Anti Pelagian Writings part 05

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Title: NPNF1-05. St. Augustine: Anti-Pelagian Writings

Creator(s):

Schaff, Philip (1819-1893) (Editor)

Print Basis: New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1886

Rights: Public Domain

CCEL Subjects: All; Proofed; Early Church

LC Call no: BR60

LC Subjects:

Christianity

Early Christian Literature. Fathers of the Church, etc.

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THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

EDITED BY

PHILIP SCHAFF, D.D., LL.D.,

PROFESSOR IN THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK.

IN CONNECTION WITH A NUMBER OF PATRISTIC SCHOLARS OF EUROPE AND

AMERICA.

VOLUME V

ST. AUGUSTIN:

ANTI-PELAGIAN WRITINGS.

T&T CLARK

EDINBURGH

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WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING COMPANY

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

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SAINT AUGUSTIN'S ANTI-PELAGIAN WORKS.

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dedication of vol. ii. of edinburgh edition.

preface to vol. i. of edinburgh edition.

preface to vol. ii. of edinburgh edition.

"on the merits and remission of sins, and on the baptism of infants."

Three Books. Written A.D. 412.

(De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione, et de Baptismo Parvulorum.)

Extract from Augustin's "Retractations" on "De Peccatorum Meritis,"

etc.

The Treatise itself.

"on the spirit and the letter." One Book. Written A.D. 412.

(De Spiritu et Litter�.)

Extract from Augustin's "Retractations" on "De Spiritu et litter�."

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"on nature and grace." One Book. Written A.D. 415.

(De Natur� et Grati�, contra Pelagium.)

Extract from Augustin's "Retractations" on "De Natur� et Grati�."

Introductory Note.

The Treatise itself.

"on man's perfection in righteousness." One Book. Written about the end

of 415.

(De Perfectione Justici� Hominis.)

Preface to the treatise.

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"on the proceedings of pelagius." One Book. Written early in 417.

(De Gestis Pelagii.)

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"on the grace of christ, and on original sin." Two Books. Written in

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(De Grati� Christi, et de Peccato Originali, contra Pelagium.)

Extract from Augustin's "Retractations" on "De Grati� Christi," and "De

Peccato Originali."

Book I. On the Grace of Christ.

Book ii. On Original Sin.

"on marriage and concupiscence." Two Books. Written early in 419 and

420.

(De Nuptiis et Concupiscienti�.)

Extract from Augustin's "Retractations" on "De Nuptiis et

Concupiscienti�."

Advertisement to the Reader.

A Letter from Augustin to the Count Valerius.

Book I.

Preliminary Notes to the Second Book.

Book ii.

"on the soul and its origin." Four Books. Written late in 419.

(De Anim� et ejus Origine.)

Extract from Augustin's "Retractations" on "De Anim� et ejus Origine."

Advertisement to the Reader.

Book I. Addressed to Renatus.

Book ii. Addressed to the Presbyter Peter.

Book III. Addressed to Vincentius Victor.

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\*"Against two letters of the pelagians." Four Books. Written in 420 or

a Little Later.

(Contra Duas Epistolas Pelagianorum.)

Extract from Augustin's "Retractations" on "Contra Duas Epistolas

Pelagianorum."

Book I.

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"on grace and free will." One Book. Written in 426 or 427.

(De Grati� et Libero Arbitrio.)

Extract from Augustin's "Retractations" on "De Grati� et Libero

Arbitrio."

Two Letters from Augustin to Valentinus and the Monks of Adrumetum, and

forwarded with the Following Treatise.

The Treatise itself.

\*"on rebuke and grace." One Book. Written in 426 or 427.

(De Correptione et Grati�.)

Extract from Augustin's "Retractations" on "De Correptione et Grati�."

The Treatise itself.

\*"on the predestination of the saints." One Book. Written in 428 or

429.

(De Pr�destinatione Sanctorum.)

\*"on the gift of perseverance." One Book. Written in 428 or 429.

(De Dono Perseveranti�.)

Note.--The treatises marked wth an asterisk above were translated by

Dr. Wallis; the others by Dr. Holmes.

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Preface to the American Edition.

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"This volume contains all the Anti-Pelagian writings of Augustin,

collected by the Benedictine editors in their tenth volume, with the

exception only of the two long works Against Julian, and The Unfinished

Work, which have been necessarily excluded on account of their bulk.

The translation here printed is that of the English version of

Augustin's works, published by Messrs. T. and T. Clark at Edinburgh.

This translation has been carefully compared with the Latin throughout,

and corrected on every page into more accurate conformity to its sense.

But this has not so altered its character that it ceases to be the

Edinburgh translation,--bettered somewhat, but still essentially the

same. The excellent translation of the three treatises, On the Spirit

and the Letter, On Nature and Grace, and On the Proceedings of

Pelagius, published in the early summer of this year by two Oxford

scholars, Messrs. Woods and Johnston (London: David Nutt), was

unfortunately too late in reaching America to be of any service to the

editor.

"What may be called the explanatory matter of the Edinburgh

translation, has been treated here even more freely than the text. The

headings to the chapters have been added to until nearly every chapter

is now provided with a caption. The brackets which distinguished the

notes added by the translator from those which he translated from the

Benedictine editor, have been generally removed, and the notes

themselves often verbally changed, or otherwise altered. A few notes

have been added,--chiefly with the design of rendering the allusions in

the text intelligible to the uninstructed reader; and the more lengthy

of these have been enclosed in brackets, and signed with a W. The

result of all this is, that it is unsafe to hold the Edinburgh

translators too closely responsible for the unbracketed matter; but

that the American editor has not claimed as his own more than is really

his.

"In preparing an Introductory Essay for the volume, two objects have

been kept in view: to place the necessary Prolegomena to the following

treatises in the hands of the reader, and to furnish the English reader

with some illustrations of the Anti-Pelagian treatises from the other

writings of Augustin. In the former interest, a brief sketch of the

history of the Pelagian controversy and of the Pelagian and Augustinian

systems has been given, and the occasions, objects, and contents of the

several treatises have been briefly stated. In the latter, Augustin's

letters and sermons have been as copiously extracted as the limits of

space allowed. In the nature of the case, the sources have been

independently examined for these materials; but those who have written

of Pelagianism and of Augustin's part in the controversy with it, have

not been neglected. Above others, probably special obligations ought to

be acknowledged to the Benedictine preface to their tenth volume, and

to Canon Bright's Introduction to his edition of Select Anti-Pelagian

Treatises. The purpose of this essay will be subserved if it enables

the reader to attack the treatises themselves with increased interest

and readiness to assimilate and estimate their contents.

"References to the treatises in the essay, and cross-references in the

treatises themselves, have been inserted wherever they seemed

absolutely necessary; but they have been often omitted where otherwise

they would have been inserted because it has been thought that the

Index of Subjects will suffice for all the needs of comparison of

passages that are likely to arise. In the Index of Texts, an asterisk

marks some of those places where a text is fully explained; and

students of the history of Biblical Interpretation may find this

feature helpful to them. It will not be strange, if, on turning up a

few passages, they will find their notion of the power, exactness, and

devout truth of Augustin as an interpreter of Scripture very much

raised above what the current histories of interpretation have taught

them."

The above has been prepared by Dr. Warfield. I need only add that the

present volume contains the most important of the doctrinal and

polemical works of Augustin, which exerted a powerful influence upon

the Reformers of the sixteenth century and upon the Jansenists in the

seventeenth. They constitute what is popularly called the Augustinian

system, though they only represent one side of it. Enough has been said

on their merits in the Prolegomena to the first volume, and in the

valuable Introductory Essay of Dr. Warfield, who has been called to

fill the chair of systematic theology once adorned by the learning and

piety of the immortal Hodges, father and son.

The remaining three volumes will contain the exegetical writings of the

great Bishop of Hippo.

Philip Schaff.

New York, September, 1887.

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introductory essay on augustin and the pelagian controversy.

by professor benjamin b. warfield, D.D.

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A Select Bibliography of the Pelagian Controversy.

(Adapted from Dr. Schaff's Church History, vol. iii.)

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I. Three works of Pelagius, printed among the works of Jerome

(Vallarsius' edition, vol. xi.): viz., the Expositions on Paul's

Epistles, written before 410 (but somewhat, especially in Romans,

interpolated); the Epistle to Demetrias, 413; and the Confession of

Faith, 417, addressed to Innocent I. Copious fragments of other works

(On Nature, In Defence of Free Will, Chapters, Letter to Innocent) are

found quoted in Augustin's refutations; as also of certain works by

Coelestius (e.g., his Definitions, Confession to Zosimus), and of the

writings of Julian. Here also belong Cassian's Collationes Patrum, and

the works of the other semi-Pelagian writers.

II. Augustin's anti-Pelagian treatises; also his work On Heresies, 88,

428; many of his letters, as e.g., those numbered by the Benedictines,

140, 157, 178, 179, 190, 191, 193, 194; and many of his letters, as

e.g., 155, 163, 165, 168, 169, 174, 176, 293, 294, etc. Jerome's Letter

to Ctesiphon (133), and his three books of Dialogue against the

Pelagians (vol. ii. of Vallarsius); Paulus Orosius' Apology against

Pelagius; Marius Mercator's Commonitoria; Prosper of Aquitaine's

writings as also those of such late writers as Avitus, C�sarius,

Fulgentius, who bore the brunt of the semi-Pelagian controversy.

III. The collections of Acta of the councils and other public

documents, in Mansi and in the appendix to the Benedictine edition of

Augustin's anti-Pelagian writings (vol.x.).

IV. Literature.--A. Special works on the subject: Gerh. Joh. Vossius,

Hist. de Controversiis quas Pelagius ejusque reliqui� moverunt, 1655;

Henr. Norisius, Historia Pelagiana, etc., 1673; Garnier, Dissert. vii.

quibus integra continuentur Pelagianorum Hist. (in his edition of

Marius Mercator, I. 113); the Pr�fatio to vol. x. of the Benedictine

edition of Augustin's works; Corn. Jansenius, Augustinus sive doctrina

S. Augustini, etc., adversus Pelagianos et Massilienses, 1640; Jac.

Sirmond, Historia Pr�destinatiana, 1648; Tillemont, M�moires xiii.

1-1075; Ch. Wilh. Fr. Walch, Ketzerh�storie, Bd. iv. and v., 1770;

Johann Geffken, Historia semi-pelagianismi antiquissima, 1826; G. F.

Wiggers, Versuch einer pragmatischen Darstellung des Augustinismus und

Pelagianismus, 1821-1833 (Part I. dealing with Pelagianism proper, in

an E. T. by Professor Emerson, Andover, 1840); J.L. Jacobi, Die Lehre

des Pelagius, 1842; P. Schaff, The Pelagian Controversy, in the

Bibliotheca Sacra, May, 1884; Theod. Gangauf, Metaphysische Psychologie

des Heiligen Augustinus, 1852; Julius M�ller, Die Christliche Lehre von

der S�nde, 5th edition 1866 (E. T. by Urwick, Edinburgh); Do., Der

Pelagianismus, 1854; F. W�rter, Der Pelagianismus u. s. w. 1866;

Mozley, On the Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination, 1855;

Nourrisson, La philosophie de S. Augustin, 1868; Bright, Select

anti-Pelagian Treatises of St. Augustine, 1880; William Cunningham (not

to be confounded with the Scotch professor of that name), S. Austin and

his Place in the History of Christian Thought, being the Hulsean

Lectures for 1885; James Field Spalding, The Teaching and Influence of

St. Augustine, 1886; Hermann Reuter, Augustinische Studien, 1887.

B. The appropriate section in the Histories of Doctrine, as for example

those of M�nchner, Baumgarten-Crusius, Hagenbach (also E. T.), Neander

(also E. T.), Baur, Beck, Thomasius, Harnack (vol. ii. in the press);

and in English, W. Cunningham, Shedd, etc.

C. The appropriate chapters in the various larger church histories,

e.g., those of Schr�ckh, Fleury, Gieseler (also E. T.), Neander (also

E.T.), Hefele (History of the Councils, also E. T.), Kurtz (also E.

T.); and in English, Schaff, Milman, Robertson, etc.

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Introductory Essay on Augustin and the Pelagian Controversy.

by professor benjamin b. warfield, D.D.

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I. The Origin and Nature of Pelagianism.

It was inevitable that the energy of the Church in intellectually

realizing and defining its doctrines in relation to one another, should

first be directed towards the objective side of Christian truth. The

chief controversies of the first four centuries and the resulting

definitions of doctrine, concerned the nature of God and the person of

Christ; and it was not until these theological and Christological

questions were well upon their way to final settlement, that the Church

could turn its attention to the more subjective side of truth.

Meanwhile she bore in her bosom a full recognition, side by side, of

the freedom of the will, the evil consequences of the fall, and the

necessity of divine grace for salvation. Individual writers, or even

the several sections of the Church, might exhibit a tendency to throw

emphasis on one or another of the elements that made up this deposit of

faith that was the common inheritance of all. The East, for instance,

laid especial stress on free will: and the West dwelt more pointedly on

the ruin of the human race and the absolute need of God's grace for

salvation. But neither did the Eastern theologians forget the universal

sinfulness and need of redemption, or the necessity, for the

realization of that redemption, of God's gracious influences; nor did

those of the West deny the self-determination or accountability of men.

All the elements of the composite doctrine of man were everywhere

confessed; but they were variously emphasized, according to the temper

of the writers or the controversial demands of the times. Such a state

of affairs, however, was an invitation to heresy, and a prophecy of

controversy; just as the simultaneous confession of the unity of God

and the Deity of Christ, or of the Deity and the humanity of Christ,

inevitably carried in its train a series of heresies and controversies,

until the definitions of the doctrines of the Trinity and of the person

of Christ were complete. In like manner, it was inevitable that sooner

or later some one should arise who would so one-sidedly emphasize one

element or the other of the Church's teaching as to salvation, as to

throw himself into heresy, and drive the Church, through controversy

with him, into a precise definition of the doctrines of free will and

grace in their mutual relations.

This new heresiarch came, at the opening of the fifth century, in the

person of the British monk, Pelagius. The novelty of the doctrine which

he taught is repeatedly asserted by Augustin [1] , and is evident to

the historian; but it consisted not in the emphasis that he laid on

free will, but rather in the fact that, in emphasizing free will, he

denied the ruin of the race and the necessity of grace. This was not

only new in Christianity; it was even anti-Christian. Jerome, as well

as Augustin, saw this at the time, and speaks of Pelagianism as the

"heresy of Pythagoras and Zeno;" [2] and modern writers of the various

schools have more or less fully recognized it. Thus Dean Milman thinks

that "the greater part" of Pelagius' letter to Demetrias "might have

been written by an ancient academic;" [3] Dr. De Pressens� identifies

the Pelagian idea of liberty with that of Paganism; [4] and Bishop

Hefele openly declares that their fundamental doctrine, "that man is

virtuous entirely of his own merit, not of the gift of grace," seems to

him "to be a rehabilitation of the general heathen view of the world,"

and compares with it Cicero's words: [5] "For gold, lands, and all the

blessings of life, we have to return thanks to the Gods; but no one

ever returned thanks to the Gods for virtues." [6] The struggle with

Pelagianism was thus in reality a struggle for the very foundations of

Christianity; and even more dangerously than in the previous

theological and Christological controversies, here the practical

substance of Christianity was in jeopardy. The real question at issue

was whether there was any need for Christianity at all; whether by his

own power man might not attain eternal felicity; whether the function

of Christianity was to save, or only to render an eternity of happiness

more easily attainable by man. [7]

Genetically speaking, Pelagianism was the daughter of legalism; but

when it itself conceived, it brought forth an essential deism. It is

not without significance that its originators were "a certain sort of

monks;" that is, laymen of ascetic life. From this point of view the

Divine law is looked upon as a collection of separate commandments,

moral perfection as a simple complex of separate virtues, and a

distinct value as a meritorious demand on Divine approbation is

ascribed to each good work or attainment in the exercises of piety. It

was because this was essentially his point of view that Pelagius could

regard man's powers as sufficient to the attainment of sanctity,--nay,

that he could even assert it to be possible for a man to do more than

was required of him. But this involved an essentially deistic

conception of man's relations to his Maker. God had endowed His

creature with a capacity (possibilitas) or ability (posse) for action,

and it was for him to use it. Man was thus a machine, which, just

because it was well made, needed no Divine interference for its right

working; and the Creator, having once framed him, and endowed him with

the posse, henceforth leaves the velle and the esse to him.

At this point we have touched the central and formative principle of

Pelagianism. It lies in the assumption of the plenary ability of man;

his ability to do all that righteousness can demand,--to work out not

only his own salvation, but also his own perfection. This is the core

of the whole theory; and all the other postulates not only depend upon

it, but arise out of it. Both chronologically and logically this is the

root of the system.

When we first hear of Pelagius, he is already advanced in years, living

in Rome in the odour of sanctity, [8] and enjoying a well-deserved

reputation for zeal in exhorting others to a good life, which grew

especially warm against those who endeavoured to shelter themselves,

when charged with their sins, behind the weakness of nature. [9] He was

outraged by the universal excuses on such occasions,--"It is hard!" "it

is difficult!" "we are not able!" "we are men!"--"Oh, blind madness!"

he cried: "we accuse God of a twofold ignorance,--that He does not seem

to know what He has made, nor what He has commanded,--as if forgetting

the human weakness of which He is Himself the Author, He has imposed

laws on man which He cannot endure." [10] He himself tells us [11] that

it was his custom, therefore, whenever he had to speak on moral

improvement and the conduct of a holy life, to begin by pointing out

the power and quality of human nature, and by showing what it was

capable of doing. For (he says) he esteemed it of small use to exhort

men to what they deemed impossible: hope must rather be our companion,

and all longing and effort die when we despair of attaining. So

exceedingly ardent an advocate was he of man's unaided ability to do

all that God commanded, that when Augustin's noble and entirely

scriptural prayer--"Give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou

wilt"--was repeated in his hearing, he was unable to endure it; and

somewhat inconsistently contradicted it with such violence as almost to

become involved in a strife. [12] The powers of man, he held, were

gifts of God; and it was, therefore, a reproach against Him as if He

had made man ill or evil, to believe that they were insufficient for

the keeping of His law. Nay, do what we will, we cannot rid ourselves

of their sufficiency: "whether we will, or whether we will not, we have

the capacity of not sinning." [13] "I say," he says, "that man is able

to be without sin, and that he is able to keep the commandments of

God;" and this sufficiently direct statement of human ability is in

reality the hinge of his whole system.

There were three specially important corollaries which flowed from this

assertion of human ability, and Augustin himself recognized these as

the chief elements of the system. [14] It would be inexplicable on such

an assumption, if no man had ever used his ability in keeping God's

law; and Pelagius consistently asserted not only that all might be

sinless if they chose, but also that many saints, even before Christ,

had actually lived free from sin. Again, it follows from man's

inalienable ability to be free from sin, that each man comes into the

world without entailment of sin or moral weakness from the past acts of

men; and Pelagius consistently denied the whole doctrine of original

sin. And still again, it follows from the same assumption of ability

that man has no need of supernatural assistance in his striving to obey

righteousness; and Pelagius consistently denied both the need and

reality of divine grace in the sense of an inward help (and especially

of a prevenient help) to man's weakness.

It was upon this last point that the greatest stress was laid in the

controversy, and Augustin was most of all disturbed that thus God's

grace was denied and opposed. No doubt the Pelagians spoke constantly

of "grace," but they meant by this the primal endowment of man with

free will, and the subsequent aid given him in order to its proper use

by the revelation of the law and the teaching of the gospel, and, above

all, by the forgiveness of past sins in Christ and by Christ's holy

example. [15] Anything further than this external help they utterly

denied; and they denied that this external help itself was absolutely

necessary, affirming that it only rendered it easier for man to do what

otherwise he had plenary ability for doing. Chronologically, this

contention seems to have preceded the assertion which must logically

lie at its base, of the freedom of man from any taint, corruption, or

weakness due to sin. It was in order that they might deny that man

needed help, that they denied that Adam's sin had any further effect on

his posterity than might arise from his bad example. "Before the action

of his own proper will," said Pelagius plainly, "that only is in man

which God made." [16] "As we are procreated without virtue," he said,

"so also without vice." [17] In a word, "Nothing that is good and evil,

on account of which we are either praiseworthy or blameworthy, is born

with us,--it is rather done by us; for we are born with capacity for

either, but provided with neither." [18] So his later follower, Julian,

plainly asserts his "faith that God creates men obnoxious to no sin,

but full of natural innocence, and with capacity for voluntary

virtues." [19] So intrenched is free will in nature, that, according to

Julian, it is "just as complete after sins as it was before sins;" [20]

and what this means may be gathered from Pelagius' definition in the

"Confession of Faith," that he sent to Innocent: "We say that man is

always able both to sin and not to sin, so as that we may confess that

we have free will." That sin in such circumstances was so common as to

be well-nigh universal, was accounted for by the bad example of Adam

and the power of habit, the latter being simply the result of imitation

of the former. "Nothing makes well-doing so hard," writes Pelagius to

Demetrias, "as the long custom of sins which begins from childhood and

gradually brings us more and more under its power until it seems to

have in some degree the force of nature (vim natur�)." He is even ready

to allow for the force of habit in a broad way, on the world at large;

and so divides all history into progressive periods, marked by God's

(external) grace. At first the light of nature was so strong that men

by it alone could live in holiness. And it was only when men's manners

became corrupt and tarnished nature began to be insufficient for holy

living, that by God's grace the Law was given as an addition to mere

nature; and by it "the original lustre was restored to nature after its

blush had been impaired." And so again, after the habit of sinning once

more prevailed among men, and "the law became unequal to the task of

curing it," [21] Christ was given, furnishing men with forgiveness of

sins, exhortations to imitation of the example and the holy example

itself. [22] But though thus a progressive deterioration was confessed,

and such a deterioration as rendered desirable at least two

supernatural interpositions (in the giving of the law and the coming of

Christ), yet no corruption of nature, even by growing habit, is really

allowed. It was only an ever-increasing facility in imitating vice

which arose from so long a schooling in evil; and all that was needed

to rescue men from it was a new explanation of what was right (in the

law), or, at the most, the encouragement of forgiveness for what was

already done, and a holy example (in Christ) for imitation. Pelagius

still asserted our continuous possession of "a free will which is

unimpaired for sinning and for not sinning;" and Julian, that "our free

will is just as full after sins as it was before sins;" although

Augustin does not fail to twit him with a charge of inconsistency. [23]

The peculiar individualism of the Pelagian view of the world comes out

strongly in their failure to perceive the effect of habit on nature

itself. Just as they conceived of virtue as a complex of virtuous acts,

so they conceived of sin exclusively as an act, or series of

disconnected acts. They appear not to have risen above the essentially

heathen view which had no notion of holiness apart from a series of

acts of holiness, or of sin apart from a like series of sinful acts.

[24] Thus the will was isolated from its acts, and the acts from each

other, and all organic connection or continuity of life was not only

overlooked but denied. [25] After each act of the will, man stood

exactly where he did before: indeed, this conception scarcely allows

for the existence of a "man"--only a willing machine is left, at each

click of the action of which the spring regains its original position,

and is equally ready as before to reperform its function. In such a

conception there was no place for character: freedom of will was all.

Thus it was not an unnatural mistake which they made, when they forgot

the man altogether, and attributed to the faculty of free will, under

the name of "possibilitas" or "posse," the ability that belonged rather

to the man whose faculty it is, and who is properly responsible for the

use he makes of it. Here lies the essential error of their doctrine of

free will: they looked upon freedom in its form only, and not in its

matter; and, keeping man in perpetual and hopeless equilibrium between

good and evil, they permitted no growth of character and no advantage

to himself to be gained by man in his successive choices of good. It

need not surprise us that the type of thought which thus dissolved the

organism of the man into a congeries of disconnected voluntary acts,

failed to comprehend the solidarity of the race. To the Pelagian, Adam

was a man, nothing more; and it was simply unthinkable that any act of

his that left his own subsequent acts uncommitted, could entail sin and

guilt upon other men. The same alembic that dissolved the individual

into a succession of voluntary acts, could not fail to separate the

race into a heap of unconnected units. If sin, as Julian declared, is

nothing but will, and the will itself remained intact after each act,

how could the individual act of an individual will condition the acts

of men as yet unborn? By "imitation" of his act alone could (under such

a conception) other men be affected. And this carried with it the

corresponding view of man's relation to Christ. He could forgive us the

sins we had committed; He could teach us the true way; He could set us

a holy example; and He could exhort us to its imitation. But He could

not touch us to enable us to will the good, without destroying the

absolute equilibrium of the will between good and evil; and to destroy

this was to destroy its freedom, which was the crowning good of our

divinely created nature. Surely the Pelagians forgot that man was not

made for will, but will for man.

In defending their theory, as we are told by Augustin, there were five

claims that they especially made for it. [26] It allowed them to praise

as was their due, the creature that God had made, the marriage that He

had instituted, the law that He had given, the free will which was His

greatest endowment to man, and the saints who had followed His

counsels. By this they meant that they proclaimed the sinless

perfection of human nature in every man as he was brought into the

world, and opposed this to the doctrine of original sin; the purity and

holiness of marriage and the sexual appetites, and opposed this to the

doctrine of the transmission of sin; the ability of the law, as well as

and apart from the gospel, to bring men into eternal life, and opposed

this to the necessity of inner grace; the integrity of free will to

choose the good, and opposed this to the necessity of divine aid; and

the perfection of the lives of the saints, and opposed this to the

doctrine of universal sinfulness. Other questions, concerning the

origin of souls, the necessity of baptism for infants, the original

immortality of Adam, lay more on the skirts of the controversy, and

were rather consequences of their teaching than parts of it. As it was

an obvious fact that all men died, they could not admit that Adam's

death was a consequence of sin lest they should be forced to confess

that his sin had injured all men; they therefore asserted that physical

death belonged to the very nature of man, and that Adam would have died

even had he not sinned. [27] So, as it was impossible to deny that the

Church everywhere baptized infants, they could not refuse them baptism

without confessing themselves innovators in doctrine; and therefore

they contended that infants were not baptized for forgiveness of sins,

but in order to attain a higher state of salvation. Finally, they

conceived that if it was admitted that souls were directly created by

God for each birth, it could not be asserted that they came into the

world soiled by sin and under condemnation; and therefore they loudly

championed this theory of the origin of souls.

The teachings of the Pelagians, it will be readily seen, easily welded

themselves into a system, the essential and formative elements of which

were entirely new in the Christian Church; and this startlingly new

reading of man's condition, powers, and dependence for salvation, it

was, that broke like a thunderbolt upon the Western Church at the

opening of the fifth century, and forced her to reconsider, from the

foundations, her whole teaching as to man and his salvation.

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[1] On the Merits and Remission of Sins, iii. 6, 11, 12; Against Two

Letters of the Pelagians, iv. 32; Against Julian, i. 4; On Heresies,

88; and often elsewhere. Jerome found roots for the theory in Origen

and Rufinus (Letter 133, 3), but this is a different matter. Compare On

Original Sin, 25.

[2] Preface to Book iv. of his work on Jeremiah.

[3] Latin Christianity, i. 166, note 2.

[4] Trois Prem. Si�cles, ii. 375.

[5] De Natura Deorum, iii. 36.

[6] History of the Councils of the Church (E.T.), ii. 446, note 3.

[7] Compare the excellent statement in Thomasius' Dogmengeschichte, i.

483.

[8] On the Proceedings of Pelagius, 46; On the Merits and Remission of

Sins, iii. 1; Epistle 186, etc.

[9] On Nature and Grace, 1.

[10] Epistle to Demetrias, 16.

[11] Do. 2 and 19.

[12] On the Gift of Perseverance, 53.

[13] On Nature and Grace, 49.

[14] On the Gift of Perseverance, 4; Against Two Letters of the

Pelagians, iii. 24; iv. 2 sq.

[15] On the Spirit and the Letter, 4; On Nature and Grace, 53; On the

Proceedings of Pelagius, 20, 22, 38; On the Grace of Christ, 2, 3, 8,

31, 42, 45; Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, iv. 11; On Grace and

Free Will, 23-26, and often.

[16] On Original Sin, 14.

[17] On Original Sin, 14.

[18] On Original Sin, 14.

[19] The Unfinished Work, iii. 82.

[20] Do. i. 91; compare do. i. 48, 60; ii. 20. "There is nothing of sin

in man, if there is nothing of his own will." "There is no original sin

in infants at all."

[21] On Original Sin, 30.

[22] On the Grace of Christ, 43.

[23] The Unfinished Work, i. 91; compare 69.

[24] Dr. Matheson finely says (Expositor, i. ix. 21), "There is the

same difference between the Chrstian and Pagan idea of prayer as there

is between the Christian and Pagan idea of sin. Paganism knows nothing

of sin, it knows only sins: it has no conception of the principle of

evil, it comprehends only a succession of sinful acts." This is

Pelagianism too.

[25] Compare Schaff, Church History, iii. 804; and Thomasius'

Dogmengeschichte, i. 487-8.

[26] Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, iii. 25, and iv. at the

beginning.

[27] This belongs to the earlier Pelagianism; Julian was ready to admit

that death came from Adam, but not sin.

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II. The External History of the Pelagian Controversy.

Pelagius seems to have been already somewhat softened by increasing age

when he came to Rome about the opening of the fifth century. He was

also constitutionally averse to controversy; and although in his zeal

for Christian morals, and in his conviction that no man would attempt

to do what he was not persuaded he had natural power to perform, he

diligently propagated his doctrines privately, he was careful to rouse

no opposition, and was content to make what progress he could quietly

and without open discussion. His methods of work sufficiently appear in

the pages of his "Commentary on the Epistles of Saint Paul," which was

written and published during these years, and which exhibits learning

and a sober and correct but somewhat shallow exegetical skill. In this

work, he manages to give expression to all the main elements of his

system, but always introduces them indirectly, not as the true

exegesis, but by way of objections to the ordinary teaching, which were

in need of discussion. The most important fruit of his residence in

Rome was the conversion to his views of the Advocate Coelestius, who

brought the courage of youth and the argumentative training of a lawyer

to the propagation of the new teaching. It was through him that it

first broke out into public controversy, and received its first

ecclesiastical examination and rejection. Fleeing from Alaric's second

raid on Rome, the two friends landed together in Africa (A.D. 411),

whence Pelagius soon afterwards departed for Palestine, leaving the

bolder and more contentious [28] Coelestius behind at Carthage. Here

Coelestius sought ordination as a presbyter. But the Milanese deacon

Paulinus stood forward in accusation of him as a heretic, and the

matter was brought before a synod under the presidency of Bishop

Aurelius. [29]

Paulinus' charge consisted of seven items, [30] which asserted that

Coelestius taught the following heresies: that Adam was made mortal,

and would have died, whether he sinned or did not sin; that the sin of

Adam injured himself alone, not the human race; that new-born children

are in that state in which Adam was before his sin; that the whole

human race does not, on the one hand, die on account of the death or

the fall of Adam, nor, on the other, rise again on account of the

resurrection of Christ; that infants, even though not baptized, have

eternal life; that the law leads to the kingdom of heaven in the same

way as the gospel; and that, even before the Lord's coming, there had

been men without sin. Only two fragments of the proceedings of the

synod in investigating this charge have come down to us; [31] but it is

easy to see that Coelestius was contumacious, and refused to reject any

of the propositions charged against him, except the one which had

reference to the salvation of infants that die unbaptized,--the sole

one that admitted of sound defence. As touching the transmission of

sin, he would only say that it was an open question in the Church, and

that he had heard both opinions from Church dignitaries; so that the

subject needed investigation, and should not be made the ground for a

charge of heresy. The natural result was, that, on refusing to condemn

the propositions charged against him, he was himself condemned and

excommunicated by the synod. Soon afterwards he sailed to Ephesus,

where he obtained the ordination which he sought.

