,9], the “true vine” [^{<431501>} John 15:1]. For the Son of God had been endowed with such prerogatives when he was manifested in the flesh. Even though along with the Father he held them before the creation of the world, it had not been in the same manner or respect, and they could not have been given to a man who was nothing but a man.

In the same sense we ought also to understand what we read in Paul: after the judgment “Christ will deliver the Kingdom to his God and Father” [^{<461524>} 1 Corinthians 15:24 p.]. Surely the Kingdom of the Son of God had no beginning and will have no end. But even as he lay concealed under

the lowness of flesh and “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant” [^{<502007>}Philippians 2:7, cf. Vg.], laying aside the splendor of majesty, he showed himself obedient to his Father [cf. ^{<502308>}Philippians 2:8]. Having completed this subjection, “he was at last crowned with glory and honor” [^{<580209>}Hebrews 2:9 p.], and exalted to the highest lordship that before him “every knee should bow” [^{<502910>}Philippians 2:10]. So then will he yield to the Father his name and crown of glory, and whatever he has received from the Father, that “God may be all in all” [^{<461528>} 1 Corinthians 15:28]. For what purpose were power and lordship given to Christ, unless that by his hand the Father might govern us? In this sense, also, Christ is said to be seated at the right hand of the Father [cf. ^{<411619>}Mark 16:19; ^{<450834>}Romans 8:34]. Yet this is but for a time, until we enjoy the direct vision of the Godhead. Here we cannot excuse the error of the ancient writers who pay no attention to the person of the Mediator, obscure the real meaning of almost all the teaching one reads in the Gospel of John, and entangle themselves in many snares.^{f384} Let this, then, be our key to right understanding: those things which apply to the office of the Mediator are not spoken simply either of the divine nature or of the human.^{f385} Until he comes forth as judge of the world Christ will therefore reign, joining us to the Father as the measure of our weakness permits. But when as partakers in heavenly glory we shall see God as he is, Christ, having then discharged the office of Mediator, will cease to be the ambassador of his Father, and will be satisfied with that glory which he enjoyed before the creation of the world.

And the name “Lord” exclusively belongs to the person of Christ only in so far as it represents a degree midway between God and us. Paul’s statement accords with this: “One God ...from whom are all things ...and one Lord ...through whom are all things” [^{<460806>} 1 Corinthians 8:6]. That is, to him was lordship committed by the Father, until such time as we should see his divine, majesty face to face. Then he returns the lordship to his Father so that — far from diminishing his own majesty — it may shine all the more brightly. Then, also, God shall cease to be the Head of Christ, for Christ’s own deity will shine of itself, although as yet it is covered by a veil.

(Condemnation of the errors of Nestorius, Eutyches, and Servetus, 4-8)

4. THE TWO NATURES MAY NOT BE THOUGHT OF AS EITHER FUSED OR SEPARATED

This observation will be highly useful in solving very many difficulties, if my readers apply it intelligently. It is amazing how much untutored minds — and even some not completely uneducated — are plagued by expressions of this sort, which they see applied to Christ, yet not quite appropriate either to his divinity or to his humanity. This is because they do not consider the expressions suitable either to his person, in which he was manifested as God and man, or to the office of the Mediator. Yet it is utterly obvious how beautifully the various statements agree among themselves, in the hands of a sober expositor who examines such great mysteries as devoutly as they deserve.^{f386} But there is nothing that these mad and frantic spirits do not stir up! They seize upon the attributes of his humanity to take away his divinity, conversely upon those of his divinity to take away his humanity;^{f387} and upon those spoken of both natures so conjointly that they are applicable to neither, to take away both. But what else is this than to contend that Christ is not man because he is God; that he is not God because he is man; that he is neither man nor God because he is man and God at the same time?

We therefore hold that Christ, as he is God and man, consisting of two natures united but not mingled, his our Lord and the true Son of God even according to, but not by reason of, his humanity. Away with the error of Nestorius, who in wanting to pull apart rather than distinguish the nature of Christ devised a double Christ! Yet we see that Scripture cries out against this with a clear voice: there the name “Son of God” is applied to him who is born of the virgin [^{<420132>} Luke 1:32 p.], and the virgin herself is called the “mother of our Lord” [^{<420143>} Luke 1:43 p.]. Let us beware, also, of Eutyches’ madness; lest, while meaning to show the unity of the person, we destroy either nature. We have cited so many testimonies that distinguish his divinity from his humanity, and there are so many others besides, that they can stop the mouths of even the most quarrelsome persons. A little later^{f388} I shall append some testimonies that will more effectively shatter that figment of theirs. For the present, one passage will suffice us: Christ would not have called his body a temple [^{<430219>} John

2:19] unless divinity, as distinct from the body, dwelt therein. Hence, just as Nestorius had justly been condemned at the Synod of Ephesus, so Eutyches was afterward justly condemned at the Councils of Constantinople and Chalcedon.^{f389} For it is no more permissible to commingle the two natures in Christ than to pull them apart.

5. CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD FROM EVERLASTING

But in our own age too, a no less deadly monster has emerged, Michael Servetus, who has supposed the Son of God to be a figment compounded from God's essence, spirit, flesh, and three uncreated elements.^{f390} First of all, he denies that Christ is the Son of God for any other reason than that he was begotten of the Holy Spirit in the virgin's womb. His subtlety takes this direction: having overturned the distinction of the two natures, he regards Christ to be a mixture of some divine and some human elements, but not to be reckoned both God and man. For his whole logic bears upon the point that before Christ was revealed in the flesh there were only shadow figures in God; the truth or effect of these appeared only when the Word, who had been destined for this honor, truly began to be the Son of God.

Now we confess that the Mediator, who was born of the virgin, is properly the Son of God. And the man Christ would not be the mirror of God's inestimable grace unless this dignity had been conferred upon him, that he should both be the only-begotten Son of God and be so called. Meanwhile, the church's definition stands firm: he is believed to be the Son of God because the Word begotten of the Father before all ages^{f391} took human nature in a hypostatic union. Now the old writers defined "hypostatic union" as that which constitutes one person out of two natures. This expression was devised to refute the delusion of Nestorius, because he imagined that the Son of God so dwelt in the flesh that he was not man also. Servetus accuses us of making two Sons of God when we say that the eternal Word, before he was clothed with flesh, was already the Son of God^{f392} — as if we were saying something else than that he was manifested in the flesh. If he was God before he became man, he did not, for that reason, begin to be a new God! It is no more absurd for us to say that the Son of God was manifested in the flesh yet had by virtue of eternal generation always possessed sonship. The words of the angel to

Mary hint at this: “What holy one will be born of you will be called the Son of God” [^{<420135>}Luke 1:35 p.]; as if to say that the name “Son,” which had been somewhat obscure under the law, was to be illustrious and known everywhere. Paul concurs: because we are now sons of God through Christ, we freely and confidently cry, “Abba! Father!” [^{<450814>}Romans 8:14-15; ^{<480406>}Galatians 4:6]. Were not the holy patriarchs of old also held to be among the sons of God? Yes — relying upon this right, they called upon God as Father. But after the only-begotten Son of God was brought into the world, the heavenly fatherhood became more clearly known. Accordingly, Paul assigns this privilege, as it were, to Christ’s Kingdom. Yet this ought to be unwaveringly maintained: to neither angels nor men was God ever Father, except with regard to his only-begotten Son; and men, especially, hateful to God because of their iniquity, become God’s sons by free adoption because Christ is the Son of God by nature. There is no reason why Servetus should violently object that this depends upon a filiation that God had decreed with himself. For here it is not a matter of figures, such as when atonement was set forth in the blood of beasts. Rather, they could not actually be sons of God unless their adoption was founded upon the Head. Accordingly, it is unreasonable to withdraw from the Head what the members had in common. I go farther: Scripture calls the angels “sons of God” [^{<198206>}Psalm 82:6], whose high dignity did not depend upon the coming redemption. Yet Christ had to be above them in rank in order to reconcile them to the Father. I shall briefly repeat this statement again, applying it also to mankind. At their creation angels and men were so constituted that God was their common Father. Hence, if Paul’s statement is true — that Christ was always the Head and the first-born of all creatures that he might hold primacy over all [cf. ^{<510115>}Colossians 1:15 ff.] — it seems meet for me to infer that he was the Son of God also before the creation of the world.

6. CHRIST AS SON OF GOD AND SON OF MAN

But if his filiation, so to speak, took its beginning from the time when he was made manifest in flesh, it will follow that he was Son also with respect to human nature. Servetus and frenzied men like him would have it that Christ, who was manifested in the flesh, was the Son of God because apart from the flesh he could not have been accorded this name.^{f393} Let

them now answer me whether he is Son according to both natures and with respect to both. This is the way they prate, but Paul teaches far otherwise. We admit Christ is indeed called “son” in human flesh; not as believers are sons, by adoption and grace only, but the true and natural, and therefore the only, Son in order that by this mark he may be distinguished from all others. For God honors us who have been reborn into new life with the name “sons,” but bestows the name “true and only-begotten” upon Christ alone. But how is he the “only” son among so many brothers, unless he possesses by nature what we receive as a gift?

And we extend this honor to the entire person of the Mediator — so that he is truly and properly the Son of God who was both born of the virgin and offered himself as a sacrifice to the Father on the cross. But this is nevertheless with regard to his deity, as Paul teaches when he says that he was “set apart for the gospel of God which God had promised beforehand ...concerning his Son, who was begotten from the seed of David according to the flesh and declared Son of God in power” [^{<450101>}Romans 1:1-4, cf. Vg.]. Why would Paul distinctly name him Son of David according to the flesh, yet state separately that he was designated to be Son of God, unless he meant to intimate that this depended upon something besides his flesh itself? In this sense Paul says elsewhere: “He suffered in weakness of the flesh but rose again by the power of the Spirit” [^{<471304>}2 Corinthians 13:4 p.]. Thus he now makes a distinction between the two natures. Surely they must admit: just as he received from his mother his reason for being called “Son of David,” so from his Father he has his reason for being called “Son of God.” And this is something other than and distinct from human nature.

Scripture gives him the two names’ sometimes calling him Son of God, at other times Son of man. Concerning the second name, they cannot stir up a quarrel because it is common usage in the Hebrew language to speak of him as “Son of man,” for he is of the posterity of Adam. On the other hand, I contend that he is called Son of God by virtue of his deity and eternal essence. For it is just as appropriate to refer the fact that he is called “Son of God” to his divine nature, as it is to refer the fact that he is called “Son of man” to his human nature.

To sum up, in this passage to which I have referred — “He who was descended from David according to the flesh and designated Son of God in power” — Paul means the same thing as he teaches in another passage: Christ who descended from the Jews “according to the flesh is ... God ... blessed unto the ages” [^{<450905>}Romans 9:5]. If both these statements note the distinction between his two natures, what right have our opponents to deny that he who is Son of man according to flesh is, with respect to his divine nature, Son of God?

7. SERVETUS' FLIMSY COUNTEREVIDENCE

They clamorously argue in defense of their error that God is said not to have spared his own Son [^{<450832>}Romans 8:32], that the angel enjoined that he who was to be born of the virgin be called “the Son of the Most High” [^{<420132>}Luke 1:32].^{f394} But that they may not glory in such a futile objection, let them ponder with us for a little while how valid their reasoning is. For if it is justly concluded that he began to be the Son of God from conception because he who has been conceived is called “Son,” then it will follow that he began to be the Word with his manifestation in the flesh because John states that he is the Word of life, which they had touched with their hands [^{<620101>}1 John 1:1]. What we read in the prophet is like John’s statement: “You, Bethlehem of the land of Judah, are tiny among the thousands of Judah, from you shall come forth for me a ruler to rule my people Israel, whose origin is from the beginning, from eternal days” [^{<330502>}Micah 5:2 and ^{<400206>}Matthew 2:6, conflated (Vg.)]. How will they be compelled to interpret this, if they are determined to argue in such a way?

I have testified that we do not agree at all with Nestorius, who imagined a double Christ, while according to our teaching, Christ made us sons of God with him by virtue of a bond of brotherhood. For in the flesh that he received from us he is the only-begotten Son of God. Augustine sagely warns us that he is the bright mirror of God’s wonderful and singular grace; for he has attained an honor that, in so far as he is man, he could not have deserved.^{f395} Christ was therefore adorned with this excellence according to the flesh, even from the womb, to be the Son of God. Yet we must not imagine in the unity of his person a mingling that takes away what belongs to his deity. Nor is it more absurd that the eternal Word of God and

Christ, since the two natures have been united into one person, is called “Son of God” in various ways than that he is called, in various respects, sometimes Son of God, at other times Son of man. ^{f396}

Servetus’ other slander also gives us no more embarrassment: before he appeared in the flesh, Christ was nowhere called “Son of God” except figuratively. For even though the description of him was then somewhat obscure, it is clearly proved that he was eternal God solely because he was the Word begotten by the eternal Father; and that this name belonged to the person of the Mediator, which he had taken upon himself, only because he was God manifest in the flesh. It is also clear that God would not have been called “Father” from the beginning unless there had already at that time been a reciprocal relationship to the Son, “from whom all kinship or fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named” [^{<490315>}Ephesians 3:15 p.]. From this evidence we may readily conclude that he was Son of God also under the Law and the Prophets, before this name became illustrious in the church. But suppose they contend over this one statement wherein Solomon tells of God’s immeasurable loftiness. He declares that both God and his son are incomprehensible: “Tell me, if you can, his name or his son’s name” [^{<203004>}Proverbs 30:4 p.]. I am aware that this testimony will not be sufficiently weighty for contentious persons. Hence, I do not depend very much on it, unless it shows that those who deny that Christ is the Son of God except in so far as he became man are wicked slanderers. Besides, the most ancient writers with one accord testified to this fact so clearly that the shamelessness of those who dare thrust at us Irenaeus and Tertullian is as ridiculous as it is detestable. For both of these writers confess that the Son of God was invisible, but afterward was visibly manifested. ^{f397}

8. COMPREHENSIVE PRESENTATION AND REBUTTAL OF SERVETUS’ DOCTRINE

Servetus has heaped up terrible portents, to which others would perhaps not subscribe. Yet if you press more closely those who recognize the Son of God only in the flesh, you will observe that they admit it for no other reason than that he was conceived in the virgin’s womb of the Holy Spirit. The Manichees of old fancied the same thing: that man has his soul by derivation from God: ^{f398} for they read that “God breathed upon Adam the

breath of life” [^{<010207>}Genesis 2:7 p.]. They so doggedly seize upon the name “Son” that they leave no distinction between the natures; rather, they confusedly babble that Christ the man is the Son of God because he was begotten of God according to his human nature. Thus the eternal begetting of wisdom of which Solomon speaks [Ecclesiasticus. 24:14, Vg.; 24:9, EV; cf. ^{<200822>}Proverbs 8:22 ff.] is annihilated, and no account is taken of deity in the Mediator, or a mere appearance is put in place of true man.

It would be useful to refute Servetus’ grosser deceptions, with which he has bewitched himself and certain others, that, admonished by this example, godly readers may remain sober and modest. But I believe this would be superfluous because I have already done it in a special book. ^{f399} The sum of the matter comes to this: for Servetus, the Son of God was from the beginning an idea, and even then was preordained to be the man who would become the essential image of God. He recognizes no other Word of God than one of outward splendor. He interprets the begetting of Christ thus: the will to beget the Son was begotten in God from the beginning, and extended itself by act to the creation itself. Meanwhile, he confuses the Spirit with the Word, for God distributed the invisible Word and the Spirit into flesh and soul. In short, the figurative representation of Christ took the [place of begetting in Servetus’ scheme. But he says that he who was then a shadow Son in appearance was at length begotten through the Word; thus he assigns to the Word a seminal function. From this it will follow that pigs and dogs are just as much sons of God, since they were created from the original seed of the Word of God. He compounds Christ out of three uncreated elements to make him begotten of God’s essence. Nevertheless, he imagines him to be the first-born among creatures in such a way that the same essential divinity is in stones according to their degree. But lest he seem to strip Christ of his deity, he declares that His flesh was of the same substance ^{f400} with God, and that the Word was made man by the conversion of flesh into God. Thus, while he cannot conceive of Christ as the Son of God unless his flesh came forth from God’s essence, and was converted into deity, he reduces to nothing the eternal hypostasis of the Word, and he snatches from us the Son of David, who had been promised as our Redeemer. Indeed, he repeats this thought quite often: that the Son was begotten of God by knowledge and predestination, but that he was

finally made man from that matter which shone at the beginning in the presence of God in three elements — elements that then appeared in the first light of the world [^{<010103>}Genesis 1:3], in the cloud and pillar of fire [^{<021321>}Exodus 13:21]. Furthermore, it would be too tedious to recount how shamefully Servetus sometimes disagrees with himself. Sane readers will gather from this summary that the crafty evasions of this foul dog utterly extinguished the hope of salvation. For if flesh were divinity itself, it would cease to be the temple of divinity. Only he can be our Redeemer who, begotten of the seed of Abraham and David, was truly made man according to the flesh. Servetus perversely bases his position on John's words: "The Word was made flesh" [John 1:14].^{f401} For, as these words resist Nestorius' error, they also give no support to that impious fabrication whose author was Eutyches, inasmuch as the sole purpose of the Evangelist was to declare unity of person in the two natures.

CHAPTER 15

TO KNOW THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH CHRIST WAS SENT BY THE FATHER,

AND WHAT HE CONFERRED UPON US, WE MUST LOOK ABOVE ALL AT THREE THINGS IN HIM: THE PROPHETIC OFFICE, KINGSHIP, AND PRIESTHOOD

(i. Christ's saving activity threefold: first the prophetic office, 1-2)

1. THE NEED OF UNDERSTANDING THIS DOCTRINE: SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES APPLICABLE TO CHRIST'S PROPHETIC OFFICE

As Augustine rightly states, the heretics, although they preach the name of Christ, have herein no common ground with believers, but it remains the sole possession of the church. For if we diligently consider the things that pertain to Christ, we will find Christ among the heretics in name only, not in reality. ^{f402} So today the words “Son of God, Redeemer of the world,” resound upon the lips of the papists. Yet because they are satisfied with vain pretense of the name, and strip him of his power and dignity, Paul’s words apply to them: “They do not hold fast to the Head” [^{<510219>} Colossians 2:19 p.].

Therefore, in order that faith may find a firm basis for salvation in Christ, and thus rest in him, this principle must be laid down: the office enjoined upon Christ by the Father consists of three parts. For he was given to be prophet, king, and priest. ^{f403} Yet it would be of little value to know these names without understanding their purpose and use. The papists use these names, too, ^{f404} but coldly and rather ineffectually, since they do not know what each of these titles contains.

We have already said ^{f405} that although God, by providing his people with an unbroken line of prophets, never left them without useful doctrine sufficient for salvation, yet the minds of the pious had always been

imbued with the conviction that they were to hope for the full light of understanding only at the coming of the Messiah. This expectation penetrated even to the Samaritans, though they never had known the true religion, as appears from the words of the woman: “When the Messiah comes, he will teach us all things” [^{<430425>} John 4:25 p.]. And the Jews did not rashly presume this in their minds; but, being taught by clear oracles, they so believed. Isaiah’s saying is particularly well known: “Behold, I have made him a witness to the peoples, I have given him as a leader and commander for the peoples” [^{<235504>} Isaiah 55:4]. Elsewhere, Isaiah called him “messenger or interpreter of great counsel” [^{<230906>} Isaiah 9:6, conflated with ^{<232829>} Isaiah 28:29 and ^{<243219>} Jeremiah 32:19]. ^{f406} For this reason, the apostle commends the perfection of the gospel doctrine, first saying: “In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets” [^{<580101>} Hebrews 1:1]. Then he adds, “In these last days he has spoken to us through a beloved Son.” [^{<580102>} Hebrews 1:2 p.] But, because the task common to the prophets was to hold the church in expectation and at the same time to support it until the Mediator’s coming, we read that in their dispersion believers complained that they were deprived of that ordinary benefit: “We do not see our signs; there is no ... prophet among us, ... there is no one ... who knows how long” [^{<197409>} Psalm 74:9]. But when Christ was no longer far off, a time was appointed for Daniel “to seal both vision and prophet” ^{f407} [^{<270924>} Daniel 9:24], not only that the prophetic utterance there mentioned might be authoritatively established, but also that believers might patiently go without the prophets for a time because the fullness and culmination of all revelations was at hand.

2. THE MEANING OF THE PROPHETIC OFFICE FOR US

Now it is to be noted that the title “Christ” pertains to these three offices: ^{f408} for we know that under the law prophets as well as priests and kings were anointed with holy oil. Hence the illustrious name of “Messiah” was also bestowed upon the promised Mediator. As I have elsewhere shown, ^{f409} I recognize that Christ was called Messiah especially with respect to, and by virtue of, his kingship. Yet his anointings as prophet and as priest have their place and must not be overlooked by us. Isaiah specifically mentions the former in these words: “The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is

upon me, because Jehovah has anointed me to preach to the humble ...to bring healing to the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberation to the captives ..., to proclaim the year of the Lord's good pleasure," etc. [^{<236101>}Isaiah 61:1-2; cf. ^{<420418>}Luke 4:18]. We see that he was anointed by the Spirit to be herald and witness of the Father's grace. And that not in the common way — for he is distinguished from other teachers with a similar office. On the other hand, we must note this: he received anointing, not only for himself that he might carry out the office of teaching, but for his whole body that the power of the Spirit might be present in the continuing preaching of the gospel. This, however, remains certain: the perfect doctrine he has brought has made an end to all prophecies. All those, then, who, not content with the gospel, patch it with something extraneous to it, detract from Christ's authority. The Voice that thundered from heaven, "This is my beloved Son; ...hear him" [^{<401705>}Matthew 17:5; cf. ^{<400317>}Matthew 3:17], exalted him by a singular privilege beyond the rank of all others. Then this anointing was diffused from the Head to the members, as Joel had foretold: "Your sons shall prophesy and your daughters ...shall see visions," etc. [^{<290228>}Joel 2:28 p.]. But when Paul says that He was given to us as our wisdom [^{<460130>}1 Corinthians 1:30], and in another place, "In him are hid all the treasures of knowledge and understanding" [^{<510203>}Colossians 2:3 p.], he has a slightly different meaning. That is, outside Christ there is nothing worth knowing, and all who by faith perceive what he is like have grasped the whole immensity of heavenly benefits. For this reason, Paul writes in another passage: "I decided to know nothing precious ...except Jesus Christ and him crucified" [^{<460202>}1 Corinthians 2:2 p.]. This is very true, because it is not lawful to go beyond the simplicity of the gospel. And the prophetic dignity in Christ leads us to know that in the sum of doctrine as he has given it to us all parts of perfect wisdom are contained.

(ii. The kingly office — its spiritual character, 3-5)

3. THE ETERNITY OF CHRIST'S DOMINION

I come now to kingship. It would be pointless to speak of this without first warning my readers that it is spiritual in nature. For from this we infer its efficacy and benefit for us, as well as its whole force and eternity. Now this eternity, which the angel in The Book of Daniel attributes to the

person of Christ [^{<270244>}Daniel 2:44], in the Gospel of Luke the angel justly applies to the salvation of the people [^{<420133>}Luke 1:33]. But this eternity is also of two sorts or must be considered in two ways: the first pertains to the whole body of the church; the second belongs to each individual member. We must refer to the first kind the statement in the Psalms: “Once for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David. His line shall endure forever, his throne as long as the sun before me. Like the moon, it shall be established forever; the witness of heaven is sure” [^{<198935>}Psalm 89:35-37 p.]. God surely promises here that through the hand of his Son he will be the eternal protector and defender of his church. We find the true fulfillment of this prophecy in Christ alone, inasmuch as immediately after Solomon’s death the authority over the greater part of the kingdom was destroyed, and — to the shame of the family of David — was transferred to a private person [1 Kings, 12].^{f410} Afterward it diminished more and more until it came to a sad and shameful end [2 Kings 24]. Isaiah’s exclamation means the same thing: “As for his generation, who will tell it?” [^{<235308>}Isaiah 53:8 p.]. For he declares that Christ will so survive death as to bind himself with his members. Therefore, whenever we hear of Christ as armed with eternal power, let us remember that the perpetuity of the church^{f411} is secure in this protection. Hence, amid the violent agitation with which it is continually troubled, amid the grievous and frightful storms that threaten it with unnumbered calamities, it still remains safe. David laughs at the boldness of his enemies who try to throw off the yoke of God and his Anointed, and says: “The kings and people rage in vain ...for he who dwells in heaven is strong enough to break their assaults” [^{<190202>}Psalm 2:2,4 p.]. Thus he assures the godly of the everlasting preservation of the church, and encourages them to hope, whenever it happens to be oppressed.

Elsewhere, speaking in the person of God, David says: “Sit at right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool” [^{<19B001>}Psalm 110:1]. Here he asserts that, no matter how many strong enemies plot to overthrow the church, they do not have sufficient strength to prevail over God’s immutable decree by which he appointed, his Son eternal King. Hence it follows that the devil, with all the resources of the world, can never destroy the church, founded as it is on the eternal throne of Christ.

Now with regard to the special application of this to each one of us — the same “eternity” ought to inspire us to hope for blessed immortality. For we see that whatever is earthly is of the world and of time, and is indeed fleeting. Therefore Christ, to lift our hope to heaven, declares that his “kingship is not of this world” [^{<431836>}John 18:36]. In short, when any one of us hears that Christ’s kingship is spiritual, aroused by this word let him attain to the hope of a better life; and since it is now protected by Christ’s hand, let him await the full fruit of this grace in the age to come.

4. THE BLESSING OF CHRIST’S KINGLY OFFICE FOR US

We have said that we can perceive the force and usefulness of Christ’s kingship only when we recognize it to be spiritual. This is clear enough from the fact that, while we must fight throughout life under the cross, our condition is harsh and wretched.^{f412} What, then, would it profit us to be gathered under the reign of the Heavenly King, unless beyond this earthly life we were certain of enjoying its benefits? For this reason we ought to know that the happiness promised us in Christ does not consist in outward advantages — such as leading a joyous and peaceful life, having rich possessions, being safe from all harm, and abounding with delights such as the flesh commonly longs after. No, our happiness belongs to the heavenly life! In the world the prosperity and well-being of a people depend partly on an abundance of all good things and domestic peace, partly on strong defenses that protect them from outside attacks. In like manner, Christ enriches his people with all things necessary for the eternal salvation of souls and fortifies them with courage to stand unconquerable against all the assaults of spiritual enemies. From this we infer that he rules — inwardly and outwardly — more for our own sake than his. Hence we are furnished, as far as God knows to be expedient for us, with the gifts of the Spirit, which we lack by nature. By these first fruits we may perceive that we are truly joined to God in perfect blessedness. Then, relying upon the power of the same Spirit, let us not doubt that we shall always be victorious over the devil, the world, and every kind of harmful thing. This is the purport of Christ’s reply to the Pharisees: because the Kingdom of God is within us, it will not come with observation [^{<421721>}Luke 17:21,20]. Probably because he professed himself King under whom God’s highest blessing was to be expected, the Pharisees jestingly asked Christ to

furnish his tokens. But he enjoined them to enter into their own consciences, because “the Kingdom of God ...is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” [^{<451417>}Romans 14:17]. This he did to prevent those otherwise too much inclined to things earthly from indulging in foolish dreams of pomp. These words briefly teach us what Christ’s Kingdom confers upon us. For since it is not earthly or carnal and hence subject to corruption, but spiritual, it lifts us up even to eternal life.