Meanwhile Pelagius was living quietly in Palestine, whither in the

summer of 415 a young Spanish presbyter, Paulus Orosius by name, came

with letters from Augustin to Jerome, and was invited, near the end of

July in that year, to a diocesan synod, presided over by John of

Jerusalem. There he was asked about Pelagius and Coelestius, and

proceeded to give an account of the condemnation of the latter at the

synod of Carthage, and of Augustin's literary refutation of the former.

Pelagius was sent for, and the proceedings became an examination into

his teachings. The chief matter brought up was his assertion of the

possibility of men living sinlessly in this world; but the favour of

the bishop towards him, the intemperance of Orosius, and the difficulty

of communication between the parties arising from difference of

language, combined so to clog proceedings that nothing was done; and

the whole matter, as Western in its origin, was referred to the Bishop

of Rome for examination and decision. [32]

Soon afterwards two Gallic bishops,--Heros of Arles, and Lazarus of

Aix,--who were then in Palestine, lodged a formal accusation against

Pelagius with the metropolitan, Eulogius of C�sarea; and he convened a

synod of fourteen bishops which met at Lydda (Diospolis), in December

of the same year (415), for the trial of the case. Perhaps no greater

ecclesiastical farce was ever enacted than this synod exhibited. [33]

When the time arrived, the accusers were prevented from being present

by illness, and Pelagius was confronted only by the written accusation.

This was both unskilfully drawn, and was written in Latin which the

synod did not understand. It was, therefore, not even consecutively

read, and was only head by head rendered into Greek by an interpreter.

Pelagius began by reading aloud several letters to himself from various

men of reputation in the Episcopate,--among them a friendly note from

Augustin. Thoroughly acquainted with both Latin and Greek, he was

enabled skillfully to thread every difficulty, and pass safely through

the ordeal. Jerome called this a "miserable synod," and not unjustly:

at the same time it is sufficient to vindicate the honesty and

earnestness of the bishops' intentions, that even in such

circumstances, and despite the more undeveloped opinions of the East on

the questions involved, Pelagius escaped condemnation only by a course

of most ingenious disingenuousness, and only at the cost both of

disowning Coelestius and his teachings, of which he had been the real

father, and of leading the synod to believe that he was anathematizing

the very doctrines which he was himself proclaiming. There is really no

possibility of doubting, as any one will see who reads the proceedings

of the synod, that Pelagius obtained his acquittal here either by a

"lying condemnation or a tricky interpretation" [34] of his own

teachings; and Augustin is perfectly justified in asserting that the

"heresy was not acquitted, but the man who denied the heresy," [35] and

who would himself have been anathematized had he not anathematized the

heresy.

However obtained, the acquittal of Pelagius was yet an accomplished

fact. Neither he nor his friends delayed to make the most widely

extended use of their good fortune. Pelagius himself was jubilant.

Accounts of the synodal proceedings were sent to the West, not

altogether free from uncandid alterations; and Pelagius soon put forth

a work In Defence of Free-Will, in which he triumphed in his acquittal

and "explained his explanations" at the synod. Nor were the champions

of the opposite opinion idle. As soon as the news arrived in North

Africa, and before the authentic records of the synod had reached that

region, the condemnation of Pelagius and Coelestius was re-affirmed in

two provincial synods,--one, consisting of sixty-eight bishops, met at

Carthage about midsummer of 416; and the other, consisting of about

sixty bishops, met soon afterwards at Mileve (Mila). Thus Palestine and

North Africa were arrayed against one another, and it became of great

importance to obtain the support of the Patriarchal See of Rome. Both

sides made the attempt, but fortune favored the Africans. Each of the

North-African synods sent a synodal letter to Innocent I., then Bishop

of Rome, engaging his assent to their action: to these, five bishops,

Aurelius of Carthage and Augustin among them, added a third "familiar"

letter of their own, in which they urged upon Innocent to examine into

Pelagius' teaching, and provided him with the material on which he

might base a decision. The letters reached Innocent in time for him to

take advice of his clergy, and send favorable replies on Jan. 27, 417.

In these he expressed his agreement with the African decisions,

asserted the necessity of inward grace, rejected the Pelagian theory of

infant baptism, and declared Pelagius and Coelestius excommunicated

until they should return to orthodoxy. In about six weeks more he was

dead: but Zosimus, his successor, was scarcely installed in his place

before Coelestius appeared at Rome in person to plead his cause; while

shortly afterwards letters arrived from Pelagius addressed to Innocent,

and by an artful statement of his belief and a recommendation from

Praylus, lately become bishop of Jerusalem in John's stead, attempting

to enlist Rome in his favour. Zosimus, who appears to have been a Greek

and therefore inclined to make little of the merits of this Western

controversy, went over to Coelestius at once, upon his profession of

willingness to anathematize all doctrines which the pontifical see had

condemned or should condemn; and wrote a sharp and arrogant letter to

Africa, proclaiming Coelestius "catholic," and requiring the Africans

to appear within two months at Rome to prosecute their charges, or else

to abandon them. On the arrival of Pelagius' papers, this letter was

followed by another (September, 417), in which Zosimus, with the

approbation of the clergy, declared both Pelagius and Coelestius to be

orthodox, and severely rebuked the Africans for their hasty judgment.

It is difficult to understand Zosimus' action in this matter: neither

of the confessions presented by the accused teachers ought to have

deceived him, and if he was seizing the occasion to magnify the Roman

see, his mistake was dreadful. Late in 417, or early in 418, the

African bishops assembled at Carthage, in number more than two hundred,

and replied to Zosimus that they had decided that the sentence

pronounced against Pelagius and Coelestius should remain in force until

they should unequivocally acknowledge that "we are aided by the grace

of God, through Christ, not only to know, but to do what is right, in

each single act, so that without grace we are unable to have, think,

speak, or do anything pertaining to piety." This firmness made Zosimus

waver. He answered swellingly but timidly, declaring that he had

maturely examined the matter, but it had not been his intention finally

to acquit Coelestius; and now he had left all things in the condition

in which they were before, but he claimed the right of final judgment

to himself. Matters were hastening to a conclusion, however, that would

leave him no opportunity to escape from the mortification of an entire

change of front. This letter was written on the 21st of March, 418; it

was received in Africa on the 29th of April; and on the very next day

an imperial decree was issued from Ravenna ordering Pelagius and

Coelestius to be banished from Rome, with all who held their opinions;

while on the next day, May 1, a plenary council of about two hundred

bishops met at Carthage, and in nine canons condemned all the essential

features of Pelagianism. Whether this simultaneous action was the

result of skillful arrangement, can only be conjectured: its effect was

in any case necessarily crushing. There could be no appeal from the

civil decision, and it played directly into the hands of the African

definition of the faith. The synod's nine canons part naturally into

three triads. [36] The first of these deals with the relation of

mankind to original sin, and anathematizes in turn those who assert

that physical death is a necessity of nature, and not a result of

Adam's sin; those who assert that new-born children derive nothing of

original sin from Adam to be expiated by the laver of regeneration; and

those who assert a distinction between the kingdom of heaven and

eternal life, for entrance into the former of which alone baptism is

necessary. The second triad deals with the nature of grace, and

anathematizes those who assert that grace brings only remission of past

sins, not aid in avoiding future ones; those who assert that grace aids

us not to sin, only by teaching us what is sinful, not by enabling us

to will and do what we know to be right; and those who assert that

grace only enables us to do more easily what we should without it still

be able to do. The third triad deals with the universal sinfulness of

the race, and anathematizes those who assert that the apostles' (1 John

i. 8) confession of sin is due only to their humility; those who say

that "Forgive us our trespasses" in the Lord's Prayer, is pronounced by

the saints, not for themselves, but for the sinners in their company;

and those who say that the saints use these words of themselves only

out of humility and not truly. Here we see a careful traversing of the

whole ground of the controversy, with a conscious reference to the

three chief contentions of the Pelagian teachers. [37]

The appeal to the civil power, by whomsoever made, was, of course,

indefensible, although it accorded with the opinions of the day, and

was entirely approved by Augustin. But it was the ruin of the Pelagian

cause. Zosimus found himself forced either to go into banishment with

his wards, or to desert their cause. He appears never to have had any

personal convictions on the dogmatic points involved in the

controversy, and so, all the more readily, yielded to the necessity of

the moment. He cited Coelestius to appear before a council for a new

examination; but that heresiarch consulted prudence, and withdrew from

the city. Zosimus, possibly in the effort to appear a leader in the

cause he had opposed, not only condemned and excommunicated the men

whom less than six months before he had pronounced "orthodox" after a

mature consideration of the matters involved,' but, in obedience to the

imperial decree, issued a stringent paper which condemned Pelagius and

the Pelagians, and affirmed the African doctrines as to corruption of

nature, true grace, and the necessity of baptism. To this he required

subscription from all bishops as a test of orthodoxy. Eighteen Italian

bishops refused their signature, with Julian of Eclanum, henceforth to

be the champion of the Pelagian party, at their head, and were

therefore deposed, although several of them afterwards recanted, and

were restored. In Julian, the heresy obtained an advocate, who, if

aught could have been done for its re-instatement, would surely have

proved successful. He was the boldest, the strongest, at once the most

acute and the most weighty, of all the disputants of his party. But the

ecclesiastical standing of this heresy was already determined. The

policy of Zosimus' test act was imposed by imperial authority on North

Africa in 419. The exiled bishops were driven from Constantinople by

Atticus in 424; and they are said to have been condemned at a Cilician

synod in 423, and at an Antiochian one in 424. Thus the East itself was

preparing for the final act in the drama. The exiled bishops were with

Nestorius at Constantinople in 429; and that patriarch unsuccessfully

interceded for them with Coelestine, then Bishop of Rome. The

conjunction was ominous. And at the ecumenical synod at Ephesus in 431,

we again find the "Coelestians" side by side with Nestorius, sharers in

his condemnation.

But Pelagianism did not so die as not to leave a legacy behind it.

"Remainders of Pelagianism" [38] soon showed themselves in Southern

Gaul, where a body of monastic leaders attempted to find a middle

ground on which they could stand, by allowing the Augustinian doctrine

of assisting grace, but retaining the Pelagian conception of our

self-determination to good. We first hear of them in 428, through

letters from two laymen, Prosper and Hilary, to Augustin, as men who

accepted original sin and the necessity of grace, but asserted that men

began their turning to God, and God helped their beginning. They taught

[39] that all men are sinners, and that they derive their sin from

Adam; that they can by no means save themselves, but need God's

assisting grace; and that this grace is gratuitous in the sense that

men cannot really deserve it, and yet that it is not irresistible, nor

given always without the occasion of its gift having been determined by

men's attitude towards God; so that, though not given on account of the

merits of men, it is given according to those merits, actual or

foreseen. The leader of this new movement was John Cassian, a pupil of

Chrysostom (to whom he attributed all that was good in his life and

will), and the fountain-head of Gallic monasticism; and its chief

champion at a somewhat later day was Faustus of Rhegium (Riez).

The Augustinian opposition was at first led by the vigorous

controversialist, Prosper of Aquitaine, and, in the next century, by

the wise, moderate, and good C�sarius of Arles, who brought the contest

to a conclusion in the victory of a softened Augustinianism. Already in

431 a letter was obtained from Pope Coelestine, designed to close the

controversy in favor of Augustinianism, and in 496 Pope Gelasius

condemned the writings of Faustus in the first index of forbidden

books; while, near the end of the first quarter of the sixth century,

Pope Hormisdas was appealed to for a renewed condemnation. The end was

now in sight. The famous second Synod of Orange met under the

presidency of C�sarius at that ancient town on the 3d of July, 529, and

drew up a series of moderate articles which received the ratification

of Boniface II. in the following year. In these articles there is

affirmed an anxiously guarded Augustinianism, a somewhat weakened

Augustinianism, but yet a distinctive Augustinianism; and, so far as a

formal condemnation could reach, semi-Pelagianism was suppressed by

them in the whole Western Church. But councils and popes can only

decree; and Cassian and Vincent and Faustus, despite C�sarius and

Boniface and Gregory, retained an influence among their countrymen

which never died away.

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[28] On Original Sin, 13.

[29] Early in 412, or, less probably, according to the Ballerini and

Hefele 411.

[30] See On Original Sin, 2, 3, 12; On the Proceedings of Pelagius, 23.

They are also given by Marius Mercator (Migne, xlviii. 69, 70), and the

fifth item (on the salvation of unbaptized infants) omitted,--though

apparently by an error.

[31] Preserved by Augustin, On Original Sin, 3, 4.

[32] An account of this synod is given by Orosius himself in his

Apology for the Freedom of the Will.

[33] A full account and criticism of the proceedings are given by

Augustin in his On the Proceedings of Pelagius.

[34] On Original Sin, 13, at the end.

[35] Augustin's Sermons (Migne, v. 1511).

[36] Compare Canon Bright's Introduction in his Select Anti-Pelagian

Treatises, p. xli.

[37] See above, p. xv., and the passages in Augustin cited in note 3.

[38] Prosper's phrase.

[39] Augustin gives their teaching carefully in his On the

Predestination of the Saints, 2.

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III. Augustin's Part in the Controversy.

Both by nature and by grace, Augustin was formed to be the champion of

truth in this controversy. Of a naturally philosophical temperament, he

saw into the springs of life with a vividness of mental perception to

which most men are strangers; and his own experiences in his long life

of resistance to, and then of yielding to, the drawings of God's grace,

gave him a clear apprehension of the great evangelic principle that God

seeks men, not men God, such as no sophistry could cloud. However much

his philosophy or theology might undergo change in other particulars,

there was one conviction too deeply imprinted upon his heart ever to

fade or alter,--the conviction of the ineffableness of God's grace.

Grace,--man's absolute dependence on God as the source of all

good,--this was the common, nay, the formative element, in all stages

of his doctrinal development, which was marked only by the ever growing

consistency with which he built his theology around this central

principle. Already in 397,--the year after he became bishop,--we find

him enunciating with admirable clearness all the essential elements of

his teaching, as he afterwards opposed them to Pelagius. [40] It was

inevitable, therefore, that although he was rejoiced when he heard,

some years later, of the zealous labours of this pious monk in Rome

towards stemming the tide of luxury and sin, and esteemed him for his

devout life, and loved him for his Christian activity, he yet was

deeply troubled when subsequent rumours reached him that he was

"disputing against the grace of God." He tells us over and over again,

that this was a thing no pious heart could endure; and we perceive

that, from this moment, Augustin was only biding his time, and awaiting

a fitting opportunity to join issue with the denier of the Holy of

holies of his whole, I will not say theology merely, but life.

"Although I was grieved by this," he says, "and it was told me by men

whom I believed, I yet desired to have something of such sort from his

own lips or in some book of his, so that, if I began to refute it, he

would not be able to deny it." [41] Thus he actually excuses himself

for not entering into the controversy earlier. When Pelagius came to

Africa, then, it was almost as if he had deliberately sought his fate.

But circumstances secured a lull before the storm. He visited Hippo;

but Augustin was absent, although he did not fail to inform himself on

his return that Pelagius while there had not been heard to say

"anything at all of this kind." The controversy against the Donatists

was now occupying all the energies of the African Church, and Augustin

himself was a ruling spirit in the great conference now holding at

Carthage with them. While there, he was so immersed in this business,

that, although he once or twice saw the face of Pelagius, he had no

conversation with him; and although his ears were wounded by a casual

remark which he heard, to the effect "that infants were not baptized

for remission of sins, but for consecration to Christ," he allowed

himself to pass over the matter, "because there was no opportunity to

contradict it, and those who said it were not such men as could cause

him solicitude for their influence." [42]

It appears from these facts, given us by himself, that Augustin was not

only ready for, but was looking for, the coming controversy. It can

scarcely have been a surprise to him when Paulinus accused Coelestius

(412); and, although he was not a member of the council which condemned

him, it was inevitable that he should at once take the leading part in

the consequent controversy. Coelestius and his friends did not silently

submit to the judgment that had been passed upon their teaching: they

could not openly propagate their heresy, but they were diligent in

spreading their plaints privately and by subterraneous whispers among

the people. [43] This was met by the Catholics in public sermons and

familiar colloquies held everywhere. But this wise rule was

observed,--to contend against the erroneous teachings, but to keep

silence as to the teachers, that so (as Augustin explains [44] ) "the

men might rather be brought to see and acknowledge their error through

fear of ecclesiastical judgment than be punished by the actual

judgment." Augustin was abundant in these oral labours; and many of his

sermons directed against Pelagian error have come down to us, although

it is often impossible to be sure as to their date. For one of them

(170) he took his text from Phil. iii. 6-16, "as touching the

righteousness which is by the law blameless; howbeit what things were

gain to me, those have I counted loss for Christ." He begins by asking

how the apostle could count his blameless conversation according to the

righteousness which is from the law as dung and loss, and then proceeds

to explain the purpose for which the law was given, our state by nature

and under law, and the kind of blamelessness that the law could

produce, ending by showing that man can have no righteousness except

from God, and no perfect righteousness except in heaven. Three others

(174, 175, 176) had as their text 1 Tim. i. 15, 16, and developed its

teaching, that the universal sin of the world and its helplessness in

sin constituted the necessity of the incarnation; and especially that

the necessity of Christ's grace for salvation was just as great for

infants as for adults. Much is very forcibly said in these sermons

which was afterwards incorporated in his treatises. "There was no

reason," he insists, "for the coming of Christ the Lord except to save

sinners. Take away diseases, take away wounds, and there is no reason

for medicine. If the great Physician came from heaven, a great sick man

was lying ill through the whole world. That sick man is the human race"

(175, 1). "He who says, I am not a sinner,' or I was not,' is

ungrateful to the Saviour. No one of men in that mass of mortals which

flows down from Adam, no one at all of men is not sick: no one is

healed without the grace of Christ. Why do you ask whether infants are

sick from Adam? For they, too, are brought to the church; and, if they

cannot run thither on their own feet, they run on the feet of others

that they may be healed. Mother Church accommodates others' feet to

them so that they may come, others' heart so that they may believe,

others' tongue so that they may confess; and, since they are sick by

another's sin, so when they are healed they are saved by another's

confession in their behalf. Let, then, no one buzz strange doctrines to

you. This the Church has always had, has always held; this she has

received from the faith of the elders; this she will perseveringly

guard until the end. Since the whole have no need of a physician, but

only the sick, what need, then, has the infant of Christ, if he is not

sick? If he is well, why does he seek the physician through those who

love him? If, when infants are brought, they are said to have no sin of

inheritance (peccatum propaginis) at all, and yet come to Christ, why

is it not said in the church to those that bring them, take these

innocents hence; the physician is not needed by the well, but by the

sick; Christ came not to call the just, but sinners'? It never has been

said, and it never will be said. Let each one therefore, brethren,

speak for him who cannot speak for himself. It is much the custom to

intrust the inheritance of orphans to the bishops; how much more the

grace of infants! The bishop protects the orphan lest he should be

oppressed by strangers, his parents being dead. Let him cry out more

for the infant who, he fears, will be slain by his parents. Who comes

to Christ has something in him to be healed; and he who has not, has no

reason for seeking the physician. Let parents choose one of two things:

let them either confess that there is sin to be healed in their

infants, or let them cease bringing them to the physician. This is

nothing else than to wish to bring a well person to the physician. Why

do you bring him? To be baptized. Whom? The infant. To whom do you

bring him? To Christ. To Him, of course, who came into the world?

Certainly, he says. Why did He come into the world? To save sinners.

Then he whom you bring has in him that which needs saving?" [45] So

again: "He who says that the age of infancy does not need Jesus'

salvation, says nothing else than that the Lord Christ is not Jesus to

faithful infants; i.e., to infants baptized in Christ. For what is

Jesus? Jesus means saviour. He is not Jesus to those whom He does not

save, who do not need to be saved. Now, if your hearts can bear that

Christ is not Jesus to any of the baptized, I do not know how you can

be acknowledged to have sound faith. They are infants, but they are

made members of Him. They are infants, but they receive His sacraments.

They are infants, but they become partakers of His table, so that they

may have life." [46] The preveniency of grace is explicitly asserted in

these sermons. In one he says, "Zaccheus was seen, and saw; but unless

he had been seen, he would not have seen. For whom He predestinated,

them also He called.' In order that we may see, we are seen; that we

may love, we are loved. My God, may His pity prevent me!'" [47] And in

another, at more length: "His calling has preceded you, so that you may

have a good will. Cry out, My God, let Thy mercy prevent me' (Ps.

lviii. 11). That you may be, that you may feel, that you may hear, that

you may consent, His mercy prevents you. It prevents you in all things;

and do you too prevent His judgment in something. In what, do you say?

In what? In confessing that you have all these things from God,

whatever you have of good; and from yourself whatever you have of evil"

(176, 5). "We owe therefore to Him that we are, that we are alive, that

we understand: that we are men, that we live well, that we understand

aright, we owe to Him. Nothing is ours except the sin that we have. For

what have we that we did not receive?" (1 Cor. ix. 7) (176, 6).

It was not long, however, before the controversy was driven out of the

region of sermons into that of regular treatises. The occasion for

Augustin's first appearance in a written document bearing on the

controversy, was given by certain questions which were sent to him for

answer by "the tribune and notary" Marcellinus, with whom he had

cemented his intimacy at Carthage, the previous year, when this notable

official was presiding, by the emperor's orders, over the great

conference of the catholics and Donatists. The mere fact that

Marcellinus, still at Carthage, where Coelestius had been brought to

trial, wrote to Augustin at Hippo for written answers to important

questions connected with the Pelagian heresy, speaks volumes for the

prominent position he had already assumed in the controversy. The

questions that were sent, concerned the connection of death with sin,

the transmission of sin, the possibility of a sinless life, and

especially infants' need of baptism. [48] Augustin was immersed in

abundant labours when they reached him: [49] but he could not resist

this appeal, and that the less as the Pelagian controversy had already

grown to a place of the first importance in his eyes. The result was

his treatise, On the Merits and Remission of Sins and on the Baptism of

Infants, consisting of two books, and written in 412. The first book of

this work is an argument for original sin, drawn from the universal

reign of death in the world (2-8), from the teaching of Rom. v. 12-21

(9-20), and chiefly from the baptism of infants (21-70). [50] It opens

by exploding the Pelagian contention that death is of nature, and Adam

would have died even had he not sinned, by showing that the penalty

threatened to Adam included physical death (Gen. iii. 19), and that it

is due to him that we all die (Rom. viii. 10, 11; 1 Cor. xv. 21) (2-8).

Then the Pelagian assertion that we are injured in Adam's sin only by

its bad example, which we imitate, not by any propagation from it, is

tested by an exposition of Rom. v. 12 sq. (9-20). And then the main

subject of the book is reached, and the writer sharply presses the

Pelagians with the universal and primeval fact of the baptism of

infants, as a proof of original sin (21-70). He tracks out all their

subterfuges,--showing the absurdity of the assertions that infants are

baptized for the remission of sins that they have themselves committed

since birth (22), or in order to obtain a higher stage of salvation

(23-28), or because of sin committed in some previous state of

existence (31-33). Then turning to the positive side, he shows at

length that the Scriptures teach that Christ came to save sinners, that

baptism is for the remission of sins, and that all that partake of it

are confessedly sinners (34 sq.); then he points out that John ii. 7,

8, on which the Pelagians relied, cannot be held to distinguish between

ordinary salvation and a higher form, under the name of "the kingdom of

God" (58 sq.); and he closes by showing that the very manner in which

baptism was administered, with its exorcism and exsufflation, implied

the infant to be a sinner (63), and by suggesting that the peculiar

helplessness of infancy, so different not only from the earliest age of

Adam, but also from that of many young animals, may possibly be itself

penal (64-69). The second book treats, with similar fulness, the

question of the perfection of human righteousness in this life. After

an exordium which speaks of the will and its limitations, and of the

need of God's assisting grace (1-6), the writer raises four questions.

First, whether it may be said to be possible, by God's grace, for a man

to attain a condition of entire sinlessness in this life (7). This he

answers in the affirmative. Secondly, he asks, whether any one has ever

done this, or may ever be expected to do it, and answers in the

negative on the testimony of Scripture (8-25). Thirdly, he asks why

not, and replies briefly because men are unwilling, explaining at

length what he means by this (26-33). Finally, he inquires whether any

man has ever existed, exists now, or will ever exist, entirely without

sin,--this question differing from the second inasmuch as that asked

after the attainment in this life of a state in which sinning should

cease, while this seeks a man who has never been guilty of sin,

implying the absence of original as well as of actual sin. After

answering this in the negative (34), Augustin discusses anew the

question of original sin. Here after expounding from the positive side

(35-38) the condition of man in paradise, the nature of his probation,

and of the fall and its effects both on him and his posterity, and the

kind of redemption that has been provided in the incarnation, he

proceeds to answer certain cavils (39 sq.), such as, "Why should

children of baptized people need baptism?"--"How can a sin be remitted

to the father and held against the child?"--"If physical death comes

from Adam, ought we not to be released from it on believing in

Christ?"--and concludes with an exhortation to hold fast to the exact

truth, turning neither to the right nor left,--neither saying that we

have no sin, nor surrendering ourselves to our sin (57 sq.).

After these books were completed, Augustin came into possession of

Pelagius' Commentary on Paul's Epistles, which was written while he was

living in Rome (before 410), and found it to contain some arguments

that he had not treated,--such arguments, he tells us, as he had not

imagined could be held by any one. [51] Unwilling to re-open his

finished argument, he now began a long supplementary letter to

Marcellinus, which he intended to serve as a third and concluding book

to his work. He was some time in completing this letter. He had asked

to have the former two books returned to him; and it is a curious

indication of his overworked state of mind, that he forgot what he

wanted with them: [52] he visited Carthage while the letter was in

hand, and saw Marcellinus personally; and even after his return to

Hippo, it dragged along, amid many distractions, slowly towards

completion. [53] Meanwhile, a long letter was written to Honoratus, in

which a section on the grace of the New Testament was incorporated. At

length the promised supplement was completed. It was professedly a

criticism of Pelagius' Commentary, and therefore naturally mentioned

his name; but Augustin even goes out of his way to speak as highly of

his opponent as he can, [54] --although it is apparent that his esteem

is not very high for his strength of mind, and is even less high for

the moral quality that led to his odd, oblique way of expressing his

opinions. There is even a half sarcasm in the way he speaks of

Pelagius' care and circumspection, which was certainly justified by the

event. The letter opens by stating and criticising in a very acute and

telling dialectic, the new arguments of Pelagius, which were such as

the following: "If Adam's sin injured even those who do not sin,

Christ's righteousness ought likewise to profit even those who do not

believe" (2-4); "No man can transmit what he has not; and hence, if

baptism cleanses from sin, the children of baptized parents ought to be

free from sin;" "God remits one's own sins, and can scarcely,

therefore, impute another's to us; and if the soul is created, it would

certainly be unjust to impute Adam's alien sin to it" (5). The stress

of the letter, however, is laid upon two contentions,--1. That whatever

else may be ambiguous in the Scriptures, they are perfectly clear that

no man can have eternal life except in Christ, who came to call sinners

to repentance (7); and 2. That original sin in infants has always been,

in the Church, one of the fixed facts, to be used as a basis of

argument, in order to reach the truth in other matters, and has never

itself been called in question before (10-14). At this point, the

writer returns to the second and third of the new arguments of Pelagius

mentioned above, and discusses them more fully (15-20), closing with a

recapitulation of the three great points that had been raised; viz.,

that both death and sin are derived from Adam's sin by all his

posterity; that infants need salvation, and hence baptism; and that no

man ever attains in this life such a state of holiness that he cannot

truly pray, "Forgive us our trespasses."

Augustin was now to learn that one service often entails another.

Marcellinus wrote to say that he was puzzled by what had been said in

the second book of this work, as to the possibility of man's attaining

to sinlessness in this life, while yet it was asserted that no man ever

had attained, or ever would attain, it. How, he asked, can that be said

to be possible which is, and which will remain, unexampled? In reply,

Augustin wrote, during this same year (412), and sent to his noble

friend, another work, which he calls On the Spirit and the Letter, from

the prominence which he gives in it to the words of 2 Cor. iii. 6. [55]

He did not content himself with a simple, direct answer to Marcellinus'

question, but goes at length into a profound disquisition into the

roots of the doctrine, and thus gives us, not a mere explanation of a

former contention, but a new treatise on a new subject,--the absolute

necessity of the grace of God for any good living. He begins by

explaining to Marcellinus that he has affirmed the possibility while

denying the actuality of a sinless life, on the ground that all things

are possible to God,--even the passage of a camel through the eye of a

needle, which nevertheless has never occurred (1, 2). For, in speaking

of man's perfection, we are speaking really of a work of God,--and one

which is none the less His work because it is wrought through the

instrumentality of man, and in the use of his free will. The

Scriptures, indeed, teach that no man lives without sin, but this is

only the proclamation of a matter of fact; and although it is thus

contrary to fact and Scripture to assert that men may be found that

live sinlessly, yet such an assertion would not be fatal heresy. What

is unbearable, is that men should assert it to be possible for man,

unaided by God, to attain this perfection. This is to speak against the

grace of God: it is to put in man's power what is only possible to the

almighty grace of God (3, 4). No doubt, even these men do not, in so

many words, exclude the aid of grace in perfecting human life,--they

affirm God's help; but they make it consist in His gift to man of a

perfectly free will, and in His addition to this of commandments and

teachings which make known to him what he is to seek and what to avoid,

and so enable him to direct his free will to what is good. What,

however, does such a "grace" amount to? (5). Man needs something more

than to know the right way: he needs to love it, or he will not walk in

it; and all mere teaching, which can do nothing more than bring us

knowledge of what we ought to do, is but the letter that killeth. What

we need is some inward, Spirit-given aid to the keeping of what by the

law we know ought to be kept. Mere knowledge slays: while to lead a

holy life is the gift of God,--not only because He has given us will,

nor only because He has taught us the right way, but because by the

Holy Spirit He sheds love abroad in the hearts of all those whom He has

predestinated, and will call and justify and glorify (Rom. viii. 29,

30). To prove this, he states to be the object of the present treatise;

and after investigating the meaning of 2 Cor. iii. 6, and showing that

"the letter" there means the law as a system of precepts, which reveals

sin rather than takes it away, points out the way rather than gives

strength to walk in it, and therefore slays the soul by shutting it up

under sin,--while "the Spirit" is God's Holy Ghost who is shed abroad

in our hearts to give us strength to walk aright,--he undertakes to

prove this position from the teachings of the Epistle to the Romans at

large. This contention, it will be seen, cut at the very roots of

Pelagianism: if all mere teaching slays the soul, as Paul asserts, then

all that what they called "grace" could, when alone, do, was to

destroy; and the upshot of "helping" man by simply giving him free

will, and pointing out the way to him, would be the loss of the whole

race. Not that the law is sin: Augustin teaches that it is holy and

good, and God's instrument in salvation. Not that free will is done

away: it is by free will that men are led into holiness. But the

purpose of the law (he teaches) is to make men so feel their lost

estate as to seek the help by which alone they may be saved; and will

is only then liberated to do good when grace has made it free. "What

the law of works enjoins by menace, that the law of faith secures by

faith. What the law of works does is to say, Do what I command thee;'

but by the law of faith we say to God, Give me what thou

commandest.'"(22). [56] In the midst of this argument, Augustin is led

to discuss the differentiating characteristics of the Old and New

Testaments; and he expounds at length (33-42) the passage in Jer. xxxi.