Thus it is that we may patiently pass through this life with its misery, hunger, cold, contempt, reproaches, and other troubles — content with this one thing: that our King will never leave us destitute, but will provide for our needs until, our warfare ended, we are called to triumph. Such is the nature of his rule, that he shares with us all that he has received from the Father. Now he arms and equips us with his power, adorns us with his beauty and magnificence, enriches us with his wealth.^{f413} These benefits, then, give us the most fruitful occasion to glory, and also provide us with confidence to struggle fearlessly against the devil, sin, and death. Finally, clothed with his righteousness, we can valiantly rise above all the world’s reproaches; and just as he himself freely lavishes his gifts upon us, so may we, in return, bring forth fruit to his glory.

5. THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF HIS KINGLY OFFICE: THE SOVEREIGNTY OF CHRIST AND OF THE FATHER

Therefore the anointing of the king is not with oil or aromatic unguents. Rather, he is called “Anointed” [*Christus*] of God because “the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might..., and of the fear of the Lord have rested upon him” [^{<231102>}Isaiah 11:2 p.]. This is “the oil of gladness” with which the psalm proclaims he “was anointed above his fellows” [^{<194507>}Psalms 45:7], for if such excellence were not in him, all of us be needy and hungry. As has already been said,^{f414} he did not enrich himself for his own sake, but that he might pour out his abundance upon the hungry and thirsty. The Father is said “not by measure to have given the Spirit to his Son” [^{<430334>}John 3:34 p.]. The reason is expressed as follows: “That from his fullness we might all receive grace upon grace” [^{<430116>}John 1:16 p.]. From this fountain flows that abundance of which Paul speaks: “Grace was given to each believer according to the measure of Christ’s gift” [^{<490407>}Ephesians 4:7]. These statements quite sufficiently

confirm what I have said: that Christ's Kingdom lies in the Spirit, not in earthly pleasures or pomp. Hence we must forsake the world if we are to share in the Kingdom.

A visible symbol of this sacred anointing was shown in Christ's baptism, when the Spirit hovered over him in the likeness of a dove [^{<430132>}John 1:32; ^{<420322>}Luke 3:22]. It is nothing new, and ought not to seem absurd that the Spirit and his gifts are designated by the word "anointing" [^{<620220>}1 John 2:20, 27]. For it is only in this way that we are invigorated. Especially with regard to heavenly life, there is no drop of vigor in us save what the Holy Spirit instills. For the Spirit has chosen Christ as his seat, that from him might abundantly flow the heavenly riches of which we are in such need. The believers stand unconquered through the strength of their king, and his spiritual riches abound in them. Hence they are justly called Christians.

Paul's statement does not detract from this eternity of which we have spoken: ^{f415} "Then ...he will deliver the Kingdom to his God and Father" [^{<461524>}1 Corinthians 15:24]. Likewise: "The Son himself will ...be subjected ...that God may be all in all." [^{<461528>}1 Corinthians 15:28, cf. Vg.] He means only that in that perfect glory the administration of the Kingdom will not be as it now is. The Father has given all power to the Son that he may by the Son's hand govern, nourish, and sustain us, keep us in his care, and help us. Thus, while for the short time we wander away from God, Christ stands in our midst, to lead us little by little to a firm union with God.

And surely, to say that he sits at the right hand of the Father is equivalent to calling him the Father's deputy, who has in his possession the whole power of God's dominion. For God mediately, so to speak, wills to rule and protect the church in Christ's person. Paul explains in the first chapter of the letter to the Ephesians that Christ was placed "at the right hand of the Father" to be the "Head of the church, ...which is Christ's body" [vs. 20-23 p.]. He means the same thing when he teaches in another place: "God ...has bestowed upon him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ...and every tongue confess what is to the glory of God the Father" [^{<502609>}Philippians 2:9-11 p.]. In these words Paul also commends the order in the Kingdom of Christ as

necessary for our present weakness. Thus Paul rightly infers: God will then of himself become the sole Head of the church, since the duties of Christ in defending the church will have been accomplished. For the same reason, Scripture usually calls Christ “Lord” because the Father set Christ over us to exercise his dominion through his Son. Although there are many lordships celebrated in the world [cf. ^{<460805>} 1 Corinthians 8:5], “for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we in him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and we through him” [^{<460806>} 1 Corinthians 8:6, cf. Vg.], says Paul. From this we duly infer that he is the same God who through the mouth of Isaiah declared himself to be king and lawgiver of the church [^{<233322>} Isaiah 33:22]. For even though [the Son] consistently calls all the power he holds “the benefit and gift of the Father,” he merely means that he reigns by divine power. Why did he take the person of the Mediator? He descended from the bosom of the Father and from incomprehensible glory that he might draw near to us. All the more reason, then, is there that we should one and all resolve to obey, and to direct our obedience with the greatest eagerness to the divine will! Now Christ fulfills the combined duties of king and pastor for the godly who submit willingly and obediently; on the other hand, we hear that he carries a “rod of iron to break them and dash them all in pieces like a potter’s vessel” [^{<190209>} Psalm 2:9 p.]. We also hear that “he will execute judgment among the Gentiles, so that he fills the earth with corpses, and strikes down every height that opposes him” [^{<19B006>} Psalm 110:6 p.]. We see today several examples of this fact, but the full proof will appear at the Last Judgment, which may also be properly considered the last act of his reign.

(iii. The priestly office: reconciliation and intercession, 6)

6. Now we must speak briefly concerning the purpose and use of Christ’s priestly office: as a pure and stainless Mediator he is by his holiness to reconcile us to God. But God’s righteous curse bars our access to him, and God in his capacity as judge is angry toward us. Hence, an expiation must intervene in order that Christ as priest may obtain God’s favor for us and appease his wrath. Thus Christ to perform this office had to come forward with a sacrifice. For under the law, also, the priest was forbidden to enter the sanctuary without blood [^{<580907>} Hebrews 9:7], that believers might know, even though the priest as their advocate stood between them and

God, that they could not propitiate God unless their sins were expiated [^{<031602>} Leviticus 16:2-3]. The apostle discusses this point at length in the Letter to the Hebrews, from the seventh almost to the end of the tenth chapter. To sum up his argument: The priestly office belongs to Christ alone because by the sacrifice of his death he blotted out our own guilt and made satisfaction for our sins [^{<580922>} Hebrews 9:22]. God's solemn oath, of which he "will not repent," warns us what a weighty matter this is: "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" [^{<19B004>} Psalm 110:4; cf. ^{<580506>} Hebrews 5:6; 7:15]. God undoubtedly willed in these words to ordain the principal point on which, he knew, our whole salvation turns. For, as has been said, we or our prayers have no access to God unless Christ, as our High Priest, having washed away our sins, sanctifies us and obtains for us that grace from which the uncleanness of our transgressions and vices debars us. Thus we see that we must begin from the death of Christ in order that the efficacy and benefit of his priesthood may reach us.

It follows that he is an everlasting intercessor: through his pleading we obtain favor. Hence arises not only trust in prayer, but also peace for godly consciences, while they safely lean upon God's fatherly mercy and are surely persuaded that whatever has been consecrated through the Mediator is pleasing to God. Although God under the law commanded animal sacrifices to be offered to himself, in Christ there was a new and different order, in which the same one was to be both priest and sacrifice. This was because no other satisfaction adequate for our sins, and no man worthy to offer to God the only-begotten Son, could be found. Now, Christ plays the priestly role, not only to render the Father favorable and propitious toward us by an eternal law of reconciliation, but also to receive us as his companions in this great office [^{<660106>} Revelation 1:6]. For we who are defiled in ourselves, yet are priests in him, ^{f416} offer ourselves and our all to God, and freely enter the heavenly sanctuary that the sacrifices of prayers and praise that we bring may be acceptable and sweet-smelling before God. This is the meaning of Christ's statement: "For their sake I sanctify myself" [^{<431719>} John 17:19]. For we, imbued with his holiness in so far as he has consecrated us to the Father with himself, although we would otherwise be loathsome to him, please him as pure and clean — and even as holy. This is why the sanctuary was anointed, as mentioned in

Daniel [^{<270924>}Daniel 9:24]. We must note the contrast between this anointing and that shadow anointing which was then in use. It is as if the angel had said, “When the shadows have been dispelled the true priesthood will shine forth in Christ.” The more detestable is the fabrication of those who, not content with Christ’s priesthood, have presumed to sacrifice him anew! The papists attempt this each day, considering the Mass as the sacrificing of Christ.

CHAPTER 16

HOW CHRIST HAS FULFILLED THE FUNCTION OF REDEEMER TO ACQUIRE SALVATION FOR US.

HERE, ALSO, HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION ARE DISCUSSED, AS WELL AS HIS ASCENT INTO HEAVEN

*(Alienated by sin from God, who yet loved us,
we are reconciled by Christ, 1-4)*

1. THE REDEEMER

What we have said so far concerning Christ must be referred to this one objective: condemned, dead, and lost in ourselves, we should seek righteousness, liberation, life, and salvation in him, as we are taught by that well-known saying of Peter: “There is no other name under heaven given to men in which we must be saved” [^{<440412>} Acts 4:12]. The name “Jesus” was bestowed upon him not without reason or by chance, or by the decision of men, but it was brought from heaven by an angel, the proclaimer of the supreme decree.^{f417} The reason for it is added: he was sent to “save the people from their sins” [^{<400121>} Matthew 1:21; cf. ^{<420131>} Luke 1:31]. We must note in these words what we have touched upon elsewhere:^{f418} the office of Redeemer was laid upon him that he might be our Savior. Still, our redemption would be imperfect if he did not lead us ever onward to the final goal of salvation. Accordingly, the moment we turn away even slightly from him, our salvation, which rests firmly in him, gradually vanishes away. As a result, all those who do not repose in him voluntarily deprive themselves of all grace. Bernard’s admonition is worth remembering: “The name of Jesus is not only light but also food; it is also oil, without which all food of the soul is dry; it is salt, without whose seasoning whatever is set before us is insipid; finally, it is honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, rejoicing in the heart, and at the same time medicine. Every discourse in which his name is not spoken is without savor.”^{f419}

But here we must earnestly ponder how he accomplishes salvation for us. This we must do not only to be persuaded that he is its author, but to gain a sufficient and stable support for our faith, rejecting whatever could draw us away in one direction or another. No one can descend into himself^{f420} and seriously consider what he is without feeling God's wrath and hostility toward him. Accordingly, he must anxiously seek ways and means to appease God — and this demands a satisfaction. No common assurance is required, for God's wrath and curse always lie upon sinners until they are absolved of guilt. Since he is a righteous Judge, he does not allow his law to be broken without punishment, but is equipped to avenge it.

2. THE AWARENESS OF GOD'S WRATH MAKES US THANKFUL FOR HIS LOVING ACT IN CHRIST

But, before we go any farther, we must see in passing how fitting it was that God, who anticipates us by his mercy, should have been our enemy until he was reconciled to us through Christ. For how could he have given in his only-begotten Son a singular pledge of his love to us if he had not already embraced us with his free favor? Since, therefore, some sort of contradiction arises here, I shall dispose of this difficulty. The Spirit usually speaks in this way in the Scriptures: "God was men's enemy until they were reconciled to grace by the death of Christ" [^{<450510>}Romans 5:10 p.]. "They were under a curse until their iniquity was atoned for by his sacrifice." [^{<480310>}Galatians 3:10,13 p.] "They were estranged from God until through his body they were reconciled." [^{<510121>}Colossians 1:21-22 p.] Expressions of this sort have been accommodated to our capacity that we may better understand how miserable and ruinous our condition is apart from Christ. For if it had not been clearly stated that the wrath and vengeance of God and eternal death rested upon us, we would scarcely have recognized how miserable we would have been without God's mercy, and we would have underestimated the benefit of liberation.

For example, suppose someone is told: "If God hated you while you were still a sinner, and cast you off, as you deserved, a terrible destruction would have awaited you. But because he kept you in grace voluntarily, and of his own free favor, and did not allow you to be estranged from him, he thus delivered you from that peril." This man then will surely experience

and feel something of what he owes to God's mercy. On the other hand, suppose he learns, as Scripture teaches, that he was estranged from God through sin, is an heir of wrath, subject to the curse of eternal death, excluded from all hope of salvation, beyond every blessing of God, the slave of Satan, captive under the yoke of sin, destined finally for a dreadful destruction and already involved in it; and that at this point Christ interceded as his advocate, took upon himself and suffered the punishment that, from God's righteous judgment, threatened all sinners; that he purged with his blood those evils which had rendered sinners hateful to God; that by this expiation he made satisfaction and sacrifice duly to God the Father; that as intercessor he has appeased God's wrath; that on this foundation rests the peace of God with men; that by this bond his benevolence is maintained toward them. Will the man not then be even more moved by all these things which so vividly portray the greatness of the calamity from which he has been rescued? ^{f421}

To sum up: since our hearts cannot, in God's mercy, either seize upon life ardently enough or accept it with the gratefulness we owe, unless our minds are first struck and overwhelmed by fear of God's wrath and by dread of eternal death, we are taught by Scripture to perceive that apart from Christ, God is, so to speak, hostile to us, and his hand is armed for our destruction; to embrace his benevolence and fatherly love in Christ alone.

3. GOD'S WRATH AGAINST UNRIGHTEOUSNESS; HIS LOVE PRECEDES OUR RECONCILIATION IN CHRIST

Although this statement is tempered to our feeble comprehension, it is not said falsely. For God, who is the highest righteousness, cannot love the unrighteousness that he sees in us all. All of us, therefore, have in ourselves something deserving of God's hatred. With regard to our corrupt nature and the wicked life that follows it, all of us surely displease God, are guilty in his sight, and are born to the damnation of hell. ^{f422} But because the Lord wills not to lose what is his in us, out of his own kindness he still finds something to love. However much we may be sinners by our own fault, we nevertheless remain his creatures. However much we have brought death upon ourselves, yet he has created us unto life. Thus he is moved by pure and freely given love of us to receive us

into grace. Since there is a perpetual and irreconcilable disagreement between righteousness and unrighteousness, so long as we remain sinners he cannot receive us completely. Therefore, to take away all cause for enmity and to reconcile us utterly to himself, he wipes out all evil in us by the expiation set forth in the death of Christ; that we, who were previously unclean and impure, may show ourselves righteous and holy in his sight. Therefore, by his love God the Father goes before and anticipates our reconciliation in Christ. Indeed, “because he first loved us” [[620419](#)] 1 John 4:19], he afterward reconciles us to himself. But until Christ succors us by his death, the unrighteousness that deserves God’s indignation remains in us, and is accursed and condemned before him. Hence, we can be fully and firmly joined with God only when Christ joins us with him. If, then, we would be assured that God is pleased with and kindly disposed toward us, we must fix our eyes and minds on Christ alone. For actually, through him alone we escape the imputation of our sins to us — an imputation bringing with it the wrath of God.

4. THE WORK OF ATONEMENT DERIVES FROM GOD’S LOVE; THEREFORE IT HAS NOT ESTABLISHED THE LATTER

For this reason, Paul says that the love with which God embraced us “before the creation of the world” was established and grounded in Christ [[490104](#)] Ephesians 1:4-5]. These things are plain and in agreement with Scripture, and beautifully harmonize those passages in which it is said that God declared his love toward us in giving his only-begotten Son to die [[430316](#)] John 3:16]; and, conversely, that God was our enemy before he was again made favorable to us by Christ’s death [[450510](#)] Romans 5:10]. But to render these things more certain among those who require the testimony of the ancient church, I shall quote a passage of Augustine where the very thing is taught: “God’s love,” says he, “is incomprehensible and unchangeable. For it was not after we were reconciled to him through the blood of his Son that he began to love us. Rather, he has loved us before the world was created, that we also might be his sons along with his only-begotten Son — before we became anything at all. The fact that we were reconciled through Christ’s death must not be understood as if his Son reconciled us to him that he might now begin to love those whom he had hated. Rather, we have already been reconciled

him who loves us, with whom we were enemies on account of sin. The apostle will testify whether I am speaking the truth: ‘God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us’

[<450508> Romans 5:8]. Therefore, he loved us even when we practiced enmity toward him and committed wickedness. Thus in a marvelous and divine way he loved us even when he hated us. For he hated us for what we were that he had not made; yet because our wickedness had not entirely consumed his handiwork, he knew how, at the same time, to hate in each one of us what we had made, and to love what he had made.”^{f423} These are Augustine’s words.

(The effects of the obedience and death of Christ, 5-7)

5. CHRIST HAS REDEEMED US THROUGH HIS OBEDIENCE, WHICH HE PRACTICED THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE

Now someone asks, How has Christ abolished sin, banished the separation between us and God, and acquired righteousness to render God favorable and kindly toward us? To this we can in general reply that he has achieved this for us by the whole course of his obedience.^{f424} This is proved by Paul’s testimony: “As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man’s obedience we are made righteous”

[<450519> Romans 5:19 p.]. In another passage, to be sure, Paul extends the basis of the pardon that frees us from the curse of the law to the whole life of Christ: “But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, subject to the law, to redeem those who were under the law” [<480404> Galatians 4:4-5]. Thus in his very baptism, also, he asserted that he fulfilled a part of righteousness in obediently carrying out his Father’s commandment [<400315> Matthew 3:15]. In short, from the time when he took on the form of a servant, he began to pay the price of liberation in order to redeem us.

Yet to define the way of salvation more exactly, Scripture ascribes this as peculiar and proper to Christ’s death. He declares that “he gave his life to redeem many” [<402028> Matthew 20:28 p.]. Paul teaches that “Christ died for our sins” [<450425> Romans 4:25 p.]. John the Baptist proclaimed that he came “to take away the sins of the world,” for he was “the Lamb of God” [<430129> John 1:29 p.]. In another passage Paul teaches that “we are freely

justified through the redemption which is in Christ, because he was put forward as a reconciler in his blood” [^{<450324>}Romans 3:24-25 p.]. Likewise: “We are ...justified by his blood ...and reconciled ...through his death.” [^{<450509>}Romans 5:9-10.] Again: “For our sake he who knew no sin was made sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” [^{<470521>}2 Corinthians 5:21.] I shall not pursue all the testimonies, for the list would be endless, and many of them will be referred to in their order. For this reason the so-called “Apostles’ Creed” passes at once in the best order from the birth of Christ to his death and resurrection, wherein the whole of perfect salvation consists. Yet the remainder of the obedience that he manifested in his life is not excluded. Paul embraces it all from beginning to end: “He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant ...and was obedient to the Father unto death, even death on a cross” [^{<502007>}Philippians 2:7-8 p.]. And truly, even in death itself his willing obedience is the important thing because a sacrifice not offered voluntarily would not have furthered righteousness. Therefore, when the Lord testified that he “laid down his life for his sheep” [^{<431015>}John 10:15 p.], he aptly added, “No one takes it from me” [^{<431018>}John 10:18]. In this sense Isaiah says, “Like a sheep that before its shearer was dumb” [^{<235307>}Isaiah 53:7; cf. ^{<440832>}Acts 8:32]. And the Gospel history relates that he went forth and met the soldiers [^{<431804>}John 18:4], and that before Pilate he did not defend himself, but stood to submit to judgment [^{<402712>}Matthew 27:12,14]. Not, indeed, without a struggle; for he had taken upon himself our weaknesses, and in this way the obedience that he had shown to his Father had to be tested! And here was no common evidence of his incomparable love toward us: to wrestle with terrible fear, and amid those cruel torments to cast off all concern for himself that he might provide for us. And we must hold fast to this: that no proper sacrifice to God could have been offered unless Christ, disregarding his own feelings, subjected and yielded himself wholly to his Father’s will. On this point the apostle appropriately quotes this testimony from a psalm: “It is written of me in the Book of the Law [^{<581007>}Hebrews 10:7] ... ‘that I am to do thy will, O God [^{<581009>}Hebrews 10:9]. I will it, and thy law is in the midst of my heart’ [^{<193909>}Psalm 39:9, Vg.]. Then I said, ‘Lo, I come’” [^{<581007>}Hebrews 10:7]. But because trembling consciences find repose only in sacrifice and cleansing by which sins are expiated, we are duly

directed thither; and for us the substance of life is set in the death of Christ.

(The condemnation through Pilate)

The curse caused by our guilt was awaiting us at God's heavenly judgment seat. Accordingly, Scripture first relates Christ's condemnation before Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea, to teach us that the penalty to which we were subject had been imposed upon this righteous man. We could not escape God's dreadful judgment. To deliver us from it, Christ allowed himself to be condemned before a mortal man — even a wicked and profane man. For the title “prefect”^{f425} is mentioned, not only to affirm the faithfulness of the history, but that we may learn what Isaiah teaches: “Upon him was the chastisement of our peace, and with his stripes we are healed” [^{<235305>} Isaiah 53:5]. To take away our condemnation, it was not enough for him to suffer any kind of death: to make satisfaction for our redemption a form of death had to be chosen in which he might free us both by transferring our condemnation to himself and by taking our guilt upon himself. If he had been murdered by thieves or slain in an insurrection by a raging mob, in such a death there would have been no evidence of satisfaction. But when he was arraigned before the judgment seat as a criminal, accused and pressed by testimony, and condemned by the mouth of the judge to die — we know by these proofs that he took the role of a guilty man and evildoer. Here we must note two things that had been foretold by the oracles of the prophets, and which greatly comfort and confirm our faith. When we hear that Christ was led from the judge's seat to death, and hanged between thieves, we possess the fulfillment of the prophecy to which the Evangelist referred: “He was reckoned among the transgressors” [^{<411528>} Mark 15:28, Vg.; cf. ^{<235312>} Isaiah 53:12]. Why so? Surely that he might die in the place of the sinner, not of the righteous or innocent man. For he suffered death not because of innocence but because of sin. On the other hand, when we hear that he was acquitted by the same lips that condemned him (for Pilate was more than once compelled to give public testimony to his innocence [e.g., ^{<402723>} Matthew 27:23]), there should come to mind the utterance of another prophet: that he repaid what he did not steal [^{<196904>} Psalm 69:4]. Thus we shall behold the person of a sinner and evildoer represented in Christ, yet from his shining innocence it will at the same time be obvious that he was burdened

with another's sin rather than his own. He therefore suffered under Pontius Pilate, and by the governor's official sentence was reckoned among criminals. Yet not so — for he was declared righteous by his judge at the same time, when Pilate affirmed that he “found no cause for complaint in him” [^{<431838>} John 18:38]. This is our acquittal: the guilt that held us liable for punishment has been transferred to the head of the Son of God [^{<235312>} Isaiah 53:12]. We must, above all, remember this substitution, lest we tremble and remain anxious throughout life — as if God's righteous vengeance, which the Son of God has taken upon himself, still hung over us.

6. “CRUCIFIED”

The form of Christ's death also embodies a singular mystery. The cross was accursed, not only in human opinion but by decree of God's law [^{<052123>} Deuteronomy 21:23]. Hence, when Christ is hanged upon the cross, he makes himself subject to the curse. It had to happen in this way in order that the whole curse — which on account of our sins awaited us, or rather lay upon us — might be lifted from us, while it was transferred to him. This was also foreshadowed in the law. Now the sacrifices and expiations offered for sins were called “Ashmoth,” ^{f426} a Hebrew word properly signifying sin itself. By using this term figuratively the Holy Spirit intended to intimate that these were like sacrifices of purification, ^{f427} which take upon themselves and bear the curse due for sins. What was figuratively represented in the Mosaic sacrifices is manifested in Christ, the archetype of the figures. Therefore, to perform a perfect expiation, he gave his own life as an *Asham*, ^{f428} that is, as an expiatory offering for sin, as the prophet calls it [^{<235310>} Isaiah 53:10; cf. 5:5], upon which our stain and punishment might somehow be cast, and cease to be imputed to us. The apostle testifies this more openly when he teaches: “For our sake he who knew no sin was made sin by the Father, so that in him we might be made the righteousness of God” [^{<470521>} 2 Corinthians 5:21]. The Son of God, utterly clean of all fault, nevertheless took upon himself the shame and reproach of our iniquities, and in return clothed us with his purity. It seems that Paul meant the same thing when he says of sin, “He condemned sin in his flesh” [^{<450803>} Romans 8:3 p.]. The Father destroyed the force of sin when the curse of sin was transferred to Christ's flesh, there, then, is

the meaning of this saying: Christ was offered to the Father in death as an expiatory sacrifice that when he discharged all satisfaction through his sacrifice, we might cease to be afraid of God's wrath. Now it is clear what the prophet's utterance means: "The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" [^{<235306>} Isaiah 53:6]. That is, he who was about to cleanse the filth of those iniquities was covered with them by transferred imputation. The cross, to which he was nailed, was a symbol of this, as the apostle testifies: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, when he became a curse for us. For it is written, 'Cursed be every one who hangs on a tree,' that in Christ the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles" [^{<480313>} Galatians 3:13-14; ^{<052123>} Deuteronomy 21:23]. Peter means the same thing when he teaches: "He himself bore our sins ... on the tree" [^{<600224>} 1 Peter 2:24], because from the very symbol of the curse we more clearly understand that the burden with which we had been oppressed was laid upon him. Yet we must not understand that he fell under a curse that overwhelmed him; rather — in taking the curse upon himself — he crushed, broke, and scattered its whole force. Hence faith apprehends an acquittal in the condemnation of Christ, a blessing in his curse. Paul with good reason, therefore, magnificently proclaims the triumph that Christ obtained for himself on the cross, as if the cross, which was full of shame, had been changed into a triumphal chariot! For he says that "Christ nailed to the cross the written bond which stood against us ... and disarmed the principalities ... and made a public example of them" [^{<510214>} Colossians 2:14-15 p.]. And no wonder! For "Christ ... through the eternal Spirit offered himself," as another apostle testifies ^{f429} [^{<580914>} Hebrews 9:14]. From this came that transmutation of nature. But that these things may take root firmly and deeply in our hearts, let us keep sacrifice and cleansing constantly in mind. For we could not believe with assurance that Christ is our redemption, ransom, and propitiation ^{f430} unless he had been a sacrificial victim. Blood is accordingly mentioned wherever Scripture discusses the mode of redemption. Yet Christ's shed blood served, not only as a satisfaction, but also as a laver [cf. ^{<490526>} Ephesians 5:26; ^{<560305>} Titus 3:5; ^{<660105>} Revelation 1:5] to wash away our corruption.