31-34, showing that, in the prophet's view, the difference between the

two covenants is that in the Old, the law is an external thing written

on stones; while in the New, it is written internally on the heart, so

that men now wish to do what the law prescribes. This writing on the

heart is nothing else, he explains, than the shedding abroad by the

Holy Spirit of love in our hearts, so that we love God's will, and

therefore freely do it. Towards the end of the treatise (50-61), he

treats in an absorbingly interesting way of the mutual relations of

free will, faith, and grace, contending that all co-exist without the

voiding of any. It is by free will that we believe; but it is only as

grace moves us, that we are able to use our free will for believing;

and it is only after we are thus led by grace to believe, that we

obtain all other goods. In prosecuting this analysis, Augustin is led

to distinguish very sharply between the faculty and use of free will

(58), as well as between ability and volition (53). Faith is an act of

the man himself; but only as he is given the power from on high to will

to believe, will he believe (57, 60).

By this work, Augustin completed, in his treatment of Pelagianism, the

circle of that triad of doctrines which he himself looked upon as most

endangered by this heresy, [57] --original sin, the imperfection of

human righteousness, the necessity of grace. In his mind, the last was

the kernel of the whole controversy; and this was a subject which he

could never approach without some heightened fervour. This accounts for

the great attractiveness of the present work,--through the whole fabric

of which runs the golden thread of the praise of God's ineffable grace.

In Canon Bright's opinion, it "perhaps, next to the Confessions,' tells

us most of the thoughts of that rich, profound, and affectionate mind'

on the soul's relations to its God." [58]

After the publication of these treatises, the controversy certainly did

not lull; but it relapsed for nearly three years again, into less

public courses. Meanwhile, Augustin was busy, among other most

distracting cares (Ep. 145, 1), still defending the grace of God, by

letters and sermons. A fair illustration of his state of mind at this

time, may be obtained from his letter to Anastasius (145), which

assuredly must have been written soon after the treatise On the Spirit

and the Letter. Throughout this letter, there are adumbrations of the

same train of thought that filled this treatise; and there is one

passage which may almost be taken as a summary of it. Augustin is so

weary of the vexatious cares that filled his life, that he is ready to

long for the everlasting rest, and yet bewails the weakness which

allowed the sweetness of external things still to insinuate itself into

his heart. Victory over, and emancipation from, this, he asserts,

"cannot, without God's grace, be achieved by the human will, which is

by no means to be called free so long as it is subject to enslaving

lusts." Then he proceeds: "The law, therefore, by teaching and

commanding what cannot be fulfilled without grace, demonstrates to man

his weakness, in order that the weakness, thus proved, may resort to

the Saviour, by whose healing the will may be able to do what it found

impossible in its weakness. So, then, the law brings us to faith, faith

obtains the Spirit in fuller measure, the Spirit sheds love abroad in

us, and love fulfils the law. For this reason the law is called a

schoolmaster, under whose threatening and severity whosoever shall call

on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.' But how shall they call on

Him in whom they have not believed?' Wherefore, that the letter without

the Spirit may not kill, the life-giving Spirit is given to those that

believe and call upon Him; but the love of God is poured out into our

hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us, so that the words of the

same apostle, Love is the fulfilling of the law,' may be realized. Thus

the law is good to him that uses it lawfully; and he uses it lawfully,

who, understanding wherefore it was given, betakes himself, under the

pressure of its threatening, to liberating grace. Whoever ungratefully

despises this grace by which the ungodly is justified, and trusts in

his own strength for fulfilling the law, being ignorant of God's

righteousness, and going about to establish his own righteousness, is

not submitting himself to the righteousness of God; and therefore the

law is made to him not a help to pardon, but the bond of guilt; not

because the law is evil, but because sin,' as it is written, works

death to such persons by that which is good.' For by the commandment,

he sins more grievously, who, by the commandment, knows how evil are

the sins which he commits." Although Augustin states clearly that this

letter is written against those "who arrogate too much to the human

will, imagining that, the law being given, the will is, of its own

strength, sufficient to fulfil the law, though not assisted by any

grace imparted by the Holy Ghost, in addition to instruction in the

law,"--he refrains still from mentioning the names of the authors of

this teaching, evidently out of a lingering tenderness in his treatment

of them. This will help us to explain the courtesy of a note which he

sent to Pelagius himself at about this time, in reply to a letter he

had received some time before from him; of which Pelagius afterwards

(at the Synod of Diospolis) made, to say the least of it, an ungenerous

use. This note, [59] Augustin tells us, was written with "tempered

praises" (wherefrom we see his lessening respect for the man), and so

as to admonish Pelagius to think rightly concerning grace,--so far as

could be done without raising the dregs of the controversy in a formal

note. This he accomplished by praying from the Lord for him, those good

things by which he might be good forever, and might live eternally with

Him who is eternal; and by asking his prayers in return, that he, too,

might be made by the Lord such as he seemed to suppose he already was.

How Augustin could really intend these prayers to be understood as an

admonition to Pelagius to look to God for what he was seeking to work

out for himself, is fully illustrated by the closing words of this

almost contemporary letter to Anastasius: "Pray, therefore, for us," he

writes, "that we may be righteous,--an attainment wholly beyond a man's

reach, unless he know righteousness, and be willing to practise it, but

one which is immediately realized when he is perfectly willing; but

this cannot be in him unless he is healed by the grace of the Spirit,

and aided to be able." The point had already been made in the

controversy, that, by the Pelagian doctrine, so much power was

attributed to the human will, that no one ought to pray, "Lead us not

into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

If he was anxious to avoid personal controversy with Pelagius himself

in the hope that he might even yet be reclaimed, Augustin was equally

anxious to teach the truth on all possible occasions. Pelagius had been

intimate, when at Rome, with the pious Paulinus, bishop of Nola; and it

was understood that there was some tendency at Nola to follow the new

teachings. It was, perhaps, as late as 414, when Augustin made reply in

a long letter, [60] to a request of Paulinus' for an exposition of

certain difficult Scriptures, which had been sent him about 410. [61]

Among them was Rom. xi. 28; and, in explaining it, Augustin did not

withhold a tolerably complete account of his doctrine of

predestination, involving the essence of his whole teaching as to

grace: "For when he had said, according to the election they are

beloved for their father's sake,' he added, for the gifts and calling

of God are without repentance.' You see that those are certainly meant

who belong to the number of the predestinated....Many indeed are

called, but few chosen;' but those who are elect, these are called

according to His purpose;' and it is beyond doubt that in them God's

foreknowledge cannot be deceived. These He foreknew and predestinated

to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the

first born among many brethren. But whom He predestinated, them He also

called.' This calling is according to His purpose,' this calling is

without repentance,'"etc., quoting Rom. v. 28-31. Then continuing, he

says, "Those are not in this vocation, who do not persevere unto the

end in the faith that worketh by love, although they walk in it a

little while....But the reason why some belong to it, and some do not,

can easily be hidden, but cannot be unjust. For is there injustice with

God? God forbid! For this belongs to those high judgments which, so to

say, terrified the wondering apostle to look upon."

Among the most remarkable of the controversial sermons that were

preached about this time, especial mention is due to two that were

delivered at Carthage, midsummer of 413. The former of these [62] was

preached on the festival of John the Baptist's birth (June 24), and

naturally took the forerunner for its subject. The nativity of John

suggesting the nativity of Christ, the preacher spoke of the marvel of

the incarnation. He who was in the beginning, and was the Word of God,

and was Himself God, and who made all things, and in whom was life,

even this one "came to us. To whom? To the worthy? Nay, but to the

unworthy! For Christ died for the ungodly, and for the unworthy, though

He was worthy. We indeed were unworthy whom He pitied; but He was

worthy who pitied us, to whom we say, For Thy pity's sake, Lord, free

us!' Not for the sake of our preceding merits, but for Thy pity's sake,

Lord, free us;' and for Thy name's sake be propitious to our sins,' not

for our merit's sake....For the merit of sins is, of course, not

reward, but punishment." He then dwelt upon the necessity of the

incarnation, and the necessity of a mediator between God and "the whole

mass of the human race alienated from Him by Adam." Then quoting 1 Cor.

iv. 7, he asserts that it is not our varying merits, but God's grace

alone, that makes us differ, and that we are all alike, great and

small, old and young, saved by one and the same Saviour. "What then,

some one says," he continues, "even the infant needs a liberator?

Certainly he needs one. And the witness to it is the mother that

faithfully runs to church with the child to be baptized. The witness is

Mother Church herself, who receives the child for washing, and either

for dismissing him [from this life] freed, or nurturing him in

piety....Last of all, the tears of his own misery are witness in the

child himself....Recognize the misery, extend the help. Let all put on

bowels of mercy. By as much as they cannot speak for themselves, by so

much more pityingly let us speak for the little ones,"--and then

follows a passage calling on the Church to take the grace of infants in

their charge as orphans committed to their care, which is in substance

repeated from a former sermon. [63] The speaker proceeded to quote

Matt. i. 21, and apply it. If Jesus came to save from sins, and infants

are brought to Him, it is to confess that they, too, are sinners. Then,

shall they be withheld from baptism? "Certainly, if the child could

speak for himself, he would repel the voice of opposition, and cry out,

Give me Christ's life! In Adam I died: give me Christ's life; in whose

sight I am not clean, even if I am an infant whose life has been but

one day in the earth.'" "No way can be found," adds the preacher, "of

coming into the life of this world except by Adam; no way can be found

of escaping punishment in the next world except by Christ. Why do you

shut up the one door?" Even John the Baptist himself was born in sin;

and absolutely no one can be found who was born apart from sin, until

you find one who was born apart from Adam. "By one man sin entered into

the world, and by sin, death; and so it passed through upon all men.'

If these were my words, could this sentiment be expressed more

expressly, more clearly, more fully?"

Three days afterwards, [64] on the invitation of the Bishop of

Carthage, Augustin preached a sermon professedly directed against the

Pelagians, [65] which takes up the threads hinted at in the former

discourse, and develops a full polemic with reference to the baptism of

infants. He began, formally enough, with the determination of the

question in dispute. The Pelagians concede that infants should be

baptized. The only question is, for what are they baptized? We say that

they would not otherwise have salvation and eternal life; but they say

it is not for salvation, not for eternal life, but for the kingdom of

God...."The child, they say, although not baptized, by the desert of

his innocence, in that he has no sin at all, either actual or original,

either from himself or contracted from Adam, necessarily has salvation

and eternal life even if not baptized; but is to be baptized for this

reason,--that he may enter into the kingdom of God, i.e., into the

kingdom of heaven." He then shows that there is no eternal life outside

the kingdom of heaven, no middle place between the right and left hand

of the judge at the last day, and that, therefore, to exclude one from

the kingdom of God is to consign him to the pains of eternal fire;

while, on the other side, no one ascends into heaven unless he has been

made a member of Christ, and this can only be by faith,--which, in an

infant's case, is professed by another in his stead. He then treats, at

length, some of the puzzling questions with which the Pelagians were

wont to try the catholics; and then breaking off suddenly, he took a

volume in his hands. "I ask you," he said, "to bear with me a little: I

will read somewhat. It is St. Cyprian whom I hold in my hand, the

ancient bishop of this see. What he thought of the baptism of

infants,--nay, what he has shown that the Church always thought,--learn

in brief. For it is not enough for them to dispute and argue, I know

not what impious novelties: they even try to charge us with asserting

something novel. It is on this account that I read here St. Cyprian, in

order that you may perceive that the orthodox understanding and

catholic sense reside in the words which I have been just now speaking

to you. He was asked whether an infant ought to be baptized before he

was eight days old, seeing that by the ancient law no infant was

allowed to be circumcised unless he was eight days old. A question

arose from this as to the day of baptism,--for concerning the origin of

sin there was no question; and therefore from this thing of which there

was no question, that question that had arisen was settled." And then

he read to them the passage out of Cyprian's letter to Fidus, which

declared that he, and all the council with him, unanimously thought

that infants should be baptized at the earliest possible age, lest they

should die in their inherited sin, and so pass into eternal punishment.

[66] The sermon closed with a tender warning to the teachers of these

strange doctrines: he might call them heretics with truth, but he will

not; let the Church seek still their salvation, and not mourn them as

dead; let them be exhorted as friends, not striven with as enemies.

"They disparage us," he says, "we will bear it; let them not disparage

the rule [of faith], let them not disparage the truth; let them not

contradict the Church, which labours every day for the remission of

infants' original sin. This thing is settled. The errant disputer may

be borne with in other questions that have not been thoroughly

canvassed, that are not yet settled by the full authority of the

Church,--their error should be borne with: it ought not to extend so

far, that they endeavour to shake even the very foundation of the

Church!" He hints that although the patience hitherto exhibited towards

them is "perhaps not blameworthy," yet patience may cease to be a

virtue, and become culpable negligence: in the mean time, however, he

begs that the catholics should continue amicable, fraternal, placid,

loving, long suffering.

Augustin himself gives us a view of the progress of the controversy at

this time in a letter written in 414. [67] The Pelagians had everywhere

scattered the seeds of their new error; and although some, by his

ministry and that of his brother workers, had, "by God's mercy," been

cured of their pest, yet they still existed in Africa, especially about

Carthage, and were everywhere propagating their opinions in

subterraneous whispers, for fear of the judgment of the Church.

Wherever they were not refuted, they were seducing others to their

following; and they were so spread abroad that he did not know where

they would break out next. Nevertheless, he was still unwilling to

brand them as heretics, and was more desirous of healing them as sick

members of the Church than of cutting them off finally as too diseased

for cure. Jerome also tells us that the poison was spreading in both

the East and the West, and mentions particularly as seats where it

showed itself the islands of Rhodes and Sicily. Of Rhodes we know

nothing further; but from Sicily an appeal came to Augustin in 414 from

one Hilary, [68] setting forth that there were certain Christians about

Syracuse who taught strange doctrines, and beseeching Augustin to help

him in dealing with them. The doctrines were enumerated as follows:

"They say (1) that man can be without sin, (2) and can easily keep the

commandments of God if he will; (3) that an unbaptized infant, if he is

cut off by death, cannot justly perish, since he is born without sin;

(4) that a rich man that remains in his riches cannot enter the kingdom

of God, except he sell all that he has;...(5) that we ought not to

swear at all;" (6) and, apparently, that the Church is to be in this

world without spot or blemish. Augustin suspected that these Sicilian

disturbances were in some way the work of Coelestius, and therefore in

his answer [69] informs his correspondent of what had been done at the

Synod of Carthage (412) against him. The long letter that he sent back

follows the inquiries in the order they were put by Hilary. To the

first he replies, in substance, as he had treated the same matter in

the second book of the treatise, On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins,

that it was opposed to Scripture, but was less a heresy than the wholly

unbearable opinion that this state of sinlessness could be attained

without God's help. "But when they say that free will suffices to man

for fulfilling the precepts of the Lord, even though unaided to good

works by God's grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit, it is to be

altogether anathematized and detested with all execrations. For those

who assert this are inwardly alien from God's grace, because being

ignorant of God's righteousness, like the Jews of whom the apostle

speaks, and wishing to establish their own, they are not subject to

God's righteousness, since there is no fulfilment of the law except

love; and of course the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, not

by ourselves, nor by the force of our own will, but by the Holy Ghost

who is given to us." Dealing next with the second point, he drifts into

the matter he had more fully developed in his work On the Spirit and

the Letter. "Free will avails for God's works," he says, "if it be

divinely aided, and this comes by humble seeking and doing; but when

deserted by divine aid, no matter how excellent may be its knowledge of

the law, it will by no means possess solidity of righteousness, but

only the inflation of ungodly pride and deadly arrogance. This is

taught us by that same Lord's Prayer; for it would be an empty thing

for us to ask God Lead us not into temptation,' if the matter was so

placed in our power that we would avail for fulfilling it without any

aid from Him. For this free will is free in proportion as it is sound,

but it is sound in proportion as it is subject to divine pity and

grace. For it faithfully prays, saying, Direct my ways according to Thy

word, and let no iniquity reign over me.' For how is that free over

which iniquity reigns? But see who it is that is invoked by it, in

order that it may not reign over it. For it says not, Direct my ways

according to free will because no iniquity shall rule over me,' but

Direct my ways according to Thy word, and let no iniquity rule over

me.' It is a prayer, not a promise; it is a confession, not a

profession; it is a wish for full freedom, not a boast of personal

power. For it is not every one who confides in his own power,' but

every one who calls on the name of God, that shall be saved.' But how

shall they call upon Him,' he says, in whom they have not believed?'

Accordingly, then, they who rightly believe, believe in order to call

on Him in whom they have believed, and to avail for doing what they

receive in the precepts of the law; since what the law commands, faith

prays for." "God, therefore, commands continence, and gives continence;

He commands by the law, He gives by grace; He commands by the letter,

He gives by the spirit: for the law without grace makes the

transgression to abound, and the letter without the spirit kills. He

commands for this reason,--that we who have endeavoured to do what He

commands, and are worn out in our weakness under the law, may know how

to ask for the aid of grace; and if we have been able to do any good

work, that we may not be ungrateful to Him who aids us." The answer to

the third point traverses the ground that was fully covered in the

first book of the treatise On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins,

beginning by opposing the Pelagians to Paul in Rom. v. 12-19: "But when

they say that an infant, cut off by death, unbaptized, cannot perish

since he is born without sin,--it is not this that the apostle says;

and I think that it is better to believe the apostle than them." The

fourth and fifth questions were new in this controversy; and it is not

certain that they belong properly to it, though the legalistic

asceticism of the Pelagian leaders may well have given rise to a demand

on all Christians to sell what they had, and give to the poor. This one

of the points, Augustin treats at length, pointing out that many of the

saints of old were rich, and that the Lord and His apostles always so

speak that their counsels avail to the right use, not the destruction,

of wealth. Christians ought so to hold their wealth that they are not

held by it, and by no means prefer it to Christ. Equal good sense and

mildness are shown in his treatment of the question concerning oaths,

which he points out were used by the Lord and His apostles, but advises

to be used as little as possible lest by the custom of frequent oaths

we learn to swear lightly. The question as to the Church, he passes

over as having been sufficiently treated in the course of his previous

remarks.

To the number of those who had been rescued from Pelagianism by his

efforts, Augustin was now to have the pleasure of adding two others, in

whom he seems to have taken much delight. Timasius and James were two

young men of honorable birth and liberal education, who had, by the

exhortation of Pelagius, been moved to give up the hope that they had

in this world, and enter upon the service of God in an ascetic life.

[70] Naturally, they had turned to him for instruction, and had

received a book to which they had given their study. They met somewhere

with some of Augustin's writings, however, and were deeply affected by

what he said as to grace, and now began to see that the teaching of

Pelagius opposed the grace of God by which man becomes a Christian.

They gave their book, therefore, to Augustin, saying that it was

Pelagius', and asking him for Pelagius' sake, and for the sake of the

truth, to answer it. This was done, and the resulting book, On Nature

and Grace, sent to the young men, who returned a letter of thanks [71]

in which they professed their conversion from their error. In this

book, too, which was written in 415, Augustin refrained from mentioning

Pelagius by name, [72] feeling it better to spare the man while not

sparing his writings. But he tells us, that, on reading the book of

Pelagius to which it was an answer, it became clear to him beyond any

doubt that his teaching was distinctly anti-Christian; [73] and when

speaking of his own book privately to a friend, he allows himself to

call it "a considerable book against the heresy of Pelagius, which he

had been constrained to write by some brethren whom he had persuaded to

adopt his fatal error, denying the grace of Christ." [74] Thus his

attitude towards the persons of the new teachers was becoming ever more

and more strained, in despite of his full recognition of the excellent

motives that might lie behind their "zeal not according to knowledge."

This treatise opens with a recognition of the zeal of Pelagius, which,

as it burns most ardently against those who, when reproved for sin,

take refuge in censuring their nature, Augustin compares with the

heathen view as expressed in Sallust's saying, "the human race falsely

complains of its own nature," [75] and which he charges with not being

according to knowledge, and proposes to oppose by an equal zeal against

all attempts to render the cross of Christ of none effect. He then

gives a brief but excellent summary of the more important features of

the catholic doctrine concerning nature and grace (2-7). Opening the

work of Pelagius, which had been placed in his hands, he examines his

doctrine of sin, its nature and effects. Pelagius, he points out, draws

a distinction, sound enough in itself, between what is "possible" and

what is "actual," but applies it unsoundly to sin, when he says that

every man has the possibility of being without sin (8-9), and therefore

without condemnation. Not so, says Augustin; an infant who dies

unbaptized has no possibility of salvation open to him; and the man who

has lived and died in a land where it was impossible for him to hear

the name of Christ, has had no possibility open to him of becoming

righteous by nature and free will. If this be not so, Christ is dead in

vain, since all men then might have accomplished their salvation, even

if Christ had never died (10). Pelagius, moreover, he shows, exhibits a

tendency to deny the sinful character of all sins that are impossible

to avoid, and so treats of sins of ignorance as to show that he excuses

them (13-19). When he argues that no sin, because it is not a

substance, can change nature, which is a substance, Augustin replies

that this destroys the Saviour's work,--for how can He save from sins

if sins do not corrupt? And, again, if an act cannot injure a

substance, how can abstention from food, which is a mere act, kill the

body? In the same way sin is not a substance; but God is a

substance,--yea, the height of substance, and only true sustenance of

the reasonable creature; and the consequence of departure from Him is

to the soul what refusal of food is to the body (22). To Pelagius'

assertion that sin cannot be punished by more sin, Augustin replies

that the apostle thinks differently (Rom. i. 21-31). Then putting his

finger on the main point in controversy, he quotes the Scriptures as

declaring the present condition of man to be that of spiritual death.

"The truth then designates as dead those whom this man declares to be

unable to be damaged or corrupted by sin,--because, forsooth, he has

discovered sin to be no substance!" (25). It was by free will that man

passed into this state of death; but a dead man needs something else to

revive him,--he needs nothing less than a Vivifier. But of vivifying

grace, Pelagius knew nothing; and by knowing nothing of a Vivifier, he

knows nothing of a Saviour; but rather by making nature of itself able

to be sinless, he glorifies the Creator at the expense of the Saviour

(39). Next is examined Pelagius' contention that many saints are

enumerated in the Scriptures as having lived sinlessly in this world.

While declining to discuss the question of fact as to the Virgin Mary

(42), Augustin opposes to the rest the declaration of John in 1 John i.

8, as final, but still pauses to explain why the Scriptures do not

mention the sins of all, and to contend that all who ever were saved

under the Old Testament or the New, were saved by the sacrificial death

of Christ, and by faith in Him (40-50). Thus we are brought, as

Augustin says, to the core of the question, which concerns, not the

fact of sinlessness in any man, but man's ability to be sinless. This

ability Pelagius affirms of all men, and Augustin denies of all "unless

they are justified by the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ

and Him crucified" (51). Thus, the whole discussion is about grace,

which Pelagius does not admit in any true sense, but places only in the

nature that God has made (52). We are next invited to attend to another

distinction of Pelagius', in which he discriminates sharply between the

nature that God has made, the crown of which is free will, and the use

that man makes of this free will. The endowment of free will is a

"capacity;" it is, because given by God in our making, a necessity of

nature, and not in man's power to have or not have. It is the right use

of it only, which man has in his power. This analysis, Pelagius

illustrates at length, by appealing to the difference between the

possession and use of the various bodily senses. The ability to see,

for instance, he says, is a necessity of our nature; we do not make it,

we cannot help having it; it is ours only to use it. Augustin

criticises this presentation of the matter with great sharpness

(although he is not averse to the analysis itself),--showing the

inapplicability of the illustrations used,--for, he asks, is it not

possible for us to blind ourselves, and so no longer have the ability

to see? and would not many a man like to control the "use" of his

"capacity" to hear when a screechy saw is in the neighbourhood? (55);

and as well the falsity of the contention illustrated, since Pelagius

has ignored the fall, and, even were that not so, has so ignored the

need of God's aid for all good, in any state of being, as to deny it

(56). Moreover, it is altogether a fallacy, Augustin argues, to contend

that men have the "ability" to make every use we can conceive of our

faculties. We cannot wish for unhappiness; God cannot deny Himself

(57); and just so, in a corrupt nature, the mere possession of a

faculty of choice does not imply the ability to use that faculty for

not sinning. "Of a man, indeed, who has his legs strong and sound, it

may be said admissibly enough, whether he will or not, he has the

capacity of walking;' but if his legs be broken, however much he may

wish, he has not the capacity.' The nature of which our author speaks

is corrupted" (57). What, then, can he mean by saying that, whether we

will or not, we have the capacity of not sinning,--a statement so

opposite to Paul's in Rom. vii. 15? Some space is next given to an

attempted rebuttal by Pelagius of the testimony of Gal. v. 17, on the

ground that the "flesh" there does not refer to the baptized (60-70);

and then the passages are examined which Pelagius had quoted against

Augustin out of earlier writers,--Lactantius (71), Hilary (72), Ambrose

(75), John of Constantinople (76), Xystus,--a blunder of Pelagius, who

quoted from a Pythagorean philosopher, mistaking him for the Roman

bishop Sixtus (57), Jerome (78), and Augustin himself (80). All these

writers, Augustin shows, admitted the universal sinfulness of man,--and

especially he himself had confessed the necessity of grace in the

immediate context of the passage quoted by Pelagius. The treatise

closes (82 sq.) with a noble panegyric on that love which God sheds

abroad in the heart, by the Holy Ghost, and by which alone we can be

made keepers of the law.

The treatise On Nature and Grace was as yet unfinished, when the

over-busy [76] scriptorium at Hippo was invaded by another young man

seeking instruction. This time it was a zealous young presbyter from

the remotest part of Spain, "from the shore of the ocean,"--Paulus

Orosius by name, whose pious soul had been afflicted with grievous

wounds by the Priscillianist and Origenist heresies that had broken out

in his country, and who had come with eager haste to Augustin, on

hearing that he could get from him the instruction which he needed for

confuting them. Augustin seems to have given him his heart at once;

and, feeling too little informed as to the special heresies which he

wished to be prepared to controvert, persuaded him to go on to

Palestine to be taught by Jerome, and gave him introductions which

described him as one "who is in the bond of catholic peace a brother,

in point of age a son, and in honour a fellow-presbyter,--a man of

quick understanding, ready speech, and burning zeal." His departure to

Palestine gave Augustin an opportunity to consult with Jerome on the

one point that had been raised in the Pelagian controversy on which he

had not been able to see light. The Pelagians had early argued, [77]

that, if souls are created anew for men at their birth, it would be

unjust in God to impute Adam's sin to them. And Augustin found himself

unable either to prove that souls are transmitted (traduced, as the

phrase is), or to show that it would not involve God in injustice to

make a soul only to make it subject to a sin committed by another.

Jerome had already put himself on record as a believer in both original

sin and the creation of souls at the time of birth. Augustin feared the

logical consequences of this assertion, and yet was unable to refute

it. He therefore seized this occasion to send a long treatise on the

origin of the soul to his friend, with the request that he would

consider the subject anew, and answer his doubts. [78] In this treatise

he stated that he was fully persuaded that the soul had fallen into

sin, but by no fault of God or of nature, but of its own free will; and

asked when could the soul of an infant have contracted the guilt,

which, unless the grace of Christ should come to its rescue by baptism,

would involve it in condemnation, if God (as Jerome held, and as he was

willing to hold with him, if this difficulty could be cleared up) makes

each soul for each individual at the time of birth? He professed

himself embarrassed on sucha supposition by the penal sufferings of

infants, the pains they endured in this life, and much more the danger

they are in of eternal damnation, into which they actually go unless

saved by baptism. God is good, just, omnipotent: how, then, can we

account for the fact that "in Adam all die," if souls are created

afresh for each birth? "If new souls are made for men," he affirms,

"individually at their birth, I do not see, on the one hand, that they

could have any sin while yet in infancy; nor do I believe, on the other

hand, that God condemns any soul which He sees to have no sin;" "and

yet, whoever says that those children who depart out of this life

without partaking of the sacrament of baptism, shall be made alive in

Christ, certainly contradicts the apostolic declaration," and "he that

is not made alive in Christ must necessarily remain under the

condemnation of which the apostle says that by the offence of one,

judgment came upon all men to condemnation." "Wherefore," he adds to

his correspondent, "if that opinion of yours does not contradict this

firmly grounded article of faith, let it be mine also; but if it does,

let it no longer be yours." [79] So far as obtaining light was

concerned, Augustin might have spared himself the pain of this

composition: Jerome simply answered [80] that he had no leisure to

reply to the questions submitted to him. But Orosius' mission to

Palestine was big with consequences. Once there, he became the accuser

of Pelagius before John of Jerusalem, and the occasion, at least, of

the trials of Pelagius in Palestine during the summer and winter of 415

which issued so disastrously, and ushered in a new phase of the

conflict.