7. “DEAD AND BURIED”

There follows in the Creed: “He was dead and buried.” Here again is to be seen how he in every respect took our place to pay the price of our redemption. Death held us captive under its yoke; Christ, in our stead, gave himself over to its power to deliver us from it. So the apostle understands it when he writes: “He tasted death for everyone” [^{<580209>} Hebrews 2:9 p.]. By dying, he ensured that we would not die, of — which is the same thing — redeemed us to life by his own death. He differed from us, however, in this respect: he let himself be swallowed up by death, as it were, not to be engulfed in its abyss, but rather to engulf it [cf. ^{<600322>} 1 Peter 3:22, Vg.] that must soon have engulfed us; he let himself be subjected to it, not to be overwhelmed by its power, but rather to lay it low, when it was threatening us and exulting, over our fallen state. Finally, his purpose was “that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage” [^{<580214>} Hebrews 2:14-15]. This is the first fruit that his death brought to us.

The second effect of Christ’s death upon us is this: by our participation in it, his death mortifies our earthly members so that they may no longer perform their functions; and it kills the old man in us that he may not flourish and bear fruit. Christ’s burial has the same effect: we ourselves as partakers in it are buried with him to sin. The apostle teaches that “we have been united with Christ in the likeness of his death” [^{<450605>} Romans 6:5, KJV], and “buried with him ...into the death” of sin [^{<450604>} Romans 6:4]; that “by his cross the world has been crucified to us, and we to the world” [^{<480219>} Galatians 2:19; 6:14 p.]; that we have died together with him [^{<510303>} Colossians 3:3]. By these statements Paul not only exhorts us to exhibit an example of Christ’s death but declares that there inheres in it an efficacy which ought to be manifest in all Christians, unless they intend to render his death useless and unfruitful.

Therefore, in Christ’s death and burial a twofold blessing is set forth for us to enjoy: liberation from the death to which we had been bound, and mortification of our flesh.

(Explanation of the doctrine of the descent into hell, 8-12)

8. “DESCENDED INTO HELL”

But we ought not to omit his descent into hell, a matter of no small moment in bringing about redemption. Now it appears from the ancient writers that this phrase which we read in the Creed was once not so much used in the churches.^{f431} Nevertheless, in setting forth a summary of doctrine a place must be given to it, as it contains the useful and not-to-be-despised mystery of a most important matter, but least some of the old writers do not leave it out.^{f432} From this we may conjecture that it was inserted after a time, and did not become customary in the churches at once, but gradually. This much is certain: that it reflected the common belief of all the godly; for there is no one of the fathers who does not mention in his writings Christ’s descent into hell, though their interpretations vary. But it matters little by whom or at what time this clause was inserted. Rather, the noteworthy point about the Creed is this: we have in it a summary of our faith, full and complete in all details; and containing nothing in it except what has been derived from the pure Word of God. If any persons have scruples about admitting this article into the Creed,^{f433} it will soon be made plain how important it is to the sum of our redemption: if it is left out, much of the benefit of Christ’s death will be lost. On the other hand, there are some who think that nothing new is spoken of in this article, but that it repeats in other words what had previously been said of his burial, the word “hell” often being used in Scripture to denote a grave.^{f434} I grant that what they put forward concerning the meaning of the word is true: “hell” is frequently to be understood as “grave.” But two reasons militate against their opinion, and readily persuade me to disagree with them. How careless it would have been, when something not at all difficult in itself has been stated with clear and easy words, to indicate it again in words that obscure rather than clarify it! Whenever two expressions for the same thing are used in the same context, the latter ought to be an explanation of the former. But what sort of explanation will it be if one says that “Christ was buried” means that “he descended into hell”? Secondly, it is not likely that a useless repetition of this sort could have crept into this summary, which the chief points of our faith are aptly noted in the fewest possible words. I have no doubt that all who have weighed this matter with some care will readily agree with me.

9. CHRIST IN THE NETHER WORLD?

Others interpret it differently: that Christ descended to the souls of the patriarchs who had died under the law, to announce redemption as accomplished and to free them from the prison where they were confined. ^{f435} To back up this interpretation, they wrongly adduce evidence from a psalm: “He shatters the doors of bronze and the bars of iron” [^{<19A716>}Psalm 107:16]. Likewise, from Zechariah: “He will redeem the captives from the waterless pit” [^{<380911>}Zechariah 9:11 p.]. But the psalm foretells the liberation of those who are cast into bondage in far-off countries; Zechariah, moreover, compares the Babylonian disaster, into which the people had been cast, to a deep, dry pit or abyss, and at the same time teaches that the salvation of the whole church is a release from the nether depths. Thus, it has happened in some way or other that later generations thought it to be a place under the earth, to which they gave the name “Limbo.” ^{f436} But this story, although it is repeated by great authors, and even today is earnestly defended as true by many persons, ^{f437} still is nothing but a story. It is childish to enclose the souls of the dead in a prison. What need, then, for Christ’s soul to go down there to release them? I readily admit that Christ shone upon them with the power of his Spirit, enabling them to realize that the grace which they had only tasted in hope was then manifested to the world. ^{f438} In this way the passage in Peter can probably be explained wherein he says: “Christ came and preached to the spirits were in a ‘watchtower — commonly rendered ‘prison’” [^{<600319>}1 Peter 3:19, cf. Vg.]. The context leads us to suppose that believers who died before that time shared the same grace with us. For Peter extols the power of Christ’s death in that it penetrated even to the dead; while godly souls enjoyed the present sight of that visitation which they had anxiously awaited. On the other hand, the wicked realized more clearly that they were excluded from all salvation. Now, while Peter does not clearly distinguish between the godly and the ungodly, we are not therefore to understand that he mixes them indiscriminately. He only means to teach that both groups have a common awareness of Christ’s death.

10. THE “DESCENT INTO HELL” AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE SPIRITUAL TORMENT THAT CHRIST UNDERWENT FOR US

But we must seek a surer explanation, apart from the Creed, of Christ’s descent into hell. The explanation given to us in God’s Word is not only holy and pious, but also full of wonderful consolation. If Christ had died only a bodily death, it would have been ineffectual. No — it was expedient at the same time for him to undergo the severity of God’s vengeance, to appease his wrath and satisfy his just judgment. For this reason, he must also grapple hand to hand with the armies of hell and the dread of everlasting death. ^{f439} A little while ago ^{f440} we referred to the prophet’s statement that “the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him,” “he was wounded for our transgressions” by the Father, “he was bruised for our infirmities” [^{<235305>}Isaiah 53:5 p.]. By these words he means that Christ was put in place of evildoers as surety and pledge — submitting himself even as the accused — to bear and suffer all the punishments that they ought to have sustained. All — with this one exception: “He could not be held by the pangs of death” [^{<440224>}Acts 2:24 p.]. No wonder, then, if he is said to have descended into hell, for he suffered the death that, God in his wrath had inflicted upon the wicked! Those who — on the ground that it is absurd to put after his burial what preceded it — say that the order is reversed in this way are making a very trifling and ridiculous objection. ^{f441} The point is that the Creed sets forth what Christ suffered in the sight of men, and then appositely speaks of that invisible and incomprehensible judgment which he underwent in the sight of God in order that we might know not only that Christ’s body was given as the price of our redemption, but that he paid a greater and more excellent price in suffering in his soul the terrible torments of a condemned and forsaken man.

11. DEFENSE OF THIS EXPLANATION FROM SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

In this sense Peter says: “Christ arose, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held or conquered by them” [^{<440224>}Acts 2:24 p.]. Peter does not simply name death, but expressly states that the Son of God had been laid hold of by the pangs of death that arose from God’s curse and wrath — the source of death. For what a small

thing it would have been to have gone forward with nothing to fear and, as if in sport, to suffer death! But this was a true proof of his boundless mercy, that he did not shun death, however much he dreaded it. There is no doubt that the apostle means the same thing when he writes in the Letter to the Hebrews: Christ “was heard for his ...fear” [^{<580507>} Hebrews 5:7 p.]. (Others render it “reverence” or “piety,”^{f442} but how inappropriately is evident from the fact itself, as well as the form of speaking.) Christ, therefore, “praying with tears and loud cries, ...is heard for his ...fear” [^{<580507>} Hebrews 5:7 p.]; he does not pray to be spared death, but he prays not to be swallowed up by it as a sinner because he there bore our nature, and surely no more terrible abyss can be conceived than to feel yourself forsaken and estranged from God; and when you call upon him, not to be heard. It is as if God himself had plotted your ruin. We see that Christ was so cast down as to be compelled to cry out in deep anguish: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” [^{<192201>} Psalm 22:1; ^{<402746>} Matthew 27:46]. Now some would have it that he was expressing the opinion of others rather than his own feeling.^{f443} This is not at all probable, for his words clearly were drawn forth from anguish deep within his heart. Yet we do not suggest that God was ever inimical or angry toward him. How could he be angry toward his beloved Son, “in whom his heart reposed” [cf. ^{<400317>} Matthew 3:17]? How could Christ by his intercession appease the Father toward others, if he were himself hateful to God? This is what we are saying: he bore the weight of divine severity, since he was “stricken and afflicted” [cf. ^{<235305>} Isaiah 53:5] by God’s hand, and experienced all the signs of a wrathful and avenging God. Therefore Hilary reasons: by his descent into hell we have obtained this, that death has been overcome. In other passages he does not differ from our view, as when he says: “The cross, death, hell — these are our life.” In another place: “The Son of God is in hell, but man is borne up to heaven.”^{f444} And why do I quote the testimony of a private individual when the apostle, recalling this fruit of victory, asserts the same thing, that they were “delivered who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage”? [Hebrews 2:15 p.]. He had, therefore, to conquer that fear which by nature continually torments and oppresses all mortals. This he could do only by fighting it. Now it will soon be more apparent that his was no common sorrow or one engendered by a light cause. Therefore, by his wrestling hand to hand with the devil’s power, with the dread of death,

with the pains of hell, he was victorious and triumphed over them, that in death we may not now fear those things which our Prince has swallowed up [cf. ^{<600322>} 1 Peter 3:22, Vg.].

12. DEFENSE OF THE DOCTRINE AGAINST MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND ERRORS

Here certain untutored wretches, impelled more by malice than by ignorance, cry out that I am doing a frightful injustice to Christ. For they hold it incongruous for him to fear for the salvation of his soul. Then they stir up a harsher slander: that I attribute to the Son of God a despair contrary to faith. ^{f445} First, these men wickedly raise a controversy over Christ's fear and dread, which the Evangelists so openly relate. For before the hour of death approached, "he was troubled in spirit" [^{<431321>} John 13:21] and stricken with grief, and when it came upon him, he, began to tremble more intensely with fear [cf. ^{<402637>} Matthew 26:37]. To say that he was pretending — as they do — is a foul evasion. We must with assurance, therefore, confess Christ's sorrow, as Ambrose rightly teaches, unless we are ashamed of the cross. ^{f446} And surely, unless his soul shared in the punishment, he would have been the Redeemer of bodies alone. But he had to struggle to lift up those who lay prostrate. His goodness — never sufficiently praised — shines in this: he did not shrink from taking our weaknesses upon himself. Hence, it in nowise detracts from his heavenly glory. From this also arises the comfort for our anguish and sorrow that the apostle holds out to us: that this Mediator has experienced our weaknesses the better to succor us in our miseries [^{<580415>} Hebrews 4:15a].

They claim that it is unworthy to attribute to Christ something evil of itself. As if they were wiser than God's Spirit, who harmonizes these two things! "Christ in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning." [^{<580415>} Hebrews 4:15b.] There is no reason why Christ's weakness should alarm us. For he was not compelled by violence or necessity, but was induced purely by his love for us and by his mercy to submit to it. But all that he voluntarily suffered for us does not in the least detract from his power. These detractors are, moreover, deceived in this one point: they do not recognize in Christ a weakness pure and free of all vice and stain because he held himself within the bounds of obedience. Our

fallen nature, whose violent and turbulent emotions know no bounds, is without moderation. Hence, our opponents wrongly measure the Son of God by that standard. But since he was uncorrupted, a moderation that restrained excess flourished in all his emotions. Hence, he could be like us [cf. ^{<580217>} Hebrews 2:17] in sorrow, fear, and dread, yet in such a way as to differ from us by this characteristic.

Our opponents, refuted, jump to another misrepresentation: although Christ feared death, he did not fear God's curse and wrath, from which he knew himself to be safe. But let godly readers consider how honorable it would be for Christ to have been more unmanly and cowardly than most men of the common sort! Thieves and other wrongdoers arrogantly hasten to death; many despise it with haughty courage; others bear it calmly. What sort of constancy or greatness would it have been for the Son of God to be stricken and almost stupefied with the dread of death? Something commonly considered miraculous was related about him: from the fierceness of his torment, drops of blood flowed from his face [^{<422244>} Luke 22:44]. And he did not do this as a show for others' eyes, since he groaned to his Father in secret. This banishes all doubt: he had to have angels descend from heaven to encourage him by their unaccustomed consolation [^{<422243>} Luke 22:43]. What shameful softness would it have been (as I have said) for Christ to be so tortured by the dread of common death as to sweat blood, and to be able to be revived only at the appearance of angels? What? Does not that prayer, coming from unbelievable bitterness of heart and repeated three times — "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me" [^{<402639>} Matthew 26:39] — show that Christ had a harsher and more difficult struggle than with common death?

From this it appears that these quibblers with whom I am contending boldly chatter about things they know nothing of. For they have never earnestly considered what it is or means that we have been redeemed from God's judgment. Yet this is our wisdom: duly to feel how much our salvation cost the Son of God.

Suppose someone should now ask whether Christ descended into hell when he prayed that death be averted. ^{f447} I reply: this was the beginning from which we may gather what harsh and dreadful torments he suffered,

when he knew that he stood accused before God's judgment seat for our sake. Although the divine power of his Spirit remained hidden for a moment to give place to weakness of flesh, we must know that the trial arising from the feeling of pain and fear was not contrary to faith. And in this way the statement in Peter's sermon was fulfilled: "He could not be held by the pangs of death" [⁴⁴⁰²²⁴ Acts 2:24 p.]. For feeling himself, as it were, forsaken by God, he did not waver in the least from trust in his goodness. This is proved by that remarkable prayer to God in which he cried out in acute agony: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" [⁴⁰²⁷⁴⁶ Matthew 27:46]. For even though he suffered beyond measure, he did not cease to call him his God, by whom he cried out that he had been forsaken. Now this refutes the error of Apollinaris, as well as that of the so-called Monothelites. Apollinaris claimed that Christ had an eternal spirit instead of a soul, so that he was only half a man. ^{f448} As if he could atone for our sins in any other way than by obeying the Father! But where is inclination or will to obey except in the soul? We know that it was for this reason that his soul was troubled: to drive away fear and bring peace and repose to our souls. Against the Monothelites, ^{f449} we see that he did not will as man what he willed according to his divine nature. I pass over the fact that, with a contrary emotion, he overcame the fear of which we have spoken. This plainly appears to be a great paradox: "'Father, save me from this hour'? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify thy name" [⁴³¹²²⁷ John 12:27-28]. Yet in his perplexity there was no extravagant behavior such as is seen in us when we strive mightily to control ourselves.

(Christ's resurrection, ascension, and heavenly session, 13-16)

13. "ON THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD"

Next comes the resurrection from the dead. Without this what we have said so far would be incomplete. For since only weakness appears in the cross, death, and burial of Christ, faith must leap over all these things to attain its full strength. We have in his death the complete fulfillment of salvation, for through it we are reconciled to God, his righteous judgment is satisfied, the curse is removed, and the penalty paid in full. Nevertheless, we are said to "have been born anew to a living hope" not through his death but "through his resurrection" [⁶⁰⁰¹⁰³ 1 Peter 1:3 p.]. For as he, in

rising again, came forth victor over death, so the victory of our faith over death lies in his resurrection alone.^{f450} Paul's words better express its nature: "He was put to death for our sins, and raised for our justification" [^{<450425>}Romans 4:25]. This is as if he had said: "Sin was taken away by his death; righteousness was revived and restored by his resurrection." For how could he by dying have freed us from death if he had himself succumbed to death? How could he have acquired victory for us if he had failed in the struggle? Therefore, we divide the substance of our salvation between Christ's death and resurrection as follows: through his death, sin was wiped out and death extinguished; through his resurrection, righteousness was restored and life raised up, so that — thanks to his resurrection — his death manifested its power and efficacy in us. Wherefore, Paul states that "Christ was declared the Son of God ... in the resurrection itself" [^{<450104>}Romans 1:4 p.], because then at last he displayed his heavenly power, which is both the clear mirror of his divinity and the firm support of our faith. Elsewhere Paul similarly teaches: "He suffered in weakness of the flesh, but rose again by the power of the Spirit" [^{<471304>}2 Corinthians 13:4 p.]. In the same sense Paul elsewhere discusses perfection: "That I may know him and the power of his resurrection." Yet immediately thereafter he adds, "The fellowship of his death" [^{<500310>}Philippians 3:10 p.]. With this Peter's statement closely agrees: "God raised him from the dead and gave him glory so that our faith and hope might be in God" [^{<600121>}1 Peter 1:21 p.]. Not that faith, supported by his death, should waver, but that the power of God, which guards us under faith, is especially revealed in the resurrection itself.

So then, let us remember that whenever mention is made of his death alone, we are to understand at the same time what belongs to his resurrection. Also, the same synecdoche applies to the word "resurrection": whenever it is mentioned separately from death, we are to understand it as including what has to do especially with his death. But because by rising again he obtained the victor's prize — that there might be resurrection and life — Paul rightly contends that "faith is annulled and the gospel empty and deceiving if Christ's resurrection is not fixed in our hearts" [^{<461517>}1 Corinthians 15:17 p.]. Accordingly, in another passage — after glorying in the death of Christ against the terrors of damnation — he adds by way of

emphasis: surely “he who was dead has risen, and appears before God as our mediator” [^{<450834>}Romans 8:34 p.].

Further, as we explained above that the mortification of our flesh depends upon participation in his cross. ^{f451} so we must understand that we obtain a corresponding benefit from his resurrection. The apostle says: “We were engrafted in the likeness of his death, so that sharing in his resurrection we might walk in newness of life” [^{<450604>}Romans 6:4 p.]. Hence, in another passage, from the fact that we have died with Christ [^{<510303>}Colossians 3:3] he derives proof that we must mortify our members that are upon the earth [cf. ^{<510305>}Colossians 3:5]. So he also infers from our rising up with Christ that we must seek those things above, not those on the earth [^{<510301>}Colossians 3:1-2]. By these words we are not only invited through the example of the risen Christ to strive after newness of life; but we are taught that we are reborn into righteousness through his power. We also receive a third benefit from his resurrection: we are assured of our own resurrection by receiving a sort of guarantee substantiated by his. Paul deals with this at greater length in ^{<461512>}1 Corinthians 15:12-26.

We must, by the way, note that he is said “to have risen from the dead.” These words express the truth of his death and resurrection, as if it were said: he suffered the same death that other men naturally die; and received immortality in the same flesh that, in the mortal state, he had taken upon himself.

14. “ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN”

To the resurrection is quite appropriately joined the ascent into heaven, Now having laid aside the mean and lowly state of mortal life and the shame of the cross, Christ by rising again began to show forth his glory and power more fully. Yet he truly inaugurated his Kingdom only at his ascension into heaven. The apostle shows this when he teaches that Christ “ascended ...that he might fill all things” [^{<490410>}Ephesians 4:10, cf. Vg.]. Despite the apparent contradiction, Paul shows that there is a remarkable agreement. For Christ left us in such a way that his presence might be more useful to us — a presence that had been confined in a humble abode of flesh so long as he sojourned on earth. Therefore John, after he related that notable invitation, “If any one thirst, let him come to me,” etc.

[^{<430737>} John 7:37], added that “the Spirit had not yet been given” to believers, “for Jesus had not yet been glorified” [^{<430739>} John 7:39]. The Lord himself also testified this to his disciples: “It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Holy Spirit will not come” [^{<431607>} John 16:7 p.]. He consoles them for his bodily absence, saying that he will not leave them orphans, but will come to them again in an invisible but more desirable way [cf. ^{<431418>} John 14:18-19;16:14]. For they were then taught by a surer experience that the authority he wielded and the power he exercised were sufficient for believers not only to live blessedly but also to die happily. Indeed, we see how much more abundantly he then poured out his Spirit, how much more wonderfully he advanced his Kingdom, how much greater power he displayed both in helping his people and in scattering his enemies. Carried up into heaven, therefore, he withdrew his bodily presence from our sight [^{<440109>} Acts 1:9], not to cease to be present with believers still on their earthly pilgrimage, but to rule heaven and earth with a more immediate power. But by his ascension he fulfilled what he had promised: that he would be with us even to the end of the world, as his body was raised up above all the heavens, so his power and energy were diffused and spread beyond all the bounds of heaven and earth. I prefer to explain this in Augustine’s words rather than my own: “Christ was to go by death to the right hand of the Father, whence he should come to judge the living and the dead. This he would do in bodily presence, according to pure doctrine and the rule of faith. For his spiritual presence with them was to come after his ascension.” ^{f452}

Elsewhere he expresses it more fully and clearly: “According to ineffable and invisible grace what he has said will be fulfilled: ‘Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world’ [^{<402820>} Matthew 28:20]. According to the flesh that the Word took upon himself, according to the fact that he was born of the virgin, according to the fact that he was seized by the Jews, fastened to a tree, taken down from a cross, wrapped with linen, laid in a sepulcher, manifested in the resurrection, these words were fulfilled: ‘You will not always have me with you’ [^{<402611>} Matthew 26:11]. Why? Because he went about in the flesh for forty days with his disciples, and while they were in his company, seeing him but not following him, he ascended into heaven [^{<440103>} Acts 1:3,9], and is not here: for there ‘he sits at the right hand of the Father’ [^{<411619>} Mark 16:19]; yet he is here, for the presence of majesty has not withdrawn [cf. ^{<580103>} Hebrews 1:3].

Therefore, we always have Christ according to the presence of majesty; but of his physical presence it was rightly said to his disciples, ‘You will not always have me with you’ [^{<402611>}Matthew 26:11]. For the church had him in his bodily presence for a few days; now it holds him by faith, but does not see him with the eyes.”^{f453}

15. “SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER”

Consequently, these words come immediately after: “Seated at the right hand of the Father.” The comparison is drawn from kings who have assessors at their side to whom they delegate the tasks of ruling and governing. So it was said that Christ, in whom the Father wills to be exalted and through whose hand he, wills to reign, was received at God’s right hand. This is as if it were said that Christ was invested with lordship over heaven and earth, and solemnly entered into possession of the government committed to him — and that he not only entered into possession once for all, but continues in it, until he shall come down on Judgment Day. For the apostle so expounds it when he states: “The Father made him sit at his right hand . . . far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come” [^{<490120>}Ephesians 1:20-21; cf. ^{<502609>}Philippians 2:9]. Also, “He has put all things in subjection under his feet” [^{<461527>}1 Corinthians 15:27] and “has made him the head over all things for the church” [^{<490122>}Ephesians 1:22]. You see the purpose of that “sitting”: that both heavenly and earthly creatures may look with admiration upon his majesty, be ruled by his hand, obey his nod, and submit to his power. Here is what the apostles meant to teach when they often recalled it; all things were entrusted to his decision [^{<440230>}Acts 2:30-36; 3:21; ch. 4; ^{<580108>}Hebrews 1:8]. Therefore, they are wrong who think that it designates simply his blessedness. It makes no difference that in the book of The Acts, Stephen declares that he saw him standing [^{<440755>}Acts 7:55]. For here it is a question, not of the disposition of his body, but of the majesty of his authority. Thus “to sit” means nothing else than to preside at the heavenly judgment seat.^{f454}

16. BENEFITS IMPARTED TO OUR FAITH BY CHRIST'S ASCENSION

From this our faith receives many benefits. First it understands that the Lord by his ascent to heaven opened the way into the Heavenly Kingdom, which had been closed through Adam [^{<431403>} John 14:3]. Since he entered heaven in our flesh, as if in our name, it follows, as the apostle says, that in a sense we already “sit with God in the heavenly places in him” [^{<490206>} Ephesians 2:6], so that we do not await heaven with a bare hope, but in our Head already possess it.

Secondly, as faith recognizes, it is to our great benefit that Christ resides with the Father. For, having entered a sanctuary not made with hands, he appears before the Father's face as our constant advocate and intercessor [^{<580725>} Hebrews 7:25; 9:11-12; ^{<450834>} Romans 8:34]. Thus he turns the Father's eyes to his own righteousness to avert his gaze from our sins. He so reconciles the Father's heart to us that by his intercession he prepares a way and access for us to the Father's throne. He fills with grace and kindness the throne that for miserable sinners would otherwise have been filled with dread.

Thirdly, faith comprehends his might, in which reposes our strength, power, wealth, and glorying against hell, When he ascended into heaven he led a captivity captive” [^{<490408>} Ephesians 4:8, cf. Vg.; cf. ^{<196818>} Psalm 68:18], and despoiling his enemies, he enriched his own people, and daily lavishes spiritual riches upon them. He therefore sits on high, transfusing us with his power, that he may quicken us to spiritual life, sanctify us by his Spirit, adorn his church with divers gifts of his grace, keep it safe from all harm by his protection, restrain the raging enemies of his cross and of our salvation by the strength of his hand, and finally hold all power in heaven and on earth. All this he does until he shall lay low all his enemies [^{<461525>} 1 Corinthians 15:25; cf. ^{<19B001>} Psalm 110:1] (who are our enemies too) and complete the building of his church. ^{f455} This is the true state of his Kingdom; this is the power that the Father has conferred upon him, until, in coming to judge the living and the dead, he accomplishes his final act.

(Christ's future return in judgment, 17)

17. “FROM WHENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD”

Christ gives to his own people clear testimonies of his very present power. Yet his Kingdom lies hidden in the earth, so to speak, under the lowliness of the flesh. It is right, therefore, that faith be called to ponder that visible presence of Christ which he will manifest on the Last Day. For he will come down from heaven in the same visible form in which he was seen to ascend [^{<440111>} Acts 1:11; ^{<402430>} Matthew 24:30]. And he will appear to all with the ineffable majesty of his Kingdom, with the glow of immortality, with the boundless power of divinity, with a guard of angels. From thence we are commanded to await him as our Redeemer on that day when he will separate the lambs from the goats, the elect from the reprobate [^{<402532>} Matthew 25:32-33]. No one — living or dead — shall escape his judgment. The sound of the trumpet will be heard from the ends of the earth, and by it all will be summoned before his judgment seat, both those still alive at that day and those whom death had previously taken from the company of the living [^{<520416>} 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17].

There are some who explain the words “the living and the dead” in another way. We see, of course, that some of the old writers were in doubt over how to explain this expression.^{f456} But as the meaning just set forth is plain and clear, it is far closer to the Creed, which obviously was written to be understood by the common people. And this does not disagree with Paul’s statement: “It is appointed to all men to die once” [^{<580927>} Hebrews 9:27]. For even though those remaining in mortal life at the Last Judgment will not die in a natural way and order, yet the change that they will undergo, because it will be like death, is not inappropriately called “death.” It is certain that “not all shall sleep, but ...all shall be changed” [^{<461551>} 1 Corinthians 15:51]. What does this mean? Their mortal life will perish and be swallowed up “in a moment,” and be transformed directly into a new nature [^{<461552>} 1 Corinthians 15:52]. No one would deny that this perishing of the flesh is death; yet it still remains true that living and dead will be called to judgment. “For the dead in Christ will rise first; then those who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them ... to meet the Lord in the air.” [^{<520416>} 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.] Now it is quite likely that this expression was taken from the sermon of Peter that Luke

relates [^{<441042>} Acts 10:42], and from Paul's solemn protestation to Timothy [^{<550401>} 2 Timothy 4:1].

(Concluding remarks on the Apostles' Creed and the sufficiency of Christ, 18-19)

18. THE JUDGE IS THE — REDEEMER!

Hence arises a wonderful consolation: that we perceive judgment to be in the hands of him who has already destined us to share with him the honor of judging [cf. ^{<401928>} Matthew 19:28]! Far indeed is he from mounting his judgment seat to condemn us! How could our most merciful Ruler destroy his people? How could the Head scatter his own members? How could our Advocate condemn his clients? For if the apostle dares exclaim that with Christ interceding for us there is no one who can come forth to condemn us [^{<450834>} Romans 8:34,33], it is much more true, then, that Christ as Intercessor will not condemn those whom he has received into his charge and protection. No mean assurance, this — that we shall be brought before no other judgment seat than that of our Redeemer, to whom we must look for our salvation! ^{f457} Moreover, he who now promises eternal blessedness through the gospel will then fulfill his promise in judgment. Therefore, by giving all judgment to the Son [^{<430522>} John 5:22], the Father has honored him to the end that he may care for the consciences of his people, who tremble in dread of judgment.

Thus far I have followed the order of the Apostles' Creed because it sums up in a few words the main points of our redemption, and thus may serve as a tablet for us upon which we see distinctly and point by point the things in Christ that we ought to heed. I call it the Apostles' Creed without concerning myself in the least as to its authorship. With considerable agreement, the old writers certainly attribute it to the apostles, holding it to have been written and published by the apostles in common, or to be a summary of teaching transmitted by their hands and collected in good faith, and thus worthy of that title. I have no doubt that at the very beginning of the church, in the apostolic age, it was received as a public confession by the consent of all — wherever it originated. It seems not to have been privately written by any one person, since as far back as men can remember it was certainly held to be of sacred authority

among all the godly. We consider to be beyond controversy the only point that ought to concern us: that the whole history of our faith is summed up in it succinctly and in definite order, and that it contains nothing that is not vouched for by genuine testimonies of Scripture. This being understood, it is pointless to trouble oneself or quarrel with anyone over the author. Unless, perchance, it is not enough for one to have the certain truth of the Holy Spirit, without at the same time knowing either by whose mouth it was spoken or by whose hand it was written.^{f458}

19. CHRIST ALONE IN ALL THE CLAUSES OF THE CREED

We see that our whole salvation and all its parts are comprehended in Christ [^{<440412>} Acts 4:12]. We should therefore take care not to derive the least portion of it from anywhere else. If we seek salvation, we are taught by the very name of Jesus that it is “of him” [^{<460130>} 1 Corinthians 1:30]. If we seek any other gifts of the Spirit, they will be found in his anointing. If we seek strength, it lies in his dominion; if purity, in his conception; if gentleness, it appears in his birth. For by his birth he was made like us in all respects [^{<580217>} Hebrews 2:17] that he might learn to feel our pain [cf. ^{<580502>} Hebrews 5:2]. If we seek redemption, it lies in his passion; if acquittal, in his condemnation; if remission of the curse, in his cross [^{<480313>} Galatians 3:13]; if satisfaction, in his sacrifice; if purification, in his blood; if reconciliation, in his descent into hell; if mortification of the flesh, in his tomb; if newness of life, in his resurrection; if immortality, in the same; if inheritance of the Heavenly Kingdom, in his entrance into heaven; if protection, if security, if abundant supply of all blessings, in his Kingdom; if untroubled expectation of judgment, in the power given to him to judge. In short, since rich store of every kind of good abounds in him, let us drink our fill from this fountain, and from no other. Some men, not content with him alone, are borne hither and thither from one hope to another; even if they concern themselves chiefly with him, they nevertheless stray from the right way in turning some part of their thinking in another direction. Yet such distrust cannot creep in where men have once for all truly known the abundance of his blessings.

CHAPTER 17

CHRIST RIGHTLY AND PROPERLY SAID TO HAVE MERITED GOD'S GRACE AND SALVATION FOR US

1. CHRIST'S MERIT DOES NOT EXCLUDE GOD'S FREE GRACE, BUT PRECEDES IT

By way of addition this question also should be explained. There are certain perversely subtle men ^{f459} who — even though they confess that we receive salvation through Christ — cannot bear to hear the word “merit,” for they think that it obscures God’s grace. Hence, they would have Christ as a mere instrument or minister, not as the Author or leader and prince of life, as Peter calls him [^{<440315>} Acts 3:15]. Indeed, I admit, if anyone would simply set Christ by himself over against God’s judgment, there will be no place for merit. For no worthiness will be found in man to deserve God’s favor. Indeed, as Augustine very truly writes: “The clearest light of predestination and grace is the Man Christ Jesus, the Savior, who brought this to pass by the human nature that was in him, through no preceding merits of works or of faith. Answer me, I beg of you, whence did that man deserve to be the only-begotten Son of God, and to be assumed into unity of person by the Word co-eternal with the Father? We must therefore recognize our Head as the very foundation of grace — a grace that is diffused from him through all his members according to the measure of each. Everyone is made a Christian from the beginning of his faith by the same grace whereby that Man from his beginning became the Christ.” ^{f460} Likewise, in another passage: “There is no more illustrious example of predestination than the Mediator himself. For he who made righteous this man of the seed of David, never to be unrighteous, without any merit of his will preceding, of unrighteous makes righteous those who are members of that Head,” ^{f461} etc. In discussing Christ’s merit, we do not consider the beginning of merit to be in him, but we go back to God’s

ordinance, the first cause. For God solely of his own good pleasure appointed him Mediator to obtain salvation for us.

Hence it is absurd to set Christ's merit against God's mercy. For it is a common rule that a thing subordinate to another is not in conflict with it. For this reason nothing hinders us from asserting that men are freely justified by God's mercy alone, and at the same time that Christ's merit, subordinate to God's mercy, also intervenes on our behalf. Both God's free favor and Christ's obedience, each in its degree, are fitly opposed to our works. Apart from God's good pleasure Christ could not merit anything; but did so because he had been appointed to appease God's wrath with his sacrifice, and to blot out our transgressions with his obedience. To sum up: inasmuch as Christ's merit depends upon God's grace alone, which has ordained this manner of salvation for us, it is just as properly opposed to all human righteousness as God's grace is.

2. SCRIPTURE COUPLES GOD'S GRACE AND CHRIST'S MERIT

This distinction is inferred from very many passages of Scripture. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him may not perish." [^{<430316>} John 3:16.] We see how God's love holds first place, as the highest cause or origin; how faith in Christ follows this as the second and proximate cause. Suppose someone takes exception that Christ is only a formal cause. He then diminishes Christ's power more than the words just quoted bear out. For if we attain righteousness by a faith that reposes in him, we ought to seek the matter of our salvation in him. Many passages of Scripture clearly prove this. "Not that we first loved God, but that he first loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation^{f462} for our sins." [^{<620410>} 1 John 4:10.] These words clearly demonstrate this fact: that nothing might stand in the way of his love toward us, God appointed Christ as a means of reconciling us to himself. The word "appeasing"^{f463} is very important. For, in some ineffable way, God loved us and yet was angry toward us at the same time, until he became reconciled to us in Christ. This is the import of all the following statements: "He is the expiation for our sins" [^{<620202>} 1 John 2:2]. Again, "God was pleased ...through him to reconcile to himself all things ...making peace in relation to himself by the blood of his cross," etc.

[^{<510119>}Colossians 1:19-20.] Again, “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting men’s sins against them.” [^{<470519>}2 Corinthians 5:19, cf. Comm. and Vg.] Again, “He ...bestowed his grace on us in his beloved Son.” [^{<490106>}Ephesians 1:6.] Again, “That he ...might reconcile us both ...in one man through the cross.” [^{<490215>}Ephesians 2:15-16, cf. Vg.] The explanation of this mystery is to be sought in the first chapter of the letter to the Ephesians. There, after Paul has taught us that we were chosen in Christ, he adds at the same time that we acquired favor in the same Christ [^{<490104>}Ephesians 1:4-5]. How did God begin to embrace with his favor those whom he had loved before the creation of the world? Only in that he revealed his love when he was reconciled to us by Christ’s blood. God is the fountainhead of all righteousness. Hence man, so long as he remains a sinner, must consider him an enemy and a judge. Therefore, the beginning of love is righteousness, as Paul describes it: “For our sake he made him to be sin who had done no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” [^{<470521>}2 Corinthians 5:21]. This means: we, who “by nature are sons of wrath” [^{<490203>}Ephesians 2:3, cf. Vg.] and estranged from him by sin, have, by Christ’s sacrifice, acquired free justification in order to appease God. But this distinction is also noted whenever Christ’s grace is joined to God’s love. From this it follows that Christ bestows on us something of what he has acquired. For otherwise it would not be fitting for this credit to be given to him as distinct from the Father, namely, that grace is his and proceeds from him.

3. THE MERIT OF CHRIST IN THE WITNESS OF SCRIPTURE

By his obedience, however, Christ truly acquired and merited grace for us with his Father. Many passages of Scripture surely and firmly attest this. I take it to be a commonplace that if Christ made satisfaction for our sins, if he paid the penalty owed by us, if he appeased God by his obedience — in short, if as a righteous man he suffered for unrighteous men — then he acquired salvation for us by his righteousness, which is tantamount to deserving it. But, as Paul says, “We were reconciled, and received reconciliation through his death” [^{<450510>}Romans 5:10-11 p.]. But reconciliation has no place except where an offense precedes it. The meaning therefore is: God, to whom we were hateful because of sin, was appeased by the death of his Son to become favorable toward us. And we

must diligently note the antithesis that follows shortly thereafter. “As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man’s obedience many are made righteous.” [^{<450519>}Romans 5:19.] This is the meaning: as by the sin of Adam we were estranged from God and destined to perish, so by Christ’s obedience we are ^{f463a}received into favor as righteous. The future tense of the verb does not exclude present righteousness, as is apparent from the context. For, as Paul had said previously, “the free gift ^{f464}following many trespasses is unto justification” [^{<450516>}Romans 5:16].

4. THE SUBSTITUTION OF CHRIST

But when we say that grace was imparted to us by the merit of Christ, we mean this: by his blood we were cleansed, and his death was an expiation for our sins. “His blood cleanses us from all sin.” [^{<620107>}1 John 1:7.] “This is my blood ... which is shed ... for the forgiveness of sins.” [^{<402628>}Matthew 26:28; cf. ^{<422220>}Luke 22:20.] If the effect of his shedding of blood is that our sins are not imputed to us, it follows that God’s judgment was satisfied by that price. On this point John the Baptist’s words apply: “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” [^{<430129>}John 1:29]. For he sets Christ over against all the sacrifices of the law, to teach that what those figures showed was fulfilled in him alone. We know what Moses often says: “Iniquity will be atoned for, sin will be blotted out and forgiven” [cf. ^{<023407>}Exodus 34:7; ^{<031634>}Leviticus 16:34]. In short, the old figures well teach us the force and power of Christ’s death. And in the Letter to the Hebrews the apostle skillfully using this principle explains this point: “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins” [^{<580922>}Hebrews 9:22]. From this he concludes that “Christ has appeared once for all ... to wipe out sin by the sacrifice of himself” [^{<580926>}Hebrews 9:26]. Again, “Christ was offered ... to bear the sins of many” [^{<580928>}Hebrews 9:28]. He had previously said: “He entered once for all into the Holy Place not through the blood of goats and calves but through his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption” [^{<580912>}Hebrews 9:12]. He now reasons on this wise: “If the blood of a heifer sanctifies unto the cleanness of the flesh, much more does the blood of Christ ... cleanse your consciences from dead works” [^{<580913>}Hebrews 9:13-14 p.]. This readily shows that Christ’s grace is too much weakened

unless we grant to his sacrifice the power of expiating, appeasing, and making satisfaction. As he adds a little later: “He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred meanwhile which redeems them from the preceding transgressions that remained under the law” [^{<580915>} Hebrews 9:15 p.].

It is especially worthwhile to ponder the analogy set forth by Paul: “Christ ... became a curse for us,” etc. [^{<480313>} Galatians 3:13]. It was superfluous, even absurd, for Christ to be burdened with a curse, unless it was to acquire righteousness for others by paying what they owed. Isaiah’s testimony is also clear: “The chastisement of our peace was laid upon Christ, and with his stripes healing has come to us” [^{<235305>} Isaiah 53:5 p.]. For unless Christ had made satisfaction for our sins, it would not have been said that he appeased God by taking upon himself the penalty to which we were subject. The words that follow in the same passage agree with this: “I have stricken him for the transgression of my people” [^{<235308>} Isaiah 53:8 p.]. Let us add the interpretation of Peter, which will remove all uncertainty: “He ... bore our sins ... on the tree” [^{<600224>} 1 Peter 2:24]. He is saying that the burden of condemnation, from which we were freed, was laid upon Christ.

5. CHRIST’S DEATH THE PRICE OF OUR REDEMPTION

The apostles clearly state that he paid the price to redeem us from the penalty of death, “being justified... by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ ..., whom God put forward as a propitiation ^{f465} through faith which is in his blood” [^{<450324>} Romans 3:24-25 p.]. Paul commends God’s grace in this respect: for God has given the price of redemption in the death of Christ [^{<450324>} Romans 3:24]; then he bids us take refuge in Christ’s blood, that having acquired righteousness we may stand secure before God’s judgment [^{<450325>} Romans 3:25]. Peter’s statement means the same thing: “You were ransomed ... not with ... silver and gold, but with the precious blood ... of a lamb without blemish” [^{<600118>} 1 Peter 1:18-19]. This comparison would not apply unless satisfaction had been made for our sins with this price. This is why Paul says that we “were bought with a price” [^{<460620>} 1 Corinthians 6:20]. His other statement also would not stand, “One mediator ... who gave himself as a ransom” ^{f466} [^{<540205>} 1

Timothy 2:5-6], unless the penalty that we deserved had been cast upon him. For this reason the apostle defines the redemption in Christ's blood as "the forgiveness of sins" [⁵¹⁰¹¹⁴Colossians 1:14]. It is as if he were saying, "We are justified or acquitted before God, because that blood corresponds to satisfaction for us." Another passage agrees with this: "In the cross he canceled the written bond which stood against us" [⁵¹⁰²¹⁴Colossians 2:14 p.]. He notes there the payment or compensation that absolves us of guilt. And these words of Paul's are very weighty: "If we are justified through the works of the law, then Christ died for nothing" [⁴⁸⁰²²¹Galatians 2:21 p.]. From this we infer that we must seek from Christ what the law would give if anyone could fulfill it; or, what is the same thing, that we obtain through Christ's grace what God promised in the law for our works: "He who will do these things, will live in them" [⁰³¹⁸⁰⁵Leviticus 18:5, cf. Comm.]. This is no less clearly confirmed in the sermon delivered at Antioch, which asserts that by believing in Christ "we are justified from everything from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses" [⁴⁴¹³³⁹Acts 13:39; cf. Vg., ch. 13:38]. For if righteousness consists in the observance of the law, who will deny that Christ merited favor for us when, by taking that burden upon himself, he reconciled us to God as if we had kept the law? What he afterward taught the Galatians has the same purpose: "God sent forth his Son ...subject to the law, to redeem those who were under the law" [⁴⁸⁰⁴⁰⁴Galatians 4:4-5 p.]. What was the purpose of this subjection of Christ to the law but to acquire righteousness for us, undertaking to pay what we could not pay? Hence, that imputation of righteousness without works which Paul discusses [Romans ch. 4]. For the righteousness found in Christ alone is reckoned as ours. Surely the only reason why Christ's flesh is called "our food" [⁴³⁰⁶⁵⁵John 6:55] is that we find in him the substance of life. Now that power arises solely from the fact that the Son of God was crucified as the price of our righteousness. As Paul says, "Christ ...gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice." [⁴⁹⁰⁵⁰²Ephesians 5:2.] And in another place: "He was put to death for our sins and rose for our justification" [⁴⁵⁰⁴²⁵Romans 4:25]. From this we conclude: not only was salvation given to us through Christ, but, by his grace the Father is now favorable to us. For there is no doubt that there is perfectly fulfilled in him what God declared through Isaiah in a figure: "I shall do this for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David" [²³³⁷³⁵Isaiah 37:35 p.]. The apostle is the

best witness of this when he says, “Your sins are forgiven for his name’s sake” [^{<620212>} 1 John 2:12]. For even though the name “Christ” is not mentioned, John designates him, as is his custom, by the pronoun [αὐτός]. The Lord also speaks in this sense: “As I live because of the Father, so ...you too will live because of me” [^{<430657>} John 6:57 p.]. Paul’s statement accords with this: “It has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ ^{f467} you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake” [^{<500129>} Philippians 1:29].

6. CHRIST ACQUIRED NO MERIT FOR HIMSELF

But to ask whether Christ merited anything for himself, as Lombard and the Schoolmen ^{f468} do, is no less stupid curiosity than their temerity in making such a definition. What need was there for God’s only Son to come down in order to acquire something new for himself? God, in setting forth his own plan banishes all doubt. For it is said not that the Father provided, in his Son’s merits, for the needs of the Son; but that he delivered him over to death, and “did not spare him” [^{<450832>} Romans 8:32] because he “loved the world” [^{<430316>} John 3:16 p.; cf. ^{<450835>} Romans 8:35,37]. And we should note the prophets’ expressions: “To us a child is born” [^{<230906>} Isaiah 9:6]. “Rejoice, ...O daughter of Zion! ...Lo, your king comes to you” [^{<380909>} Zechariah 9:9, cf. Comm.]. Also, that confirmation of love which Paul commends would otherwise be barren: that Christ suffered death for his enemies [cf. ^{<450510>} Romans 5:10]. From this we conclude that he had no regard for himself; as he clearly affirms, “For their sake I sanctify myself” [^{<431719>} John 17:19]. For he who gave away the fruit of his holiness to others testifies that he acquired nothing for himself. And this is indeed worth noting: to devote himself completely to saving us, Christ in a way forgot himself. But they absurdly apply Paul’s testimony to this: “Therefore the Father has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name,” etc. [^{<502609>} Philippians 2:9 p.]. ^{f469} By what merits, they ask, could a man become judge of the world and head of the angels, acquire God’s supreme dominion, and have abiding in himself that majesty, when all the power and virtue of men and angels cannot attain even a thousandth part of it? But there is a ready and full answer: Paul is not there discussing the reason why Christ was exalted, but, for our example, is merely showing how Christ’s exaltation follows his

humiliation. And this means nothing else than what is said elsewhere: “It was necessary that the Christ should suffer ...and so enter into the glory of the Father” [^{<422426>}Luke 24:26 p.].

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 1

- ^{ft1} Calvin is here recalling the opening words of the *Institutes* on the knowledge of God and of ourselves. Cf. 1.1:1, and secs. 1 and 4, below. See also Erasmus, *Enchiridion* 3 (tr. LCC XIV. 308 ff.). The inscription “[Γνῶθι σαυτόν]” (or “[σεαυτόν]”), “Know thyself,” on the temple at Delphi, supplies the text for a lesson taught by Socrates in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* IV. 2:24-29 (LCL edition, pp. 286 f.). Cf. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* II. 21:1395a (LCL edition, pp. 282 ff.). Cicero several times quotes and comments on this expression, e.g.: “When Apollo says, ‘Know thyself,’ he is saying, ‘Know thy soul,’” *Tusculan Disputations* I. 22:52 (LCL edition, pp. 62 f.). With this, Calvin’s meaning accords.
- ^{ft2} Cicero, *Nature of the Gods* III. 35:87,88, where the Academician Cotta says that while intellect, virtue, and faith are within ourselves, safety, wealth, and victory are to be sought from the gods. (Tr. LCL edition, pp. 372-375.)
- ^{ft3} Pannier notes that Calvin here reveals the dynamism of the doctrine of the unfree will: when we realize the end for which we have been created, together with our actual moral impotence, we are led to seek power and deliverance from God. (Pannier, *Institution* I. 311, note *a* on p. 84.)
- ^{ft4} Cf. L. 15:1-4.
- ^{ft5} “*Vitaeque futurae meditationem.*” Cf. 3:9.
- ^{ft6} Augustine, *Psalms*, Psalm 18. 2:15 (MPL 36. 168; tr. LF *Psalms* 1:188 f.).
- ^{ft7} Bernard, *Sermons on the Song of Songs* 28 (MPL 183. 923; tr. S. J. Eales, *Life and Works of St. Bernard* IV. 179).
- ^{ft8} Pelagius (ca. 354-420), a British monk who combated Augustine’s doctrine of man’s innate depravity resulting from Adam’s sin, thus

calling forth a body of treatises and letters by Augustine in exposition and defense of this doctrine. Cf. Augustine, *Retractations* I. 13:5 (MPL 32. 604); *Against Julian* III. 26:59 (MPL 44. 739 f.; tr. FC 35. 159f.). With his more aggressive associate, Coelestius, an Irishman, Pelagius emerged from Rome, visited North Africa, Palestine, and Asia Minor, and won numerous adherents. Pelagianism was condemned in Councils of Carthage, 412 and 418, and in an imperial edict, 418, after which Pope Zosimus withdrew the favor in which he had held Coelestius and joined in his condemnation. But elements of this heresy were perpetuated. It is essentially an assertion of the natural moral ability of man. For a useful brief selection of documents on the controversy, see H. Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, pp. 74-87. The work of Pelagius has been edited by A. Souter, *Pelagius's Expositions of the Thirteen Epistles of St. Paul*, Texts and Studies IX (Part I, Introduction; Part II, Text).

^{ft9} Cf. Augustine, *City of God* XVI. xxvii: "infants according to the common origin of the human race, have all broken God's covenant in that one in whom all have sinned... Infants are... born in sin not actual but original" (MPL 41. 506; tr. NPNF II. 326). Other passages from Augustine of similar import are cited in Smits II. 30 and in OS III. 233 f. The first opposition of Pelagius to Augustine had been called forth against the implications of man's helplessness in the well-known sentence in the *Confessions* (X. 29:40; X. 31:45): "*Da quod iubes et iube quod vis*" ("Give what thou commandest and command what thou wilt"). (MPL 32. 796,798; tr. LCC VII. 225,228.) Cf. II. 5:7, note 17; II. 8:57, note 67.

^{ft10} Calvin here uses the debated word *tradux* and has in mind the arguments among the fathers on the origin of the individual soul. Cf. I. 15:5, note 15. Though both Augustine and Calvin hold strongly the unity of mankind in creation, neither commits himself to traducianism, by which Adam's soul is regarded as bearing an element transmitted from the divine essence and as the source of all human souls. Calvin, indeed, completely rejects this teaching. But Augustine opposed the alternate view of creationism as it was somewhat crudely presented by Vincentius Victor. See Augustine, *On the Soul and Its Origin* I. iv; II. xiv (MPL 44. 477; 507 f.; tr. NPNF V. 316; 340 f.). For the prevailing

medieval view, cf. E. R. Fairweather's note on a passage from Anselm of Laon (LCC X. 261, note 2). On the whole controversy, see C. Hodge, *Systematic Theology* II. in, and J. F. Bethune-Baker, *An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 302 ff. Calvinist theology has favored creationism, the doctrine that each soul is a new creation of God. Says Hodge, p. 64: "Calvin, Beza, Turretin, and the great majority of Reformed theologians were creationists." This view was also voiced by certain opponents of the Reformation: cf. Alfonso de Castro, *Adversus omnes haereses* II, s.v. "anima" (1543, fo. 34 C-35 A).

^{ft11} Benoit here cites Calvin, Comm. ^{<430306>} John 3:6, where it is said that original sin is not transmitted from parents by physical generation, but that by divine ordinance all are corrupted in Adam, being despoiled of the gifts with which in him we were adorned.

^{ft12} Cf. Augustine: "*Regeneratus non regenerat filios carnis, sed generat.*" On the Grace of Christ and on Original Sin II. 40:45 (MPL 44. 407; tr. NPNF 5:253).

^{ft13} *Acts of the Synod of Trent with the Antidote* I, session 5, decree 1 (CR VII. 425 f.; tr. Calvin, *Tracts* III. 86 ff.).

^{ft14} Augustine, *On the Grace of Christ and on Original Sin loc. cit.*

^{ft15} Melancthon describes original sin as "a native propensity and a certain genial impulse and energy [*genialis impetus et energia*] by which we are drawn toward sinning." He illustrates it by the upward direction of flames and by the attraction of a magnet. It is thus wrong to differentiate, in the Scholastic manner, between original and actual sin. While he approves the Scholastic description of it as "the lack of original righteousness," he emphatically points to the insufficiency of this as a definition, since the sin is an active impiety springing from a primary self-love. *Loci communes* (1521), ed. H. Engelland, in the series *Melancthons Werke in Auswahl*, ed. R. Stupperich, II. 1:27 ff.; tr. from Kolde's 1910 edition, C. L. Hill, *The Loci Communes of Philip Melancthon*, pp. 81 ff.

^{ft16} The term "concupiscence" is much used by Augustine, e.g., in his treatise *On Marriage and Concupiscence*, where in its broadest sense the word means "the law of sin in our sinful flesh" (I. xxxiv) (MPL 44.

435; tr. NPNF V. 277). Peter Lombard, in discussing the transmission of Adam's sin to his posterity, describes original sin as "*fomes peccati, id est, concupiscentia,*" and also calls it "a vice of nature vitiating all men, who through Adam are born in concupiscence. *Sentences*, II. 30:7 f. (MPL 192. 722). Cf. the interesting and typically Scholastic argument of Stephen Langton on original sin in LCG X. 352 if.

ft17 Lombard, *Sentences*, II. 30:7 f. and 31:2-4 (MPL 192. 722,724).

ft18 Cf. II. 2:15, *ad finem*; II. 3. 2.

ft19 This is one of the charges brought against the Libertines in Calvin's *Contre la secte phantastique des Libertins* (1545) (CR VII. 184 f.), and in his *Epistre contre un certain Cordelier* (1547) (CR VII. 347, 350 ff.).

ft20 Cf. Augustine, *On Genesis in the Literal Sense* XI. iv, vi, x, xiii (MPL 34. 431-434).

ft21 III. xxi-xxiv; cf. I. 15:8. In the corresponding passage in the editions of 1539 and 1541, Pannier finds the first occurrence of the word "predestination" in Calvin's writings. (Pannier, *Institution* I. 312.) However, the verbal form appears in the *Instruction et confession de foy* (1537) (OS I. 390; tr. P. T. Fuhrmann, *Instruction in Faith*, p. 36).

ft22 Cf. I. 1:2, note 7; I. 14:3, note 11.

ft23 Augustine, *On Genesis in the Literal Sense* I. 1:3 (MPL 34. 221); *Contra Julianum, opus imperfectum* V. xl (MPL 45-1477).

ft24 Cf. I. 13:1.