Meanwhile, however, Augustin was ignorant of what was going on in the

East, and had his mind directed again to Sicily. About a year had

passed since he had sent thither his long letter to Hilary. Now his

conjecture that Coelestius was in some way at the bottom of the

Sicilian outbreak, received confirmation from a paper which certain

catholic brethren brought out of Sicily, and which was handed to

Augustin by two exiled Spanish bishops, Eutropius and Paul. This paper

bore the title, Definitions Ascribed to Coelestius, and presented

internal evidence, in style and thought, of being correctly so

ascribed. [81] It consisted of three parts, in the first of which were

collected a series of brief and compressed "definitions," or

"ratiocinations" as Augustin calls them, in which the author tries to

place the catholics in a logical dilemma, and to force them to admit

that man can live in this world without sin. In the second part, he

adduced certain passages of Scripture in defence of his doctrine. In

the third part, he undertook to deal with the texts that had been

quoted against his contention, not, however, by examining into their

meaning, or seeking to explain them in the sense of his theory, but

simply by matching them with others which he thought made for him.

Augustin at once (about the end of 415) wrote a treatise in answer to

this, which bears the title of On the Perfection of Man's

Righteousness. The distribution of the matter in this work follows that

of the treatise to which it is an answer. First of all (1-16), the

"ratiocinations" are taken up one by one and briefly answered. As they

all concern sin, and have for their object to prove that man cannot be

accounted a sinner unless he is able, in his own power, wholly to avoid

sin,--that is, to prove that a plenary natural ability is the necessary

basis of responsibility,--Augustin argues per contra that man can

entail a sinfulness on himself for which and for the deeds of which he

remains responsible, though he is no longer able to avoid sin; thus

admitting that for the race, plenary ability must stand at the root of

sinfulness. Next (17-22) he discusses the passages which Coelestius had

advanced in defence of his teachings, viz., (1) passages in which God

commands men to be without sin, which Augustin meets by saying that the

point is, whether these commands are to be fulfilled without God's aid,

in the body of this death, while absent from the Lord (17-20); and (2)

passages in which God declares that His commandments are not grievous,

which Augustin meets by explaining that all God's commandments are

fulfilled only by Love, which finds nothing grievous; and that this

love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, without whom we

have only fear, to which the commandments are not only grievous, but

impossible. Lastly, Augustin patiently follows Coelestius through his

odd "oppositions of texts," explaining carefully all that he had

adduced, in an orthodox sense (23-42). In closing, he takes up

Coelestius' statement, that "it is quite possible for man not to sin

even in word, if God so will," pointing out how he avoids saying "if

God give him His help," and then proceeds to distinguish carefully

between the differing assertions of sinlessness that may be made. To

say that any man ever lived, or will live, without needing forgiveness,

is to contradict Rom. v. 12, and must imply that he does not need a

Saviour, against Matt. ix. 12, 13. To say that after his sins have been

forgiven, any one has ever remained without sin, contradicts 1 John i.

8 and Matt. vi. 12. Yet, if God's help be allowed, this contention is

not so wicked as the other; and the great heresy is to deny the

necessity of God's constant grace, for which we pray when we say, "Lead

us not into temptation."

Tidings were now (416) beginning to reach Africa of what was doing in

the East. There was diligently circulated everywhere, and came into

Augustin's hands, an epistle of Pelagius' own "filled with vanity," in

which he boasted that fourteen bishops had approved his assertion that

"man can live without sin, and easily keep the commandments if he

wishes," and had thus "shut the mouth of opposition in confusion," and

"broken up the whole band of wicked conspirators against him." Soon

afterwards a copy of an "apologetical paper," in which Pelagius used

the authority of the Palestinian bishops against his adversaries, not

altogether without disingenuousness, was sent by him to Augustin

through the hands of a common acquaintance, Charus by name. It was not

accompanied, however, by any letter from Pelagius; and Augustin wisely

refrained from making public use of it. Towards midsummer Orosius came

with more authentic information, and bearing letters from Jerome and

Heros and Lazarus. It was apparently before his coming that a

controversial sermon was preached, only a fragment of which has come

down to us. [82] So far as we can learn from the extant part, its

subject seems to have been the relation of prayer to Pelagianism; and

what we have, opens with a striking anecdote: "When these two

petitions--Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors,' and

Lead us not into temptation'--are objected to the Pelagians, what do

you think they reply? I was horrified, my brethren, when I heard it. I

did not, indeed, hear it with my own ears; but my holy brother and

fellow-bishop Urbanus, who used to be presbyter here, and now is bishop

of Sicca," when he was in Rome, and was arguing with one who held these

opinions, pressed him with the weight of the Lord's Prayer, and "what

do you think he replied to him? We ask God,' he said, not to lead us

into temptation, lest we should suffer something that is not in our

power,--lest I should be thrown from my horse; lest I should break my

leg; lest a robber should slay me, and the like. For these things,' he

said, are not in my power; but for overcoming the temptations of my

sins, I both have ability if I wish to use it, and am not able to

receive God's help.' [83] You see, brethren," the good bishop adds,

"how malignant this heresy is: you see how it horrifies all of you.

Have a care that you be not taken by it." He then presses the general

doctrine of prayer as proving that all good things come from God, whose

aid is always necessary to us, and is always attainable by prayer; and

closes as follows: "Consider, then, these things, my brethren, when any

one comes to you and says to you, What, then, are we to do if we have

nothing in our power, unless God gives all things? God will not then

crown us, but He will crown Himself.' You already see that this comes

from that vein: it is a vein, but it has poison in it; it is stricken

by the serpent; it is not sound. For what Satan is doing to-day is

seeking to cast out from the Church by the poison of heretics, just as

he once cast out from Paradise by the poison of the serpent. Let no one

tell you that this one was acquitted by the bishops: there was an

acquittal, but it was his confession, so to speak, his amendment, that

was acquitted. For what he said before the bishops seemed catholic; but

what he wrote in his books, the bishops who pronounced the acquittal

were ignorant of. And perchance he was really convinced and amended.

For we ought not to despair of the man who perchance preferred to be

united to the catholic faith, and fled to its grace and aid. Perchance

this was what happened. But, in any event, it was not the heresy that

was acquitted, but the man who denied the heresy." [84]

The coming of Orosius must have dispelled any lingering hope that the

meaning of the council's finding was that Pelagius had really recanted.

Councils were immediately assembled at Carthage and Mileve, and the

documents which Orosius had brought were read before them. We know

nothing of their proceedings except what we can gather from the letters

which they sent [85] to Innocent at Rome, seeking his aid in their

condemnation of the heresy now so nearly approved in Palestine. To

these two official letters, Augustin, in company with four other

bishops, added a third private letter, [86] in which they took care

that Innocent should be informed on all the points necessary to his

decision. This important letter begins almost abruptly with a

characterization of Pelagianism as inimical to the grace of God, and

has grace for its subject throughout. It accounts for the action of the

Palestinian synod, as growing out of a misunderstanding of Pelagius'

words, in which he seemed to acknowledge grace, which these catholic

bishops understood naturally to mean that grace of which they read in

the Scriptures, and which they were accustomed to preach to their

people,--the grace by which we are justified from iniquity, and saved

from weakness; while he meant nothing more than that by which we are

given free will at our creation. "For if these bishops had understood

that he meant only that grace which we have in common with the ungodly

and with all, along with whom we are men, while he denied that by which

we are Christians and the sons of God, they not only could not have

patiently listened to him,--they could not even have borne him before

their eyes." The letter then proceeds to point out the difference

between grace and natural gifts, and between grace and the law, and to

trace out Pelagius' meaning when he speaks of grace, and when he

contends that man can be sinless without any really inward aid. It

suggests that Pelagius be sent for, and thoroughly examined by

Innocent, or that he should be examined by letter or in his writings;

and that he be not cleared until he unequivocally confessed the grace

of God in the catholic sense, and anathematized the false teachings in

the books attributed to him. The book of Pelagius which was answered in

the treatise On Nature and Grace was enclosed, with this letter, with

the most important passages marked: and it was suggested that more was

involved in the matter than the fate of one single man, Pelagius, who,

perhaps, was already brought to a better mind; the fate of multitudes

already led astray, or yet to be deceived by these false views, was in

danger.

At about this same time (417), the tireless bishop sent a short letter

[87] to a Hilary, who seems to be Hilary of Norbonne, which is

interesting from its undertaking to convey a characterization of

Pelagianism to one who was as yet ignorant of it. It thus brings out

what Augustin conceived to be its essential features. "An effort has

been made," we read, "to raise a certain new heresy, inimical to the

grace of Christ, against the Church of Christ. It is not yet openly

separated from the Church. It is the heresy of men who dare to

attribute so much power to human weakness that they contend that this

only belongs to God's grace,--that we are created with free will and

the possibility of not sinning, and that we receive God's commandments

which are to be fulfilled by us; but, for keeping and fulfilling these

commandments, we do not need any divine aid. No doubt, the remission of

sins is necessary for us; for we have no power to right what we have

done wrong in the past. But for avoiding and overcoming sins in the

future, for conquering all temptations with virtue, the human will is

sufficient by its natural capacity without any aid of God's grace. And

neither do infants need the grace of the Saviour, so as to be liberated

by it through His baptism from perdition, seeing that they have

contracted no contagion of damnation from Adam." [88] He engages Hilary

in the destruction of this heresy, which ought to be "concordantly

condemned and anathematized by all who have hope in Christ," as a

"pestiferous impiety," and excuses himself for not undertaking its full

refutation in a brief letter. A much more important letter was sent

off, at about the same time, to John of Jerusalem, who had conducted

the first Palestinian examination of Pelagius, and had borne a

prominent part in the synod at Diospolis. He sent with it a copy of

Pelagius' book which he had examined in his treatise On Nature and

Grace, as well as a copy of that reply itself, and asked John to send

him an authentic copy of the proceedings at Diospolis. He took this

occasion seriously to warn his brother bishop against the wiles of

Pelagius, and begged him, if he loved Pelagius, to let men see that he

did not so love him as to be deceived by him. He pointed out that in

the book sent with the letter, Pelagius called nothing the grace of God

except nature; and that he affirmed, and even vehemently contended,

that by free will alone, human nature was able to suffice for itself

for working righteousness and keeping all God's commandments; whence

any one could see that he opposed the grace of God of which the

apostles spoke in Rom. vii. 24, 25, and contradicted, as well, all the

prayers and benedictions of the Church by which blessings were sought

for men from God's grace. "If you love Pelagius, then," he continued,

"let him, too, love you as himself,--nay, more than himself; and let

him not deceive you. For when you hear him confess the grace of God and

the aid of God, you think he means what you mean by it. But let him be

openly asked whether he desires that we should pray God that we sin

not; whether he proclaims the assisting grace of God, without which we

would do much evil; whether he believes that even children who have not

yet been able to do good or evil are nevertheless, on account of one

man by whom sin entered into the world, sinners in him, and in need of

being delivered by the grace of Christ." If he openly denies such

things, Augustin would be pleased to hear of it.

Thus we see the great bishop sitting in his library at Hippo, placing

his hands on the two ends of the world. That nothing may be lacking to

the picture of his universal activity, we have another letter from him,

coming from about this same time, that exhibits his care for the

individuals who had placed themselves in some sort under his tutelage.

Among the refugees from Rome in the terrible times when Alaric was a

second time threatening the city, was a family of noble women,--Proba,

Juliana, and Demetrias, [89] --grandmother, mother, and daughter,--who,

finding an asylum in Africa, gave themselves to God's service, and

sought the friendship and counsel of Augustin. In 413 the granddaughter

"took the veil" under circumstances that thrilled the Christian world,

and brought out letters of congratulation and advice from Augustin and

Jerome, and also from Pelagius. This letter of Pelagius seems not to

have fallen into Augustin's way until now (416): he was so disturbed by

it that he wrote to Juliana a long letter warning her against its evil

counsels. [90] It was so shrewdly phrased, that, at first sight,

Augustin was himself almost persuaded that it did somehow acknowledge

the grace of God; but when he compared it with others of Pelagius'

writings, he saw that here, too, he was using ambiguous phrases in a

non-natural sense. The object of his letter (in which Alypius is

conjoined, as joint author) to Juliana is to warn her and her holy

daughter against all opinions that opposed the grace of God, and

especially against the covert teaching of the letter of Pelagius to

Demetrias. [91] "In this book," he says, "were it lawful for such an

one to read it, a virgin of Christ would read that her holiness and all

her spiritual riches are to spring from no other source than herself;

and thus before she attains to the perfection of blessedness, she would

learn--which may God forbid!--to be ungrateful to God." Then, after

quoting the words of Pelagius, in which he declares that "earthly

riches came from others, but your spiritual riches no one can have

conferred on you but yourself; for these, then, you are justly praised,

for these you are deservedly to be preferred to others,--for they can

exist only from yourself and in yourself," he continues: "Far be it

from any virgin to listen to statements like these. Every virgin of

Christ understands the innate poverty of the human heart, and therefore

declines to be adorned otherwise than by the gifts of her spouse....Let

her not listen to him who says, No one can confer them on you but

yourself, and they cannot exist except from you and in you:' but to him

who says, We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency

of the power may be of God, and not of us.' And be not surprised that

we speak of these things as yours, and not from you; for we speak of

daily bread as ours,' but yet add give it to us,' lest it should be

thought it was from ourselves." Again, he warns her that grace is not

mere knowledge any more than mere nature; and that Pelagius, even when

using the word "grace," means no inward or efficient aid, but mere

nature or knowledge or forgiveness of past sins; and beseeches her not

to forget the God of all grace from whom (Wisdom i. 20, 21) Demetrias

had that very virgin continence which was so justly her boast.

With the opening of 417, came the answers from Innocent to the African

letters. [92] And although they were marred by much boastful language

concerning the dignity of his see, which could not but be distasteful

to the Africans, they admirably served their purpose in the

satisfactory manner in which they, on the one hand, asserted the

necessity of the "daily grace, and help of God," for our good living,

and, on the other, determined that the Pelagians had denied this grace,

and declared their leaders Pelagius and Coelestius deprived of the

communion of the Church until they should "recover their senses from

the wiles of the Devil by whom they are held captive according to his

will." Augustin may be pardoned for supposing that a condemnation

pronounced by two provincial synods in Africa, and heartily concurred

in by the Roman bishop, who had already at Jerusalem been recognized as

in some sort the fit arbiter of this Western dispute, should settle the

matter. If Pelagius had been before jubilant, Augustin found this a

suitable time for his rejoicing.

About the same time with Innocent's letters, the official proceedings

of the synod of Diospolis at last reached Africa, and Augustin lost no

time (early in 417) in publishing a full account and examination of

them, thus providing us with that inestimable boon, a full contemporary

history of the chief events connected with the controversy up to this

time. This treatise, which is addressed to Aurelius, bishop of

Carthage, opens with a brief explanation of Augustin's delay

heretofore, in discussing Pelagius' defence of himself in Palestine, as

due to his not having received the official copy of the Proceedings of

the Council at Diospolis (1-2a). Then Augustin proceeds at once to

discuss at length the doings of the synod, point by point, following

the official record step by step (2b-45). He treats at large here

eleven items in the indictment, with Pelagius' answers and the synod's

decision, showing that in all of them Pelagius either explained away

his heresy, taking advantage of the ignorance of the judges of his

books, or else openly repudiated or anathematized it. When the twelfth

item of the indictment was reached (41b-43), Augustin shows that the

synod was so indignant at its character (it charged Pelagius with

teaching that men cannot be sons of God unless they are sinless, and

with condoning sins of ignorance, and with asserting that choice is not

free if it depends on God's help, and that pardon is given according to

merit), that, without waiting for Pelagius' answer, it condemned the

statement, and Pelagius at once repudiated and anathematized it (43).

How could the synod act in such circumstances, he asks, except by

acquitting the man who condemned the heresy? After quoting the final

judgment of the synod (44), Augustin briefly characterizes it and its

effect (45) as being indeed all that could be asked of the judges, but

of no moral weight to those better acquainted than they were with

Pelagius' character and writings. In a word, they approved his answers

to them, as indeed they ought to have done; but they by no means

approved, but both they and he condemned, his heresies as expressed in

his writings. To this statement, Augustin appends an account of the

origin of Pelagianism, and of his relations to it from the beginning,

which has the very highest value as history (46-49); and then speaks of

the character and doubtful practices of Pelagius (50-58), returning at

the end (59-65) to a thorough canvass of the value of the acquittal

which he obtained by such doubtful practices at the synod. He closes

with an indignant account of the outrages which the Pelagians had

perpetrated on Jerome (66).

This valuable treatise is not, however, the only account of the

historical origin of Pelagianism that we have, from Augustin's hands.

Soon after the death of Innocent (March 12, 417), he found occasion to

write a very long letter [93] to the venerable Paulinus of Nola, in

which he summarized both the history of and the arguments against this

"worldly philosophy." He begins by saying that he knows Paulinus has

loved Pelagius as a servant of God, but is ignorant in what way he now

loves him. For he himself not only has loved him, but loves him still,

but in different ways. Once he loved him as apparently a brother in the

true faith: now he loves him in the longing that God will by His mercy

free him from his noxious opinions against God's grace. He is not

merely following report in so speaking of him: no doubt report did for

a long time represent this of him, but he gave the less heed to it

because report is accustomed to lie. But a book of his [94] at last

came into his hands, which left no room for doubt, since in it he

asserted repeatedly that God's grace consisted of the gift to man of

the capacity to will and act, and thus reduced it to what is common to

pagans and Christians, to the ungodly and godly, to the faithful and

infidels. He then gives a brief account of the measures that had been

taken against Pelagius, and passes on to a treatment of the main

matters involved in the controversy,--all of which gather around the

one magic word of "the grace of God." He argues first that we are all

lost,--in one mass and concretion of perdition,--and that God's grace

alone makes us to differ. It is therefore folly to talk of deserving

the beginnings of grace. Nor can a faithful man say that he merits

justification by his faith, although it is given to faith; for at once

he hears the words, "what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" and

learns that even the deserving faith is the gift of God. But if,

peering into God's inscrutable judgments, we go farther, and ask why,

from the mass of Adam, all of which undoubtedly has fallen from one

into condemnation, this vessel is made for honor, that for

dishonor,--we can only say that we do not know more than the fact; and

God's reasons are hidden, but His acts are just. Certain it is that

Paul teaches that all die in Adam; and that God freely chooses, by a

sovereign election, some out of that sinful mass, to eternal life; and

that He knew from the beginning to whom He would give this grace, and

so the number of the saints has always been fixed, to whom he gives in

due time the Holy Ghost. Others, no doubt, are called; but no others

are elect, or "called according to his purpose." On no other body of

doctrines, can it be possibly explained that some infants die

unbaptized, and are lost. Is God unjust to punish innocent children

with eternal pains? And are they not innocent if they are not partakers

of Adam's sin? And can they be saved from that, save by the undeserved,

and that is the gratuitous, grace of God? The account of the

Proceedings at the Palestinian synod is then taken up, and Pelagius'

position in his latest writings is quoted and examined. "But why say

more?" he adds...."Ought they not, since they call themselves

Christians, to be more careful than the Jews that they do not stumble

at the stone of offence, while they subtly defend nature and free will

just like philosophers of this world who vehemently strive to be

thought, or to think themselves, to attain for themselves a happy life

by the force of their own will? Let them take care, then, that they do

not make the cross of Christ of none effect by the wisdom of word (1

Cor. i. 17), and thus stumble at the rock of offence. For human nature,

even if it had remained in that integrity in which it was created,

could by no means have served its own Creator without His aid. Since

then, without God's grace it could not keep the safety it had received,

how can it without God's grace repair what it has lost?" With this

profound view of the Divine immanence, and of the necessity of His

moving grace in all the acts of all his creatures, as over against the

heathen-deistic view of Pelagius, Augustin touched in reality the

deepest point in the whole controversy, and illustrated the essential

harmony of all truth. [95]

The sharpest period of the whole conflict was now drawing on. [96]

Innocent's death brought Zosimus to the chair of the Roman See, and the

efforts which he made to re-instate Pelagius and Coelestius now began

(September, 417). How little the Africans were likely to yield to his

remarkable demands, may be seen from a sermon [97] which Augustin

preached on the 23d of September, while Zosimus' letter (written on the

21st of September) was on its way to Africa. The preacher took his text

from John vi. 54-66. "We hear here," he said, "the true Master, the

Divine Redeemer, the human Saviour, commending to us our ransom, His

blood. He calls His body food, and His blood drink; and, in commending

such food and drink, He says, Unless you eat My flesh, and drink My

blood, ye shall have no life in you.' What, then, is this eating and

drinking, but to live? Eat life, drink life; you shall have life, and

life is whole. This will come,--that is, the body and blood of Christ

will be life to every one,--if what is taken visibly in the sacrament

is in real truth spiritually eaten and spiritually drunk. But that He

might teach us that even to believe in Him is of gift, not of merit, He

said, No one comes to Me, except the Father who sent Me draw him.' Draw

him, not lead him. This violence is done to the heart, not the flesh.

Why do you marvel? Believe, and you come; love, and you are drawn.

Think not that this is harsh and injurious violence; it is soft, it is

sweet; it is sweetness itself that draws you. Is not the sheep drawn

when the succulent herbage is shown to him? And I think that there is

no compulsion of the body, but an assembling of the desire. So, too, do

you come to Christ; wish not to plan a long journey,--when you believe,

then you come. For to Him who is everywhere, one comes by loving, not

by taking a voyage. No doubt, if you come not, it is your work; but if

you come, it is God's work. And even after you have come, and are

walking in the right way, become not proud, lest you perish from it:

happy are those that confide in Him,' not in themselves, but in Him. We

are saved by grace, not of ourselves: it is the gift of God. Why do I

continually say this to you? It is because there are men who are

ungrateful to grace, and attribute much to unaided and wounded nature.

It is true that man received great powers of free will at his creation;

but he lost them by sinning. He has fallen into death; he has been made

weak; he has been left half dead in the way, by robbers; the good

Samaritan has lifted him up upon his ass, and borne him to the inn. Why

should we boast? But I am told that it is enough that sins are remitted

in baptism. But does the removal of sin take away weakness too? What!

will you not see that after pouring the oil and the wine into the

wounds of the man left half dead by the robbers, he must still go to

the inn where his weakness may be healed? Nay, so long as we are in

this life we bear a fragile body; it is only after we are redeemed from

corruption that we shall find no sin, and receive the crown of

righteousness. Grace, that was hidden in the Old Testament, is now

manifest to the whole world. Even though the Jew may be ignorant of it,

why should Christians be enemies of grace? why presumptuous of

themselves? why ungrateful to grace? For, why did Christ come? Was not

nature already here,--that very nature by the praise of which you are

beguiled? Was not the law here? But the apostle says, If righteousness

is of the law, then is Christ dead in vain.' What the apostle says of

the law, that we say to these men about nature: if righteousness is by

nature, then Christ is dead in vain. What then was said of the Jews,

this we see repeated in these men. They have a zeal for God: I bear

them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to

knowledge. For, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and wishing to

establish their own, they are not subject to the righteousness of God.

My brethren, share my compassion. Where you find such men, wish no

concealment; let there be no perverse pity in you: where you find them,

wish no concealment at all. Contradict and refute, resist, or persuade

them to us. For already two councils have, in this cause, sent letters

to the Apostolic See, whence also rescripts have come back. The cause

is ended: would that the error might some day end! Therefore we

admonish so that they may take notice, we teach so that they may be

instructed, we pray so that their way be changed." Here is certainly

tenderness to the persons of the teachers of error; readiness to

forgive, and readiness to go all proper lengths in recovering them to

the truth. But here is also absolute firmness as to the truth itself,

and a manifesto as to policy. Certainly, on the lines of the policy

here indicated, the Africans fought out the coming campaign. They met

in council at the end of this year, or early in the next (418); and

formally replied to Zosimus, that the cause had been tried, and was

finished, and that the sentence that had been already pronounced

against Pelagius and Coelestius should remain in force until they

should unequivocally acknowledge that "we are aided by the grace of God

through Christ, not only to know, but to do, what is right, and that in

each single act; so that without grace we are unable to have, think,

speak, or do anything belonging to piety." As we may see Augustin's

hand in this, so, doubtless, we may recognize it in that remarkable

piece of engineering which crushed Zosimus' plans within the next few

months. There is, indeed, no direct proof that it was due to Augustin,

or to the Africans under his leading, or to the Africans at all, that

the State interfered in the matter; it is even in doubt whether the

action of the Empire was put forth as a rescript, or as a self-moved

decree: but surely it is difficult to believe that such a coup de

th��trecould have been prepared for Zosimus by chance; and as it is

well known, both that Augustin believed in the righteousness of civil

penalty for heresy, and invoked it on other occasions, and defended and

used it on this, and that he had influential friends at court with whom

he was in correspondence, it seems, on internal grounds, altogether

probable that he was the Deus ex machin� who let loose the thunders of

ecclesiastical and civil enactment simultaneously on the poor Pope's

devoted head.

The "great African Council" met at Carthage, on the 1st of May, 418;

and, after its decrees were issued, Augustin remained at Carthage, and

watched the effect of the combination of which he was probably one of

the moving causes. He had now an opportunity to betake himself once

more to his pen. While still at Carthage, at short notice, and in the

midst of much distraction, he wrote a large work, in two books which

have come down to us under the separate titles of On the Grace of

Christ, and On Original Sin, at the instance of another of those

ascetic families which formed so marked a feature in those troubled

times. Pinianus and Melania, the daughter of Albina, were husband and

wife, who, leaving Rome amid the wars with Alaric, had lived in

continence in Africa for some time, but now in Palestine had separated,

he to become head of a monastery, and she an inmate of a convent. While

in Africa, they had lived at Sagaste under the tutelage of Alypius, and

in the enjoyment of the friendship and instruction of Augustin. After

retiring to Bethlehem, like the other holy ascetics whom he had known

in Africa, they kept up their relations with him. Like the others,

also, they became acquainted with Pelagius in Palestine, and were

well-nigh deceived by him. They wrote to Augustin that they had begged

Pelagius to condemn in writing all that had been alleged against him,

and that he had replied in the presence of them all, that "he

anathematized the man who either thinks or says that the grace of God

whereby Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners is not

necessary, not only for every hour and for every moment, but also for

every act of our lives," and asserted that "those who endeavor to

disannul it are worthy of everlasting punishment." [98] Moreover, they

wrote that Pelagius had read to them, out of his book that he had sent

to Rome, [99] his assertion "that infants ought to be baptized with the

same formula of sacramental words as adults." [100] They wrote that

they were delighted to hear these words from Pelagius, as they seemed

exactly what they had been desirous of hearing; and yet they preferred

consulting Augustin about them, before they were fully committed

regarding them. [101] It was in answer to this appeal, that the present

work was written; the two books of which take up the two points in

Pelagius' asseveration,--the theme of the first being "the assistance

of the Divine grace towards our justification, by which God co-operates

in all things for good to those who love Him, and whom He first loved,

giving to them that He may receive from them,"--while the subject of

the second is "the sin which by one man has entered the world along

with death, and so has passed upon all men." [102]

The first book, On the Grace of Christ, begins by quoting and examining

Pelagius' anathema of all those who deny that grace is necessary for

every action (2 sq.). Augustin confesses that this would deceive all

who were not fortified by knowledge of Pelagius' writings; but asserts

that in the light of them it is clear that he means that grace is

always necessary, because we need continually to remember the

forgiveness of our sins, the example of Christ, the teaching of the

law, and the like. Then he enters (4 sq.) upon an examination of

Pelagius' scheme of human faculties, and quotes at length his account

of them given in his book, In Defence of Free Will, wherein he

distinguishes between the possibilitas (posse), voluntas (velle), and

actio (esse), and declares that the first only is from God and receives

aid from God, while the others are entirely ours, and in our own power.

Augustin opposes to this the passage in Phil. ii. 12, 13 (6), and then

criticises (7 sq.) Pelagius' ambiguous acknowledgment that God is to be

praised for man's good works, "because the capacity for any action on

man's part is from God," by which he reduces all grace to the primeval

endowment of nature with "capacity" (possibilitas, posse), and the help

afforded it by the law and teaching. Augustin points out the difference

between law and grace, and the purpose of the former as a pedagogue to

the latter (9 sq.), and then refutes Pelagius' further definition of

grace as consisting in the promise of future glory and the revelation

of wisdom, by an appeal to Paul's thorn in the flesh, and his

experience under its discipline (11 sq.). Pelagius' illustrations from

our senses, of his theory of natural faculty, are then sharply tested

(16); and the criticism on the whole doctrine is then made and pressed

(17 sq.), that it makes God equally sharer in our blame for evil acts

as in our praise for good ones, since if God does help, and His help is

only His gift to us of ability to act in either part, then He has

equally helped to the evil deeds as to the good. The assertion that

this "capacity of either part" is the fecund root of both good and evil

is then criticised (19 sq.), and opposed to Matt. vii. 18, with the

result of establishing that we must seek two roots in our dispositions

for so diverse results,--covetousness for evil, and love for good,--not

a single root for both in nature. Man's "capacity," it is argued, is

the root of nothing; but it is capable of both good and evil according

to the moving cause, which, in the case of evil, is man-originated,

while, in the case of good, it is from God (21). Next, Pelagius'

assertion that grace is given according to our merits (23 sq.) is taken

up and examined. It is shown, that, despite his anathema, Pelagius

holds to this doctrine, and in so extreme a form as explicitly to

declare that man comes and cleaves to God by his freedom of will alone,

and without God's aid. He shows that the Scriptures teach just the

opposite (24-26); and then points out how Pelagius has confounded the

functions of knowledge and love (27 sq.), and how he forgets that we

cannot have merits until we love God, while John certainly asserts that

God loved us first (1 John iv. 10). The representation that what grace

does is to render obedience easier (28-30), and the twin view that

prayer is only relatively necessary, are next criticised (32). That

Pelagius never acknowledges real grace, is then demonstrated by a

detailed examination of all that he had written on the subject (31-45).

The book closes (46-80) with a full refutation of Pelagius' appeal to

Ambrose, as if he supported him; and exhibition of Ambrose's contrary

testimony as to grace and its necessity.

The object of the second book--On Original Sin--is to show, that, in

spite of Pelagius' admissions as to the baptism of infants, he yet

denies that they inherit original sin and contends that they are born

free from corruption. The book opens by pointing out that there is no

question as to Coelestius' teaching in this matter (2-8), as he at

Carthage refused to condemn those who say that Adam's sin injured no

one but himself, and that infants are born in the same state that Adam

was in before the fall, and openly asserted at Rome that there is no

sin ex traduce. As for Pelagius, he is simply more cautious and

mendacious than Coelestius: he deceived the Council at Diospolis, but

failed to deceive the Romans (5-13), and, as a matter of fact (14-18),

teaches exactly what Coelestius does. In support of this assertion,

Pelagius' Defence of Free Will is quoted, wherein he asserts that we

are born neither good nor bad, "but with a capacity for either," and

"as without virtue, so without vice; and previous to the action of our

own proper will, that that alone is in man which God has formed" (14).