CHAPTER 2

ft25 Augustine, *Letters* ccxv, interpreting ^{<200426>} Proverbs 4:26 (MPL 33. 971 ff.; tr. FC 32 65 ff.); *John's Gospel* 53:8 (MPL 35. 1778; tr. NPNF VII. 293 f.).

ft26 Similar language is used in Calvin's *Instruction et confession de foy* (1537) (OS I. 382; tr. Fuhrmann, *Instruction in Faith*, p. 23). Cf. Pannier, *Institution* I. 95, note *a* on p. 312.

ft27 Augustine, *John's Gospel* lxxxi, 2 (MPL 35. 1841; tr. NPNF VII. 345; *Letters* ccxvii. 3 (MPL 33. 981; tr. FC 32. 80 f.).

- ft28 The position of Erasmus in his treatise against Luther on free will, *De libero arbitrio* [διατριβή] (ed. J. von Walter, *Quellenschriften zur Geschichte des Protestantismus* 8, pp. 1, 5 ff.). Extensive portions of this treatise are translated in *The Portable Renaissance Reader*, ed. J. B. Ross and M. M. McLaughlin, pp. 677-693. The entire treatise is in LCC XVII.
- ft29 I. xv.7.
- ft30 Plato, *Republic* IV. 14 ff., 439 ff. (LCL Plato, *Republic* I. 394 ff.); Aristotle, *De anima* III. 10:433 (LCL edition, pp. 186-191).
- ft31 I. XV. 6.
- ft32 Plato, *Laws* I. 644 E (LCL Plato, *Laws* I. 68 f.).
- ft33 Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* III. 1. 2 (LCL edition, pp. 226 f.).
- ft34 Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 74 ff., 253 D-254 E (LCL Plato I. 494-497).
- ft35 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* III. 5. 1113b: “For virtue is in our power and so too is vice. For where it is in our power to act, it is also in our power not to act” (tr. R. McKeon, *Basic Works of Aristotle*, p. 972; cf. LCL edition, pp. 142 f.); Seneca, *Moral Epistles* xc. 1 (LCL Seneca, II. 394 f.).
- ft36 Cicero, *Nature of the Gods* III. 36:86 f. (LCL edition, pp. 372 f.).
- ft37 In the *De scandalis* (1550), Calvin similarly charges certain of the fathers with undue deference to the philosophers in ascribing free will to man. (CP, VIII. 49; cf. Benoit, *Institution* II. 25.)
- ft38 While his references are to the fathers, Calvin nevertheless slants his argument against contemporary Humanists, including Erasmus. See Pannier, *Institution* I. 313, note *a* on p. 101.
- ft39 Chrysostom, *De prodicione Judaeorum*, hom. i (MPG 49. 377); *Homilies on Genesis*: hom. 19:2; hom. 53:2; hom. 25:7 (MPG 53. 158; 54. 466; 53. 228).
- ft40 Jerome, *Dialogus contra Pelagianos* III. 1 (MPL 23. 569).
- ft41 Duns Scotus, *In sententias* II. 29:1 (*Opera omnia* XIII. 267 f.).
- ft42 This sentence, much in Augustine’s style and based upon his thought, is of medieval formulation. Lombard has “*alia sunt corrupta per peccatum, id est naturalia... alia subtracta*” (*Sentences* II. 25:8; MPL

192. 207). See also Augustine, *Questions on the Gospels* 2:19, on the good Samaritan, Luke 10. Man is alive, says Augustine, in that by which he has understanding and knowledge of God, but as oppressed by sin he is dead; hence he is said to be half alive (*semivivus*, ^{<421030>}Luke 10:30) (MPL 35. 1340). Other related passages are *On Nature and Grace* 3. 3; 19:21; 20:22 (MPL 44. 249 f.-256 f.; tr. NPNF V. 122; 127 f.); Pseudo-Augustine, *Hypomnesticon* [commonly called *Hypognosticon*] *contra pelagianos et caelestinos* III. 8:11 (MPL 45. 1628). See also II. 5:19, note 38; note 21, below; sec. 12, note 53; sec. 16, note 62; Comm. ^{<261119>}Ezekiel 11:19-20; T. F. Torrance, *Calvin's Doctrine of Man*, chapter 7.
- ^{ft43} “[*ἀντεξούσιος*]” Among the church fathers this word is apparently first used by Clement of Alexandria, who interprets Paul’s “When I became a man” (1 Corinthians 13:11) as applying “to us who are obedient to the Word and masters of ourselves [*ἀντεξουσίους*].” *Instructor* I. 6. 33 (GCS Clemens Alexandrinus I. 110; MPG 8. 289 f.; tr. ANF II. 217).
- ^{ft44} Origen, *De principiis* III. 1:3 (GCS 22. 197; MPG 11. 252; tr. ANF IV. 303; Butterworth, *Origen On First Principles*, p. 159).
- ^{ft45} Cf. Augustine, *Sermons* clvi. 9-13 (MPL 38. 855-857; tr. LF *Sermons* II. 767-770); Pseudo-Augustine (school of Hugh of St. Victor), *Summa sententiarum* 3. 8 (MPL 176. 101); Lombard, *Sentences* II. 24:5 (MPL 192. 702) and note 18, above. See also OS III. 246, note 3; Smits II. 31.
- ^{ft46} Bernard, *De gratia et libero arbitrio* 2. 4 (MPL 182. 1004; tr. W. W. Williams, *Concerning Grace and Free Will*, p. 10).
- ^{ft47} Anselm, *Dialogus de libero arbitrio* 3 (MPL 158. 494): “*Potestas servandi rectitudinem propter ipsam rectitudinem.*”
- ^{ft48} Lombard, *Sentences* II. 24. 5 (MPL 192. 702).
- ^{ft49} Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* I. lxxxiii. 3.
- ^{ft50} “*Res medias*,” things intermediate, or indifferent, a rendering of the Greek [*ἀδιάφορα*] (cf. German, *Mitteldinge*). See the discussion under “Christian Freedom” III. 19:7-9; also II. 2:12-14; II. 3. 5.
- ^{ft51} Prosper of Aquitaine, *De vocatione omnium gentium* (ca. 450) I. 2. This treatise was published with the works of Ambrose (Basel, 1492)

and appears with the spurious works formerly attributed to him in MPL 17; also, in variant form, with the works of Prosper, MPL 51. For this passage, see MPL 17. 1075; 51. 649 f., and the translation by P. de Letter, *St. Prosper of Aquitaine, The Call of All Nations* (tr. ACW XIV), p. 27. Cf. M. Cappuyns, “L’Auteur du *De vocatione omnium gentium*,” *Revue Benedictine* XXXIX (1927), 198-226.

ft52 II. xii-xviii.

ft53 Lombard, *Sentences* II. 25:9 (MPL 192. 708); Bernard, *De gratia et libero arbitrio* 3. 7 (MPL 182. 1005; tr. W. W. Williams, *Concerning Grace and Free Will*, pp. 15 f.).

ft54 II. 3. 5.

ft55 In his response (June 5, 1555) to questions addressed to him by Laelius Socinus (to whom he may be alluding here), Calvin distinguishes between the effective giving of grace to the elect and the “inferior operation of the Spirit” in the reprobate. *Responsio ad aliquot Laelii Socini quaestiones*, 2-4 (CR X. 163 ff.).

ft56 Lombard, *Sentences* II. 26:1 (MPL 192. 710).

ft57 Bernard, *De gratia et libero arbitrio* 14. 46 (MPL 182, 1006; tr. W. W. Williams, *Concerning Grace and Free Will*, p. 48); Augustine, *On Grace and Free Will* 17. 33 (MPL 44. 901; tr. NPNF V. 457).

ft58 Prosper of Aquitaine, *The Call of All Nations* II. iv (MPL 51. 96; tr. ACW XIV. 96).

ft59 Note the distinction between the earlier and “sounder” Schoolmen and the *recentiores sophistae*. In the latter expression Calvin apparently has in mind Ockham, his later interpreters such as Gabriel Biel (d. 1495), and the Sorbonne theologians of his own day.

ft60 Lombard, *Sentences* II. 25:8 (MPL 192. 708). Cf. II. 2:15, which describes the continuing good in sinful man, and II. 3. 2 (especially the last sentence), which denies him all good. Such comparison will show both the hyperbole of Calvin’s expression and the underlying theological position on the basis of which he can say that “many good qualities” remain in man and yet that he is “totally destitute of all good.” Cf. *Instruction et confession de foy* (1537) (OS I. 381; CR. XXII. 36 f.; tr. Fuhrmann, *Instruction in Faith* 5, P. 22): “The

Scripture testifies often that man is a slave of sin.... Because the heart, totally imbued with the poison of sin, can emit nothing but the fruits of sin.” Note also the “gift” quality of the heathen virtues, II. 3. 3-4, and the relative degrees of goodness within the state of human depravity. T. F. Torrance has shed much light on this aspect of Calvin’s thought in *Calvin’s Doctrine of Man*, chapters. 7,8.

- ft61 “[ἐθελόδουλος].” Pannier points out that Etienne de Boute (the friend of Montaigne) had written his famous political treatise *La servitude volontaire* in 1548.
- ft62 [λογομαχίας].
- ft63 Augustine, *Against Julian* II. 8:23 (MPL 44. 689; tr. FC 35. 83 f.). Cf. Calvin, *Instruction in Faith* (1537), 5 (OS I. 381; CR XXII. 36; tr. Fuhrmann, p. 22).
- ft64 Augustine, *John’s Gospel* 53. 8 (MPL 35. 1778; tr. NPNF VII. 293).
- ft65 Augustine, *Letters* cxlv. 2 (MPL 33. 593; tr. FC 20. 163 f.).
- ft66 Augustine, *On Man’s Perfection in Righteousness* 4. 9 (MPL 44. 296; tr. NPNF V. 161).
- ft67 The additional passages from Augustine quoted in the above sentences are: *Enchiridion* 9. 30 (MPL 40. 246; tr. LCC VII. 356 f.); *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians* III. 8:24 (MPL 44. 607; tr. NPNF V. 414); 1. 3. 6 (MPL 44. 553; tr. NPNF V. 379); III. 7:20: “*Hominis libera, sed Dei gratia liberata, voluntas*” (MPL 44. 603; tr. NPNF V. 412); *Sermons* cxxxi. 6 (MPL 38. 732).
- ft68 Augustine, *On the Spirit and the Letter* 30. 52 (MPL 44. 234; CSEL 60. 208 f.; tr. LCC VIII. 236 f.); *On Rebuke and Grace* 13. 42 (MPL 44. 942; tr. NPNF V. 489); *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians* I. 2. 5 (MPL 44. 552; tr. NPNF V. 378).
- ft69 Augustine, *On the Predestination of the Saints* 3. 7; 4:8 (MPL 44. 964,966; tr. NPNF V. 500). Here Augustine quotes Cyprian, *Testimonies Against the Jews, to Quirinus* III. iv: “We should boast in nothing, since nothing is ours” (MPL 4. 764; tr. ANF V. 528). The same quotation occurs in *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians* IV. 9. 25-26 (MPL 44. 627 f.; tr. NPNF V. 428).

- ft70 Augustine, *On Genesis in the Literal Sense* VIII. 4-6 (MPL 34. 375 ff.); Eucherius (bishop of Lyons, 434-450), *Commentarii in Genesis* 1, on <010209> Genesis 2:9 (MPL 50. 907).
- ft71 In the edition of Chrysostom's works by Erasmus (Basel, 1530), these words occur in a homily for the first Sunday in Advent, but the homily is not contained or mentioned in later editions (OS III. 252, note 2).
- ft72 II. 2. 1; cf. II. 1. 1-3.
- ft73 Chrysostom, *De profectu evangelii* 2 (MPG 51. 312).
- ft74 The French text names Demosthenes. The anecdote is told of Demosthenes by Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* XI. 3. 6 (LCL Quintilian IV. 244 f.). For its use by Augustine, see his *Letters* cxiii. 3. 22 (MPL 33. 442; tr. FC 18. 282). Calvin, like the monastic and Scholastic moralists, regards pride as the chief of vices, and humility as the pre-eminent virtue. Cf. *Sermons on Job* lxxx, where humility is the "sovereign virtue... the mother and root of all virtue" (CR XXXIV. 234; tr. A. Golding (1580 edition, p. 376). The classic passage in Benedict of Nursia's *Rule of Monks* vii, "the twelve steps of humility," cannot have been unfamiliar to Calvin (J. McCann, *The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English*, pp. 36-49; tr. LCC XII. 301-304). Cf. Bernard's devotional treatise *De gradibus humilitatis et superbiae* (annotated Latin text by B. R. V. Mills in *Select Treatises of St. Bernard*; tr. by B. R. V. Mills, *The Twelve Degrees of Humility and Pride*).
- ft75 Augustine, *John's Gospel* 49. 8 (MPL 35. 1750; tr. NPNF VII. 273); *On Nature and Grace* 53. 62 (MPL 44. 277; tr. NPNF V. 142); *Psalms*, Psalm 45. 13 (MPL 36. 523); *Psalms*, <197001> Psalm 70:1,2 (MPL 36. 876; tr. NPNF [Psalm 46 and 71] VIII. 160. 315).
- ft76 "[φιλαυτίας καὶ φιλονεικίας]."
- ft77 See, above, sec. 4, notes 17, 18, 21; Augustine, *On Nature and Grace* 3. 3. 19:21; 20:22 (MPL 44. 249,256 f.; tr. NPNF V. 122, 127 f.).
- ft78 I. 15:7,8.
- ft79 In the following account Calvin fails to mention the fine arts, which, however, are admired by him. Cf. I. 11:12; Comm. <010420> Genesis 4:20; Comm. Harmony Books of Moses, <022004> Exodus 20:4; 34:17.

The subject is treated by L. Wencelius, *L'Esthetique de Calvin* II. 5, 6, and by J. Bohatec, *Bude und Calvin*, pp. 467-471.

ft80 Seneca, *On Clemency* I. 3. 2; *On Benefits* VIII. 1. 7 (LCL Seneca, *Moral Essays* I. 364 f.; III. 458 f.); Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* VI. 10. xvii (CSEL 19. 515, 545; MPL 6. 668, 696; tr. ANF VII. 173, 182). In Comm. <010218>Genesis 2:18, Calvin speaks of the “general principle that man was created to be a social animal.” Cf. *Comm. Seneca On Clemency* I. 3 (CR V. 40).

ft81 Plato, *Meno* 81 f., 84 (*Dialogues of Plato*, tr. Jowett I. 361 ff.).

ft82 Cf. I. 4:3, note 6. This assertion of the divine origin and authentication of “truth wherever it appears” could hardly be more emphatic. While the natural capacities of the human mind are here chiefly associated with temporal and “inferior” concerns, elsewhere Calvin frequently recognizes the discernment by pagan philosophers of elements of religious truth. Cf. I. 3. 1; I. 5. 3. It is to be noted that, in his welcome to truth found in nonscriptural sources and in the natural man, we have no thought of the concept (best represented by Duns Scotus) of two kinds of truth that are not mutually harmonious. Rather, his view is of one God-given truth manifested on two levels, one of which is of value for temporal and mundane concerns only. He is on common ground with Lactantius, who says that though the philosophers missed “the sum of things,” viz., that the world was created by God so that man might worship him, yet each of them saw something of the truth. Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* VII. 6-7 (CSEL 19. 605 f.; MPL 6. 757, 759; tr. ANF VII. 203 f.). The statement of Clement of Alexandria that the truth of philosophy as it investigates the nature of things “is the truth of which the Lord himself said: I am the truth” (*Stromata* I. 5:32; GCS II. 21; tr. ANF II. 307), startling as it appears, can be read in a similar sense. Calvin may here be indebted to Augustine, *Against Julian* IV. 12. 60: “*In ipsius [i.e., in pagan writers] reperiuntur nonnulla vestigia veritatis*” (MPL 44. 767; tr. FC 35. 218). In Comm. <560101>Titus 1:1,2, Calvin says that anything true, though said by wicked men, is from God. Cf. Comm. <430436>John 4:36.

ft83 Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* I. 26:64 (LCL edition, pp. 74 f.). (Cicero’s reference is to Plato, *Timaeus* 47.)

ft84 “[ψυχικούς]”.

^{ft85} Cf. II. 3. 2, ad finem.

^{ft86} Lombard, *Sentences* II. 25:8 (MPL 192. 707). In adding “*et scholastici*” here, Calvin has reference to the numerous commentaries on Lombard’s *Sentences* written by the Schoolmen. See, above, sec. 4, notes 17, 18; sec. 12, note 53.

^{ft87} “*Generalem Dei gratiam.*” Calvin’s conception of “common grace” has been intensively studied by H. Kuiper, *Calvin on Common Grace*, following discussions by A. Kuyper and H. Bavinck, and has since been variously treated by other scholars. Numerous passages in the *Institutes* illustrate the thought here expressed, e.g.: I. 3. 1-3; I. 4. 2 (“light of nature”); I. 5:3-4; I. 5:7-8; I. 11:12; I. 13:14; I. 17:1; II. 2. 12-27; II. 3. 3; II. 7:1; III. 2. 32; III. 7:6; III. 9:3; III. 14:9; III. 20:15; IV. 10. 5; IV. 20:1-4; IV. 20:9-11. H. Kuiper treats these and many other references throughout the entire corpus of Calvin’s writings. Cf. Benoit, *Institution* II. 42, note 1. The difficulty of stating Calvin’s doctrine is illustrated in C. Van Til’s *Common Grace*. Kuiper and his predecessors employ the term to designate Calvin’s recognition that the good in mankind, including religious aspiration, decent behavior, social brotherliness, artistic and scientific achievement, is bestowed by God. See Pannier’s notes on the 1541 French text, the passages corresponding to II. 2. 13-15 (*Institution* I. 117, note *a*; I. 119, notes *b*, *c*, given on pp. 314 f.).

^{ft88} Neither common grace nor the special grace here mentioned has any relation to the salvation of its possessor. Special grace is a special endowment of capacity, virtue, or heroism by which a man is fitted to serve the divine purpose in this world, while he himself may remain in the common state of human depravity. Cf. II. 3. 4, where Calvin views in this light Camillus, Saul, and the Homeric heroes referred to by Plato.

^{ft89} “[*οἶον ἐπὶ ἥμαρ ἄρησι*],” Homer, *Odyssey* 18. 137 (LCL Homer, *Odyssey* II 206 f.).

^{ft90} I. 3. 1,3.

^{ft91} Cf. I. 1:2; I. 10:2; III. 2:16.

^{ft92} Calvin says “recently [nuper] quoted,” but the reference is to I. 17:2. See also Comm. ^{<430105>} John 1:5.

- ft⁹³ Cf. sec. 16, note 62, above.
- ft⁹⁴ Cf. I. 7:4-5; II. 5:5 (latter part); III. 11:19; III. 24:2.
- ft^{94x} The following words are from the 1545 edition.
- ft⁹⁵ Cf. II. 1:5, note 9. Numerous passages from Augustine are cited in Smits in II. 32 f., and in OS III. 264.
- ft⁹⁶ Cf. the enumeration in II. 2:18.
- ft⁹⁷ Cf. II. 8:1-2, 5l, and Comm. ^{<450214>}Romans 2:14-16; G. Gloede, *Theologia naturalis bei Calvin*, pp. 178ff.; cf. J. Bohatec, *Calvins Lehre von Staat und Kirche*, pp. 20-35; E. Brunner, *Justice and the Social Order* (tr. M. Hottinger, p. 233); J. T. McNeill, "Natural Law in the Teaching of the Reformers," *Journal of Religion* XXVI (1946), 168-182.
- ft⁹⁸ Plato, Protagoras 357 (LCL Plato IV. 240 f.).
- ft⁹⁹ Themistius, *In libros Aristotelis de anima paraphrasis* VI (ed. R. Heinze, p. 112).
- ft¹⁰⁰ "*Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*," from Medea's speech in Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII. 20 (LCL edition, *Metamorphoses* I. 342).
- ft¹⁰¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* VII. 1-3. 1145-2247 (LCL edition, pp. 374-377; tr. McKeon, *Basic Works of Aristotle*, pp. 1036-1042). Aristotle here contends against Plato's view of the equation between virtue and knowledge.
- ft¹⁰² C f. II. 8:22, note 26.
- ft¹⁰³ "They shall approach the gods in purity, bringing piety and leaving riches behind." Cicero, *De legibus* II. 8:19, 24 (LCL edition, pp. 392 f., 400 f.).
- ft¹⁰⁴ II. 2:12, and note 74, above.
- ft¹⁰⁵ Augustine, *On the Merits and Remission of Sins* II. 5:5 (MPL 44. 153 f.; tr. NPNF V. 45 f.).
- ft¹⁰⁶ The "examination" of the will begun here is continued through chapters 2-5 following.
- ft¹⁰⁷ II. 2:4.
- ft¹⁰⁸ Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* I. lxxxiii. 3.

- ^{ft109} Origen, *De principiis* III. 1:20 (GCS 22. 234 f.; MPG 11. 294 ff.; tr. ANF IV. 324; Butterworth, *Origen On First Principles*, p. 157); Chrysostom, *Homilies on Hebrews*, hom. 12:3 (MPG 63. 99; tr. LF 44. 155); Lombard, *Sentences* II. 24:5 (MPL 192. 702); Duns Scotus, *In sententias* I. 17:2. 12 and 3. 19 (*Opera omnia* X. 51b, 74a).
- ^{ft110} Augustine, *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians* I. 10:22 (MPL 44. 561; tr. NPNF V. 384). Where Calvin writes “natural man,” Augustine has “man under the law.” The point was discussed with animation in the Arminian controversy, Arminius taking the view at first adopted by Augustine and, as Calvin states, finally rejected by him in the passage cited. See Arminius, *Dissertation on the Seventh Chapter of Romans* (*Works of James Arminius*), tr. J. Nichols, II. 287-322: “The man about whom the apostle treats in this passage is an unregenerate man, and not placed under grace but under the law” (p. 322). Luther, in his *Lectures on Romans* (1515-1516), marvels that the words of ^{<450724>}Romans 7:24, “O wretched man that I am,” could be thought of as the utterance of “an old carnal man”: only a spiritual man could say this (*Werke* WA LVI. 346).
- ^{ft111} J. Fisher (John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, 1504—1535), *Assertionis Lutheranae confutatio* (1523), pp. 548 f.; J. Cochlaeus, *De libero arbitrio hominis* II, fo. L 6b; A. de Castro, *Adversus omnes haereses* IX (1543 ed., fo. 125 D-F).
- ^{ft112} Augustine, *Sermons* clxxvi. 5-6 (MPL 38. 952 f.).

CHAPTER 3

- ^{ft113} Fisher, *Assertionis Lutheranae confutatio* (1523), pp. 560 ff., 568f.; Erasmus, *De libero arbitrio*, ed. J. von Walter, pp. 61 ff.; J. Cochlaeus, *De libero arbitrio* I, fo. E 2b ff. According to these writings, the proclivity toward evil that many show does not wholly take away freedom of the choice of good, though it cannot be wholly overcome without the “aid” of divine grace.
- ^{ft114} Cf. Cyprian: “*Salus extra ecclesiam non est*”: *Letters* lxxiii. 21 (CSEL 3. 2. 795; tr. ANF V. 384).
- ^{ft115} Cf. II. 1. 6.

ft116 II. 2. 12.

ft117 Catiline's evil nature is described by Sallust, *The War with Catiline* 3.5; LCL edition, pp. 8 ff. He was assailed by Cicero, and was held up to reproach, while Camillus, the noble but unrewarded patriot, was celebrated with praise by Horace, Vergil, and Juvenal. Cf. Augustine, *City of God* II. 17, XXIII; III. 17 (MPL 41. 61 f., 96 f.; tr. NPNF II. 32, 37, 54).

ft118 Augustine, *Against Julian* IV. 3. 16 ff. (MPL 44. 774 ff.; tr. FC 35. 179 f.).

ft119 On the expressions "*speciales Dei gratias*"... "*specialis gratiae*," cf. II. 2:17, notes 63, 64; II. 4:7, note 13; and above, on Camillus, in this sec. 4. Those special endowments that make possible admirable and heroic actions by nonelect persons are by Calvin referred to God's special grace.

ft120 Plato, *Cratylus* 393 f. (LCL Plato VI. 38-45).

ft121 Bernard, *Concerning Grace and Free Will* 6. 16 (MPL 182. 1040; tr. W. W. Williams, p. 32).

ft122 Luther had made this distinction in his dispute with Erasmus: "By necessity I do not mean compulsion, but the necessity of iramutability"; he explains that an evil man does evil spontaneously but that he cannot of himself leave off doing evil. *De servo arbitrio* (*Werke* WA XVIII. 634; tr. H. Cole, *The Bondage of the Will*, p. 72). De Castro virtually identifies the two. *Adversus omnes haereses* IX (1543, fo. 123 D).

ft123 In *Defensio doctrinae de servitute humani arbitrii contra A. Pighium* (1543), Calvin assails Pighius for this opinion (CR VI. 333 f.). Albert Pighius was a Louvain scholar who served Adrian VI and succeeding popes in Rome and who published various anti-Reformation books. Calvin's treatise is a reply to his *De libero hominis arbitrio et divina gratia* (Cologne, 1542). Cf. also Augustine, *On Nature and Grace* 46. 54 (MPL 44. 273; tr. NPNF V. 139).

ft124 Augustine, *On Man's Perfection in Righteousness* 4. 9 (MPL 44. 295; tr. NPNF V. 261); *On Nature and Grace* 66. 79, quoting ^{<192517>}Psalm 25:17 (Vg. ^{<192401>}Psalm 24:17): "*de miserationibus meis*" (MPL 44. 186; tr. NPNF V. 149).