Augustin also quotes Pelagius' explanation of his anathema against

those who say Adam's sin injured only himself, as meaning that he has

injured man by setting a bad "example," and his even more sinuous

explanation of his anathema against those who assert that infants are

born in the same condition that Adam was in before he fell, as meaning

that they are infants and he was a man! (16-18). With this introduction

to them, Augustin next treats of Pelagius' subterfuges (19-25), and

then animadverts on the importance of the issue (26-37), pointing out

that Pelagianism is not a mere error, but a deadly heresy, and strikes

at the very centre of Christianity. A counter argument of the Pelagians

is then answered (38-45), "Does not the doctrine of original sin make

marriage an evil thing?" No, says Augustin, marriage is ordained by

God, and is good; but it is a diseased good, and hence what is born of

it is a good nature made by God, but this good nature in a diseased

condition,--the result of the Devil's work. Hence, if it be asked why

God's gift produces any thing for the Devil to take possession of, it

is to be answered that God gives his gifts liberally (Matt. v. 45), and

makes men; but the Devil makes these men sinners (46). Finally, as

Ambrose had been appealed to in the former book, so at the end of this

it is shown that he openly proclaimed the doctrine of original sin, and

here too, before Pelagius, condemned Pelagius (47 sq.).

What Augustin means by writing to Pinianus and his family that he was

more oppressed by work at Carthage than anywhere else, may perhaps be

illustrated from his diligence in preaching while in that capital. He

seems to have been almost constantly in the pulpit, during this period

"of the sharpest conflict with them," [103] preaching against the

Pelagians. There is one series of his sermons, of the exact dates of

which we can be pretty sure, which may be adverted to here,--Sermons

151 and 152, preached early in October, 418; Sermon 155 on Oct. 14, 156

on Oct.17, and 26 on Oct. 18; thus following one another almost with

the regularity of the days. The first of these was based on Rom. vii.

15-25, which he declares to contain dangerous words if not properly

understood; for men are prone to sin, and when they hear the apostle so

speaking they do evil, and think they are like him. They are meant to

teach us, however, that the life of the just in this body is a war, not

yet a triumph: the triumph will come only when death is swallowed up in

victory. It would, no doubt, be better not to have an enemy than even

to conquer. It would be better not to have evil desires: but we have

them; therefore, let us not go after them. If they rebel against us,

let us rebel against them; if they fight, let us fight; if they

besiege, let us besiege: let us look only to this, that they do not

conquer. With some evil desires we are born: others we make, by bad

habit. It is on account of those with which we are born, that infants

are baptized; that they may be freed from the guilt of inheritance, not

from any evil of custom, which, of course, they have not. And it is on

account of these, too, that our war must be endless: the concupiscence

with which we are born cannot be done away as long as we live; it may

be diminished, but not done away. Neither can the law free us, for it

only reveals the sin to our greater apprehension. Where, then, is hope,

save in the superabundance of grace? The next sermon (152) takes up the

words in Rom. viii. 1-4, and points out that the inward aid of the

Spirit brings all the help we need. "We, like farmers in the field,

work from without: but, if there were no one who worked from within,

the seed would not take root in the ground, nor would the sprout arise

in the field, nor would the shoot grow strong and become a tree, nor

would branches and fruit and leaves be produced. Therefore the apostle

distinguishes between the work of the workmen and of the Creator (1

Cor. iii. 6, 7). If God give not the increase, empty is this sound

within your ears; but if he gives, it avails somewhat that we plant and

water, and our labor is not in vain." He then applies this to the

individual, striving against his lusts; warns against Manichean error;

and distinguishes between the three laws,--the law of sin, the law of

faith, and the law of deeds,--defending the latter, the law of Moses,

against the Manicheans; and then he comes to the words of the text, and

explains its chief phrases, closing thus: "What other do we read here

than that Christ is a sacrifice for sin?...Behold by what sin' he

condemned sin: by the sacrifice which he made for sins, he condemned

sin. This is the law of the Spirit of life which has freed you from the

law of sin and death. For that other law, the law of the letter, the

law that commands, is indeed good; the commandment is holy and just and

good:' but it was weak by the flesh,' and what it commanded it could

not bring about in us. Therefore there is one law, as I began by

saying, that reveals sin to you, and another that takes it away: the

law of the letter reveals sin, the law of grace takes it away." Sermon

155 covers the same ground, and more, taking the broader text, Rom.

viii. 1-11, and fully developing its teaching, especially as

discriminating between the law of sin and the law of Moses and the law

of faith; the law of Moses being the holy law of God written with His

finger on the tables of stone, while the law of the Spirit of life is

nothing other than the same law written in the heart, as the prophet

(Jer. xxx. 1, 33) clearly declares. So written, it does not terrify

from without, but soothes from within. Great care is also taken, lest

by such phrases as, "walk in the Spirit, not in the flesh," "who shall

deliver me from the body of this death?" a hatred of the body should be

begotten. "Thus you shall be freed from the body of this death, not by

having no body, but by having another one and dying no more. If,

indeed, he had not added, of this death,' perchance an error might have

been suggested to the human mind, and it might have been said, You see

that God does not wish us to have a body.' But He says, the body of

this death.' Take away death, and the body is good. Let our last enemy,

death, be taken away, and my dear flesh will be mine for eternity. For

no one can ever hate his own flesh.' Although the spirit lusts against

the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit,' although there is now a

battle in this house, yet the husband is seeking by his strife not the

ruin of, but concord with, his wife. Far be it, far be it, my brethren,

that the spirit should hate the flesh in lusting against it! It hates

the vices of the flesh; it hates the wisdom of the flesh; it hates the

contention of death. This corruption shall put on incorruption,--this

mortal shall put on immortality; it is sown a natural body; it shall

rise a spiritual body; and you shall see full and perfect concord,--you

shall see the creature praise the Creator." One of the special

interests of such passages is to show, that, even at this early date,

Augustin was careful to guard his hearers from Manichean error while

proclaiming original sin. One of the sermons which, probably, was

preached about this time (153), is even entitled, "Against the

Manicheans openly, but tacitly against the Pelagians," and bears

witness to the early development of the method that he was somewhat

later to use effectively against Julian's charges of Manicheanism

against the catholics. [104] Three days afterwards, Augustin preached

on the next few verses, Rom. viii. 12-17, but can scarcely be said to

have risen to the height of its great argument. The greater part of the

sermon is occupied with a discussion of the law, why it was given, how

it is legitimately used, and its usefulness as a pedagogue to bring us

to Christ; then of the need of a mediator; and then, of what it is to

live according to the flesh, which includes living according to merely

human nature; and the need of mortifying the flesh in this world. All

this, of course, gave full opportunity for opposing the leading

Pelagian errors; and the sermon is brought to a close by a direct

polemic against their assertion that the function of grace is only to

make it more easy to do what is right. "With the sail more easily, with

the oar with more difficulty: nevertheless even with the oar we can go.

On a beast more easily, on foot with more difficulty: nevertheless

progress can be made on foot. It is not true! For the true Master who

flatters no one, who deceives no one,--the truthful Teacher and very

Saviour to whom the most grievous pedagogue has led us,--when he was

speaking about good works, i.e., about the fruits of the twigs and

branches, did not say, Without me, indeed, you can do something, but

you will do it more easily with me;' He did not say, You can make your

fruit without me, but more richly with me.' He did not say this! Read

what He said: it is the holy gospel,--bow the proud necks! Augustin

does not say this: the Lord says it. What says the Lord? Without me you

can do nothing!'" On the very next day, he was again in the pulpit, and

taking for his text chiefly the ninety-fourth Psalm. [105] The preacher

began [106] by quoting the sixth verse, and laying stress on the words

"our Maker." No Christian,' he said, doubted that God had made him, and

that in such a sense that God created not only the first man, from whom

all have descended, but that God to-day creates every man,--as He said

to one of His saints, "Before that I formed thee in the womb, I knew

thee." At first He created man apart from man; now He creates man from

man: nevertheless, whether man apart from man, or man from man, "it is

He that made us, and not we ourselves." Nor has He made us and then

deserted us; He has not cared to make us, and not cared to keep us.

Will He who made us without being asked, desert us when He is besought?

But is it not just as foolish to say, as some say or are ready to say,

that God made them men, but they make themselves righteous? Why, then,

do we pray to God to make us righteous? The first man was created in a

nature that was without fault or flaw. He was made righteous: he did

not make himself righteous; what he did for himself was to fall and

break his righteousness. This God did not do: He permitted it, as if He

had said, "Let him desert Me; let him find himself; and let his misery

prove that he has no ability without Me." In this way God wished to

show man what free will was worth without God. O evil free will without

God! Behold, man was made good; and by free will man was made evil!

When will the evil man make himself good by free will? When good, he

was not able to keep himself good; and now that he is evil, is he to

make himself good? Nay, behold, He that made us has also made us "His

people" (Ps. xciv. 7). This is a distinguishing gift. Nature is common

to all, but grace is not. It is not to be confounded with nature; but

if it were, it would still be gratuitous. For certainly no man, before

he existed, deserved to come into existence. And yet God has made him,

and that not like the beasts or a stock or a stone, but in His own

image. Who has given this benefit? He gave it who was in existence: he

received it who was not. And only He could do this, who calls the

things that are not as though they were: of whom the apostle says that

"He chose us before the foundation of the world." We have been made in

this world, and yet the world was not when we were chosen. Ineffable!

wonderful! They are chosen who are not: neither does He err in

choosing, nor choose in vain. He chooses, and has elect whom He is to

create to be chosen: He has them in Himself; not indeed in His nature,

but in His prescience. Let us not, then, glory in ourselves, or dispute

against grace. If we are men, He made us. If we are believers, He made

us this too. He who sent the Lamb to be slain has, out of wolves, made

us sheep. This is grace. And it is an even greater grace than that

grace of nature by which we were all made men.' "I am continually

endeavouring to discuss such things as these," said the preacher,

"against a new heresy which is attempting to rise; because I wish you

to be fixed in the good, untouched by the evil....For, disputing

against grace in favor of free will, they became an offence to pious

and catholic ears. They began to create horror; they began to be

avoided as a fixed pest; it began to be said of them, that they argued

against grace. And they found such a device as this: Because I defend

man's free will, and say that free will is sufficient in order that I

may be righteous,' says one, I do not say that it is without the grace

of God.' The ears of the pious are pricked up, and he who hears this,

already begins to rejoice: Thanks be to God! He does not defend free

will without the grace of God! There is free will, but it avails

nothing without the grace of God.' If, then, they do not defend free

will without the grace of God, what evil do they say? Expound to us, O

teacher, what grace you mean? When I say,' he says, the free will of

man, you observe that I say "of man"?' What then? Who created man?'

God. Who gave him free will?' God. If, then, God created man, and God

gave man free will, whatever man is able to do by free will, to whose

grace does he owe it, except to His who made him with free will?' And

this is what they think they say so acutely! You see, nevertheless, my

brethren, how they preach that general grace by which we were created

and by which we are men; and, of course, we are men in common with the

ungodly, and are Christians apart from them. It is this grace by which

we are Christians, that we wish them to preach, this that we wish them

to acknowledge, this that we wish,--of which the apostle says, I do not

make void the grace of God, for if righteousness is by the law, Christ

is dead in vain.'" Then the true function of the law is explained, as a

revealer of our sinfulness, and a pedagogue to lead us to Christ: the

Manichean view of the Old Testament law is attacked, but its

insufficiency for salvation is pointed out; and so we are brought back

to the necessity of grace, which is illustrated from the story of the

raising of the dead child in 2 Kings iv. 18-37,--the dead child being

Adam; the ineffective staff (by which we ought to walk), the law; but

the living prophet, Christ with his grace, which we must preach. "The

prophetic staff was not enough for the dead boy: would dead nature

itself have been enough? Even this, by which we are made, although we

nowhere read of it under this name, we nevertheless, because it is

given gratuitously, confess to be grace. But we show to you a greater

grace than this, by which we are Christians....This is the grace by

Jesus Christ our Lord: it was He that made us,--both before we were at

all, it was He that made us, and now, after we are made, it is He that

has made us all righteous,--and not we ourselves." There was but one

mass of perdition from Adam, to which nothing was due but punishment;

and from that mass vessels have been made unto honor. "Rejoice because

you have escaped; you have escaped the death that was due,--you have

received the life that was not due. But,' you ask, why did He make me

unto honor, and another unto dishonor?' Will you who will not hear the

apostle saying, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?' hear

Augustin?...Do you wish to dispute with me? Nay, wonder with me, and

cry out with me, Oh the depth of the riches!' Let us both be

afraid,--let us both cry out, Oh the depth of the riches!' Let us both

agree in fear, lest we perish in error."

Augustin was not less busy with his pen, during these months, than with

his voice. Quite a series of letters belong to the last half of 418, in

which he argues to his distant correspondents on the same themes which

he was so iterantly trying to make clear to his Carthaginian auditors.

One of the most interesting of these was written to a fellow-bishop,

Optatus, on the origin of the soul. [107] Optatus, like Jerome, had

expressed himself as favoring the theory of a special creation of each

at birth; and Augustin, in this letter as in the paper sent to Jerome,

lays great stress on so holding our theories on so obscure a matter as

to conform to the indubitable fact of the transmission of sin. This

fact, such passages as 1 Cor. xv. 21 sq., Rom. v. 12 sq., make certain;

and in stating this, Augustin takes the opportunity to outline the

chief contents of the catholic faith over against the Pelagian denial

of original sin and grace: that all are born under the contagion of

death and in the bond of guilt; that there is no deliverance except in

the one Mediator, Christ Jesus; that before His coming men received him

as promised, now as already come, but with the same faith; that the law

was not intended to save, but to shut up under sin and so force us back

upon the one Saviour; and that the distribution of grace is sovereign.

Augustin pries into God's sovereign counsels somewhat more freely here

than is usual with him. "But why those also are created who, the

Creator foreknew, would belong to damnation, not to grace, the blessed

apostle mentions with as much succinct brevity as great authority. For

he says that God, wishing to show His wrath and demonstrate His power,'

etc. (Rom. ix. 22). Justly, however, would he seem unjust in forming

vessels of wrath for perdition, if the whole mass from Adam were not

condemned. That, therefore, they are made on birth vessels of anger,

belongs to the punishment due to them; but that they are made by

re-birth vessels of mercy, belongs to the grace that is not due to

them. God, therefore, shows his wrath,--not, of course, perturbation of

mind, such as is called wrath among men, but a just and fixed

vengeance....He shows also his power, by which he makes a good use of

evil men, and endows them with many natural and temporal goods, and

bends their evil to admonition and instruction of the good by

comparison with it, so that these may learn from them to give thanks to

God that they have been made to differ from them, not by their own

deserts which were of like kind in the same mass, but by His

pity....But by creating so many to be born who, He foreknew, would not

belong to his grace, so that they are more by an incomparable multitude

than those whom he deigned to predestinate as children of the promise

into the glory of His Kingdom,--He wished to show by this very

multitude of the rejected how entirely of no moment it is to the just

God what is the multitude of those most justly condemned. And that

hence also those who are redeemed from this condemnation may

understand, that what they see rendered to so great a part of the mass

was the due of the whole of it,--not only of those who add many others

to original sin, by the choice of an evil will, but as well of so many

children who are snatched from this life without the grace of the

Mediator, bound by no bond except that of original sin alone." With

respect to the question more immediately concerning which the letter

was written, Augustin explains that he is willing to accept the opinion

that souls are created for men as they are born, if only it can be made

plain that it is consistent with the original sin that the Scriptures

so clearly teach. In the paper sent to Jerome, the difficulties of

creationism are sufficiently urged; this letter is interesting on

account of its statement of some of the difficulties of traducianism

also,--thus evidencing Augustin's clear view of the peculiar complexity

of the problem, and justifying his attitude of balance and uncertainty

between the two theories. The human understanding,' he says, can

scarcely comprehend how a soul arises from a parent's soul in the

offspring; or is transmitted to the offspring as a candle is lighted

from a candle and thence another fire comes into existence without loss

to the former one. Is there an incorporeal seed for the soul, which

passes, by some hidden and invisible channel of its own, from the

father to the mother, when it is conceived in the woman? Or, even more

incredible, does it lie enfolded and hidden within the corporeal seed?'

He is lost in wonder over the question whether, when conception does

not take place, the immortal seed of an immortal soul perishes; or,

does the immortality attach itself to it only when it lives? He even

expresses the doubt whether traducianism will explain what it is called

in to explain, much better than creationism; in any case, who denies

that God is the maker of every soul? Isaiah (lvii. 16) says, "I have

made every breath;" and the only question that can arise is as to

method,--whether He "makes every breath from the one first breath, just

as He makes every body of man from the one first body; or whether he

makes new bodies indeed, from the one body, but new souls out of

nothing." Certainly nothing but Scripture can determine such a

question; but where do the Scriptures speak unambiguously upon it? The

passages to which the creationists point only affirm the admitted fact

that God makes the soul; and the traducianists forget that the word

"soul" in the Scriptures is ambiguous, and can mean "man," and even a

"dead man." What more can be done, then, than to assert what is

certain, viz., that sin is propagated, and leave what is uncertain in

the doubt in which God has chosen to place it?

This letter was written not long after the issue of Zosimus' Tractoria,

demanding the signature of all to African orthodoxy; and Augustin sends

Optatus "copies of the recent letters which have been sent forth from

the Roman see, whether specially to the African bishops or generally to

all bishops," on the Pelagian controversy, "lest perchance they had not

yet reached" his correspondent, who, it is very evident, he was anxious

should thoroughly realize "that the authors, or certainly the most

energetic and noted teachers," of these new heresies, "had been

condemned in the whole Christian world by the vigilance of episcopal

councils aided by the Saviour who keeps His Church, as well as by two

venerable overseers of the Apostolical see, Pope Innocent and Pope

Zosimus, unless they should show repentance by being convinced and

reformed." To this zeal we owe it that the letter contains an extract

from Zosimus' Tractoria, one of the two brief fragments of that

document that have reached our day.

There was another ecclesiastic in Rome, besides Zosimus, who was

strongly suspected of favoring the Pelagians,--the presbyter Sixtus,

who afterwards became Pope Sixtus III. But when Zosimus sent forth his

condemnation of Pelagianism, Sixtus sent also a short letter to Africa

addressed to Aurelius of Carthage, which, though brief, indicated a

considerable vigor against the heresy which he was commonly believed to

have before defended, [108] and which claimed him as its own. [109]

Some months afterwards, he sent another similar, but longer, letter to

Augustin and Alypius, more fully expounding his rejection of "the fatal

dogma" of Pelagius, and his acceptance of "that grace of God freely

given by Him to small and great, to which Pelagius' dogma was

diametrically opposed." Augustin was overjoyed with these developments.

He quickly replied in a short letter [110] in which he expresses the

delight he has in learning from Sixtus' own hand that he is not a

defender of Pelagius, but a preacher of grace. And close upon the heels

of this he sent another much longer letter, [111] in which he discusses

the subtler arguments of the Pelagians with an anxious care that seems

to bear witness to his desire to confirm and support his correspondent

in his new opinions. Both letters testify to Augustin's approval of the

persecuting measures which had been instituted by the Roman see in

obedience to the emperor; and urge on Sixtus his duty not only to bring

the open heretics to deserved punishment, but to track out those who

spread their poison secretly, and even to remember those whom he had

formerly heard announcing the error before it had been condemned, and

who were now silent through fear, and to bring them either to open

recantation of their former beliefs, or to punishment. It is pleasanter

to recall our thoughts to the dialectic of these letters. The greater

part of the second is given to a discussion of the gratuitousness of

grace, which, just because grace, is given to no preceding merits. Many

subtle objections to this doctrine were brought forward by the

Pelagians. They said that "free will was taken away if we asserted that

man did not have even a good will without the aid of God;" that we made

"God an accepter of persons, if we believed that without any preceding

merits He had mercy on whom He would, and whom He would He called, and

whom He would He made religious;" that "it was unjust, in one and the

same case, to deliver one and punish another;" that, if such a doctrine

is preached, "men who do not wish to live rightly and faithfully, will

excuse themselves by saying that they have done nothing evil by living

ill, since they have not received the grace by which they might live

well;" that it is a puzzle "how sin can pass over to the children of

the faithful, when it has been remitted to the parents in baptism;"

that "children respond truly by the mouth of their sponsors that they

believe in remission of sins, but not because sins are remitted to

them, but because they believe that sins are remitted in the church or

in baptism to those in whom they are found, not to those in whom they

do not exist," and consequently they said that "they were unwilling

that infants should be so baptized unto remission of sins as if this

remission took place in them," for (they contend) "they have no sin;

but they are to be baptized, although without sin, with the same rite

of baptism through which remission of sins takes place in any that are

sinners." This last objection is especially interesting [112] because

it furnishes us with the reply which the Pelagians made to the argument

that Augustin so strongly pressed against them from the very act and

ritual of baptism, as implying remission of sins. [113] His rejoinder

to it here is to point to the other parts of the same ritual, and to

ask why, then, infants are exorcised and exsufflated in baptism. "For,

it cannot be doubted that this is done fictitiously, if the Devil does

not rule over them; but if he rules over them, and they are therefore

not falsely exorcised and exsufflated, why does that prince of sinners

rule over them except because of sin?" On the fundamental matter of the

gratuitousness of grace, this letter is very explicit. "If we seek for

the deserving of hardening, we shall find it....But if we seek for the

deserving of pity, we shall not find it; for there is none, lest grace

be made a vanity if it is not given gratis, but rendered to merits.

But, should we say that faith preceded and in it there is desert of

grace, what desert did man have before faith that he should receive

faith? For, what did he have that he did not receive? and if he

received it, why does he glory as if he received it not? For as man

would not have wisdom, understanding, prudence, fortitude, knowledge,

piety, fear of God, unless he had received (according to the prophet)

the spirit of wisdom and understanding, of prudence and fortitude, of

knowledge and piety and the fear of God; as he would not have justice,

love, continence, except the spirit was received of whom the apostle

says, For you did not receive the spirit of fear, but of virtue, and

love, and continence:' so he would not have faith unless he received

the spirit of faith of whom the same apostle says, Having then the same

spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and

therefore spoke," we too believe and therefore speak.' But that He is

not received by desert, but by His mercy who has mercy on whom He will,

is manifestly shown where he says of himself, I have obtained mercy to

be faithful.'" "If we should say that the merit of prayer precedes,

that the gift of grace may follow,...even prayer itself is found among

the gifts of grace" (Rom. viii. 26). "It remains, then, that faith

itself, whence all righteousness takes beginning;...it remains, I say,

that even faith itself is not to be attributed to the human will which

they extol, nor to any preceding merits, since from it begin whatever

good things are merits: but it is to be confessed to be the gratuitous

gift of God, since we consider it true grace, that is, without merits,

inasmuch as we read in the same epistle, God divides out the measure of

faith to each' (Rom. xii. 3). Now, good works are done by man, but

faith is wrought in man, and without it these are not done by any man.

For all that is not of faith is sin" (Rom. xiv. 23).

By the same messenger who carried this important letter to Sixtus,

Augustin sent also a letter to Mercator, [114] an African layman who

was then apparently at Rome, but who was afterwards (in 429) to render

service by instructing the Emperor Theodosius as to the nature and

history of Pelagianism, and so preventing the appeal of the Pelagians

to him from being granted. Now he appears as an inquirer: Augustin,

while at Carthage, had received a letter from him in which he had

consulted him on certain questions that the Pelagians had raised, but

in such a manner as to indicate his opposition to them. Press of

business had compelled the postponement of the reply until this later

date. One of the questions that Mercator had put concerned the Pelagian

account of infants sharing in the one baptism unto remission of sins,

which we have seen Augustin answering when writing to Sixtus. In this

letter he replies: "Let them, then, hear the Lord (John iii. 36).

Infants, therefore, who made believers by others, by whom they are

brought to baptism, are, of course, unbelievers by others, if they are

in the hands of such as do not believe that they should be brought,

inasmuch as they believe they are nothing profited; and accordingly, if

they believe by believers, and have eternal life, they are unbelievers

by unbelievers, and shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on

them. For it is not said, it comes on them,' but it abideth on them,'

because it was on them from the beginning, and will not be taken from

them except by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, our

Lord....Therefore, when children are baptized, the confession is made

that they are believers, and it is not to be doubted that those who are

not believers are condemned: let them, then, dare to say now, if they

can, that they contract no evil from their origin to be condemned by

the just God, and have no contagion of sin." The other matter on which

Mercator sought light concerned the statement that universal death

proved universal sin: [115] he reported that the Pelagians replied that

not even death was universal,--that Enoch, for instance, and Elijah,

had not died. Augustin adds those who are to be found living at the

second advent, who are not to die, but be "changed;" and replies that

Rom. v. 12 is perfectly explicit that there is no death in the world

except that which comes from sin, and that God a Saviour, and we cannot

at all "deny that He is able to do that, now, in any that he wishes,

without death, which we undoubtingly believe is to be done in so many

after death." He adds that the difficult question is not why Enoch and

Elijah did not die, if death is the punishment of sin; but why, such

being the case, the justified ever die; and he refers his correspondent

to his book On the Baptism of Infants [116] for a resolution of this

greater difficulty.

It was probably at the very end of 418 that Augustin wrote a letter of

some length [117] to Asellicus, in reply to one which he had written on

"avoiding the deception of Judaism," to the primate of the Bizacene

province, and which that ecclesiastic had sent to Augustin for

answering. He discusses in this the law of the Old Testament. He opens

by pointing out that the apostle forbids Christians to Judaize (Gal.

ii. 14-16), and explains that it is not merely the ceremonial law that

we may not depend upon, "but also what is said in the law, Thou shalt

not covet' (which no one, of course, doubts is to be said to Christians

too), does not justify man, except by faith in Jesus Christ and the

grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord." He then expounds the use

of the law: "This, then, is the usefulness of the law: that it shows

man to himself, so that he may know his weakness, and see how, by the

prohibition, carnal concupiscence is rather increased than

healed....The use of the law is, thus, to convince man of his weakness,

and force him to implore the medicine of grace that is in Christ."

"Since these things are so," he adds, "those who rejoice that they are

Israelites after the flesh, and glory in the law apart from the grace

of Christ, these are those concerning whom the apostle said that being

ignorant of God's righteousness, and wishing to establish their own,

they are not subject to God's righteousness;' since he calls God's

righteousness' that which is from God to man; and their own,' what they

think that the commandments suffice for them to do without the help and

gift of Him who gave the law. But they are like those who, while they

profess to be Christians, so oppose the grace of Christ, that they

suppose that they fulfil the divine commands by human powers, and,

wishing to establish their own,' are not subject to the righteousness

of God,' and so, not indeed in name, but yet in error, Judaize. This

sort of men found heads for themselves in Pelagius and Coelestius, the

most acute asserters of this impiety, who by God's recent judgment,

through his diligent and faithful servants, have been deprived even of

catholic communion, and, on account of an impenitent heart, persist

still in their condemnation."

At the beginning of 419, a considerable work was published by Augustin

on one of the more remote corollaries which the Pelagians drew from his

teachings. It had come to his ears, that they asserted that his

doctrine condemned marriage: "if only sinful offspring come from

marriage," they asked, "is not marriage itself made a sinful thing?"

The book which Augustin composed in answer to this query, he dedicated

to, and sent along with an explanatory letter to, the Comes Valerius, a

trusted servant of the Emperor Honorius, and one of the most steady

opponents at court of the Pelagian heresy. Augustin explains [118] why

he has desired to address the book to him: first, because Valerius was

a striking example of those continent husbands of which that age

furnishes us with many instances, and, therefore, the discussion would

have especial interest for him; secondly, because of his eminence as an

opponent of Pelagianism; and, thirdly, because Augustin had learned

that he had read a Pelagian document in which Augustin was charged with

condemning marriage by defending original sin. [119] The book in

question is the first book of the treatise On Marriage and

Concupiscence. It is, naturally, tinged, or rather stained, with the

prevalent ascetic notions of the day. Its doctrine is that marriage is

good, and God is the maker of the offspring that comes from it,

although now there can be no begetting and hence no birth without sin.

Sin made concupiscence, and now concupiscence perpetuates sinners. The

specific object of the work, as it states it itself, is "to distinguish

between the evil of carnal concupiscence, from which man, who is born

therefrom, contracts original sin, and the good of marriage" (I. 1).

After a brief introduction, in which he explains why he writes, and why

he addresses his book to Valerius (1-2), Augustin points out that

conjugal chastity, like its higher sister-grace of continence, is God's

gift. Thus copulation, but only for the propagation of children, has

divine allowance (3-5). Lust, or "shameful concupiscence," however, he

teaches, is not of the essence, but only an accident, of marriage. It

did not exist in Eden, although true marriage existed there; but arose

from, and therefore only after, sin (6-7). Its addition to marriage

does not destroy the good of marriage: it only conditions the character

of the offspring (8). Hence it is that the apostle allows marriage, but

forbids the "disease of desire" (1 Thess. iv. 3-5); and hence the

Old-Testament saints were even permitted more than one wife, because,

by multiplying wives, it was not lust, but offspring, that was

increased (9-10). Nevertheless, fecundity is not to be thought the only

good of marriage: true marriage can exist without offspring, and even

without cohabitation (11-13), and cohabitation is now, under the New

Testament, no longer a duty as it was under the Old Testament (14-15),

but the apostle praises continence above it. We must, then, distinguish

between the goods of marriage, and seek the best (16-19). But thus it

follows that it is not due to any inherent and necessary evil in

marriage, but only to the presence, now, of concupiscence in all

cohabitation, that children are born under sin, even the children of

the regenerate, just as from the seed of olives only oleasters grow

(20-24). And yet again, concupiscence is not itself sin in the

regenerate; it is remitted as guilt in baptism: but it is the daughter

of sin, and it is the mother of sin, and in the unregenerate it is

itself sin, as to yield to it is even to the regenerate (25-39).

Finally, as so often, the testimony of Ambrose is appealed to, and it

is shown that he too teaches that all born from cohabitation are born

guilty (40). In this book, Augustin certainly seems to teach that the

bond of connection by which Adam's sin is conveyed to his offspring is

not mere descent, or heredity, or mere inclusion in him, in a realistic

sense, as partakers of the same numerical nature, but concupiscence.