- ft125 This distinction is similarly made, but with different terminology, in Reinhold Niebuhr's view that man sins "inevitably" but "responsibly." *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, first series, pp. 151-164.
- ft126 Bernard, *Sermons on the Song of Songs* lxxxi. 7, 9 (MPL 183. 174 f.; tr. S. J. Eales, *Life and Works of St. Bernard* IV. 498 f.); Lombard, *Sentences* II. 25:5, 9 (MPL 192. 707).
- ft127 Lombard, *Sentences* II. 24:5; II. 25:16 (MPL 192. 702, 709); Erasmus, *De libero arbitrio*, ed. J. von Walter, p. 6.
- ft128 Cf. secs. 7,10,12,13,14, below, on Calvin's terminology of will: whether the will is removed and replaced, or whether the same "natural gift" is renovated.
- ft129 Augustine, *Letters* clxxxvi. 3. 10 (MPL 33. 819; tr. FC 30. 196).
- ft130 Lombard, *Sentences* II. 26:3 (MPL 192. 711). Cf. John Fisher, *Assertio Lutheranae confutatio*, p. 604: "*Auxilium Dei paratum est omnibus.*"
- ft131 Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew*, homily lxxxiv. 4 (MPG 58. 756; tr. NPNF X. 494 f.).
- ft132 Calvin has here condensed the teachings of the following passages from treatises of Augustine: *Enchiridion* 9. 32 (MPL 40. 248; tr. LCC VII. 358); *On the Merits and Remission of Sins* II. 18. 28 (MPL 44. 168; tr. NPNF V. 56); *On the Grace of Christ and on Original Sin* I. 14. 15 (MPL 44. 368; tr. NPNF V. 223).
- ft133 "Account... recount," following Calvin's play on words: "*Censeo... recenseantur.*"
- ft134 John Fisher, *Assertionis Lutheranae confutatio*, pp. 565 f.
- ft134a The passages from John are quoted from Vg.
- ft135 As argued by A. Pighius, *De libero hominis arbitrio et divina gratia* 1542), fo. 97.
- ft136 II. 3. 6.
- ft137 *Quem trahit, volentem trahit*: Chrysostom, *De ferendis reprehensionibus* 6 (MPG 51. 143); *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, hom. 10:1 (MPG 59. 73; tr. NPNF XIV. 35; FC 33. 95). In Comm. <430644> John 6:44, Calvin calls the sentence "a false, profane assertion."

- ft138 Augustine, *On the Predestination of the Saints* 8. 13 (MPL 44. 970; tr. NPNF V. 504 f.).
- ft139 Calvin doubtfully ascribes to Ockham a phrase from Gabriel Biel's commentary on Lombard's *Sentences: Epythoma pariter et collectorium circa quatuor sententiarum libros* II. 27:2. Cf. Nicholas (Ferber of) Herborn's statement that if a man fulfills that which is in him (*quod in se est*), he would appear to have done enough and that cooperating grace will aid him: *Locorum communium adversus huius temporis haereses enchiridion* xxxviii (ed. P. Schlager, from the 1529 edition, CC 12. 132).
- ft140 Augustine, *Sermons* 26. 3,12,4,7 (MPL 38. 172,177,172 f., 174); 30. 8,10 (MPL 38. 192).
- ft141 Lombard, *Sentences* II. 26. 8,9; 27. 5 (MPL 192. 713, 715).
- ft142 Augustine, *On Grace and Free Will* 17. 33 (MPL 44. 901; tr. NPNF V. 457 f.); *Enchiridion* 9. 32 (MPL 40. 248; tr. LCC VII. 358 f.).
- ft143 Erasmus, *De libero arbitrio* (ed. J. von Walter), pp. 75 f., based on his interpretation of <421511> Luke 15:11-24, <460510> 1 Corinthians 5:10, <450816> Romans 8:16; Eck, *Enchiridion* (1532) L 17b.
- ft144 Cf. Comm. 1 Corinthians 15: 10. The reference here is apparently to the interpretation given by Erasmus, *De libero arbitrio* (ed. J. von Walter), p. 72. Modern editors read: “[ἡ χάρις αὐτοῦ ἡ εἰς ἐμὲ]”: the second [ἡ] is the article referred to.
- ft145 Based on the Vulgate text, where the number is <195910> Psalm 59:10.
- ft146 Bernard, *Sermons on the Song of Songs* 21. 9 (MPL 183. 876; tr. S. J. Eales, *Life and Works of St. Bernard* IV. 121).
- ft147 Cf. Prefatory Address to the King of France, above, pp. 18 ff.
- ft148 Augustine, *On Rebuke and Grace* 11. 31 f.; 12:33, 38; 14:45 (MPL 44. 935 f., 939 f., 943; tr. NPNF V. 484 f., 487, 489 f.); Lombard, *Sentences* II. 25:3 (MPL 192. 707).
- [ft149] Augustine, *Letters* cxciv. 5: “*Omne bonum meritum nostrum non in nobis faciat nisi gratia*” (MPL 33. 880; tr. FC 30. 313).
- ft150 Passages from Augustine quoted or alluded to in sec. 14 are: *On Grace and Free Will* 20. 41 (MPL 44. 905; tr. NPNF V. 461); *On the Spirit and the Letter* 30. 52 (MPL 44. 233; tr. NPNF V. 106); *Letters* ccxvii.

5. 16 (MPL 33. 984 f.; tr. FC 32.86); *Sermons* clxxvi. 5,6 (MPL 38. 952 f.; tr. LF *Sermons* II. 907 f.); *On Rebuke and Grace* 8. 17 (MPL 44. 926; tr. NPNF V. 478); *Letters* ccxiv. 7 (MPL 33. 970; tr. FC 32.61 f.).

CHAPTER 4

ft151 Cf. III. 1:3.

ft152 Cf. II. 3. 5.

ft153 Apparently a variation on Pseudo-Augustine, *Hypomnesticon* (commonly *Hypognosticon*) II. 11. 20 (MPL 45. 1632). Luther uses the metaphor in his *Bondage of the Will* (*Werke* WA XVIII. 635; tr. J. L. Parker and D. R. Johnston, *The Bondage of the Will*, pp. 103 f.). Cf. *Martin Luther, Ausgewählte Werke*, ed. H. H. Borchardt, *Ergänzungsband*, pp. 46 f.; E.G. Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times*, pp. 691 f. See also Augustine, *Psalms*, ^{<193305>} Psalm 33:5; 148:2 (MPL 36. 310; 37. 1938; tr. NPNF VIII. 74. 673).

ft154 Cf. I. 16:4.

ft155 In the work *De praedestinatione et gratia*, erroneously attributed to Augustine but showing semi-Pelagian features, the statement is made: “Before he had made us, he foreknew us and in the very foreknowledge [*ipsa praescientia*], although he had not yet made us, he elected us”; *De praedestinatione et gratia*, chs. 6,7 (MPL 45. 1668). Calvin apparently does not doubt Augustine’s authorship, which had been accepted in two Basel editions of Augustine (the second by Erasmus) and was first discarded in the Louvain edition of 1577. See the *admonitio* in MPL 45. 1665 and H. Pope, *St. Augustine of Hippo*, p. 387. See also Smits I. 191 f.

ft156 Augustine, *Against Julian* V. 3 (MPL 44. 786 ff.; tr. FC 35. 247-250).

ft157 I. 18.

ft158 Augustine, *On the Predestination of the Saints* 16. 33 (MPL 44. 984; tr. NPNF V. 514).

ft159 I. 16-18.

ft160 II. 2. 13-17.

- ^{ft161} The reference is to Lutheran statements represented by the Augsburg Confession I. 18: “Man’s will has some liberty to work a civil righteousness... no power to work the righteousness of God.” Cf. Melanchthon, *Loci communes*, 1535, where it is stated that man retains a certain power of choice respecting “outward civil works.” Thus “the human will is able of its own force without renewal [*suis viribus sine renovatione*] to do some outward works of the law. This is the freedom of will which philosophers rightly attribute to man.” (CK Melanchthon XXI. 374.) Calvin would have us view all such human choice and action as within the operation of divine providence.
- ^{ft162} Erasmus, *De libero arbitrio*, ed. J. von Walter, p. 66.
- ^{ft163} A different turn of thought is found in VG: “*Mais de la grace speciale que Dieu fait aux hommes de jour en jour.*”^{ft164} Augustine, *On Grace and Free Will* 20. 41 (MPL 44. 906; tr. NPNF V. 461).
- ^{ft165} The virtues of Regulus, who met a cruel death at the hands of the Carthaginians rather than break his promise, were celebrated by Cicero, Horace, Seneca, and other Roman writers. Augustine, to meet pagan charges against Christianity, presents the story of Regulus as an instance in which the Roman gods could not avail to save a faithful man (*City of God* I. 15; MPL 4I. 28; LCL Augustine, I. 68 ff.; tr. NPNF II. 11).

CHAPTER 5

- ^{ft166} Erasmus, *De libero arbitrio*, ed. von Walter, p. 25. Augustine repeats and answers formulations of the same argument in his unfinished treatise against the Pelagian, Julian of Eclanum; *Contra secundam Juliani responsionem, imperfectum opus* I. 46-48, 60, 82, 84, 106 (MPL 45. 1067-1071, 1081, 1103 f., 1119 f.); *On Man’s Perfection in Righteousness* 2. 2 (MPL 44. 293; tr. NPNF V. 160); *On Nature and Grace* 67. 80 (MPL 44. 286; tr. NPNF V. 49).
- ^{ft167} II. 3. 5. The references to previous statements that follow in this paragraph are to the same passage.
- ^{ft168} Bernard, *Sermons on the Song of Songs* lxxxi. 7,9 (MPL 283. 1174 f.; tr. S. J. Eales, *Life and Works of St. Bernard* IV. 498 f.).

- ft169 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* III. 5. 1113b (LCL edition, pp. 142f.): Chrysostom, *Homily on the Passage “The way of man is not in himself”* (<241023> Jeremiah 10:23) (MPL 56. 153-162); Jerome, *Letters* cxxxiii. 5 (CSEL 56. 249; tr. NPNF 2 ser. VI. 231); *Dialogue Against the Pelagians* I. 6 (MPL 33. 501).
- ft170 Augustine, *Letters* cxciv. 5. 19 (MPL 33. 880): “*Cum Deus coronat merita nostra nihil aliud coronat quam munera sua*” (tr. FC 30. 313); *On Grace and Free Will* 6. 15 (MPL 44. 890; tr. NPNF V. 450).
- ft171 The references to contemporary opinions in this paragraph are to passages in Cochlaeus, *De libero arbitrio*, and in Erasmus. *De libero arbitrio*. See J. von Walter’s edition of the latter, pp. 50,53,59, and the citations in OS III. 299.
- ft172 Augustine, *Psalms*, Psalm 70. 2:5 (MPL 36. 895; tr. NPNF [Psalm 71] VIII. 324). In *Sermons* clxix. 2, Augustine has the sentence: “*Nihil in eis invenis unde salves, et tamen salvas*” (MPL 38. 917).
- ft173 Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis*, hom. 23:5 (MPG 53. 204).
- ft174 Prosper of Aquitaine, *The Call of All Nations* II. 4 (MPL 17. 1112; 51. 689 f.; tr. ACW XIV. 96 f.). Cf. II. 2. 5, note 27.
- ft175 “*Praetermittit.*”
- ft176 Erasmus, *De libero arbitrio*, ed. von Walter, pp. 40 f.; Herborn, *Locorum communium enchiridion* xxxviii (CC 12. 131).
- ft177 Augustine, *On Rebuke and Grace* 3. 5 (MPL 44. 918; tr. NPNF V. 473); *On the Spirit and the Letter* (MPL 44. 199; tr. NPNF V. 83-114).
- ft178 Calvin here characteristically affirms the necessity of a conjunction of the Word of Scripture with the operation of the Holy Spirit. Cf. I. 7. 4; III. i, *passim*, and notes appended.
- ft179 cf. II. 7. 5; Eck, *Enchiridion* (1541), fo. 188a.
- ft180 Cf. I. 6. 6; II. 7:6, 10-12.
- ft181 Cf. Origen, *De principiis* III. 1. 5 (GCS 22. 200; MPG 11. 254; tr. G. W. Butterworth, *Origen On First Principles*, p. 162; ANF IV. 304); Augustine, *Sermons* clvi. 12. 13 (MPL 38. 857; tr. LF *Sermons* II. 769 f.).

- ft182 Augustine, *On Grace and Free Will* 16. 32 (MPL 44. 900; tr. NPNF V. 457); *Letters* clxvii. 4. 15 (MPL 33. 739; tr. FC 30. 45); *Enchiridion* 31. 117 (MPL 40. 287; tr. LCL VII. 409); *Confessions* X. 29:40; 31:45 (MPL 32.796, 798; tr. LCC VII. 225, 228); *Psalms*, Psalm 118. 16. 2 (MPL 37. 1545; tr. LF *Psalms* V. 381); *On the Gift of Perseverance* 20. 53 (MPL 45. 1026; tr. NPNF V. 547).
- ft183 Sec. 6, above.
- ft184 Augustine, *On the Grace of Christ and on Original Sin* I. 30 f. (MPL 44. 375; tr. NPNF V. 228); *On Christian Doctrine* III. 33 (MPL 34. 83; tr. NPNF II. 569). Augustine is here calling attention to the third of the seven rules for understanding Scripture, put forth about 590 by Tychonius, a Donatist who was condemned by the leaders of the sect.
- ft185 Secs. 7,8, above.
- ft186 II. 7:8,9.
- ft187 Most of these passages and arguments had been used by opponents of Luther, including Schatzgeyer, Erasmus, Cochlaeus, De Castro, and Faber. For citations, see OS III. 308.
- ft188 II. 7. 4; II. 8. 4; III. 17. 1-3,6,7.
- ft189 Cited by Erasmus, *De libero arbitrio* (ed. von Walter, pp. 36 f.); Eck, *Enchiridion* (1541), fo. 185a; Herborn, *Locorum communium enchiridion* xxxviii (CC 12. 129).
- ft190 Herborn, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*; *Acts of the Conference of Ratisbon, 1541* (in the document presented by the emperor) (CR V. 518).
- ft191 “[οὐδενίαν]”
- ft192 cf. Cochlaeus, *De libero arbitrio* (1525) I, fo. B 1a; G 8b f.
- ft193 Augustine, *Sermons* clvi. 11. 11 (MPL 38. 855 f.; tr. LF *Sermons* II. 769). This is the passage referred to in the last sentence of this section. See also *On Rebuke and Grace* 2. 4 (MPL 44. 918; tr. NPNF V. 473).
- ft194 Augustine, *Sermons* clvi. 9. 9; 11. 11-12 (MPL 38. 855 f.; tr. LF *Sermons* II. 769). Cf. Bernard, *Concerning Grace and Free Will* 6. 16 (MPL 182. 1010; tr. W. W. Williams, pp. 32 ff.).
- ft195 Augustine, *On Grace and Free Will* 20. 41 (MPL 44. 905; tr. NPNF V. 461).

- ft196 Cf. II. 2. 11 and the references in note 51, p. 269.
- ft197 Herborn, *op. cit.*, xxxviii (CC 12. 130); De Castro, *Adversus omnes haereses* IX (1543, fo. 123 E).
- ft198 Erasmus, *De libero arbitrio* (ed. von Walter), p. 49.
- ft199 Origen, *Commentary on Romans* 7. 16 (on ^{<450916>}Romans 9:16) (MPG 14. 1145); Jerome, *Dialogue Against the Pelagians* I. 5 (MPL 23. 500 f.); Augustine, *Enchiridion* 9. 32 (MPL 40. 248; tr. LCC VII. 358 f.).
- ft200 Augustine, *Letters* ccxvii. 4. 12 (MPL 33. 983; tr. FC 32. 84).
- ft201 Eck, *Enchiridion* (1532) 31. L 15a; De Castro, *Adversus omnes haereses* IX (1543, fo. 124D).
- ft202 Cited by Erasmus, with the remark that he does not know why Ecclesiasticus was excluded from the canon of Scripture; *De libero arbitrio* (ed. von Walter, p. 19).
- ft203 In the parable of the good Samaritan, the word [ἡμιθανής], in English versions, “half dead,” is rendered in the Vulgate, *semivivus*, “half alive.” This word was allegorized in a semi-Pelagian sense in the fifth-century Pseudo-Augustine, *Hypomnesticon* III. 8. 11 f.: fallen man has remaining *a liberum arbitrium vulneratum*, a wounded free will (MPL 45. 1628 f.). Cf. Augustine, *Questions on the Gospels* 2. 19 (MPL 35. 240). In a variation on the allegories, the Venerable Bede says, “They left him half alive in that they despoiled him of the life immortal, but they were unable to destroy the sense of reason.” *In Lucae evangelium expositio* III. x (MPL 92. 469). This passage was employed by opponents of Luther. Cf. Herborn, *Locorum communium enchiridion* xxxviii (CC 12. 129).
- ft204 For Calvin’s repudiation of the allegorical method in the use of Scripture, see also III. 4. 4,5 and his Comm. ^{<480422>}Galatians 4:22-26, where he requires “the natural and obvious meaning.” Cf. also Comm. ^{<010208>}Genesis 2:8; ^{<233318>}Isaiah 33:18; ^{<243124>}Jeremiah 31:24; ^{<270820>}Daniel 8:20-25; 10:6.
- ft205 Cf. II. 2. 4,12.

CHAPTER 6

ft206 This entire chapter and sections 1 and 2 of chapter 7 are completely new material in the 1559 edition. They clarify Calvin's new organization according to the "twofold" knowledge (cf. I. 2. 1, notes 3,4). In this chapter he enters for the first time on the knowledge of the Redeemer, the ostensible theme of Book II. It is of decisive importance that soteriology is introduced, not by law, but by this radical *in Christo* passage, which brings the law within the context of the promise of the gospel. Note especially the titles of chapters 6,7, and 9. The phrase "gospel and law," rather than the more common "law and gospel," is appropriate to Calvin. Typical of many sections added in 1559, the opening sentences are reminders of the architectonics of the work and of the principal topics previously treated. Cf. II. 7. 1, note 1.

ft207 I. 15.1-3,8.

ft208 Book I, *passim*.

ft209 "*Mundi fabrica*": cf. I. 10. 1, note 2.

ft210 Cf. II. 6. 4; II. 9. 1.

ft211 Cf. I. 5. 8; I. 6. 2; I. 14. 20.

ft212 Cf. next section and II. 12,14.

ft213 Erasmus, *Colloquies*, "*Convivium religiosum*," which contains, with much praise of piety and virtue of the ancients, the well-known utterance, "*Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis.*" Cf. Coelius Secundus Curio's *De amplitudine beati regni Dei* (1554) (Gouda, 1614) II. 136 ff., 147 ff., and Zwingli's *Exposition of the Faith* (1530), ch. 12. Zwingli lists certain virtuous pagans with Old Testament heroes and "the Virgin Mother of God" as among the companions of the faithful in the life to come: the pagan names are Theseus, Socrates, Aristides, Antigonus, Numa, Camillus, the Catos, and the Scipios (Zwingli, *Opera*, ed. M. Schuler and J. Schulthess, IV. 65; tr. LCC XXIV. 275). Calvin alludes adversely to these opinions.

ft214 Comm. <192001> Psalm 20:10.

ft215 Cf. III. 2. 1-7.

ft216 Cf. II. 7. 2; II. 8. 7. The sense in which “Christ is the end of the law” (<451004>Romans 10:4) appears in I. 6. 2; II. 7. 2; III. 2. 6: the Law and the Prophets partially anticipated Christ’s work of reconciliation. Cf. Comm. <451004>Romans 10:4: “The law in all its parts has a reference to Christ.”

ft217 III. 2.

ft218 II. 6. 1.

ft219 Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* IV. 4. 2 (MPG 7. 982; tr. ANF I. 466).

ft220 Gentile uses passages of Irenaeus to support his view that the Father is the “*essentiator*” of the Son (CR IX. 395). Cf. I. 13. 23, note 51.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ft221 The term “law” for Calvin may mean (1) the whole religion of Moses (II. 7. 1); (2) the special revelation of the moral law to the chosen people, i.e., chiefly the Decalogue and Jesus’ summary (II. 8); or (3) various bodies of civil, judicial, and ceremonial statutes (IV. 20. 14-16; Comm. *Harmony Four Books of Moses*; cf. Decalogue “supplements”). Of these, the moral law, the “true and eternal rule of righteousness” (IV. 20. 15), is most important. It appears in three contexts shown in the three “uses,” below, paragraphs 6-15. For Calvin a positive evaluation of the law allows the “third use” to be the principal one, while for Luther the condemning function is the chief one: cf. Luther, Comm. <480319>Galatians 3:19. Calvin regards the condemning function as “accidental” to its true purpose: Comm. <470307>2 Corinthians 3:7; Comm. <450710>Romans 7:10-11. Calvin habitually asserts that the law has validity only as it is related to Christ. Cf. Comm. <430538>John 5:38; <441339>Acts 13:39; <451005>Romans 10:5; *Sermons on Galatians* xxvi (CR L. 603); and Benoit’s note in *Institution* II. 15.

ft222 “*Typus ille.*” The word *typus* has for its basic meaning a representative figure, or image, on a wall. In general, it is a mark or sign to indicate something not present. For Calvin, the ceremonies enjoined in the law were “types,” or “foreshadowings,” of the full and clear revelation of the gospel in which the ceremonies cease. Cf. II. 7. 16; II. 8. 28; II. 9. 3,

4; II. 11. 2-6; III. 20. 18. This typology became a more or less constant feature of Reformed theology. See Heppe RD, p. 403; Westminster Confession VII. 5.

- ft223 “*Similes fuerunt pueris.*” Cf. the reference to ^{<480324>}Galatians 3:24, just preceding. Allied with his typology is Calvin’s oft-repeated idea of the childlike stage of development of the ancient Hebrew people, a condition that rendered necessary the accommodation of revelation to an elementary mentality in the Old Testament. Cf. I. 11. 3; II. 11. 2; Comm. ^{<010116>}Genesis 1:16; 2:8.
- ft224 III. 11. 1-7.
- ft225 Jerome, *Dialogue Against the Pelagians* I. 10; III. 3 (MPL 23. 525, 599).
- ft226 Augustine, *On Man’s Perfection in Righteousness* 3. 8 (MPL 44. 295; tr. NPNF V. 161; *On the Spirit and the Letter* 36. 66 (MPL 44. 245 f.; tr. NPNF V. 113 f.). On the argument of this section, cf. Comm. ^{<480517>}Galatians 5:17.
- ft227 An approximation to Augustine’s language in *On the Spirit and the Letter* 36. 64 f. (MPL 44. 242 ff.; tr. NPNF V. 112 f.) and in *On Man’s Perfection in Righteousness* 8. 17 ff. (MPL 44. 299 ff.; tr. NPNF V. 164 f.).
- ft228 II. 12. 4; III. 4. 27; III. 11. 23.
- ft229 “*Officium usumque legis.*” The “uses of the law,” which in all preceding editions follow the exposition of the Decalogue, here precede it in a manner appropriate to the covenant setting, and especially to the law’s “principal” use (sec. 12, below), which is that of positive guidance to the Christian. Cf. Luther’s two uses in his Commentary on ^{<480319>}Galatians 3:19; 4:3 (tr. E. Middleton, pp. 281 ff., 324 f.).
- ft230 Melancthon, in *Loci communes* (1521), holds that it is the proper purpose of the law to make sin manifest and confound the conscience. In the 1535 and later editions, he introduces the three uses of the law here expounded by Calvin. *Loci communes* (1521), ed. H. Engelland, in the series *Melancthons Werke in Auswahl*, ed. R. Stupperich, II. 1. 122; tr. C. L. Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 215; *Loci praecipui theologici* (1559), ed. Engelland, *op. cit.*, pp. 321-326, and note 13 on p. 321. Here emphasis is placed upon the second use, which is developed from

<450118> Romans 1:18. In the Formula of Concord, the third use is given due recognition (art. vi).

- ft231 Augustine. *On Rebuke and Grace* 1. 2 (MPL 44. 917; tr. NPNF V. 472).
- ft232 Ambrose, *De Jacobo et vita beata* I. 6. 21 f. (MPL 14. 637).
- ft233 The two sentences preceding are found in Calvin's *Instruction et confession de Joy* (1537); tr. Fuhrmann, *Instruction in Faith* 11, p. 35. They appear in the *Institutes* first in 1539.
- ft234 The following are the passages from Augustine quoted above in this paragraph: *Letters* clvii. 2. 9; cxcvi. 2. 6; clxxvii. 5 (MPL 33. 677, 893, 766; tr. FC 20. 325; 30. 336, 97); *On Grace and Free Will* 16. 32 (MPL 44. 900; tr. NPNF V. 457); *On the Spirit and the Letter* 13. 22 (MPL 44. 214 f.; tr. NPNF V. 92); *Psalms*, Psalm 70. 1. 19; 118. 27. 3 (MPL 36. 889; 37. 1581; tr. LF *Psalms* V. 434). "Innocent of Rome" in the text is Pope Innocent I (402-417).
- ft235 Text in MPL 44. 201-246; tr. NPNF V. 83-114.
- ft236 Note the similar phrases in IV. 20. 3, and cf. Melanchthon: "*publicae pacis causa*" (*Loci praecipui theologici*, ed. Engelland, *op. cit.*, p. 322); cf. also IV. 20. 14-16.
- ft237 "*Paedagogia*," rendered "*pedagogie*" in French versions of 1545-1557, but in 1560 "*instruction puerile*."
- ft238 Cf. II. 8. 51-59.
- ft239 Melanchthon, *Loci communes* (1521), ed. Engelland, *op. cit.*, p. 133 (tr. C. L. Hill, p. 229).
- ft240 This is probably directed not only against the Libertine sect (cf. *Contre la secte phantastique des Libertins*, CR VII. 206 f., 220, 229, 233) but also against John Agricola, who broke from Luther and began the Antinomian Controversy, 1537, denying all Christian obligation to fulfill any part of the Old Testament law. See *Werke* WA XXXIX. 1. 342 ff. and HDRE article "Antinomianism."
- ft241 Cf. Melanchthon, *Loci communes* in Engelland, *op. cit.*, pp. 120 ff., 126 f., 132 ff. (tr. Hill, *op. cit.*, pp. 214ff., 220 f., 229 ff.); Zwingli, *Of True and False Religion* (CR Zwingli III. 710; tr. *Latin Works of Huldreich Zwingli*, ed. S. M. Jackson, III. 141: "God has put into our

hearts a fire by which to kindle love of him in place of love of ourselves”).

- ft242 On the “shadowy” character and foreshadowing function of Old Testament legislation, see also II. 8. 28, 29; cf. LCC XXIII. 29 f.
- ft243 So Melanchthon, *Scripta exegetica*, on ^{<510214>}Colossians 2:14 (GR Melanchthon XV. 1256); cf. the section *De abrogatione legis* in his *Loci communes*, 1521 (ed. Engelland, *op. cit.*, 132 ff.; tr. Hill, *op. cit.*, pp. 221 ff.).
- ft244 Bucer, *Metaphrases et enarrationes perpetuae epistolarum D. Pauli Apostoli I, ad Romanos*, Strasbourg, 1536, p. 205: “Paul here [i.e., ^{<510214>}Colossians 2:14] means by ‘handwriting’ [*chirographum*] the law of ceremonies, that yoke which Peter said neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.”
- ft245 “*Chirographum*,” Greek: “[χειρόγραφον].”
- ft246 Augustine, *On the Merits and Remission of Sins* I. 27. 54 (MPL 44. 139; tr. NPNF V. 35).
- ft247 “*Solennia instrumenta*.”