Without concupiscence in the act of generation, the offspring would not

be a partaker of Adam's sin. This he had taught also previously, as,

e.g., in the treatise On Original Sin, from which a few words may be

profitably quoted as succinctly summing up the teaching of this book on

the subject: "It is, then, manifest, that that must not be laid to the

account of marriage, in the absence of which even marriage would still

have existed....Such, however, is the present condition of mortal men,

that the connubial intercourse and lust are at the same time in

action....Hence it follows that infants, although incapable of sinning,

are yet not born without the contagion of sin,...not, indeed, because

of what is lawful, but on account of that which is unseemly: for, from

what is lawful, nature is born; from what is unseemly, sin" (42).

Towards the end of the same year (419), Augustin was led to take up

again the vexed question of the origin of the soul,--both in a new

letter to Optatus, [120] by the zeal of the same monk, Renatus, who had

formerly brought Optatus' inquiries to his notice,--in an elaborate

treatise entitled On the Soul and its Origin, by way of reply to a rash

adventure of a young man named Vincentius Victor, who blamed him for

his uncertainty on such a subject, and attempted to determine all the

puzzles of the question, though, as Augustin insists, on assumptions

that were partly Pelagian and partly worse. Optatus had written in the

hope that Augustin had heard by this time from Jerome, in reply to the

treatise he had sent him on this subject. Augustin, in answering his

letter, expresses his sorrow that he has not yet been worthy of an

answer from Jerome, although five years had passed away since he wrote,

but his continued hope that such an answer will in due time come. For

himself, he confesses that he has not yet been able to see how the soul

can contract sin from Adam and yet not itself be contracted from Adam;

and he regrets that Optatus, although holding that God creates each

soul for its birth, has not sent him the proofs on which he depends for

that opinion, nor met its obvious difficulties. He rebukes Optatus for

confounding the question of whether God makes the soul, with the

entirely different one of how he makes it, whether ex propagine or sive

propagine. No one doubts that God makes the soul, as no one doubts that

He makes the body. But when we consider how he makes it, sobriety and

vigilance become necessary lest we should unguardedly fall into the

Pelagian heresy. Augustin defends his attitude of uncertainty, and

enumerates the points as to which he has no doubt: viz., that the soul

is spirit, not body; that it is rational or intellectual; that it is

not of the nature of God, but is so far a mortal creature that it is

capable of deterioration and of alienation from the life of God, and so

far immortal that after this life it lives on in bliss or punishment

forever; that it was not incarnated because of, or according to,

preceding deserts acquired in a previous existence, yet that it is

under the curse of sin which it derives from Adam, and therefore in all

cases alike needs redemption in Christ.

The whole subject of the nature and origin of the soul, however, is

most fully discussed in the four books which are gathered together

under the common title of On the Soul and its Origin. Vincentius Victor

was a young layman who had recently been converted from the Rogatian

heresy; on being shown by his friend Peter, a presbyter, a small work

of Augustin's on the origin of the soul, he expressed surprise that so

great a man could profess ignorance on a matter so intimate to his very

being, and, receiving encouragement, wrote a book for Peter in which he

attacked and tried to solve all the difficulties of the subject. Peter

received the work with transports of delighted admiration; but Renatus,

happening that way, looked upon it with distrust, and, finding that

Augustin was spoken of in it with scant courtesy, felt it his duty to

send him a copy of it, which he did in the summer of 419. It was

probably not until late in the following autumn that Augustin found

time to take up the matter; but then he wrote to Renatus, to Peter, and

two books to Victor himself, and it is these four books together which

constitute the treatise that has come down to us. The first book is a

letter to Renatus, and is introduced by an expression of thanks to him

for sending Victor's book, and of kindly feeling towards and

appreciation for the high qualities of Victor himself (1-3). Then

Victor's errors are pointed out,--as to the nature of the soul (4-9),

including certain far-reaching corollaries that flow from these

(10-15), as well as, as to the origin of the soul (16-30); and the

letter closes with some remarks on the danger of arguing from the

silence of Scripture (31), on the self-contradictions of Victor (34),

and on the errors that must be avoided in any theory of the origin of

the soul that hopes to be acceptable,--to wit, that souls become sinful

by an alien original sin, that unbaptized infants need no salvation,

that souls sinned in a previous state, and that they are condemned for

sins which they have not committed but would have committed had they

lived longer. The second book is a letter to Peter, warning him of the

responsibility that rests on him as Victor's trusted friend and a

clergyman, to correct Victor's errors, and reproving him for the

uninstructed delight he had taken in Victor's crudities. It opens by

asking Peter what was the occasion of the great joy which Victor's book

brought him? could it be that he learned from it, for the first time,

the old and primary truths it contained? (2-3); or was it due to the

new errors that it proclaimed,--seven of which he enumerates? (4-16).

Then, after animadverting on the dilemma in which Victor stood, of

either being forced to withdraw his violent assertion of creationism,

or else of making God unjust in His dealings with new souls (17), he

speaks of Victor's unjustifiable dogmatism in the matter (18-21), and

closes with severely solemn words to Peter on his responsibility in the

premises (22-23). In the third and fourth books, which are addressed to

Victor, the polemic, of course, reaches its height. The third book is

entirely taken up with pointing out to Victor, as a father to a son,

the errors into which he has fallen, and which, in accordance with his

professions of readiness for amendment, he ought to correct. Eleven are

enumerated: 1. That the soul was made by God out of Himself (3-7); 2.

That God will continuously create souls forever (8); 3. That the soul

has desert of good before birth (9); 4. (contradictingly), That the

soul has desert of evil before birth (10); 5. That the soul deserved to

be sinful before any sin (11); 6. That unbaptized infants are saved

(12); 7. That what God predestinates may not occur (13); 8. That Wisd.

iv. 1 is spoken of infants (14); 9. That some of the mansions with the

Father are outside of God's kingdom (15-17); 10. That the sacrifice of

Christ's blood may be offered for the unbaptized (18); 11. That the

unbaptized may attain at the resurrection even to the kingdom of heaven

(19). The book closes by reminding Victor of his professions of

readiness to correct his errors, and warning him against the obstinacy

that makes the heretic (20-23). The fourth book deals with the more

personal elements of the controversy, and discusses the points in which

Victor had expressed dissent from Augustin. It opens with a statement

of the two grounds of complaint that Victor had urged against Augustin;

viz., that he refused to express a confident opinion as to the origin

of the soul, and that he affirmed that the soul was not corporeal, but

spirit (1-2). These two complaints are then taken up at length (2-16

and 17-37). To the first, Augustin replies that man's knowledge is at

best limited, and often most limited about the things nearest to him;

we do not know the constitution of our bodies; and, above most others,

this subject of the origin of the soul is one on which no one but God

is a competent witness. Who remembers his birth? Who remembers what was

before birth? But this is just one of the subjects on which God has not

spoken unambiguously in the Scriptures. Would it not be better, then,

for Victor to imitate Augustin's cautious ignorance, than that Augustin

should imitate Victor's rash assertion of errors? That the soul is not

corporeal, Augustin argues (18-35) from the Scriptures and from the

phenomena of dreams; and then shows, in opposition to Victor's

trichotomy, that the Scriptures teach the identity of "soul" and

"spirit" (36-37). The book closes with a renewed enumeration of

Victor's eleven errors (38), and a final admonition to his rashness

(39). It is pleasant to know that Augustin found in this case, also,

that righteousness is the fruit of the faithful wounds of a friend.

Victor accepted the rebuke, and professed his better instruction at the

hands of his modest but resistless antagonist.

The controversy now entered upon a new stage. Among the evicted bishops

of Italy who refused to sign Zosimus' Epistola Tractoria, Julian of

Eclanum was easily the first, and at this point he appears as the

champion of Pelagianism. It was a sad fate that arrayed this beloved

son of his old friend against Augustin, just when there seemed to be

reason to hope that the controversy was at an end, and the victory won,

and the plaudits of the world were greeting him as the saviour of the

Church. [121] But the now fast-aging bishop was to find, that, in this

"very confident young man," he had yet to meet the most persistent and

most dangerous advocate of the new doctrines that had arisen. Julian

had sent, at an earlier period, two letters to Zosimus, one of which

has come down to us as a "Confession of Faith," and the other of which

attempted to approach Augustinian forms of speech as much as possible;

the object of both being to gain standing ground in the Church for the

Italian Pelagians. Now he appears as a Pelagian controversialist; and

in opposition to the book On Marriage and Concupiscence, which Augustin

had sent Valerius, he published an extended work in four thick books

addressed to Turbantius. Extracts from the first of these books were

sent by some one to Valerius, and were placed by him in the hands of

Alypius, who was then in Italy, for transmission to Augustin.

Meanwhile, a letter had been sent to Rome by Julian, [122] designed to

strengthen the cause of Pelagianism there; and a similar one, in the

names of the eighteen Pelagianizing Italian bishops, was addressed to

Rufus, bishop of Thessalonica, and representative of the Roman see in

that portion of the Eastern Empire which was regarded as

ecclesiastically a part of the West, the design of which was to obtain

the powerful support of this important magnate, perhaps, also, a refuge

from persecution within his jurisdiction. These two letters came into

the hands of the new Pope, Boniface, who gave them also to Alypius for

transmission to Augustin. Thus provided, Alypius returned to Africa.

The tactics of all these writings of Julian were essentially the same;

he attempted not so much to defend Pelagianism, as to attack

Augustinianism, and thus literally to carry the war into Africa. He

insisted that the corruption of nature which Augustin taught was

nothing else than Manicheism; that the sovereignty of grace, as taught

by him, was only the attribution of "acceptance of persons," and

partiality, to God; and that his doctrine of predestination was mere

fatalism. He accused the anti-Pelagians of denying the goodness of the

nature that God had created, of the marriage that He had ordained, of

the law that He had given, of the free will that He had implanted in

man, as well as the perfection of His saints. [123] He insisted that

this teaching also did dishonour to baptism itself which it professed

so to honour, inasmuch as it asserted the continuance of concupiscence

after baptism,--and thus taught that baptism does not take away sins,

but only shaves them off as one shaves his beard, and leaves the roots

whence the sins may grow anew, and need cutting down again. He

complained bitterly of the way in which Pelagianism had been

condemned,--that bishops had been compelled to sign a definition of

dogma, not in council assembled, but sitting at home; and he demanded a

rehearing of the whole case before a lawful council, lest the doctrine

of the Manichees should be forced upon the acceptance of the world.

Augustin felt a strong desire to see the whole work of Julian against

his book On Marriage and Concupiscence before he undertook a reply to

the excerpts sent him by Valerius; but he did not feel justified in

delaying obedience to that officer's request, and so wrote at once two

treatises, one an answer to these excerpts, for the benefit of

Valerius, constituting the second book of his On Marriage and

Concupiscence; and the other, a far more elaborate examination of the

letters sent by Boniface, which bears the title, Against Two Letters of

the Pelagians. The purpose of the second book of On Marriage and

Concupiscence, Augustin himself states, in its introductory sentences,

to be "to reply to the taunts of his adversaries with all the

truthfulness and scriptural authority he could command." He begins (2)

by identifying the source of the extracts forwarded to him by Valerius,

with Julian's work against his first book, and then remarks upon the

garbled form in which he is quoted in them (3-6), and passes on to

state and refute Julian's charge that the catholics had turned

Manicheans (7-9). At this point, the refutation of Julian begins in

good earnest, and the method that he proposes to use is stated; viz.,

to adduce the adverse statements, and refute them one by one (10).

Beginning at the beginning, he quotes first the title of the paper sent

him, which declares that it is directed against "those who condemn

matrimony, and ascribe its fruit to the Devil" (11), which certainly,

says Augustin, does not describe him or the catholics. The next twenty

chapters (10-30), accordingly, following Julian's order, labour to

prove that marriage is good, and ordained by God, but that its good

includes fecundity indeed, but not concupiscence, which arose from sin,

and contracts sin. It is next argued, that the doctrine of original sin

does not imply an evil origin for man (31-51); and in the course of

this argument, the following propositions are especially defended: that

God makes offspring for good and bad alike, just as He sends the rain

and sunshine on just and unjust (31-34); that God makes everything to

be found in marriage except its flaw, concupiscence (35-40); that

marriage is not the cause of original sin, but only the channel through

which it is transmitted (41-47); and that to assert that evil cannot

arise from what is good leaves us in the clutches of that very

Manicheism which is so unjustly charged against the catholics--for, if

evil be not eternal, what else was there from which it could arise but

something good? (48-51). In concluding, Augustin recapitulates, and

argues especially, that shameful concupiscence is of sin, and the

author of sin, and was not in paradise (52-54); that children are made

by God, and only marred by the Devil (55); that Julian, in admitting

that Christ died for infants, admits that they need salvation (56);

that what the Devil makes in children is not a substance, but an injury

to a substance (57-58); and that to suppose that concupiscence existed

in any form in paradise introduces incongruities in our conception of

life in that abode of primeval bliss (59-60).

The long and important treatise, Against Two Letters of the Pelagians,

consists of four books, the first of which replies to the letter sent

to Rome, and the other three to that sent to Thessalonica. After a

short introduction, in which he thanks Boniface for his kindness, and

gives reasons why heretical writings should be answered (1-3), Augustin

begins at once to rebut the calumnies which the letter before him

brings against the catholics (4-28). These are seven in number: 1. That

the catholics destroy free will; to which Augustin replies that none

are "forced into sin by the necessity of their flesh," but all sin by

free will, though no man can have a righteous will save by God's grace,

and that it is really the Pelagians that destroy free will by

exaggerating it (4-8); 2. That Augustin declares that such marriage as

now exists is not of God (9); 3. That sexual desire and intercourse are

made a device of the Devil, which is sheer Manicheism (10-11); 4. That

the Old-Testament saints are said to have died in sin (12); 5. That

Paul and the other apostles are asserted to have been polluted by lust

all their days; Augustin's answer to which includes a running

commentary on Rom. vii. 7 sq., in which (correcting his older exegesis)

he shows that Paul is giving here a transcript of his own experience as

a typical Christian (13-24); 6. That Christ is said not to have been

free from sin (25); 7. That baptism does not give complete remission of

sins, but leaves roots from which they may again grow; to which

Augustin replies that baptism does remit all sins, but leaves

concupiscence, which, although not sin, is the source of sin (26-28).

Next, the positive part of Julian's letter is taken up, and his

profession of faith against the catholics examined (29-41). The seven

affirmations that Julian makes here are designed as the obverse of the

seven charges against the catholics. He believed: 1. That free will is

in all by nature, and could not perish by Adam's sin (29); 2. That

marriage, as now existent, was ordained by God (30); 3. That sexual

impulse and virility are from God (31-35); 4. That men are God's work,

and no one is forced to do good or evil unwillingly, but are assisted

by grace to good, and incited by the Devil to evil (36-38); 5. That the

saints of the Old Testament were perfected in righteousness here, and

so passed into eternal life (39); 6. That the grace of Christ

(ambiguously meant) is necessary for all, and all children--even those

of baptized parents--are to be baptized (40); 7. And that baptism gives

full cleansing from all sins; to which Augustin pointedly asks, "What

does it do for infants, then?" (41). The book concludes with an answer

to Julian's conclusion, in which he demands a general council, and

charges the catholics with Manicheism.

The second, third, and fourth books deal with the letter to Rufus in a

somewhat similar way, the second and third books being occupied with

the calumnies brought against the catholics, and the fourth with the

claims made by the Pelagians. The second begins by repelling the charge

of Manicheism brought against the catholics (1-4), to which the pointed

remark is added, that the Pelagians cannot hope to escape condemnation

because they are willing to condemn another heresy; and then defends

(with less success) the Roman clergy against the charge of

prevarication in their dealing with the Pelagians (5-8), in the course

of which all that can be said in defence of Zosimus' wavering policy is

said well and strongly. Next the charges against catholic teaching are

taken up and answered (9-16), especially the two important accusations

that they maintain fate under the name of grace (9-12), and that they

make God an "accepter of persons" (13-16). Augustin's replies to these

charges are in every way admirable. The charge of "fate" rests solely

on the catholic denial that grace is given according to preceding

merits; but the Pelagians do not escape the same charge when they

acknowledge that the "fates" of baptized and unbaptized infants do

differ. It is, in truth, not a question of "fate," but of gratuitous

bounty; and "it is not the catholics that assert fate under the name of

grace, but the Pelagians that choose to call divine grace by the name

of fate'" (12). As to "acceptance of persons," we must define what we

mean by that. God certainly does not accept one's "person" above

another's; He does not give to one rather than to another because He

sees something to please Him in one rather than another: quite the

opposite. He gives of His bounty to one while giving all their due to

all, as in the parable (Matt. xx. 9 sq.). To ask why He does this, is

to ask in vain: the apostle answers by not answering (Rom. ix.); and

before the dumb infants, who are yet made to differ, all objection to

God is dumb. From this point, the book becomes an examination of the

Pelagian doctrine of prevenient merit (17-23), concluding that God

gives all by grace from the beginning to the end of every process of

doing good. 1. He commands the good; 2. He gives the desire to do it;

and, 3. He gives the power to do it: and all, of His gratuitous mercy.

The third book continues the discussion of the calumnies of the

Pelagians against the catholics, and enumerates and answers six of

them: viz., that the catholics teach, 1. That the Old-Testament law was

given, not to justify the obedient, but to serve as cause of greater

sin (2-3); 2. That baptism does not give entire remission of sins, but

the baptized are partly God's and partly the Devil's (4-5); 3. That the

Holy Ghost did not assist virtue in the Old Testament (6-13); 4. That

the Bible saints were not holy, but only less wicked than others

(14-15); 5. That Christ was a sinner by necessity of His flesh

(doubtless, Julian's inference from the doctrine of race-sin) (16); 6.

That men will begin to fulfil God's commandments only after the

resurrection (17-23). Augustin shows that at the basis of all these

calumnies lies either misapprehension or misrepresentation; and, in

concluding the book, enumerates the three chief points in the Pelagian

heresy, with the five claims growing out of them, of which they most

boasted, and then elucidates the mutual relations of the three parties,

catholics, Pelagians, and Manicheans, with reference to these points,

showing that the catholics stand asunder from both the others, and

condemn both (24-27). This conclusion is really a preparation for the

fourth book, which takes up these five Pelagian claims, and, after

showing the catholic position on them all in brief (1-3), discusses

them in turn (4-19): viz., the praise of the creature (4-8), the praise

of marriage (9), the praise of the law (10-11), the praise of free will

(12-16), and the praise of the saints (17-18). At the end, Augustin

calls on the Pelagians to cease to oppose the Manicheans, only to fall

into as bad heresy as theirs (19); and then, in reply to their

accusation that the catholics were proclaiming novel doctrine, he

adduces the testimony of Cyprian and Ambrose, both of whom had received

Pelagius' praise, on each of the three main points of Pelagianism

(20-32), [124] and then closes with the declaration that the "impious

and foolish doctrine," as they called it, of the catholics, is

immemorial truth (33), and with a denial of the right of the Pelagians

to ask for a general council to condemn them (34). All heresies do not

need an ecumenical synod for their condemnation; usually it is best to

stamp them out locally, and not allow what may be confined to a corner

to disturb the whole world.

These books were written late in 420, or early in 421, and Alypius

appears to have conveyed them to Italy during the latter year. Before

its close, Augustin, having obtained and read the whole of Julian's

attack on the first book of his work On Marriage and Concupiscence,

wrote out a complete answer to it, [125] --a task that he was all the

more anxious to complete, on perceiving that the extracts sent by

Valerius were not only all from the first book of Julian's treatise,

but were somewhat altered in the extracting. The resulting work,

Against Julian, one of the longest that he wrote in the whole course of

the Pelagian controversy, shows its author at his best: according to

Cardinal Noris's judgment, he appears in it "almost divine," and

Augustin himself clearly set great store by it. In the first book of

this noble treatise, after professing his continued love for Julian,

"whom he was unable not to love, whatever he [Julian] should say

against him" (35), he undertakes to show that in affixing the

opprobrious name of Manicheans on those who assert original sin, Julian

is incriminating many of the most famous fathers, both of the Latin and

Greek Churches. In proof of this, he makes appropriate quotations from

Iren�us, Cyprian, Reticius, Olympius, Hilary, Ambrose, Gregory

Nazianzenus, Basil, John of Constantinople. [126] Then he argues, that,

so far from the catholics falling into Manichean heresy, Julian plays,

himself, into the hands of the Manicheans in their strife against the

catholics, by many unguarded statements, such as, e.g., when he says

that an evil thing cannot arise from what is good, that the work of the

Devil cannot be suffered to be diffused by means of a work of God, that

a root of evil cannot be placed within a gift of God, and the like. The

second book advances to greater detail, and adduces the five great

arguments which the Pelagians urged against the catholics, in order to

test them by the voice of antiquity. These arguments are stated as

follows (2): "For you say, That we, by asserting original sin, affirm

that the Devil is the maker of infants, condemn marriage, deny that all

sins are remitted in baptism, accuse God of the guilt of sin, and

produce despair of perfection.' You contend that all these are

consequences, if we believe that infants are born bound by the sin of

the first man, and are therefore under the Devil unless they are born

again in Christ. For, It is the Devil that creates,' you say, if they

are created from that wound which the Devil inflicted on the human

nature that was made at first.' And marriage is condemned,' you say, if

it is to be believed to have something about it whence it produces

those worthy of condemnation.' And all sins are not remitted in

baptism,' you say, if there remains any evil in baptized couples whence

evil offspring are produced.' And how is God,' you ask, not unjust, if

He, while remitting their own sins to baptized persons, yet condemns

their offspring, inasmuch as, although it is created by Him, it yet

ignorantly and involuntarily contracts the sins of others from those

very parents to whom they are remitted?' Nor can men believe,' you add,

that virtue--to which corruption is to be understood to be

contrary--can be perfected, if they cannot believe that it can destroy

the inbred vices, although, no doubt, these can scarcely be considered

vices, since he does not sin, who is unable to be other than he was

created.'" These arguments are then tested, one by one, by the

authority of the earlier teachers who were appealed to in the first

book, and shown to be condemned by them. The remaining four books

follow Julian's four books, argument by argument, refuting him in

detail. In the third book it is urged that although God is good, and

made man good, and instituted marriage which is, therefore, good,

nevertheless concupiscence is evil, and in it the flesh lusts against

the spirit. Although chaste spouses use this evil well, continent

believers do better in not using it at all. It is pointed out, how far

all this is from the madness of the Manicheans, who dream of matter as

essentially evil and co-eternal with God; and shown that evil

concupiscence sprang from Adam's disobedience and, being transmitted to

us, can be removed only by Christ. It is shown, also, that Julian

himself confesses lust to be evil, inasmuch as he speaks of remedies

against it, wishes it to be bridled, and speaks of the continent waging

a glorious warfare. The fourth book follows the second book of Julian's

work, and makes two chief contentions: that unbelievers have no true

virtues, and that even the heathen recognize concupiscence as evil. It

also argues that grace is not given according to merit, and yet is not

to be confounded with fate; and explains the text that asserts that God

wishes all men to be saved,' in the sense that all men' means all that

are to be saved' since none are saved except by His will. [127] The

fifth book, in like manner, follows Julian's third book, and treats of

such subjects as these: that it is due to sin that any infants are

lost; that shame arose in our first parents through sin; that sin can

well be the punishment of preceding sin; that concupiscence is always

evil, even in those who do not assent to it; that true marriage may

exist without intercourse; that the "flesh" of Christ differs from the

"sinful flesh" of other men; and the like. In the sixth book, Julian's

fourth book is followed, and original sin is proved from the baptism of

infants, the teaching of the apostles, and the rites of exorcism and

exsufflation incorporated in the form of baptism. Then, by the help of

the illustration drawn from the olive and the oleaster, it is explained

how Christian parents can produce unregenerate offspring; and the

originally voluntary character of sin is asserted, even though it now

comes by inheritance.

After the completion of this important work, there succeeded a lull in

the controversy, of some years duration; and the calm refutation of

Pelagianism and exposition of Christian grace, which Augustin gave in

his Enchiridion, [128] might well have seemed to him his closing word

on this all-absorbing subject. But he had not yet given the world all

he had in treasure for it, and we can rejoice in the chance that five

or six years afterwards drew from him a renewed discussion of some of

the more important aspects of the doctrine of grace. The circumstances

which brought this about are sufficiently interesting in themselves,

and open up to us an unwonted view into the monastic life of the times.

There was an important monastery at Adrumetum, the metropolitan city of

the province of Byzacium, [129] from which a monk named Florus went out

on a journey of charity to his native country of Uzalis about 426. On

the journey he met with Augustin's letter to Sixtus, [130] in which the

doctrines of gratuitous and prevenient grace were expounded. He was

much delighted with it, and, procuring a copy, sent it back to his

monastery for the edification of his brethren, while he himself went on

to Carthage. At the monastery, the letter created great disturbance:

without the knowledge of the abbot, Valentinus, it was read aloud to

the monks, many of whom were unskilled in theological questions; and

some five or more were greatly offended, and declared that free will

was destroyed by it. A secret strife arose among the brethren, some

taking extreme grounds on both sides. Of all this, Valentinus remained

ignorant until the return of Florus, who was attacked as the author of

all the trouble, and who felt it his duty to inform the abbot of the

state of affairs. Valentinus applied first to the bishop, Evodius, for

such instruction as would make Augustin's letter clear to the most

simple. Evodius replied, praising their zeal and deprecating their

contentiousness, and explaining that Adam had full free will, but that

it is now wounded and weak, and Christ's mission was as a physician to

cure and recuperate it. "Let them read," is his prescription, "the

words of God's elders....And when they do not understand, let them not

quickly reprehend, but pray to understand." This did not, however, cure

the malecontents, and the holy presbyter Sabrinus was appealed to, and

sent a book with clear interpretations. But neither was this

satisfactory; and Valentinus, at last, reluctantly consented that

Augustin himself should be consulted,--fearing, he says, lest by making

inquiries he should seem to waver about the truth. Two members of the

community were consequently permitted to journey to Hippo, but they

took with them no introduction and no commendation from their abbot.

Augustin, nevertheless, received them without hesitation, as they bore

themselves with too great simplicity to allow him to suspect them of

deception. Now we get a glimpse of life in the great bishop's monastic

home. The monks told their story, and were listened to with courtesy

and instructed with patience; and, as they were anxious to get home

before Easter, they received a letter for Valentinus [131] in which

Augustin briefly explains the nature of the misapprehension that had

arisen, and points out that both grace and free will must be defended,

and neither so exaggerated as to deny the other. The letter of Sixtus,

he explains, was written against the Pelagians, who assert that grace

is given according to merit, and briefly expounds the true doctrine of

grace as necessarily gratuitous and therefore prevenient. When the

monks were on the point of starting home, they were joined by a third

companion from Adrumetum, and were led to prolong their visit. This

gave him the opportunity he craved for their fuller instruction: he

read with them and explained to them not only his letter to Sixtus,

from which the strife had risen, but much of the chief literature of

the Pelagian controversy, [132] copies of which also were made for them

to take home with them; and when they were ready to go, he sent by them

another and longer letter to Valentinus, and placed in their hands a

treatise composed for their especial use, which, moreover, he explained

to them. This longer letter is essentially an exhortation "to turn

aside neither to the right hand nor to the left,"--neither to the left

hand of the Pelagian error of upholding free will in such a manner as

to deny grace, nor to the right hand of the equal error of so upholding

grace as if we might yield ourselves to evil with impunity. Both grace

and free will are to be proclaimed; and it is true both that grace is

not given to merits, and that we are to be judged at the last day

according to our works. The treatise which Augustin composed for a

fuller exposition of these doctrines is the important work On Grace and

Free Will. After a brief introduction, explaining the occasion of his

writing, and exhorting the monks to humility and teachableness before

God's revelations (1), Augustin begins by asserting and proving the two

propositions that the Scriptures clearly teach that man has free will

(2-5), and, as clearly, the necessity of grace for doing any good

(6-9). He then examines the passages which the Pelagians claim as

teaching that we must first turn to God, before He visits us with His

grace (10-11), and then undertakes to show that grace is not given to

merit (12 sq.), appealing especially to Paul's teaching and example,

and replying to the assertion that forgiveness is the only grace that

is not given according to our merits (15-18), and to the query, "How

can eternal life be both of grace and of reward?" (19-21). The nature

of grace, what it is, is next explained (22 sq.). It is not the law,

which gives only knowledge of sin (22-24), nor nature, which would

render Christ's death needless (25), nor mere forgiveness of sins, as

the Lord's Prayer (which should be read with Cyprian's comments on it)

is enough to show (26). Nor will it do to say that it is given to the

merit of a good will, thus distinguishing the good work which is of

grace from the good will which precedes grace (27-30); for the

Scriptures oppose this, and our prayers for others prove that we expect

God to be the first mover, as indeed both Scripture and experience

prove that He is. It is next shown that both free will and grace are

concerned in the heart's conversion (31-32), and that love is the

spring of all good in man (33-40), which, however, we have only because

God first loved us (38), and which is certainly greater than knowledge,

although the Pelagians admit only the latter to be from God (40). God's

sovereign government of men's wills is then proved from Scripture

(41-43), and the wholly gratuitous character of grace is illustrated

(44), while the only possible theodicy is found in the certainty that

the Lord of all the earth will do right. For, though no one knows why

He takes one and leaves another, we all know that He hardens judicially

and saves graciously,--that He hardens none who do not deserve

hardening, but none that He saves deserve to be saved (45). The

treatise closes with an exhortation to its prayerful and repeated study

(46).