CHAPTER 8

- ft248 The Commandments, with the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer, constituted a topic of lay instruction in countless medieval handbooks of religious guidance, such as the English *Lay Folk’s Catechism*, attributed to John Thoresby, archbishop of York (d. 1373). Pannier cites a separate French booklet on the Commandments, *Les fleurs des commandemens* (1490, revised 1516): (*Institution* I. 322, note on p. 197). Their use in Reformation catechisms was begun by Luther (1529), and Calvin had discussed them *seriatim* in his *Instruction et confession de foy* (1537); tr. Fuhrmann, *Instruction in Faith* 8, pp. 24-32.
- ft249 I. 7. 1-2.
- ft250 I. 1. 2.
- ft251 II. 1-6.

ft252 “*Dictat lex illa interior.*” Cf., below, in this section, “*in lege naturali.*” References to natural law in the *Institutes* are usually, as here, associated with conscience, frequently also with civil positive law and equity, and the Christian’s duties to society. Cf. II. 2:22, where the key Pauline passage for natural law, <450214> Romans 2:14-15, is employed: see also II. 7. 3-4; II. 8. 1-2, 53; III. 19. 15-16; IV. 10. 3; IV. 20. 11 (“natural equity”); IV. 20. 15 (the rule of love); IV. 20. 16 (“the moral law... a testimony of natural law”). Calvin’s view of the Commandments as a divinely authorized text expressing and clarifying the natural law engraved on all hearts is the traditional one. Lactantius quotes in full Cicero’s important paragraph, in *De republica* III. 22, on the law of right reason agreeing with nature, which God has given to all men, and asks what Christian could have set forth so meaningfully the law of God: *Divine Institutes* VI. 8 (CSEL 19. 508 f.; MPL 6. 660 f.; tr. ANF VII. 171). Cf. Augustine, *Confessions* II. 4. 9 (MPL 32. 678; tr. LCC VII. 54). Aquinas treats natural law with some fullness, e.g., in *Summa Theol.* I IIae, questions xci. 1-3; xciv; c. 1-5, where the principles of the Decalogue are identified with those of natural reason. The association of natural law with the golden rule of <400712> Matthew 7:12 is also common: see Gratian, *Decretum* I. 1 (Friedberg I. 2). Some references to this background are given in J. T. McNeill’s article “Natural Law in the Thought of Luther” in *Church History* X (1941), 211-227; for Calvin, see also “Natural Law in the Teaching of the Reformers,” *Journal of Religion* XXVI (1946), 168-182, and literature there cited. Notable references in Calvin’s commentaries and sermons are: Comm. <450214> Romans 2:14-15; *Sermons on Deuteronomy* cxix (on <051914> Deuteronomy 19:14-15) (CR XXVII. 568); *Sermons on Job* ci, on <182801> Job 28:1-9 (CR XXXIV: 503 ff.); Comm. *Harmony Four Books of Moses*, “*Praefatio in legera*” (CR XXIV. 209-260). Here again the Commandments are seen as a specially accommodated restatement of the law of nature for the chosen people, and the entire body of “Mosaic” legislation is classified under the ten laws.

ft253 Cf. I. 1. 2, note 6. This passage succinctly presents Calvin’s view of the work of the law and of conscience in conversion.

ft254 II. 5. 10; II. 7. 4; II I. 17. 1-3,6,7.

- ft255 Augustine, *City of God* XIV. 12 (MPL 41. 420; tr. NPNF II. 273); *On the Good of Marriage* 23. 30 (MPL 40. 393; tr. NPNF III. 411); *Contra adversarios legis et prophetarum* I. 14. 19 (MPL 42. 613).
- ft256 II. 7. 1-12.
- ft257 Cf. Plato, *Laws* IX. 862 (LCL Plato, *Laws* II. 228 f.).
- ft258 Cf. Melanchthon, *Loci communes* (1521), ed. Engelland, *op. cit.*, p. 73; tr. Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 153.
- ft259 Melanchthon, *Loci communes*, *loc. cit.*, and in Engelland, pp. 130 f.; tr. Hill, *op. cit.*, pp. 224 ff.; Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* I IIae. xci. 5. Cf. Comm. ^{<191908>}Psalm 19:8.
- ft260 A reference to Aristotle's illustration of things undetermined by law from the pliable, leaden measuring rule used in Lesbian molding. *Nicomachean Ethics* V. 10. 1137b (LCL edition, pp. 314 f.).
- ft261 Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* I IIae. xcvi. 1.
- ft262 Calvin uses the traditional identification of the two "tables of stone" (^{<022412>}Exodus 24:12; ^{<470303>}2 Corinthians 3:3, and elsewhere) with the two series of the commandments requiring duties to God (1-4) and duties to man (5-10). Cf. his defense of this in sec. 12, below, and Comm. Harmony of the Evangelists, on ^{<402237>}Matthew 22:37.
- ft263 The arrangement adopted by Lombard, *Sentences* III. 33. 1. 2 (MPL 192. 830 f.), and followed in the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran Churches. (Cf. Melanchthon, *Loci communes* 1521, ed. Engelland, *op. cit.*, p. 46.) See *Catholic Encyclopedia* article, "Commandments of God," where this division is supported from Augustine, and that of Calvin (earlier stated by Bucer) is traced back to Philo Judaeus and Origen.
- ft264 Origen calls ^{<022004>}Exodus 20:4 the "second commandment," *Homilies on Exodus* homily 8:3 (MPG 12. 355).
- ft265 Augustine, *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians* III. 4. 10 (MPL 44. 594; tr. NPNF V. 406). On "*umbratili Sabbathi praecepto*" here, cf. II. 7. 1, note 2.
- ft266 Augustine, *Letters* lv. II (MPL 33. 217; tr. FC 12. 276); *Sermons* 33. 3: "*propter Trinitatem tria praecepta*" (MPL 38. 208).

- ft267 *Eruditi commentarii in Matthei Evangelium, opus imperfectum*, a work of unidentified authorship published with the Homilies of Chrysostom homily 49 (MPG 56. 910).
- ft268 Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* III. 5. 8. 101; III. 6. 5. 140 (LCL Josephus IV. 364 f., 380 f.). Cf LCC XXIII. 118, note 7.
- ft269 Cf. II. 10. 10-18, where Calvin enlarges on the afflictions of the elect in this life save for anticipation of future blessedness.
- ft270 I. 4. 3.
- ft271 “*Laudisque confessione.*” Cf. III. 4. 9, where Calvin objects to the citation of “*confessio*” in <194204> Psalm 42:4 as evidence to justify sacramental confession.
- ft272 I. 13. 1.
- ft273 I. 12. 3.
- ft274 Augustine, *City of God* XIX. 23 (MPL 41. 654; tr. NPNF II. 415-418).
- ft275 I. 11. 2,12.
- ft276 *Nam hoc Dei nomen a fortitudine ductum est.*”
- ft277 *Oratio obliqua*, in Latin: pronouns changed in translation.
- ft278 “*Mille generationes.*” Calvin’s opinion that the Hebrew text here and in <050509> Deuteronomy 5:9 should be rendered “showing mercy to a thousand generations” appears in all his editions of the *Institutes*, and in his *Instruction in Faith*, 1537 (tr. Fuhrmann, p. 26). It is repeated in II. 10:9 and appeared four times in *Comm. Four Books of Moses*, <022006> Exodus 20:6. Many French versions of the Bible, and some in German and English, have a corresponding translation. Cf. J. M.P. Smith, *The Bible: An American Translation*; L. Segond’s revised French edition; Fr. Noetscher’s German edition; also the comment of A. H. McNeile, Westminster Commentaries, *Exodus*, p. 17. Calvin repeatedly uses the passage as evidence of the vastness of God’s mercy, e.g., in IV. 16. 9. We should be unwise to stress, though we may hardly exclude altogether, the bearing of such passages on Calvin’s expectation of the duration of the human race on earth.
- ft279 Calvin had encountered this view among the Anabaptists, against whom he wrote his *Psychopannychia* in 1534 (published 1542) and

with whom he was in controversy in Geneva, 1537, and in Strasbourg, 1539. Zwingli had written against this opinion in his tract *In Catabaptistas strophas elenchus*, 1527 (Zwingli, *Opera*, ed. M. Schuler and J. Schulthess III. 406 ff.; tr. S. M. Jackson, *Selected Works of Huldreich Zwingli*, “Refutation of Baptist Tricks,” pp. 206 ff.). Calvin treats it also in his *Brieve instruction contre les erreurs de la secte commune des Anabaptistes* (1544), seventh article (CR VII. 92 ff.; cf. OS III. 361). Cf. W. E. Keeney, *The Development of Dutch Anabaptist Thought and Practice, 1539-1564* (Hartford Seminary dissertation, 1959), pp. 212 ff.

ft280 Zwingli, *In Catabaptistas strophas elenchus*, 1527, *loc. cit.*; Calvin, *Brieve instruction: contre les erreurs de la secte commune des Anabaptistes* (1544), pp. 95 f.

ft281 The opinions here condemned were espoused by Zwingli (*op. cit.*, p. 408) and in the 1536 *Institutio* by Calvin himself (ch. 5; *De lege, mandatum in*; OS I. 45 f.).

ft282 Bucer, *In sacra quatuor Evangelia, enarrationes perpetuae* (Strasbourg, 1536), pp. 135 ff.

ft283 Augustine, *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians* III. 4. 10 (MPL 44. 194; tr. NPNF V. 406); *Sermons* cxxxvi. 3 (MPL 38. 752). Cf. II. 7. 16, note 22.

ft283x The words “or at least... piety” are from the 1545 edition.

ft284 “*Spiritualis quietis adumbrationem*”; cf. “*umbratile*” in sec. 28. The spiritualizing of the Sabbath as foreshadowing, the heavenly rest, seen in secs. 28 and 29, here, was anticipated by Augustine, e.g., in *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians*, *loc. cit.*; *Sermons* 9. 3. 3; 33. 3. 3 (MPL 38. 77, 208); *Letters* lv. 9. 17 (MPL 33. 212; tr. FC 12. 274). Some convenient data on historical Christian discussions of Sunday will be found in *Sunday, Its Origin, History, and Present Obligation*, by J. A. Hussey (Bampton Lectures, 1860), lectures 3 to 6.

ft285 Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job* 35. 8. 15-17 (on ^{<184208>} Job 42:8) (MPL 76. 757 ff.; tr. LF XXXI. 671 ff.). Cf. Bucer, *In sacra quatuor Evangelia, enarrationes perpetuae*, pp. 299 f.

ft286 Bucer, *In sacra quatuor Evangelia, enarrationes perpetuae*, p. 300.

- ft287 Some of the “restless spirits” had appeared in Geneva in 1537, when a citizen named Colinaeus, or Colon, was imprisoned for unorthodox opinions on baptism and the Sabbath. The fact is referred to in a letter from Christophe Fabri, minister in Thonon, to the ministers of Geneva, July 31, 1537. Herminjard gives the letter with informing notes (*Correspondance* IV. 270 ff.).
- ft288 It is clear from this passage and from sec. 34 that for Calvin the Christian Sunday is not, as in the Westminster Confession XXI. 8, a simple continuation of the Jewish Sabbath “changed into the first day of the week,” but a distinctively Christian institution adopted on the abrogation of the former one, as a means of church order and spiritual health.
- ft288x The following words are from the 1545 edition.
- ft289 Calvin here refers to Cassiodorus, *Historia tripartita* IX. 38, the passage being from Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* 5. 23 (MPL 69. 1153; MPG 67. 625 f.; tr. NPNF 2 ser. II. 130). Calvin’s concern to avoid the oppression of the serving class is not paralleled in this patristic source however. Luther makes much of the worker’s rest day in his Larger Catechism (1529), and it is prominent in the English Reformers, John Hooper and Thomas Becon. Cf. Parker Society, Hooper, *Early Works*, pp. 337-351; Becon, *Catechism*, etc., pp. 82 f.
- ft290 Cf. Albertus Magnus, *Compendium veritatis theologicae* (Venice, 1485) V. 62; Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* IIIae. c. 3 ad 2; II IIae. cxxii. 4 ad 1.
- ft291 See *Catholic Encyclopedia* articles “Constitutions,” “Constitution, papal.” Calvin’s position is consciously anti-Sabbatarian. A severe legalism connected with Sunday was a phenomenon of the Middle Ages, as it was of some later Protestantism. The penitential books of the early Middle Ages indicate heavy penalties for Sunday work. Cf. J. T. McNeill and H. M. Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance* (Records of Civilization XIX), index, s.v. “Sunday.” Calvin’s View is similar to that adopted in the Second Helvetic Confession XXIV, which allows “no place to a Jewish observance of the day.”
- ft292 “*Dispositionis.*” Cf. I. 13. 6: “*Dispositionem vel oeconomiam.*”
- ft293 Cf. IV. 20. 32.

- ft294 III 7. 2-7; III. 20. 38, 45-46; IV. 1. 11-19; IV. 14. 9; IV. 17. 88-40.
- ft295 Eck, *Enchiridion*, in ch. 19 on clerical celibacy (1541, fo. 129b).
- ft296 This reflects Horace, *Epistles* I. 7. 98 (LCL edition, Horace, *Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica*, pp. 302 f.).
- ft297 Augustine, *Against Julian* II. 7. 20, quoting an interpretation of <460729> 1 Corinthians 7:29 in a work of Ambrose that is not extant (MPL 44. 687; tr. FC 35. 79).
- ft298 OS III. 383, note 2.
- ft299 “*Unicuique... suum.*”
- ft300 Both Luther and Bucer had a like emphasis. See especially Bucer’s *Das ihm selbs (Traita de l’amour du prochain)* (1523); French tr. H. Strohl (Paris, 1949), pp. 55 f.; English, P. T. Fuhrmann, *Instruction in Christian Love*, p. 40.
- ft301 Cf. II. 2. 24; III. 3. 11-13; IV. 15. 11-12.
- ft302 Augustine, *On the Spirit and the Letter* 36. 64-66 (MPL 44. 242 ff.; tr. NPNF V. 112 ff.). Numerous additional passages from Augustine on the Tenth Commandment are cited by Smits II. 36.
- ft303 Cf. II. 8. 12, note 16.
- ft304 Melanchthon, *Annotationes in Evangelium Matthaei* (1523), fo. 46a.
- ft305 Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* I. 23-26 (MPL 34. 27 ff.; tr. NPNF II. 528 f.).
- ft306 The preceding sentences of sec. 54 show a general similarity to a passage in Luther’s *Short Exposition of the Decalogue, the Apostles’ Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer*, 1520, the conclusion of the section on the Decalogue (*Werke* WA VII. 214; tr. B. L. Woolf, *Reformation Writings of Martin Luther* I. 82 f.). The statement is repeated word for word in the *Betbuchlein*, 1522 (*Werke* WAX. 2. 388).
- ft307 “[φιλαυτία].”
- ft308 Cf. Lombard, *Sentences* III. xxviii, l; 29. 1 (MPL 192. 814 f.); Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* II IIae. 26. 4-5. In this section, Calvin employs three words corresponding to “love” and “charity” in English: *amor, dilectio, charitas*. There is no use in seeking fastidious distinctions between these words, here or elsewhere, in Calvin and other writers of his time.

In a note by Ludovico Vives in his elaborate edition of Augustine's *City of God* (1522), it is stated that *amor* and *dilectio* are indifferently used in the Scriptures. Profane authors, says Vives, used the verb *diligo* for a light love and *arno* for a fervent one. He admits that *amor* is more often than *dilectio* used for obscenity. (Augustine, *Of the City of God, with the Learned Comments of Jo. Lod. Vives* [London, 1620], p. 478.) The detailed study of Helene Petre, *Caritas: etude sur le vocabulaire Latin de la charitg Chretienne*, yields a similar result. See esp. pp. 79-98, with revealing citations from Augustine, Isidore of Seville (d. 636), and other Christian Latin writers. A distinction in patristic Latin expressed by Isidore seems of general application: *amor* and *dilectio* may be used in a good or in a bad sense; *caritas*, in a good sense only. (Isidore, *Libri differentiarum* II. 37. 142; MPL 83. 92.)

ft309 Cf. III. 7. 6.

ft310 Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* I IIae. cviii. 4; II IIae. clxxxiv. 3; clxxxvi; Melanchthon, *Loci communes*, 1521 (ed. Engelland, *op. cit.*, p.118).

ft311 Chrysostom, *De compunctione cordis* I. 4 (Chrysostom, *Opera*, Paris, 1834, I. 157; MPG 47. 399 f.); Chrysostom, *Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae* III. 14 (MPG 47. 372 ff.).

ft312 Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* I. 30. 32 (MPL 34. 31; tr. NPNF II. 531 f.), discoursing on "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor" (Romans 13:10), argues that "every man is to be considered our neighbor."

ft313 Gregory the Great, *Homilies on the Gospels* 2. 27. 1 (MPL 76. 1206).

ft314 Augustine, "*Da quod iubes et iube quod vis*," in *Confessions* X. 29. 40; xxx2. 45 (MPL 32. 796, 798; tr. LCC VII. 225,228). See also *On Grace and Free Will* 15. 3 (MPL 44. 899; tr. NPNF V. 456 f.); *On the Perseverance of the Saints* 20. 53 (MPL 45. 1026; tr. NPNF V. 347); *On the Spirit and the Letter* 13. 22 (MPL 44. 224; tr. NPNF V. 92). Cf. II. 5. 7, note 17.

ft315 Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* I IIae. lxxiv. 20; cf. III. 4. 28.

ft316 This chapter, secs. 49,50.

ft317 Augustine, *On Baptism, Against the Donatists* II. 6. 9 (MPL 43. 232; tr. NPNF IV. 429).

ft318 In the previous section.

CHAPTER 9

- ft319 This is an entire new chapter in edition 1559 (cf. II. 6), further emphasizing the context of law within the covenant, and the prime purpose of the law: to point to Christ. Much of the content is rehearsed again, however, in chs. 1,11, following, which date largely from 1539.
- ft320 Cf. I. 6. 1-4.
- ft321 I. 13. 10.
- ft322 Servetus, *Christianismi restitutio* (1553), pp. 294,324, and *Epistolae* 9 (in same volume), p. 601; also in CR VIII. 667 f.
- ft323 Cf. II. 7. 16; II. 8. 28,29, and notes there appended.

CHAPTER 10

- ft324 In this chapter, especially secs. 1-5 and 8, Calvin unfolds the doctrine of the covenant. See the passages listed in I. 6. 1, note 3. Zwingli, Oecolampadius, William Tyndale, Bucer, and Bullinger all made the covenant of grace a substantive element in theology. Their conception of the covenant was advanced by Zacharias Ursinus (d. 1585) and Caspar Olevianus (d. 1587), the Heidelberg Reformers, and by Robert Rollock (d. 1599) in Scotland. The full development of the covenant theology came only in the seventeenth century and was expressed in the Westminster Confession (1647), ch. VII, and in the influential work of John Cocceius, *Summa doctrinae de foedere et testamento Dei* (1648). This amplification, in which a covenant of works, or of nature, stands beside the covenant of grace, is not anticipated by Calvin. Relevant information is briefly given in articles by L. J. Trinterud, "The Origins of Puritanism," *Church History* XX (1951), 37-57; by E. H. Emerson, "Calvin and Covenant Theology," *Church History* XXV (1956), 186-144; and with reference to Scotland, by S. A. Burrell, "The Covenant Idea as a Revolutionary Symbol," *Church History* XXVII (1958), 338-350. See also G. Schrenk, *Gottesreich und Bund in alteren Protestantismus* (Gutersloh, 1923), and the discussion by G. D.

Henderson of “The Idea of the Covenant in Scotland,” *The Burning Bush: Studies in Scottish Church History*, ch. 4.

- ft325 Servetus insistently affirms the view here rejected by Calvin. “In the law,” he says, “remission of sins was carnal and earthly,” as also was faith. *Christianismi restitutio* (1553), pp. 322, 324; cf. pp. 233, 237 ff., 305, 314, 321-326.
- ft326 III. 15-18.
- ft327 “*Neglectaque animae cura.*” Pannier regards this as reflecting one of the grievances against the Anabaptists: Pannier, *Institution* III. 288 and note *b* on p. 10.
- ft328 Servetus, *Dialogorum de Trinitate libri duo: De justitia regni Christi* 1. 1, 4, fo. C 7a, D 16, D 2a (tr. E. M. Wilbur, *The Two Treatises of Servetus on the Trinity*, pp. 225, 230 f.).
- ft329 Servetus, *De justitia regni Christi*, III. 3, fo. E 2a (tr. Wilbur, *op. cit.*, pp. 243 ff.).
- ft330 Bucer had similarly associated Christ with the ancient covenant in *Metaphrases et enarrationes perpetuae epistolarum D. Pauli Apostoli*, 1536, p. 159. Cf. Benoit, *Institution* II. 198. For patristic views of this, familiar to Calvin, see Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* IV. 9, 10 (MPG 7. 996-1000; tr. ANF I. 472 ff.); Augustine, *On the Morals of the Catholic Church* 28. 56-58 (MPL 32. 1333; tr. NPNF IV. 56 f.).
- ft331 Cf. Comm. ^{<461001>} 1 Corinthians 10:1-5.
- ft332 Bucer, *Metaphrases et enarrationes perpetuae epistolarum D. Pauli Apostoli*, p. 158, states that the sacraments of the ancient Jews and of Christians are not different in substance. Most of the opinions condemned in this and the following section are those of Servetus.
- ft333 Augustine, *Reply to Faustus the Manichaean* XV. 1 1; XIX. 16 (MPL 42. 314,356; tr. NPNF IV. 229, 244). Last sentence is from 1553 edition.
- ft334 “*Extremae infoelicitatis insigne est exemplar.*” The fact that for Calvin the patriarchs, elect of God, experienced only affliction and unhappiness in the course of their lives is in accord with innumerable passages in his works that counter the unfounded notion that Calvin regarded prosperity in this life as associated with election. Dr.

McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism*, pp. 222 f., 418 ff. On Jacob, cf. Ambrose, *On the Duties of the Clergy* 2. 5 (MPL 16. 114 ff.; tr. NPNF 2 ser. X. 46 f.).

- ft335 “*Ultima linea et meta.*” Cf. Horace, *Epistles* I. 16. 79: “*Mors ultima linea rerum est.*” (LCL edition, Horace, *Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica*, p. 356.)
- ft336 In his emphasis on the eschatological aspect of the Old Testament promises, Calvin is disposed to minimize the element in these of hope for the present life. Cf. Pannier, *Institution* III. 290, note d, on p. 25.
- ft337 “*Lucis exortum,*” corresponding to the phrase “*exorta luce,*” which is thrust into the quotation from ^{<194906>}Psalm 49:6-14, above.
- ft338 Cf. III. 25. 4. Calvin, in *Psychopannychia*, contending against the doctrine of “the sleep of the soul,” expounds numerous passages of Job (CR V. 228 ff.; tr. Calvin, *Tracts* III. 486 ff.).
- ft339 In this remarkable passage, and frequently elsewhere, Calvin states forcibly his view of the progressive nature of revelation. For the reference to the growing light of morning, cf. Comm. ^{<480323>}Galatians 3:23, and Benoit, *Institution* II. 213, note 3. Cf. Pannier, *Institution* III. 32, 291; Fuhrmann, *God-centered Religion*, pp. 84 f. See also “accommodation” in Index 111.
- ft340 cf. II. 9. 1-4.
- ft341 “*Vix minima vestigia.*” Cf. secs. 11-14, above. Calvin keeps insisting that God’s elect experience no worldly prosperity.
- ft342 “*Animarum substantiam.*” VG: “*Immortalite des ames.*”

CHAPTER 11

- ft343 cf. II. 10. 1.
- ft344 Servetus had stated that the promises of the law are fulfilled spiritually to Christians but that the Jews “obtained the Land of Canaan and were satisfied with both milk and honey”: *De justitia regni Christi* (1532) I, fo. D 16; tr. E. M. Wilbur, *op. cit.*, p. 230.
- ft345 cf. I. 11. 3; II. 9. 3.

- ft346 Servetus, *De justitia regni Christi* III, fo. D 8a-b; tr. Wilbur, *op. cit.*, pp. 240 f. On the Manichaean rejection of the God of the Old Testament, see Augustine, *On the Morals of the Catholic Church* 10. 16 (MPL 32. 1317; tr. NPNF IV. 46).
- ft347 Cf. II. 9. 4; Comm. Hebrews 7-10.
- ft348 “*Testamenti.*” In this section and elsewhere Calvin uses the words *testamentum* and *foedus* interchangeably, as they are used in the Vulgate. The Scripture words are [בְּרִית] and [διαθήκη]. Both Latin words are here ordinarily translated “covenant” except in Scripture quotations and where *testamentum* evidently refers to one of the parts of Scripture. Cf. II. 8. 21; II. 10. 7; III. 14. 6; III. 17. 6; III. 21. 1,5,7; IV. 14. 6. Other Latin terms are *pactio*, *pactum*.
- ft349 “*Umbratili.*” Cf. II. 7. 1; II. 9. 3, 4; III. 20, 18, note 29.
- ft350 Cf. II. 9. 1.
- ft351 “*Legis* [κακόζηλοι].”
- ft352 For “*infirmitatis*” VG reads: “*de leur abrogation.*”
- ft353 “*Chirographa.*” Cf. II. 7. 17, note 25.
- ft354 In sections 4,7,9, above.
- ft355 Section 1, above.
- ft356 Augustine, *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians* III. 4. 6-12, esp. 11 (MPL 44. 591-597; tr. NPNF V. 346-351).
- ft357 Cf. Melancthon, *Loci communes*, 1535 (CR Melancthon XXI. 454).
- ft358 “*Supra Vetus testamentum Novi excellentia.*”
- ft359 Barth and Niesel point to what appears to be a reply to such statements as this in Sebastian Franck’s *Paradoxa* (1535), Paradox 86 (fo. xlviib ff.), and suggest that since Franck says he had “often heard” these opinions, he drew them from Anabaptist acquaintances. (OS III. 435, note 2.)
- ft360 Sections 5 and 13, above.

CHAPTER 12

- ft361 For Calvin's thought of Christ as Head over the angels as well as over man, see his *Responsum ad fratres Polonos* (1560), CR IX. 338: "*Primatum tenuit etiam super angelos.*" Cf. Comm. Colossians 1:20.
- ft362 Cf. Comm. ^{<580415>} Hebrews 4:15.
- ft363 This is affirmed by Osiander in his treatise *An filius Dei fuerit incarnandus* (1550), K 2a, 2b, and by Servetus, *Christianismi restitutio: De regeneratione superna* I, pp. 370,382. Calvin reverts to this point in sections 5 and 6.
- ft364 Referring to Osiander's statement, *op. cit., loc. cit.*
- ft365 This passage briefly shows Calvin as favoring the supralapsarian as opposed to the infralapsarian view of the decrees of God. The issue became controversial in the Netherlands shortly after Calvin's death. Cf. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism*, pp. 263 f. For typical source citations on the *ordo salutis* in Reformed theology, see Heppe RD, pp. 146 ff.
- ft366 Osiander (*op. cit.*, fo. A 4a-B 1a) cites Alexander of Hales, Duns Scotus, and especially John Pico della Mirandola as patrons of his opinion. Cf. OS III. 443, note 2, where passages from these authors are cited.
- ft367 William of Ockham (d. ca. 1349), *Centilogium theologicum* (Lyons, 1495) (a work appended to Ockham's commentary on Lombard's *Sentences*), concl. 7. A.
- ft368 Osiander, *op. cit.* The passages referred to in sections 6 and 7 are scattered through folios C 3a to I 3a of this work.
- ft369 "[ἀκέφαλον]."