The one request that Augustin made, on sending this work to Valentinus,

was that Florus, through whom the controversy had arisen, should be

sent to him, that he might converse with him and learn whether he had

been misunderstood, or himself had misunderstood Augustin. In due time

Florus arrived at Hippo, bringing a letter [133] from Valentinus which

addresses Augustin as "Lord Pope" (domine papa), thanks him for his

"sweet" and "healing" instruction, and introduces Florus as one whose

true faith could be confided in. It is very clear, both from

Valentinus' letter and from the hints that Augustin gives, that his

loving dealing with the monks had borne admirable fruit: "none were

cast down for the worse, some were built up for the better." [134] But

it was reported to him that some one at the monastery had objected to

the doctrine he had taught them, that "no man ought, then, to be

rebuked for not keeping God's commandments; but only God should be

besought that he might keep them." [135] In other words, it was said

that if all good was, in the last resort, from God's grace, man ought

not to be blamed for not doing what he could not do, but God ought to

be besought to do for man what He alone could do: we ought, in a word,

to apply to the source of power. This occasioned the composition of yet

another treatise On Rebuke and Grace, [136] the object of which was to

explain the relations of grace to human conduct, and especially to make

it plain that the sovereignty of God's grace does not supersede our

duty to ourselves or our fellow-men. It begins by thanking Valentinus

for his letter and for sending Florus (whom Augustin finds well

instructed in the truth), thanking God for the good effect of the

previous book, and recommending its continued study, and then by

briefly expounding the Catholic faith concerning grace, free-will, and

the law (1-2). The general proposition that is defended is that the

gratuitous sovereignty of God's grace does not supersede human means

for obtaining and continuing it (3 sq.). This is shown by the apostle's

example, who used all human means for the prosecution of his work, and

yet confessed that it was "God that gave the increase" (3). Objections

are then answered (4 sq.),--especially the great one that "it is not my

fault if I do not do what I have not received grace for doing" (6); to

which Augustin replies (7-10), that we deserve rebuke for our very

unwillingness to be rebuked, that on the same reasoning the

prescription of the law and the preaching of the gospel would be

useless, that the apostle's example opposes such a position, and that

our consciousness witnesses that we deserve rebuke for not persevering

in the right way. From this point an important discussion arises, in

this interest, of the gift of perseverance (11-19), and of God's

election (20-24); the teaching being that no one is saved who does not

persevere, and all that are predestinated or "called according to the

purpose" (Augustin's phrase for what we should call "effectual

calling") will persevere, and yet that we co-operate by our will in all

good deeds, and deserve rebuke if we do not. Whether Adam received the

gift of perseverance, and, in general, the difference between the grace

given to him (which was that grace by which he could stand) and that

now given to God's children (which is that grace by which we are

actually made to stand), are next discussed (26-38), with the result of

showing the superior greatness of the gifts of grace now to those given

before the fall. The necessity of God's mercy at all times, and our

constant dependence on it, are next vigorously asserted (39-42); even

in the day of judgment, if we are not judged "with mercy" we cannot be

saved (41). The treatise is brought to an end by a concluding

application of the whole discussion to the special matter in hand,

rebuke (43-49). Seeing that rebuke is one of God's means of working out

his gracious purposes, it cannot be inconsistent with the sovereignty

of that grace; for, of course, God predestinates the means with the end

(43). Nor can we know, in our ignorance, whether our rebuke is, in any

particular case, to be the means of amendment or the ground of greater

condemnation. How dare we, then, withhold it? Let it be, however,

graduated to the fault, and let us always remember its purpose (46-48).

Above all, let us not dare hold it back, lest we hold back from our

brother the means of his recovery, and, as well, disobey the command of

God (49).

It was not long afterwards (about 427) when Augustin was called upon to

attempt to reclaim a Carthaginian brother, Vitalis by name, who had

been brought to trial on the charge of teaching that the beginning of

faith was not the gift of God, but the act of man's own free will (ex

propria voluntatis). This was essentially the semi-Pelagian position

which was subsequently to make so large a figure in history; and

Augustin treats it now as necessarily implying the basal idea of

Pelagianism. In the important letter which he sent to Vitalis, [137] he

first argues that his position is inconsistent with the prayers of the

church. He, Augustin, prays that Vitalis may come to the true faith;

but does not this prayer ascribe the origination of right faith to God?

The Church so prays for all men: the priest at the altar exhorts the

people to pray God for unbelievers, that He may convert them to the

faith; for catechumens, that He may breathe into them a desire for

regeneration; for the faithful, that by His aid they may persevere in

what they have begun: will Vitalis refuse to obey these exhortations,

because, forsooth, faith is of free will and not of God's gift? Nay,

will a Carthaginian scholar array himself against Cyprian's exposition

of the Lord's Prayer? for he certainly teaches that we are to ask of

God what Vitalis says is to be had of ourselves. We may go farther: it

is not Cyprian, but Paul, who says, "Let us pray to God that we do no

evil" (2 Cor. xiii. 7); it is the Psalmist who says, "The steps of man

are directed by God" (Ps. xxxvi. 23). "If we wish to defend free will,

let us not strive against that by which it is made free. For he who

strives against grace, by which the will is made free for refusing evil

and doing good, wishes his will to remain captive. Tell us, I beg you,

how the apostle can say, We give thanks to the Father who made us fit

to have our lot with the saints in light, who delivered us from the

power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His

love' (Col. i. 12, 13), if not He, but itself, frees our choice? It is,

then, a false rendering of thanks to God, as if He does what He does

not do; and he has erred who has said that He makes us fit, etc.' The

grace of God,' therefore, does not consist in the nature of free-will,

and in law and teaching, as the Pelagian perversity dreams; but it is

given for each single act by His will, concerning whom it is

written,"--quoting Ps. lxvii. 10. About the middle of the letter,

Augustin lays down twelve propositions against the Pelagians, which are

important as communicating to us what he thought, at the end of the

controversy, were the chief points in dispute. "Since, therefore," he

writes, "we are catholic Christians: 1. We know that new-born children

have not yet done anything in their own lives, good or evil, neither

have they come into the miseries of this life according to the deserts

of some previous life, which none of them can have had in their own

persons; and yet, because they are born carnally after Adam, they

contract the contagion of ancient death, by the first birth, and are

not freed from the punishment of eternal death (which is contracted by

a just condemnation, passing over from one to all), except they are by

grace born again in Christ. 2. We know that the grace of God is given

neither to children nor to adults according to our deserts. 3. We know

that it is given to adults for each several act. 4. We know that it is

not given to all men; and to those to whom it is given, it is not only

not given according to the merits of works, but it is not even given to

them according to the merits of their will; and this is especially

apparent in children. 5. We know that to those to whom it is given, it

is given by the gratuitous mercy of God. 6. We know that to those to

whom it is not given, it is not given by the just judgment of God. 7.

We know that we shall all stand before the tribunal of Christ, and each

shall receive according to what he has done through the body,--not

according to what he would have done, had he lived longer,--whether

good or evil. 8. We know that even children are to receive according to

what they have done through the body, whether good or evil. But

according to what "they have done" not by their own act, but by the act

of those by whose responses for them they are said both to renounce the

Devil and to believe in God, wherefore they are counted among the

number of the faithful, and have part in the statement of the Lord when

He says, "Whosoever shall believe and be baptized, shall be saved."

Therefore also, to those who do not receive this sacrament, belongs

what follows, "But whosoever shall not have believed, shall be damned"

(Mark xvi. 16). Whence these too, as I have said, if they die in that

early age, are judged, of course, according to what they have done

through the body, i.e., in the time in which they were in the body,

when they believe or do not believe by the heart and mouth of their

sponsors, when they are baptized or not baptized, when they eat or do

not eat the flesh of Christ, when they drink or do not drink His

blood,--according to those things, then, which they have done through

the body, not according to those which, had they lived longer, they

would have done. 9. We know that blessed are the dead that die in the

Lord; and that what they would have done had they lived longer, is not

imputed to them. 10. We know that those that believe, with their own

heart, in the Lord, do so by their own free will and choice. 11. We

know that we who already believe act with right faith towards those who

do not wish to believe, when we pray to God that they may wish it. 12.

We know that for those who have believed out of this number, we both

ought and are rightly and truly accustomed to return thanks to God, as

for his benefits." Certainly such a body of propositions commends their

author to us as Christian both in head and heart: they are admirable in

every respect; and even in the matter of the salvation of infants,

where he had not yet seen the light of truth, he expresses himself in a

way as engaging in its hearty faith in God's goodness as it is

honorable in its loyalty to what he believed to be truth and justice.

Here his doctrine of the Church ran athwart and clouded his view of the

reach of grace; but we seem to see between the lines the promise of the

brighter dawn of truth that was yet to come. The rest of the epistle is

occupied with an exposition and commendation of these propositions,

which ranks with the richest passages of the anti-Pelagian writings,

and which breathes everywhere a yearning for his correspondent which we

cannot help hoping proved salutary to his faith.

It is not without significance, that the error of Vitalis took a

semi-Pelagian form. Pure Pelagianism was by this time no longer a

living issue. Augustin was himself, no doubt, not yet done with it. The

second book of his treatise On Marriage and Concupiscence, which seems

to have been taken to Italy by Alypius, in 421, received at once the

attention of Julian, and was elaborately answered by him, during that

same year, in eight books addressed to Florus. But Julian was now in

Cilicia, and his book was slow in working its way westward. It was

found at Rome by Alypius, apparently in 427 or 428, and he at once set

about transcribing it for his friend's use. An opportunity arising to

send it to Africa before it was finished, he forwarded to Augustin the

five books that were ready, with an urgent request that they should

receive his immediate attention, and a promise to send the other three

as soon as possible. Augustin gives an account of his progress in his

reply to them in a letter written to Quodvultdeus, apparently in 428.

[138] This deacon was urging Augustin to give the Church a succinct

account of all heresies; and Augustin excuses himself from immediately

undertaking that task by the press of work on his hands. He was writing

his Retractations, and had already finished two books of them, in which

he had dealt with two hundred and thirty-two works. His letters and

homilies remained and he had given the necessary reading to many of the

letters. Also, he tells his correspondent, he was engaged on a reply to

the eight books of Julian's new work. Working night and day, he had

already completed his response to the first three of Julian's books,

and had begun on the fourth while still expecting the arrival of the

last three which Alypius had promised to send. If he had completed the

answer to the five books of Julian which he already had in hand, before

the other three reached him, he might begin the work which Quodvultdeus

so earnestly desired him to undertake. In due time, whatever may have

been the trials and labours that needed first to be met, the desired

treatise On Heresies was written (about 428), and the eighty-eighth

chapter of it gives us a welcome compressed account of the Pelagian

heresy, which may be accepted as the obverse of the account of catholic

truth given in the letter to Vitalis. [139] But the composition of this

work was not the only interruption which postponed the completion of

the second elaborate work against Julian. It was in the providence of

God that the life of this great leader in the battle for grace should

be prolonged until he could deal with semi-Pelagianism also.

Information as to the rise of this new form of the heresy at Marseilles

and elsewhere in Southern Gaul was conveyed to Augustin along with

entreaties, that, as "faith's great patron," he would give his aid

towards meeting it, by two laymen with whom he had already had

correspondence,--Prosper and Hilary. [140] They pointed out [141] the

difference between the new party and thorough-going Pelagianism; but,

at the same time, the essentially Pelagianizing character of its

formative elements. Its representatives were ready, as a rule, to admit

that all men were lost in Adam, and no one could recover himself by his

own free will, but all needed God's grace for salvation. But they

objected to the doctrines of prevenient and of irresistible grace; and

asserted that man could initiate the process of salvation by turning

first to God, that all men could resist God's grace, and no grace could

be given which they could not reject, and especially they denied that

the gifts of grace came irrespective of merits, actual or foreseen.

They said that what Augustin taught as to the calling of God's elect

according to His own purpose was tantamount to fatalism, was contrary

to the teaching of the fathers and the true Church doctrine, and, even

if true, should not be preached, because of its tendency to drive men

into indifference or despair. Hence, Prosper especially desired

Augustin to point out the dangerous nature of these views, and to show

that prevenient and co-operating grace is not inconsistent with free

will, that God's predestination is not founded on foresight of

receptivity in its objects, and that the doctrines of grace may be

preached without danger to souls.

Augustin's answer to these appeals was a work in two books, On the

Predestination of the Saints, the second book of which is usually known

under the separate title of The Gift of Perseverance. The former book

begins with a careful discrimination of the position of his new

opponents: they have made a right beginning in that they believe in

original sin, and acknowledge that none are saved from it save by

Christ, and that God's grace leads men's wills, and without grace no

one can suffice for good deeds. These things will furnish a good

starting-point for their progress to an acceptance of predestination

also (1-2). The first question that needs discussion in such

circumstances is, whether God gives the very beginnings of faith (3

sq.); since they admit that what Augustin had previously urged sufficed

to prove that faith was the gift of God so far as that the increase of

faith was given by Him, but not so far but that the beginning of faith

may be understood to be man's, to which, then, God adds all other gifts

(compare 43). Augustin insists that this is no other than the Pelagian

assertion of grace according to merit (3), is opposed to Scripture

(4-5), and begets arrogant boasting in ourselves (6). He replies to the

objection that he had himself once held this view, by confessing it,

and explaining that he was converted from it by 1 Cor. iv. 7, as

applied by Cyprian (7-8), and expounds that verse as containing in its

narrow compass a sufficient answer to the present theories (9-11). He

answers, further, the objection that the apostle distinguishes faith

from works, and works alone are meant in such passages, by pointing to

John vi. 28, and similar statements in Paul (12-16). Then he answers

the objection that he himself had previously taught that God acted on

foresight of faith, by showing that he was misunderstood (17-18). He

next shows that no objection lies against predestination that does not

lie with equal force against grace (19-22),--since predestination is

nothing but God's foreknowledge of and preparation for grace, and all

questions of sovereignty and the like belong to grace. Did God not know

to whom he was going to give faith (19)? or did he promise the results

of faith, works, without promising the faith without which, as going

before, the works were impossible? Would not this place God's

fulfilment of his promise out of His power, and make it depend on man

(20)? Why are men more willing to trust in their weakness than in God's

strength? do they count God's promises more uncertain than their own

performance (22)? He next proves the sovereignty of grace, and of

predestination, which is but the preparation for grace, by the striking

examples of infants, and, above all, of the human nature of Christ

(23-31), and then speaks of the twofold calling, one external and one

"according to purpose,"--the latter of which is efficacious and

sovereign (32-37). In closing, the semi-Pelagian position is carefully

defined and refuted as opposed, alike with the grosser Pelagianism, to

the Scriptures of both Testaments (38-42).

The purpose of the second book, which has come down to us under the

separate title of On the Gift of Perseverance, is to show that that

perseverance which endures to the end is as much of God as the

beginning of faith, and that no man who has been "called according to

God's purpose," and has received this gift, can fall from grace and be

lost. The first half of the treatise is devoted to this theme (1-33).

It begins by distinguishing between temporary perseverance, which

endures for a time, and that which continues to the end (1), and

affirms that the latter is certainly a gift of God's grace, and is,

therefore, asked from God which would otherwise be but a mocking

petition (2-3). This, the Lord's Prayer itself might teach us, as under

Cyprian's exposition it does teach us,--each petition being capable of

being read as a prayer for perseverance (4-9). Of course, moreover, it

cannot be lost, otherwise it would not be "to the end." If man forsakes

God, of course it is he that does it, and he is doubtless under

continual temptation to do so; but if he abides with God, it is God who

secures that, and God is equally able to keep one when drawn to Him, as

He is to draw him to Him (10-15). He argues anew at this point, that

grace is not according to merit, but always in mercy; and explains and

illustrates the unsearchable ways of God in His sovereign but merciful

dealing with men (16-25), and closes this part of the treatise by a

defence of himself against adverse quotations from his early work on

Free Will, which he has already corrected in his Retractations. The

second half of the book discusses the objections that were being urged

against the preaching of predestination (34-62), as if it opposed and

enervated the preaching of the Gospel. He replies that Paul and the

apostles, and Cyprian and the fathers, preached both together; that the

same objections will lie against the preaching of God's foreknowledge

and grace itself, and, indeed, against preaching any of the virtues,

as, e.g., obedience, while declaring them God's gifts. He meets the

objections in detail, and shows that such preaching is food to the

soul, and must not be withheld from men; but explains that it must be

given gently, wisely, and prayerfully. The whole treatise ends with an

appeal to the prayers of the Church as testifying that all good is from

God (63-65), and to the great example of unmerited grace and sovereign

predestination in the choice of one human nature without preceding

merit, to be united in one person with the Eternal Word,--an

illustration of his theme of the gratuitous grace of God which he is

never tired of adducing (66-67).

These books were written in 428-429, and after their completion the

unfinished work against Julian was resumed. Alypius had sent the

remaining three books, and Augustin slowly toiled on to the end of his

reply to the sixth book. But he was to be interrupted once more, and

this time by the most serious of all interruptions. On the 28th of

August, 430, with the Vandals thundering at the gates of Hippo, full of

good works and of faith, he turned his face away from the

strifes--whether theological or secular--of earth, and entered into

rest with the Lord whom he loved. The last work against Julian was

already one of the most considerable in size of all his books; but it

was never finished, and retains until to-day the significant title of

The Unfinished Work. Augustin had hesitated to undertake this work,

because he found Julian's arguments too silly either to deserve

refutation, or to afford occasion for really edifying discourse. And

certainly the result falls below Augustin's usual level, though this is

not due, as is so often said, to failing powers and great age; for

nothing that he wrote surpasses in mellow beauty and chastened strength

the two books, On the Predestination of the Saints, which were written

after four books of this work were completed. The plan of the work is

to state Julian's arguments in his own words, and follow it with his

remarks; thus giving it something of the form of a dialogue. It follows

Julian's work, book by book. The first book states and answers certain

calumnies which Julian had brought against Augustin and the catholic

faith on the ground of their confession of original sin. Julian had

argued, that, since God is just, He cannot impute another's sins to

innocent infants; since sin is nothing but evil will, there can be no

sin in infants who are not yet in the use of their will; and, since the

freedom of will that is given to man consists in the capacity of both

sinning and not sinning, free will is denied to those who attribute sin

to nature. Augustin replies to these arguments, and answers certain

objections that are made to his work On Marriage and Concupiscence, and

then corrects Julian's false explanations of certain Scriptures from

John viii., Rom. vi., vii., and 2 Timothy. The second book is a

discussion of Rom. v. 12, which Julian had tried, like the other

Pelagians, to explain by the "imitation" of Adam's bad example. The

third book examines the abuse by Julian of certain Old-Testament

passages--in Deut. xxiv., 2 Kings xiv., Ezek. xviii.--in his effort to

show that God does not impute the father's sins to the children; as

well as his similar abuse of Heb. xi. The charge of Manicheism, which

was so repetitiously brought by Julian against the catholics, is then

examined and refuted. The fourth book treats of Julian's strictures on

Augustin's On Marriage and Concupiscence ii. 4-11, and proves from 1

John ii. 16 that concupiscence is evil, and not the work of God, but of

the Devil. He argues that the shame that accompanies it is due to its

sinfulness, and that there was none of it in Christ; also, that infants

are born obnoxious to the first sin, and proves the corruption of their

origin from Wisd. x. 10, 11. The fifth book defends On Marriage and

Concupiscence ii. 12 sq., and argues that a sound nature could not have

shame on account of its members, and the need of regeneration for what

is generated by means of shameful concupiscence. Then Julian's abuse of

1 Cor. xv., Rom. v., Matt. vii. 17 and 33, with reference to On

Marriage and Concupiscence ii. 14, 20, 26, is discussed; and then the

origin of evil, and God's treatment of evil in the world. The sixth

book traverses Julian's strictures on On Marriage and Concupiscence ii.

34 sq., and argues that human nature was changed for the worse by the

sin of Adam, and thus was made not only sinful, but the source of

sinners; and that the forces of free will by which man could at first

do rightly if he wished, and refrain from sin if he chose, were lost by

Adam's sin. He attacks Julian's definition of free will as "the

capacity for sinning and not sinning" (possibilitas peccandi et non

peccandi); and proves that the evils of this life are the punishment of

sin,--including, first of all, physical death. At the end, he treats of

1 Cor. xv. 22.

Although the great preacher of grace was taken away by death before the

completion of this book, yet his work was not left incomplete. In the

course of the next year (431) the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus

condemned Pelagianism for the whole world; and an elaborate treatise

against the pure Pelagianism of Julian was already in 430 an

anachronism. Semi-Pelagianism was yet to run its course, and to work

its way so into the heart of a corrupt church as not to be easily

displaced; but Pelagianism was to die with the first generation of its

advocates. As we look back now through the almost millennium and a half

of years that has intervened since Augustin lived and wrote, it is to

his Predestination of the Saints,--a completed, and well-completed,

treatise,--and not to The Unfinished Work, that we look as the crown

and completion of his labours for grace.

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[40] Compare his work written this year, On Several Questions to

Simplicianus. For the development of Augustin's theology, see the

admirable statement in Neander's Church History, E.T., ii. 625 sq.

[41] On the Proceedings of Pelagius, 46.

[42] On the Merits and Remission of Sins, iii. 12.

[43] Epistle 157, 22.

[44] On the Proceedings of Pelagius, 46.

[45] Sermon 176, 2.

[46] Sermon 174.

[47] Do.

[48] On the Merits and Remission of Sins, iii. 1.

[49] On the Merits and Remission of Sins, i. 1. Compare Epistle 139.

[50] On the prominence of infant baptism in the controversy, and why it

was so, see Sermon 165, 7 sq. "What do you say? Just this,' he says,

that God creates every man immortal.' Why, then do infant children die?

For if I say, Why do adult men die?' you would say to me, They have

sinned.' Therefore I do not argue about the adults: I cite infancy as a

witness against you," and so on, eloquently developing the argument.

[51] On the Merits and Remission of Sins, iii. 1.

[52] Letter 139, 3.

[53] Letter 140.

[54] See chaps. 1 and 5.

[55] Sermon 163 treats the text similarly.

[56] See this prayer beautifully illustrated from Scripture in On the

Merits and Remission of Sins, ii. 5.

[57] See above, p. xv.

[58] As quoted above, p. xx.

[59] Epistle 146. See On the Proceedings of Pelagius, 50, 51, 52.

[60] Epistle 149. See especially 18 sq.

[61] Epistle 121.

[62] Sermon 293.

[63] Sermon 176, 2.

[64] The inscription says, "V Calendus Julii," i.e., June 27; but it

also says, "In natalis martyris Guddentis," whose day appears to have

been July 18. Some of the martyrologies assign 28th of June to

Gaudentius (which some copies read here), but possibly none to Guddene.

[65] Sermon 294.

[66] The passage is quoted at length in On the Merits and Remission of

Sins, iii. 10. Compare Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, iv. 23.

[67] Epistle 157, 22.

[68] Epistle 156, among Augustin's Letters.

[69] Epistle, 157, 22.

[70] Epistles 177, 6; and 179, 2.

[71] Epistle 168. On the Proceedings of Pelagius, 48.

[72] On the Proceedings of Pelagius, 47; and Epistle 186, 1.

[73] Compare On Nature and Grace, 7; and Epistle 186, 1.

[74] Epistle 169, 13.

[75] On Nature and Grace, 1. Sallust's Jugurtha, prologue.

[76] For Augustin's press of work just now, see Epistle 169, 1 and 13.

[77] The argument occurs in Pelagius' Commentary on Paul, written

before 410, and is already before Augustin in On the Merits and

Forgiveness of Sins, etc., iii. 5.

[78] Epistle 166.

[79] An almost contemporary letter to Oceanus (Epistle 180, written in

416) adverts to the same subject and in the same spirit, showing how

much it was in Augustin's thoughts. Compare Epistle 180, 2 and 5.

[80] Epistle 172.

[81] See On the Perfection of Man's Righteousness, 1.

[82] Migne's Edition of Augustin's Works, vol. v. pp. 1719-1723.

[83] Compare the words of Cicero quoted above, p. xiv.

[84] Compare the similar words in Epistle 177, 3, which was written,

not only after what had occurred in Palestine was known, but also after

the condemnatory decisions of the African synods.

[85] Epistles 175 and 176 in Augustin's Letters.

[86] Epistle 177. The other bishops were Aurelius, Alypius, Evodius,

and Possidius.

[87] Epistle 178.

[88] Epistle 179.

[89] See vol. i. of this series, p. 459, and the references there

given. Compare Canon Robertson's vivid account of them in his History

of the Christian Church, ii. 18, 145.

[90] Epistle 188.

[91] Compare On the Grace of Christ, 40. In the succeeding sections,

some of its statements are examined.

[92] Epistles 181, 182, 183, among Augustin's Letters.

[93] Epistle 186, written conjointly with Alypius.

[94] The book given him by Timasius and James, to which On Nature and

Grace is a reply.

[95] Compare also Innocent's letter (Epistle 181) to the Carthaginian

Council, chap. 4, which also Neander, History of the Christian Church,

E.T., ii. 646, quotes in this connection, as showing that Innocent

"perceived that this dispute was connected with a different way of

regarding the relation of God's providence to creation." As if Augustin

did not see this too!

[96] The book addressed to Dardanus, in which the Pelagians are

confuted, but not named, belongs about at this time. Compare

Retractations, ii. 49.

[97] Sermon 131, preached at Carthage.

[98] On the Grace of Christ, 2.

[99] The so-called Confession of Faith sent to Innocent after the Synod

of Diospolis, but which arrived after Innocent's death.

[100] On Original Sin, 1.

[101] Do., 5.

[102] On the Grace of Christ, 55.

[103] On the Gift of Perseverance, 55.

[104] Compare, below, pp. lv-lviii. Neander, in the second volume

(E.T.) of his History of the Christian Church, discusses the matter in

a very fair spirit.

[105] English version, xcv., see verse 6.

[106] Sermon 26.

[107] Epistle 190.

[108] See Epistle 194, 1.

[109] See Epistle 191, 1.

[110] Epistle 191.

[111] Epistle 194.

[112] It appears to have been first reported to Augustin, by Marius

Mercator, in a letter received at Carthage. See Epistle 193, 3.

[113] As, for example, in On the Merits and Remission of Sins, etc., i.

[114] Epistle 193.

[115] Compare On Dulcitius' Eight Questions, 3.

[116] That is, On the Merits and Remission of Sins, etc., ii. 30 sq.

[117] Epistle 196.

[118] On Marriage and Concupiscence, i. 2.

[119] Compare the Benedictine Preface to The Unfinished Work.

[120] Epistle 202, bis. Compare Epistle 190.

[121] Compare Epistle 195.

[122] Julian afterwards repudiated this letter, perhaps because of some

falsifications it had suffered; it seems to have been certainly his.

[123] Compare Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, iii. 24: and see

above, p. xv.

[124] To wit: Cyprian's testimony on original sin (20-24), on

gratuitous grace (25-26), on the imperfection of human righteousness

(27-28), and Ambrose's testimony on original sin (29), on gratuitous

grace (30), and on the imperfection of human righteousness (31).

[125] Compare Epistle 207, written probably in the latter half of 421.

[126] That is, Chyrsostom.

[127] Compare On Rebuke and Grace, 44, and the footnote there.

[128] See vol. iii. of this series, pp. 227 sq.

[129] Now a portion of Tunis.

[130] Epistle 194.

[131] Epistle 214.

[132] Epistle 215, 2 sq.

[133] Epistle 216.

[134] On Rebuke and Grace, 1.

[135] Retractions, ii. 67. Compare On Rebuke and Grace, 5 sq.

[136] On the importance of this treatise for Augustin's doctrine of

predestination, see Wiggers' Augustinianism and Pelagianism, E.T. p.

236, where a sketch of the history of this doctrine in Augustin's

writings may be found.

[137] Epistle 217.

[138] Epistle 224.

[139] The account given of Pelagianism is as follows: "They are in such

degree enemies of the grace of God, by which we have been predestined

into the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ unto Himself (Eph. i. 5), and

by which we are delivered from the power of darkness so as to believe

in Him, and be translated into His kingdom (Col. i. 13)--wherefore He

says, No man comes to Me, except it be given him of My Father' (John

vi. 66)--and by which love is shed abroad in our hearts (Rom. v. 5), so

that faith may work by love: that they believe that man is able,

without it, to keep all the Divine commandments,--whereas, if this were

true, it would clearly be an empty thing that the Lord said, Without Me

ye can do nothing' (John xv. 5). When Pelagius was at length accused by

the brethren, because he attributed nothing to the assistance of God's

grace towards the keeping of His commandments, he yielded to their

rebuke, so far as not to place this grace above free will, but with

faithless cunning to subordinate it, saying that it was given to men

for this purpose; viz., that they might be able more easily to fulfil

by grace, what they were commanded to do by free will. By saying, that

they might be able more easily,' he, of course, wished it to be

believed that, although with more difficulty, nevertheless men were

able without divine grace to perform the divine commands. But that

grace of God, without which we can do nothing good, they say does not

exist except in free will, which without any preceding merits our

nature received from Him; and that He adds His aid only in that by His

law and teaching we may learn what we ought to do, but not in that by

the gift of His Spirit we may do what we have learned ought to be done.

Accordingly, they confess that knowledge by which ignorance is banished

is divinely given to us, but deny that love by which we may live a

pious life is given; so that, forsooth, while knowledge, which, without

love, puffeth up, is the gift of God, love itself, which edifieth so

that knowledge may not puff up, is not the gift of God (1 Cor. viii.

11). They also destroy the prayers which the Church offers, whether for

those that are unbelieving and resisting God's teaching, that they may

be converted to God; or for the faithful, that faith may be increased

in them, and they may persevere in it. For they contend that men do not

receive these things from Him, but have them from ourselves, saying,

that the grace of God, by which we are freed from impiety, is given

according to our merits. Pelagius was compelled, no doubt, to condemn

this by his fear of being condemned by the episcopal judgment in

Palestine; but he is found to teach it still in his later writings.

They also advanced so far as to say that the life of the righteous in

this world is without sin, and the Church of Christ is perfected by

them in this mortality, to the point of being entirely without spot or

wrinkle (Eph. v. 27); as if it were not the Church of Christ, that, in

the whole world, cries to God, Forgive us our debts.' They also deny

that children, who are carnally born after Adam, contract the contagion

of ancient death from their first birth. For they assert that they are

born so without any bond of original sin, that there is absolutely

nothing that ought to be remitted to them in the second birth, yet they

are to be baptized; but for this reason, that, adopted in regeneration,

they may be admitted to the kingdom of God, and thus be translated from

good into better,--not that they may be washed by that renovation from

any evil of the old bond. For although they be not baptized, they

promise to them, outside the kingdom of God indeed, but nevertheless, a

certain eternal and blessed life of their own. They also say that Adam

himself, even had he not sinned, would have died in the body, and that

this death would not have come as a desert to a fault, but as a

condition of nature. Certain other things also are objected to them,

but these are the chief, and also either all, or nearly all, the others

may be understood to depend on these."

[140] Compare Epistles 225, 1, and 156. It is, of course, not certain

that this is the same Hilary that wrote to Augustin from Sicily, but it

seems probable.

[141] In Letters 225 and 226.

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IV. The Theology of Grace.

The theology which Augustin opposed, in his anti-Pelagian writings, to

the errors of Pelagianism, is, shortly, the theology of grace. Its

roots were planted deeply in his own experience, and in the teachings

of Scripture, especially of that apostle whom he delights to call "the

great preacher of grace," and to follow whom, in his measure, was his

greatest desire. The grace of God in Jesus Christ, conveyed to us by

the Holy Spirit and evidenced by the love that He sheds abroad in our

hearts, is the centre around which this whole side [142] of His system

revolves, and the germ out of which it grows. He was the more able to

make it thus central because of the harmony of this view of salvation

with the general principle of his whole theology, which was theocentric

and revolved around his conception of God as the immanent and vital

spirit in whom all things live and move and have their being. [143] In

like manner, God is the absolute good, and all good is either Himself

or from Him; and only as God makes us good, are we able to do anything

good.