CHAPTER 13

- ft370 I. 13. 7-13.
- ft371 For the Manichees, see I. 13. 1, note 3. Marcion of Pontus taught in Rome about A.D. 150. His significance lies in his rejection of the Old

Testament and in his Gnostic dualism, which expressed itself in the denial of the materiality of Christ's body and in extreme asceticism. Calvin has in mind contemporary "Marcionites," including Menno Simons (1496-1561), who refounded the Netherlands Anabaptists after the Munster incident. Calvin knew Menno's opinions, which were published only in Dutch or in the Oostersch dialect of North Germany, chiefly through Martin Micron of Norden, East Frisia. Micron several times disputed with Menno (1554, 1556) and exchanged pamphlets with him (1556, 1558), chiefly on the incarnation (*Complete Works of Menno Simons*, translated from the Dutch by L. Verduin and edited by J.C. Wenger, with a biography by Harold Bender, p. 25). An earlier tract by John a Lasco against Menno, *Defensio verae... doctrinae de Christi incarnatione*, was sent to Calvin by Albert Hardenberg of Bremen, 1545. This was an answer to Menno's *Brief and Clear Confession* (1544) (tr. Verduin, *op. cit.*, pp. 419-454). See also Menno's *The Incarnation of Our Lord* (1554) (tr. Verduin, *op. cit.*, pp. 783-943); *Reply to Martin Micron* (1556); *Epistle to Martin Micron* (1556). In the first mentioned of these pamphlets Menno devotes considerable space to the interpretation of the passages cited below from Hebrews chapter 2 (English translation, pp. 823-832). His argument is somewhat difficult to summarize. Against John "a Lasco he asserts "that there is not a letter to be found in all the Scriptures that the Word assumed our flesh... ; or that the divine nature miraculously united itself with our human nature" (p. 829). (The Mennonites after him have not held this doctrine.) Augustine severely condemned the ancient Docetism that made Christ's flesh a phantom: *Sermons* lxxv. 7-9 (MPL 38. 477; tr. NPNF VI. 338 f.).

^{ft372} II. 12. 3.

^{ft373} Cf. Augustine, *Against Faustus* 2. 4; 5. 4 (MPL 42. 211, 222; tr. NPNF IV. 157, 168 f.).

^{ft374} "*Mulieres contendunt esse [ἄσπόρους]*." This theme is developed by Menno in his *Reply to Gellius Faber* (1554) and elsewhere. (Jelle Smit, or Gellius Faber, formerly a priest, had become pastor in Emden.) Menno held the unscientific notion that in procreation woman's part is receptive only, and "the father is the real origin of his child," *Reply to*

Gellius Faber, p. 768; cf. his *Reply to Martin Micron*; tr. Verduin, *op. cit.*, pp. 849 f., 886-890,906.

ft375 The phrase is found in the *Institutes* of Justinian I. 3,4 and in his *Digest* I. 5. 5, 2 (*Corpus iuris civilis: Institutiones et Digesta*, ed. p. Krueger [*Inst.*, p. 2; *Dig.*, p. 35]; tr. J. B. Moyle, *The Institutes of Justinian* (5th ed., pp. 6 f.); tr. C. H. Monro, *The Digest of Justinian I*, pp. 24 f.).

ft376 “*Genitrices*.” Cf. Menno, *Reply to Martin Micron*; tr. Verduin, *op. cit.*, pp. 896,908.

ft377 Other passages from this work are alluded to in the remainder of the chapter.

ft378 VG adds: “*et par consequent de la race de David*.”

CHAPTER 14

ft379 Throughout this chapter, as in the opening sentences. Calvin adheres strictly to the line of Chalcedonian orthodoxy. On this topic the study by J. S. Witte, “Die Christologie Calvins” in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, ed. A. Grillmeier, III. 487-529, and W. Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, pp.115 ff., should be consulted. Cf. S. Cave, *The Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, pp. 151 f.

ft380 Calvin here uses “*animus*” instead of “*anima*” as in the 1536 edition.

ft381 Augustine, *Sermones* clxxxvi (MPL 38. 999; *Enchiridion* 11. 36 (MPL 40. 250; tr. LCC VII. 361 f.). Augustine observes that as man is a unity of soul and flesh, so Christ is a unity of the Word and man.

ft382 “[ιδιωμάτων κοινωνία].” The doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*, or interchange of properties of the divine and human nature of Christ. This doctrine found occasional expression in the Nestorian controversy (ca. 428-452), having been held, though inadequately expressed, by Tertullian, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Ephiphanius, and other earlier writers. See the discussion in C. J. Hefele, *ConciUengesichte* II (1856). 127 f.; Hefele-Leclercq II. 1. 231 f.; tr. from the German text, *History of the Councils* III. 8, 9. Cf. Tertullian, *Of the Flesh of Christ* v (CG II. 880; tr. ANF III. 525); Cyril of Alexandria, “[ἀλλήλοις ἀνακρινὰς τὰ τῶν φύσεων ἰδιώματα.]”

(citing ^{<430313>}John 3:13), *De incarnatione Unigeniti* (MPG 75. 1244); Leo the Great, *Letters* 28. 5 (MPL 54. 771 f.; tr. NPNF 2 ser. XII. 41 and note 7); Athanasius, *Discourses Against the Arians* 3. 31 (tr. NPNF 2 ser. IV. 410 f.); John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* III. 3-4 (MPG 94. 993 f.; tr. NPNF 2 ser. IX. 43-49). There is a statement based on Hefele in NPNF 2 ser. XIV. 208 f. Calvin approves and explains the doctrine (sec. 9); but he rejects the use made of it by Lutheran advocates of the ubiquity of Christ's risen body. Cf. IV. 17. 29,30, and Luther, *Werke* WA XXV. 309. Servetus had repeatedly attacked this doctrine: see, for example, *De Trinitatis erroribus* I. 15, fo. 20b; III. 12 to 761b; tr. Wilbur, *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 118. The doctrine is affirmed in the Second Helvetic Confession XI. 10 (Schaff, *Creeds* III. 256; tr. p. 852; Kidd, *Documents*, pp. 113 f.).

^{ft383} Cf. Servetus, *Christianismi restitutio*, *De Trinitate* III, p. 96.

^{ft384} Probably an allusion to ancient writers who approached Eutychean or Monophysite opinions: cf. Cyril of Alexandria, *Expositio in Evangelium Johannis*, on ^{<430519>}John 5:19; 5:30; 8:28 (MPG 73. 757 f., 386 ff., 832 ff.). See OS III. 517.

^{ft385} The sentences following in this section reflect Calvin's clash with George Blandrata and other anti-Trinitarians of Poland, about 1558. Cf. *Responsio ad nobiles Polonos et Franciscum Stancarum Mantuarum* (CR IX. 354 ff.); *Ad quaestiones Georgii Blandratae responsum* (CR IX. 332); the second confession of Valentine Gentile (CR IX. 399).

^{ft386} Augustine, *Enchiridion* 11. 36 (MPL 40. 250; tr. LCC VII. 361 f.).

^{ft387} Servetus, *De Trinitatis erroribus* I, fo. 2b ff.; II, fo. 58ab (tr. Wilbur, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-11, 90 ff.); *Dialogues on the Trinity* I, fo. A 6b-7b (tr. Wilbur, *op. cit.*, pp. 195 ff.).

^{ft388} Sections 6-8, below.

^{ft389} Nestorius, who sharply separated the divine and human natures of Christ, was condemned by the Synod of Ephesus, 431, through the action of Cyril of Alexandria. Eutyches, who, exaggerating Cyril's teaching, minimized so as virtually to deny Christ's human nature, was condemned by the Council of Constantinople, 448. The doctrines of both were repudiated in the creed adopted by the Ecumenical Council

of Chalcedon, 451. Cf. IV. 5. 6; IV. 7. 1,9, and see the documents and references in Ayer, *Source Book*, pp. 504-521.

- ft390 Cf. Servetus, *Christianismi restitutio*, *De Trinitate*, dial. II, pp. 250 f.
- ft391 “*Ante saecula.*” In the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed the phrase is *ante omnia saecula*, “before all ages.”
- ft392 Servetus, *De Trinitatis erroribus* I. 54 ff., fo. 38a ff. (tr. Wilbur, *op. cit.*, pp. 59 ff.).
- ft393 Calvin has in mind both Servetus and the Italian anti-Trinitarians George Blandrata (Giorgio Blandrata), Valentine Gentile, and John Paul (Gianpaulo) Alciati. Cf. I. 13. 20-25 and notes appended; also CR VIII. 651 f. (second letter of Servetus to Calvin from *Christianismi restitutio*, p. 580); IX. 392 f. (Gentile’s second confession); XVII. 169 ff. (letter of Blandrata to Calvin). On these writers and their activities and opinions, see E. M. Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism: Socinianism and Its Antecedents*, pp. 302 ff., 308-321.
- ft394 Servetus. *De Trinitatis erroribus* I. 9. fo. 6a; tr. Wilbur, *op. cit.*, pp. 11 f.
- ft395 Augustine, *City of God* X. 29. 1 (MPL 4I. 308; tr. NPNF II. 199).
- ft396 Servetus, *Christianismi restitutio*, pp. 577 ff. (first letter of Servetus to Calvin, also in CR VIII. 649 ff.), 580 (second letter; CR VIII. 580).
- ft397 Servetus, *De Trinitatis erroribus* II. 5, fo. 48ab; tr. Wilbur, *op. cit.*, pp. 76 ff.; Tertullian, *Against Praxeas* 2, 3, 15 (MPL 2. 156-159; CCL II. 1178 ff.; E. Evans, *Tertullian’s Treatise Against Praxeas*, text, p. 207; tr. p. 151; tr. ANF III. 598, 610 f.); Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* III. 16. 6; III. 21. 10 (MPG 7. 925,954 f.; tr. ANF I. 442,454). Cf. CR VIII. 507 ff., 522,535,574; IX. 394 ff. Augustine, *On True Religion* 16. 30 (MPL 34. 134 f. LCC VI. 239); *John’s Gospel* 3. 18 (MPL 35. 1403; tr. NPNF VII. 24); *Against the Letter of Manichaeus Called Fundamental* 37. 42 (MPL 42. 202; tr. NPNF IV. 198); *On the Trinity* II. 9. 15 (MPL 42. 854 f.; tr. NPNF III. 44).
- ft398 “*Ex traduce Dei.*” Cf. I. 15. 5; II. 1. , note 10, and see the references given in OS III. 181, 469; Smits, II. 29, 37-

ft399 The reference is to Calvin's *Defensio orthodoxae fidei de sacra Trinitate* (1554) (CR VIII. 457-644; tr. H. Cole, *Calvin's Calvinism*, pp. 25-206).

ft400 “[ὁμοουσίον].”

ft401 In the preceding sentences Calvin has in mind numerous passages in the *Christianismi restitutio* of Servetus. These are listed, with the titles of the special sections of the work, by Barth and Niesel, OS III. 470 f. The pages in the order of reference are: 578, 92 f., 679 f., 205 f., 591 f., 683, 164, 202 f., 355, 145, 159, 162, 269, 263, 590, 150, 680, 683, 205, 250, 159, 119 f., 265 f. On *homoousios* and *hypostasis*, see especially p. 269 (*De Trinitate* II).

CHAPTER 15

ft402 Augustine, *Enchiridion* 1. 5 (MPL 40. 233; tr. LCC VII. 339).

ft403 On Calvin's treatment of the three offices of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King, see J. F. Jansen, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Work of Christ*. Jansen presents some useful data on the background of this formulation (pp. 20-38). He holds that the prophetic office of Christ largely drops from Calvin's attention. In typical works of Reformed theology, however, the triple office gives structure to the doctrine of the work of Christ as Mediator. Cf. Heppe RD, pp. 452-487; C. Hodge, *Systematic Theology* II. 459-609; W. Cunningham, *Historical Theology* II. 238 ff.; E. D. Morris, *Theology of the Westminster Symbols*, pp. 322-343; Westminster Confession VIII; Larger Catechism 43-45; Shorter Catechism 24-26; T. F. Torrance, *The School of Faith*, Introduction, pp. lxxvii-xcv, ciii f.

[404] Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* III. 22. 2: “Wherefore, as to others, one is a lawgiver, another is a priest, another is a king; but all these concur in Christ as the fount of all grace.”

ft405 II. 6. 2-4.

ft406 French text: “*Ange ou ambassadeur du haut conseil.*” In Comm. <230906> Isaiah 9:6, Calvin does not follow this variant translation but argues for the rendering: “The Mighty God, Wonderful, Counselor, shall call,” etc.

- ft407 “*Prophetam.*” VG has “*prophetie,*” prophecy; but the Latin accords with the Hebrew.
- ft408 Cf. Bucer: “*Rex regum Christus est, summus sacerdos, et prophetarum caput.*” *Enarrationes in Evangelia* (1536), p. 607. Benoit suggests that Calvin may have borrowed the idea from this statement of Bucer (Benoit, *Institution* II. 267, note 8).
- ft409 II. 6. 3.
- ft410 Calvin apparently has in mind the defection of the ten tribes to Jeroboam (1 Kings, chapter 12) and the disasters recorded in 2 Kings, chapter 24. Cf. CR XXXVIII. 401,409.
- ft411 The perpetuity of the true church in the world is a constituent element in the Reformed doctrine of the church. See Heppe RD, p. 664; McNeill, “The Church in Post-Reformation Reformed Theology,” *Journal of Religion* XXIV (1944), 102 f. K. Barth, in *Kirchliche Dogmatik* I. 2. 771-774, has urgently affirmed the preservation of the church as associated with the perpetual reviving power of the Word, effecting a divine *creatio continua*, so that without the Scripture the church “would dissolve at once into nothingness.” (Tr. G. T. Thomson, *Doctrine of the Word of God*. I. 2. 688-691.)
- ft412 A characteristic statement. Cf. Comm. <402534> Matthew 25:34: “The life of the godly is nothing but an exile full of sorrow and misery,” amid which, however, the Lord gives them “a fortified and buoyant spirit that they may be able to overcome the odds against them.” Similar statements abound in Calvin’s works. Some examples are given in McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism*, pp. 222 f.
- ft413 cf. “*Spirituales eius divitiae,*” section 5.
- ft414 Section 2, above.
- ft415 Section 3, above.
- ft416 Calvin’s utterances specifically on the priesthood of believers are rare and unsystematic, although in treatment of other topics he gives to that doctrine substantially the content given to it by Luther.

CHAPTER 16

- ft417 The “decree” of salvation proclaimed in the angel’s message to Mary, <420128> Luke 1:28-33.
- ft418 II. 6. 1.
- ft419 Bernard, *Sermons on the Song of Songs* 15. 6 (MPL. 183. 340 f.; tr. S. J. Eales, *Life and Work of St. Bernard* IV. 83 f.).
- ft420 Cf. I. 1. 2; I. 5. 3, and notes appended to these passages.
- ft421 The conception of the atonement as effectual through man’s response to God’s love revealed in Christ’s death (a view usually associated with Abailard’s name) seems momentarily suggested in this sentence. But Calvin’s thought is not Abailard’s. E. Brunner has justly stressed Calvin’s adherence to the substitutionary doctrine of Anselm: *The Mediator* (tr. O. Wyon), pp. 438 f., 458, 507.
- ft422 “*Gehennae*.”
- ft423 Augustine, *John’s Gospel* cx. 6 (MPL 35. 1923 f.; tr. NPNF VII. 411).
- ft424 Pannier remarks that the clause “born of the Virgin Mary,” which seems the most supernaturalist article of the Creed, serves Calvin mainly as an attestation not of the divinity, but of the humanity of Christ, of his incorporation in Adam’s race. (Pannier, *Institution* II. 382, note *a* on p. 98.) See also T. F. Torrance, *The School of Faith*, Introduction, pp. lxxx f.
- ft425 “*Nomen praefecti*.” Cf. “*praeside Judaeae*,” above. Pilate’s title, however, was “*procurator Judaeae*.”
- ft426 “[אשמות].”
- ft427 “[καθαρμάτων].”
- ft428 “[אש].”
- ft429 Using the term “the apostle,” Calvin seems momentarily to accept Paul’s authorship of Hebrews, which he elsewhere repeatedly denies. Cf. Comm. Heb., “Argument,” and ch. 13:93.

ft430 “[ἀπολύτρωσιν καὶ ἄντι λυτρον καὶ ἰλαστήριον].” Cf. <422128> Luke 21:28; <450324> Romans 3:24; Colossians 1:14; <540206> 1 Timothy 2:6; <580905> Hebrews 9:5; <581135> Hebrews 11:35.

ft431 Calvin here follows Erasmus’ *Explanation of the Apostles’ Creed* (1533), published with the Basel edition of his works, *Omnia Opera D. Erasmi* (Basel, 1540). V. 967 f. On the late appearance of this doctrine and its incorporation in the Creed, see especially A. Vacant and E. Mangenot, *Dictionnaire de theologie Catholique*, article “Descent de Jesus aux enfers,” Vol. IV. One of the earliest references to it is in the unorthodox “Dated Creed” of the synod held at Nice in Thrace 359, as given by Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* 2. 37 (MPG 67. 280; tr. Ayer, *Source Book*, p. 318; H. Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, p. 60.

ft432 The topic is omitted by Augustine in his sermon to catechumens on the Creed (*De symbolo ad catechumenos*) (MPL 40. 627-656; tr. NPNF III. 369-375). The descent into hell had been called in question or rejected by some bold theologians before Calvin. Reginald Pecock presented a revision of the Creed in 1440, omitting this article. Cf. J. Lewis, *Life of the Learned and Right Reverend Reynold Pecock*, pp. 210, 221-225, 316, 325.

ft433 The insertion of this sentence in 1559 may have been occasioned by a revival of criticism of the article. In a letter written by John a Lasco to Bullinger, June 17, 1553, it is stated that Walter Deloenus, a minister of the church of the German refugees in London, had proposed its omission as “a plant that the Lord hath not planted” (cf. <401513> Matthew 15:13). Though under rebuke he had acknowledged his fault, harmful discussion had arisen (A. Lasco, *Opera*, ed. A. Kuyper, II. 677 f.). Cf. OS III, *Addenda*, p. 517, and on Deloenus (Devlin or Delvin), see *Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation*, edited for The Parker Society II. 575, 588.

ft434 This view was held by Bucer (*Enarrationes in Evangelia*, 1536, pp. 511 f., 792 ff.) and apparently by Beza.

ft435 Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* III. 52. 5: “When Christ descended into hell, by the power of his Passion he delivered the saints from this penalty whereby they were excluded from the life of glory....”

- ft436 Aquinas, in *Summa Theol.* III. Supplementum lxi. 4-7, examines questions on the *limbus patrum*, distinguishing it (Art. 6) from the *limbus puerorum*. The fathers were detained *in limbo* until delivered by Christ, and were thus in hope and in a state of rest, while the children in limbo “have no hope of the blessed life.” Cf. A. Vacant and E. Mangenot, *Dictionnaire de theologie Catholique*, article “Limbes.”
- ft437 Cf. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* IV. 2; V. 31 (MPG 7.976 ff., 1068 ff.; tr. ANF I. 463 f., 504 f.). Servetus, *Christianismi restitutio*, pp. 621 f. (first letter of Servetus to Calvin, also in CR VIII. 682 f.); Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Loci communes* III. 16. 8.
- ft438 Perhaps a reference to Zwingli, *Exposition of the Faith*, section on “Christ the Lord” (Zwingli, *Opera*, ed. M. Schuler and J. Schulthess, IV. 49; tr. LCC XXIV. 252). Cf. the treatment of the descent into hell by Peter Martyr, *Loci communes* III: “Simple Exposition of the Articles of the Creed” 20 and III. 16. 8-25 (1576 edition, pp. 476, 814-815).
- ft439 Cf. sections 8,9, notes 17 and 20, above. Calvin first suggests this conception of the descent into hell in *Psychopannychia* (1534, published 1542: CR V. 224; tr. Calvin, *Tracts* III. 628). The prevailing interpretation of this article of the Creed was that of Aquinas, who gave some firmness to this doctrine after the rather unsystematic treatment of it by Lombard and Albertus Magnus. See *Summa Theol.* III. 52. 2,4-6,8. Calvin’s explanation is not, as Pannier states, “entirely original” (Pannier, *Institution* II. 883, note *a* on p. 107). Nicolas of Cusa (e.g., in Sermon on ^{<193011>}Psalm 30:11), followed by Pico della Mirandola, had similarly explained the *descensus* in terms of Christ’s agony. Luther adopted the view that Christ, as God and man, literally entered into hell. The Catechism of the Council of Trent, section 49, following Aquinas, states that Christ liberated the (Old Testament) fathers and other pious men from imprisonment in limbo. For the complicated history of discussions concerning this article, see J. A. Dietelmeier, *Historia de descensu Christi ad inferos literaria*, esp. pp. 160-191, and the sources there cited.
- ft440 Section 5, above.
- ft441 Calvin’s explanation of the descent into hell as consisting of Christ’s redemptive agony on the cross had been ridiculed by Sebastian

Castellio, as is indicated in a letter of Calvin to Viret, March, 1544 (CR XI. 688; tr. Calvin, *Letters* I. 409), Apparently Castellio held the view here rejected. Cf. CR XI. 675; Herminjard, *Correspondance* IX. 158,185.

ft442 Vulgate: “*Exauditus est pro sua reverentia.*”

ft443 Cyril, *De recta fide*, Oratio 2. 18 (MPG 76. 1555 ff.).

ft444 Hilary, *On the Trinity* IV. xlii (“*mortera in inferno perimens*”); III. xv (“*Dei filius in inferis est; sed homo refertur ad coelum*”) (MPL 10. 128, 24; tr. NPNF 2 ser. IX. 84,66).

ft445 See section 8, note 17; section 10, note 25, above. Barth and Niesel hold it improbable that in this passage Calvin is refuting a criticism by Castellio. Although they know of no explanation in opposition to Calvin’s view other than Castellio’s, they would not exclude the possibility that the charges here dealt with were those of some Lutheran critic. (OS III. 497, note 1.) The topic had come into discussion in England through the rejection of the article in a disputation at Cambridge by Christopher Carlisle, 1552 (Dietelmeier, *op. cit.*, pp. 205 ff.). Carlisle’s discourse was published in 1582: *Touching the Descension of Our Savior Christ Into Hell*. A year later, as we have seen, the German refugee church in London was disturbed by the similar views of one of its ministers (section 8, note 17, above). See also Herminjard, *Correspondance* IX. 158, note 3; CR XI. 675. Later Robert Parkes resumed the attack with reference to Article 3 of the Thirty-nine Articles, calling forth a reply by the Calvinist Andrew Willet (*Limbomastix*, 1607).

ft446 Ambrose, *Exposition of Luke’s Gospel* 10. 56-62 (MPL 15. 1910 ff.).

ft447 The reference is apparently to an opinion of Castellio’s: cf. section 10, note 25.

ft448 Apollinaris of Laodicea taught (ca. 360) that the divine Logos “dwelt as soul in the body received from the Virgin Mary” (Lietzmann). See C. E. Raven, *Apollinarianism*, and H. Lietzmann, *From Constantine to Julian (A History of the Early Church, Volume III)*, pp. 209 f.

ft449 The Monothelites arose in the seventh century in attempts to resolve the Monophysite schism. Whereas Monophysites taught one nature only in Christ, thus rejecting the definition of Chalcedon (451), the

Monothelites, on the basis of the compromising Ecthesis of the Emperor Heraclius (638), admitted two natures but only one energy or will ([**Θέλημα**]). Their doctrine was explicitly rejected in the Third Council of Constantinople, 681, session 13. (Mansi XI. 1054; Ayer, *Source Book*, pp. 671 f.; Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, p. 130.)

- ft450 Pannier calls attention here to the victorious note in Calvinist piety from its view of the resurrection, and quotes *Instruction et confession de foy* (1537). See OS I. 402; Fuhrmann, *Instruction in Faith*, p. 50; Pannier, *Institution* III. 383, notes *b* and *c* on p. 108.
- ft451 Section 7, above.
- ft452 The words quoted roughly correspond to separate sentences in Augustine, *John's Gospel* lxxviii. 1 (MPL 35. 1835; tr. NPNF VII. 340 f.).
- ft453 Augustine, *John's Gospel* 1. 13 (MPL 35. 1763; tr. NPNF VII. 282).
- ft454 Augustine, *Faith and the Creed* 7. 14 (MPL 40. 188; tr. LCC VI. 360 f.).
- ft455 Calvin eagerly looks for the glorious triumph of the church, but not in its earthly existence. Cf. Pannier, *Institution* II. 384, note *a* on p. 114.
- ft456 Augustine, *Faith and the Creed* 8. 15 (MPL 40. 188; tr. LGC VI. 361).
- ft457 Ambrose, *De Jacobo et Vita beata* I. vi (MPL 14. 637 f.).
- ft458 Prior to the Renaissance the Apostles' Creed was believed to have been composed by the apostles themselves. But Lorenzo Valla (ca. 1440) (*Contra calumniatores... apologia*, *Opera* 1540, p. 800) and Erasmus (*Ratio verac theologiae*, 1518, *Opera* 1540, V. 77) rejected the traditional view. See Schaff, *Creeeds* I. 23; F. Kattenbusch, *Das ApostoUsche Symbol* I. 1-15; OS III. 506 f.

CHAPTER 17

- ft459 Presumably referring to Laelius Socinus (d. 1562). See Calvin's *Responsio ad aliquot Laelii Socini quaestiones* (1555) (CR X. 1. 160-165). The questions of Socinus are not extant but can be inferred from Calvin's replies. In the first of these replies Calvin states: "It is a

common rule that things subordinate are not opposed. Therefore, there is nothing to prevent the free justification of men out of the mere mercy of God from being accompanied [*et simul interveniat*] by the merit of Christ.”

ft460 Augustine, *On the Predestination of the Saints* 15. 30,31 (MPL 44. 981 f.; tr. NPNF V. 512).

ft461 Augustine, *On the Gift of Perseverance* 24. 67 (MPL 45. 1034; tr. NPNF V. 552).

ft462 “[ἴλασμων].”

ft463 “*Placatio.*”

ft463a [κατασταθήσονται]. [^{<450519>}Romans 5:19].

ft464 “[χάρισμα].”

ft465 [ἴλαστήριον].

ft466 “[ἀντίλυτρον].”

ft467 “[ὕπὲρ χριστοῦ].”

ft468 Lombard, *Sentences* III. 18. 1 (MPL 192. 792 ff.); Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* III. 59. 3 (tr. English Dominican Fathers, *Summa Theol.* III. second number, pp. 455 f.). Bonaventura, *In sententias* III. xviii, 1,2 (*Opera omnia*, ed. College of St. Bonaventura, III. 379 f.). Cf. Augustine, *John’s Gospel* civ. 3 (MPL 35. 1903; tr. NPNF VII. 395).

ft469 In the French text the misrepresentation is charged against the Sorbonnists.