The necessity of grace to man, Augustin argued from the condition of

the race as partakers of Adam's sin. God created man upright, and

endowed him with human faculties, including free will; [144] and gave

to him freely that grace by which he was able to retain his

uprightness. [145] Being thus put on probation, [146] with divine aid

to enable him to stand if he chose, Adam used his free choice for

sinning, and involved his whole race in his fall. [147] It was on

account of this sin that he died physically and spiritually, and this

double death passes over from him to us. [148] That all his descendants

by ordinary generation are partakers in Adam's guilt and condemnation,

Augustin is sure from the teachings of Scripture; and this is the fact

of original sin, from which no one generated from Adam is free, and

from which no one is freed save as regenerated in Christ. [149] But how

we are made partakers of it, he is less certain: sometimes he speaks as

if it came by some mysterious unity of the race, so that we were all

personally present in the individual Adam, and thus the whole race was

the one man that sinned; [150] sometimes he speaks more in the sense of

modern realists, as if Adam's sin corrupted the nature, and the nature

now corrupts those to whom it is communicated; [151] sometimes he

speaks as if it were due to simple heredity; [152] sometimes, again, as

if it depended on the presence of shameful concupiscence in the act of

procreation, so that the propagation of guilt depends on the

propagation of offspring by means of concupiscence. [153] However

transmitted, it is yet a fact that sin is propagated, and all mankind

became sinners in Adam. The result of this is that we have lost the

divine image, though not in such a sense that no lineaments of it

remain to us; [154] and, the sinning soul making the flesh corruptible,

our whole nature is corrupted, and we are unable to do anything of

ourselves truly good. [155] This includes, of course, an injury to our

will. Augustin, writing for the popular eye, treats this subject in

popular language. But it is clear that he distinguished, in his

thinking, between will as a faculty and will in a broader sense. As a

mere faculty, will is and always remains an indifferent thing, [156]

--after the fall, as before it, continuing poised in indifferency, and

ready, like a weathercock, to be turned whithersoever the breeze that

blows from the heart ("will," in the broader sense) may direct. [157]

It is not the faculty of willing, but the man who makes use of that

faculty, that has suffered change from the fall. In paradise man stood

in full ability: he had the posse non peccare, but not yet the non

posse peccare; [158] that is, he was endowed with a capacity for either

part, and possessed the grace of God by which he was able to stand if

he would, but also the power of free will by which he might fall if he

would. By his fall he has suffered a change, is corrupt, and under the

power of Satan; his will (in the broader sense) is now injured,

wounded, diseased, enslaved,--although the faculty of will (in the

narrow sense) remains indifferent. [159] Augustin's criticism of

Pelagius' discrimination [160] of "capacity" (possibilitas, posse),

"will" (voluntas, velle), and "act" (actio, esse), does not turn on the

discrimination itself, but on the incongruity of placing the power,

ability in the mere capacity or possibility, rather than in the living

agent who "wills" and "acts." He himself adopts an essentially similar

distribution, with only this correction; [161] and thus keeps the

faculty of will indifferent, but places the power of using it in the

active agent, man. According, then, to the character of this man, will

the use of the free will be. If the man be holy he will make a holy use

of it, and if he be corrupt he will make a sinful use of it: if he be

essentially holy, he cannot (like God Himself) make a sinful use of his

will; and if he be enslaved to sin, he cannot make a good use of it.

The last is the present condition of men by nature. They have free

will; [162] the faculty by which they act remains in indifferency, and

they are allowed to use it just as they choose: but such as they cannot

desire and therefore cannot choose anything but evil; [163] and

therefore they, and therefore their choice, and therefore their

willing, is always evil and never good. They are thus the slaves of

sin, which they obey; and while their free will avails for sinning, it

does not avail for doing any good unless they be first freed by the

grace of God. It is undeniable that this view is in consonance with

modern psychology: let us once conceive of "the will" as simply the

whole man in the attitude of willing, and it is immediately evident,

that, however abstractly free the "will" is, it is conditioned and

enslaved in all its action by the character of the willing agent: a bad

man does not cease to be bad in the act of willing, and a good man

remains good even in his acts of choice.

In its nature, grace is assistance, help from God; and all divine aid

may be included under the term,--as well what may be called natural, as

what may be called spiritual, aid. [164] Spiritual grace includes, no

doubt, all external help that God gives man for working out his

salvation, such as the law, the preaching of the gospel, the example of

Christ, by which we may learn the right way; it includes also

forgiveness of sins, by which we are freed from the guilt already

incurred; but above all it includes that help which God gives by His

Holy Spirit, working within, not without, by which man is enabled to

choose and to do what he sees, by the teachings of the law, or by the

gospel, or by the natural conscience, to be right. [165] Within this

aid are included all those spiritual exercises which we call

regeneration, justification, perseverance to the end,--in a word, all

the divine assistance by which, in being made Christians, we are made

to differ from other men. Augustin is fond of representing this grace

as in essence the writing of God's law (or of God's will) on our

hearts, so that it appears hereafter as our own desire and wish; and

even more prevalently as the shedding abroad of love in our hearts by

the Holy Ghost, given to us in Christ Jesus; therefore, as a change of

disposition, by which we come to love and freely choose, in

co-operation with God's aid, just the things which hitherto we have

been unable to choose because in bondage to sin. Grace, thus, does not

make void free will: [166] it acts through free will, and acts upon it

only by liberating it from its bondage to sin, i.e., by liberating the

agent that uses the free will, so that he is no longer enslaved by his

fleshly lusts, and is enabled to make use of his free will in choosing

the good; and thus it is only by grace that free will is enabled to act

in good part. But just because grace changes the disposition, and so

enables man, hitherto enslaved to sin, for the first time to desire and

use his free will for good, it lies in the very nature of the case that

it is prevenient. [167] Also, as the very name imports, it is

necessarily gratuitous; [168] since man is enslaved to sin until it is

given, all the merits that he can have prior to it are bad merits, and

deserve punishment, not gifts of favour. When, then, it is asked, on

the ground of what, grace is given, it can only be answered, "on the

ground of God's infinite mercy and undeserved favour." [169] There is

nothing in man to merit it, and it first gives merit of good to man.

All men alike deserve death, and all that comes to them in the way of

blessing is necessarily of God's free and unmerited favour. This is

equally true of all grace. It is pre-eminently clear of that grace

which gives faith, the root of all other graces, which is given of God,

not to merits of good-will or incipient turning to Him, but of His

sovereign good pleasure. [170] But equally with faith, it is true of

all other divine gifts: we may, indeed, speak of "merits of good" as

succeeding faith; but as all these merits find their root in faith,

they are but "grace on grace," and men need God's mercy always,

throughout this life, and even on the judgment day itself, when, if

they are judged without mercy, they must be condemned. [171] If we ask,

then, why God gives grace, we can only answer that it is of His

unspeakable mercy; and if we ask why He gives it to one rather than to

another, what can we answer but that it is of His will? The sovereignty

of grace results from its very gratuitousness: [172] where none deserve

it, it can be given only of the sovereign good pleasure of the great

Giver,--and this is necessarily inscrutable, but cannot be unjust. We

can faintly perceive, indeed, some reasons why God may be supposed not

to have chosen to give His saving grace to all, [173] or even to the

most; [174] but we cannot understand why He has chosen to give it to

just the individuals to whom He has given it, and to withhold it from

just those from whom He has withheld it. Here we are driven to the

apostle's cry, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the mercy and the

justice of God!" [175]

The effects of grace are according to its nature. Taken as a whole, it

is the recreative principle sent forth from God for the recovery of man

from his slavery to sin, and for his reformation in the divine image.

Considered as to the time of its giving, it is either operating or

co-operating grace, i.e., either the grace that first enables the will

to choose the good, or the grace that co-operates with the already

enabled will to do the good; and it is, therefore, also called either

prevenient or subsequent grace. [176] It is not to be conceived of as a

series of disconnected divine gifts, but as a constant efflux from God;

but we may look upon it in the various steps of its operation in men,

as bringing forgiveness of sins, faith, which is the beginning of all

good, love to God, progressive power of good working, and perseverance

to the end. [177] In any case, and in all its operations alike, just

because it is power from on high and the living spring of a new and

re-created life, it is irresistible and indefectible. [178] Those on

whom the Lord bestows the gift of faith working from within, not from

without, of course, have faith, and cannot help believing. Those to

whom perseverance to the end is given must persevere to the end. It is

not to be objected to this, that many seem to begin well who do not

persevere: this also is of God, who has in such cases given great

blessings indeed, but not this blessing, of perseverance to the end.

Whatever of good men have, that God has given; and what they have not,

why, of course, God has not given it. Nor can it be objected, that this

leaves all uncertain: it is only unknown to us, but this is not

uncertainty; we cannot know that we are to have any gift which God

sovereignly gives, of course, until it is given, and we therefore

cannot know that we have perseverance unto the end until we actually

persevere to the end; [179] but who would call what God does, and knows

He is to do, uncertain, and what man is to do certain? Nor will it do

to say that thus nothing is left for us to do: no doubt, all things are

in God's hands, and we should praise God that this is so, but we must

co-operate with Him; and it is just because it is He that is working in

us the willing and the doing, that it is worth our while to work out

our salvation with fear and trembling. God has not determined the end

without determining the appointed means. [180]

Now, Augustin argues, since grace certainly is gratuitous, and given to

no preceding merits,--prevenient and antecedent to all good,--and,

therefore, sovereign, and bestowed only on those whom God selects for

its reception; we must, of course, believe that the eternal God has

foreknown all this from the beginning. He would be something less than

God, had He not foreknown that He intended to bestow this prevenient,

gratuitous, and sovereign grace on some men, and had He not foreknown

equally the precise individuals on whom He intended to bestow it. To

foreknow is to prepare beforehand. And this is predestination. [181] He

argues that there can be no objection to predestination, in itself

considered, in the mind of any man who believes in a God: what men

object to is the gratuitous and sovereign grace to which no additional

difficulty is added by the necessary assumption that it was foreknown

and prepared for from eternity. That predestination does not proceed on

the foreknowledge of good or of faith, [182] follows from its being

nothing more than the foresight and preparation of grace, which, in its

very idea, is gratuitous and not according to any merits, sovereign and

according only to God's purpose, prevenient and in order to faith and

good works. It is the sovereignty of grace, not its foresight or the

preparation for it, which places men in God's hands, and suspends

salvation absolutely on his unmerited mercy. But just because God is

God, of course, no one receives grace who has not been foreknown and

afore-selected for the gift; and, as much of course, no one who has

been foreknown and afore-selected for it, fails to receive it.

Therefore the number of the predestinated is fixed, and fixed by God.

[183] Is this fate? Men may call God's grace fate if they choose; but

it is not fate, but undeserved love and tender mercy, without which

none would be saved. [184] Does it paralyze effort? Only to those who

will not strive to obey God because obedience is His gift. Is it

unjust? Far from it: shall not God do what He will with His own

undeserved favour? It is nothing but gratuitous mercy, sovereignly

distributed, and foreseen and provided for from all eternity by Him who

has selected us in His Son.

When Augustin comes to speak of the means of grace, i.e., of the

channels and circumstances of its conference to men, he approaches the

meeting point of two very dissimilar streams of his theology,--his

doctrine of grace and his doctrine of the Church,--and he is sadly

deflected from the natural course of his theology by the alien

influence. He does not, indeed, bind the conference of grace to the

means in such a sense that the grace must be given at the exact time of

the application of the means. He does not deny that "God is able, even

when no man rebukes, to correct whom He will, and to lead him on to the

wholesome mortification of repentance by the most hidden and most

mighty power of His medicine." [185] Though the Gospel must be known in

order that man may be saved [186] (for how shall they believe without a

preacher?), yet the preacher is nothing, and the preachment is nothing,

but God only that gives the increase. [187] He even has something like

a distant glimpse of what has since been called the distinction between

the visible and invisible Church,--speaking of men not yet born as

among those who are "called according to God's purpose," and,

therefore, of the saved who constitute the Church, [188] --asserting

that those who are so called, even before they believe, are "already

children of God enrolled in the memorial of their Father with

unchangeable surety," [189] and, at the same time, allowing that there

are many already in the visible Church who are not of it, and who can

therefore depart from it. But he teaches that those who are thus lost

out of the visible Church are lost because of some fatal flaw in their

baptism, or on account of post-baptismal sins; and that those who are

of the "called according to the purpose" are predestinated not only to

salvation, but to salvation by baptism. Grace is not tied to the means

in the sense that it is not conferred save in the means; but it is tied

to the means in the sense that it is not conferred without the means.

Baptism, for instance, is absolutely necessary for salvation: no

exception is allowed except such as save the principle,--baptism of

blood (martyrdom), [190] and, somewhat grudgingly, baptism of

intention. And baptism, when worthily received, is absolutely

efficacious: "if a man were to die immediately after baptism, he would

have nothing at all left to hold him liable to punishment." [191] In a

word, while there are many baptized who will not be saved, there are

none saved who have not been baptized; it is the grace of God that

saves, but baptism is a channel of grace without which none receive it.

[192]

The saddest corollary that flowed from this doctrine was that by which

Augustin was forced to assert that all those who died unbaptized,

including infants, are finally lost and depart into eternal punishment.

He did not shrink from the inference, although he assigned the place of

lightest punishment in hell to those who were guilty of no sin but

original sin, but who had departed this life without having washed this

away in the "laver of regeneration." This is the dark side of his

soteriology; but it should be remembered that it was not his theology

of grace, but the universal and traditional belief in the necessity of

baptism for remission of sins, which he inherited in common with all of

his time, that forced it upon him. The theology of grace was destined

in the hands of his successors, who have rejoiced to confess that they

were taught by him, to remove this stumbling-block also from Christian

teaching; and if not to Augustin, it is to Augustin's theology that the

Christian world owes its liberation from so terrible and incredible a

tenet. Along with the doctrine of infant damnation, another

stumbling-block also, not so much of Augustinian, but of Church

theology, has gone. It was not because of his theology of grace, or of

his doctrine of predestination, that Augustin taught that comparatively

few of the human race are saved. It was, again, because he believed

that baptism and incorporation into the visible Church were necessary

for salvation. And it is only because of Augustin's theology of grace,

which places man in the hands of an all-merciful Saviour and not in the

grasp of a human institution, that men can see that in the salvation of

all who die in infancy, the invisible Church of God embraces the vast

majority of the human race,--saved not by the washing of water

administered by the Church, but by the blood of Christ administered by

God's own hand outside of the ordinary channels of his grace. We are

indeed born in sin, and those that die in infancy are, in Adam,

children of wrath even as others; but God's hand is not shortened by

the limits of His Church on earth, that it cannot save. In Christ

Jesus, all souls are the Lord's, and only the soul that itself sinneth

shall die (Ezek. xviii. 1-4); and the only judgment wherewith men shall

be judged proceeds on the principle that as many as have sinned without

law shall also perish without law, and as many as have sinned under law

shall be judged by the law (Rev. ii. 12).

Thus, although Augustin's theology had a very strong churchly element

within it, it was, on the side that is presented in the controversy

against Pelagianism, distinctly anti-ecclesiastical. Its central

thought was the absolute dependence of the individual on the grace of

God in Jesus Christ. It made everything that concerned salvation to be

of God, and traced the source of all good to Him. "Without me ye can do

nothing," is the inscription on one side of it; on the other stands

written, "All things are yours." Augustin held that he who builds on a

human foundation builds on sand, and founded all his hope on the Rock

itself. And there also he founded his teaching; as he distrusted man in

the matter of salvation, so he distrusted him in the form of theology.

No other of the fathers so conscientiously wrought out his theology

from the revealed Word; no other of them so sternly excluded human

additions. The subjects of which theology treats, he declares, are such

as "we could by no means find out unless we believed them on the

testimony of Holy Scripture." [193] "Where Scripture gives no certain

testimony," he says, "human presumption must beware how it decides in

favor of either side." [194] "We must first bend our necks to the

authority of Scripture," he insists, "in order that we may arrive at

knowledge and understanding through faith." [195] And this was not

merely his theory, but his practice. [196] No theology was ever, it may

be more broadly asserted, more conscientiously wrought out from the

Scriptures. Is it without error? No; but its errors are on the surface,

not of the essence. It leads to God, and it came from God; and in the

midst of the controversies of so many ages it has shown itself an

edifice whose solid core is built out of material "which cannot be

shaken." [197]

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[142] This is a necessary limitation, for there is another side--a

churchly side--of Augustin's theology, which was only laid alongside

of, and artificially combined with, his theology of grace. This was the

traditional element in his teaching, but was far from the determining

or formative element. As Thomasius truly points out (Dogmengeschichte,

i. 495), both his experience and the Scriptures stood with him above

tradition.

[143] It is only one of the strange assertions in Professor Allen's

Continuity of Christian Thought, that he makes "the Augustinian

theology rest upon the transcendence of Deity as its controlling

principle" (p. 3), which is identified with "a tacit assumption of

deism" (p. 171), and explained to include a "localization of God as a

physical essence in the infinite remoteness," "separated from the world

by infinite reaches of space." As a matter of mere fact, Augustin's

conception of God was that of an immanent Spirit, and his tendency was

consequently distinctly towards a pantheistic rather than a deistic

view of His relation to His creatures. Nor is this true only "at a

certain stage of his career" (p. 6), which is but Professor Allen's

attempt to reconcile fact with his theory, but of his whole life and

all his teaching. He, no doubt, did not so teach the Divine immanence

as to make God the author of the form as well as the matter of all acts

of His creatures, or to render it impossible for His creatures to turn

from Him; this would be to pass the limits that separate the conception

of Christian immanence from pure pantheism, and to make God the author

of sin, and all His creatures but manifestations of Himself.

[144] On Rebuke and Grace, 27, 28.

[145] On Rebuke and Grace, 29, 31 sq.

[146] On Rebuke and Grace, 28.

[147] On Rebuke and Grace, 28.

[148] On the City of God, xiii. 2, 12, 14; On the Trinity, iv. 13.

[149] On the Merits and Remission of Sins, i. 15, and often.

[150] Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, iv. 7; On the Merits and

Forgiveness of Sins, iii. 14, 15.

[151] On Marriage and Concupiscence, ii. 57; On the City of God, xiv.

1.

[152] Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, iv. 7.

[153] On Original Sin, 42.

[154] Retractations, ii. 24.

[155] Against Julian, iv. 3, 25, 26. Compare Thomasius'

Dogmengeschichte, i. 501 and 507.

[156] On the Spirit and the Letter, 58.

[157] On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, ii. 30.

[158] On Rebuke and Grace, 11.

[159] On the Spirit and the Letter, 58.

[160] On the Grace of Christ, 4 sq.

[161] On the Predestination of the Saints, 10.

[162] Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, i. 5. Epistle 215, 4 and

often.

[163] Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, i. 7. Compare i. 5, 6.

[164] Sermon 26.

[165] On Nature and Grace, 62. On the Grace of Christ, 13. On Rebuke

and Grace, 2 sq.

[166] On the Spirit and Letter, 52; On Grace and Free Will, 1 sq.

[167] On the Spirit and Letter, 60, and often.

[168] On Nature and Grace, 4, and often.

[169] On the Grace of Christ, 27, and often.

[170] On the Grace of Christ, 34, and often.

[171] On Grace and Free Will, 21.

[172] On Grace and Free Will, 30, and often.

[173] On the Gift of Perseverance, 16; Against Two Letters of the

Pelagians, ii. 15.

[174] Epistle to Optatus, 190.

[175] On the Predestination of the Saints, 17, 18.

[176] On Grace and Free Will, 17; On the Proceedings of Pelagius, 34,

and often.

[177] Compare Thomasius' Dogmengeschichte, i. 510.

[178] On Rebuke and Grace, 40, 45; On the Predestination of the Saints,

13.

[179] On Rebuke and Grace, 40.

[180] On the Gift of Perseverance, 56.

[181] On the Predestination of the Saints, 36 sq.

[182] On the Gift of Perseverance, 41 sq., 47.

[183] On Rebuke and Grace, 39. Compare 14.

[184] On the Gift of Perseverance, 29; Against Two Letters of the

Pelagians, ii. 9 sq.

[185] On Rebuke and Grace, 1.

[186] On the Predestination of the Saints, 17, 18; if the gospel is not

preached at any given place, it is proof that God has no elect there.

[187] On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, etc., ii. 37.

[188] On Rebuke and Grace, 23.

[189] Do., 20.

[190] On the Soul and its Origin, i. 11; ii. 17.

[191] On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, etc., ii. 46.

[192] On Augustin's teaching as to baptism, see Rev. James Field

Spalding's The Teaching and Influence of Augustin, pp. 39 sq.

[193] On the Soul and its Origin, iv. 14.

[194] On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, etc., ii. 59.

[195] On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, i. 29.

[196] Compare On the Spirit and the Letter, 63.

[197] On the subject of this whole section, compare Reuter's

Augustinische Studien, which has come to hand only after the whole was

already in type, but which in all essential matters--such as the

formative principle, the sources, and the main outlines of Augustin's

theology--is in substantial agreement with what is here said.

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Dedication of Volume I. Of the Edinburgh Edition.

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TO The Right Reverend The Lord Bishop OF Exeter.

My Dear Lord,--I gladly avail myself of your permission to dedicate

this volume to you. In the course of a professional life of nearly the

third of a century, which has not been idly spent, I have never failed

to find pleasure in theological pursuits. In the intervals of most

pressing labour, these have often tended to refresh and comfort one's

wearied spirit. If this confession of my own experience should have any

weight with any one in our sacred calling to combine the hard work

which we owe to others while ministering to their wants, with "that

diligent attendance to reading" which we require for ourselves, to

inform our minds and refresh our spirits, I shall have accomplished my

only purpose in making it. Your Lordship, I am sure, will entirely

approve of such a combination of employments in your clergy. I well

remember your recommendation of theological study to us at the opening

of Bishop Phillpott's Library at Truro; and how you counselled us the

more earnestly to pursue it, from the danger there is, in these busy

times, of merging the acquisition of sacred learning in the active

labours of our holy vocation. That the divine blessing may crown the

work which you are so diligently prosecuting in the several functions

of your high office, is the earnest wish, my dear Lord, of your

faithful servant,

Peter Holmes.

Mannamead, Plymouth, March 10, 1872.

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Dedication of Volume II. Of the Edinburgh Edition.

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TO The Rev. C. T. Wilkinson, M.A.,

Vicar OF ST. Andrews With Pennycross, Plymouth.

My Dear Vicar,--I have great pleasure in associating your name with my

own in this volume. We are officially connected in the sacred ministry

of the Church, and I think I may, not unsuitably, extend our relations

in this little effort to strengthen the defences of the great doctrine

of Grace committed to our care and advocacy. Never was this portion of

revealed truth more formidably assailed than at the present day.

Rationalism, as its primary dogma, asserts the perfectibility of our

nature, out of its own resources; and with a versatility and power of

argument and illustration, which gathers help from every quarter in

literature and philosophy, it opposes "the truth as it is in Jesus."

This truth, which implies, as its cardinal points, the ruin of man's

nature in the sin of the first Adam, and its recovery in the obedience

of the second Adam, is vindicated with admirable method and convincing

force in the Anti-Pelagian treatises of the great Doctor of the Western

Church. Some of these treatises appear for the first time in our

language in this volume; and you will, I am sure, admire the acuteness

with which Saint Augustin tracks out and refutes the sophistries of the

rationalists of his own day, as well as the profound knowledge and

earnest charity with which he enforces and recommends the Catholic

verity.

In identifying you thus far with myself in this undertaking, I not only

gratify my own feelings of sincere friendship, but with a confidence

which I believe I do not over-estimate, I assume, what I highly prize,

your agreement with me in accepting and furthering the principles set

forth in this volume.

With sincere sympathy for you in your important work at Plymouth, and

best wishes for the divine blessing upon it, believe me, yours very

faithfully,

Peter Holmes.

Mannamead, Plymouth, June 24, 1874.

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Preface to Volume I. Of the Edinburgh Edition.

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Contents.--� 1. The Latin Titles of the Treatises contained in this

Volume; on the Preface of the Benedictine Edition. � 2. Notice of

Pelagius and his Opinions. � 3. Of Coelestius and his Doctrine, in

Seven Propositions. � 4. On Augustin as compared with other Doctors of

the Church; his Estimate of Pelagius and Coelestius. � 5. The Different

Fortunes of these Two Men at First. � 6. St. Jerome differs from St.

Augustin as to the Origin of Pelagianism; East and West, their

Doctrinal Characteristics--how Agreeing, how Varying. � 7. On the

Conduct of Augustin and Pelagius; Partisanship of their Followers and

Critics. � 8. Paramount Influence of St. Augustin in Ancient and Modern

Times, and in Various Parts of Christendom. � 9. Reason of this

Influence; Augustin true to Scripture and Human Experience; in

Favourable Contrast to Pelagius as to the Scientific Depth and Accuracy

of his Doctrine. � 10. Rationalism and Revelation; Pelagius' Views

Isolated and Incoherent; Augustin an Excellent Guide in Scripture

Knowledge. � 11. Popularity and Permanence of Pelagianism; Consentient

with Man's Natural Feelings; Elevating Influence of Divine Grace, its

Ultimate Triumph in Everlasting Glory. � 12. Original Text from which

this Translation is made; Works useful in the Pelagian Controversy.

� 1. The reader has in this volume, translated for the first time in

English, five of the fifteen treatises of St. Augustin on the Pelagian

heresy. They are here arranged in the same order (the chronological

one) in which they are placed in the tenth volume of the Benedictine

edition, and are therefore St. Augustin's earliest contributions to the

great controversy. These are their Latin titles:

De peccatorum meritis et remissione, et de baptismo parvulorum ad

Marcellinum; libri tres, scripti anno Christi 412.

De Spiritu et littera ad eumdem; liber unus, scriptus sub finem anni

412.

De natura et gratia contra Pelagium, ad Timasium et Jacobum; liber

unus, scriptus anno Christi 415.

De perfectione justiti� hominis; [Epistola seu] liber ad Eutropium et

Paulum, scriptus circiter finem anni 415.

De gestis Pelagii ad Aurelium episcopum; liber unus, scriptus sub

initium anni 417.

The Benedictine editors have enriched their edition with prefaces

("Admonitiones") and critical and explanatory notes, and, above all,

with the appropriate extracts from St. Augustin's Retractations, [198]

in which we have the author's own final revision and correction of his

works. All these have been reproduced in a translated form in this

volume; and they will, it is believed, afford the reader sufficient

guidance for an intelligent apprehension of at least the special

arguments of the several treatises. The Benedictine editors, however,

prefixed to this detailed information an elaborate and lengthy preface,

in which they reviewed the general history of the Pelagian discussions

and their authors, with especial reference to the part which St.

Augustin played throughout it. This historical introduction it was at

first intended to present to the reader in English at the head of this

volume. In consideration, however, of the length of the document, we

have so far changed our purpose as to substitute a shorter statement of

certain facts and features of the Pelagian controversy, which it is

hoped may contribute to a better understanding of the general subject.

� 2. The Pelagian heresy is so designated after Pelagius, a British

monk. (Augustin calls him Brito, so do Prosper and Gennadius; by

Orosius he is called Britannicus noster, and by Mercator described as

gente Britannus. This wide epithet is somewhat restricted by Jerome,

who says of him, Habet progeniem Scoti� gentis de Britannorum vicinia;

leaving it uncertain, however, whether he deemed Scotland his native

country, or Ireland. His monastic character is often referred to both

by Augustin and other writers, and Pope Zosimus describes him as Laicum

virum ad bonam frugem longa erga Deum servitute nitentem. It is, after

all, quite uncertain what part of "Britain" gave him birth; among other

conjectures, he has been made a native of Wales, attached to a

monastery at Bangor, and gifted with the Welsh name of Morgan, of which

his usual designation of Pelagius is supposed to be simply the Greek

version, Pelagios.) It was at the beginning of the fifth century that

he became conspicuous. He then resided at Rome, known by many as an

honourable and earnest man, seeking in a corrupt age to reform the

morals of society. (In the present volume the reader will not fail to

observe the eulogistic language which Augustin often uses of Pelagius;

see On the Merits of Sin, iii. 1, 5, 6.) Sundry theological treatises

are even attributed to him; among them one On the Trinity, of

unquestionable orthodoxy, and showing great ability. Unfavourable

reports, however, afterwards began to be circulated, charging him with

opening, in fact, entirely new ground in the fields of heresy. During

the previous centuries of Christian opinion the speculations of active

thinkers had been occupied on Theology properly so called, or the

doctrine of God as to His nature and personal attributes, including

Christology, which treated of Christ's divine and human natures. This

was objective divinity. With Pelagius, however, a fresh class of

subjects was forced on men's attention: in his peculiar system of

doctrine he deals with what is subjective in man, and reviews the whole

of his relation to God. His heresy turns mainly upon two points--the

assumed incorruptness of human nature, and the denial of all

supernatural influence upon the human will.

� 3. He had an early associate in Coelestius, a native of Campania,

according to some, or as others say, of Ireland or of Scotland. This

man, who is said to have been highly connected, began life as an

advocate, but, influenced by the advice and example of Pelagius, soon

became a monk. He excelled his master in boldness and energy; and thus

early precipitated the new doctrine into a formal dogmatism, from which

the caution and subtler management of Pelagius might have saved it. In

the year A.D. 412 (Pelagius having just left him at Carthage to go to

Palestine), Coelestius was accused before the bishop Aurelius of

holding and teaching the following opinions:

1. Adam was created mortal, and must have died, even if he had not

sinned; 2. Adam's sin injured himself only, and not mankind; 3. Infants

are born in the state of Adam before he fell; 4. Mankind neither died

in Adam, nor rose again in Christ; 5. The Law, no less than the Gospel,

brings men to the kingdom of heaven; 6. There were sinless men before

the coming of Christ. [199] What Coelestius thus boldly propounded, he

had the courage to maintain. On his refusal to retract, he was

excommunicated. He threatened, or perhaps actually though ineffectually

made, an appeal to Rome, and afterwards quitted Carthage for Ephesus.

� 4. Augustin, who had for some time been occupied in the Donatist

controversy, had as yet taken no personal part in the proceedings

against Coelestius. Soon, however, was his attention directed to the

new opinions, and he wrote the first two treatises contained in this

volume, in the year when Coelestius was excommunicated. At first he

treated Pelagius, as has been said, with deference and forbearance,

hoping by courtesy to recall him from danger. But as the heresy

developed, Augustin's opposition was more directly and vigorously

exhibited. The gospel was being fatally tampered with, in its essential

facts of human sin and divine grace; so, in the fulness of his own

absolute loyalty to the entire volume of evangelical truth, he

concentrated his best efforts in opposition to the now formidable

heresy. It is perhaps not too much to say, that St. Augustin, the

greatest doctor of the Catholic Church, effected his greatness mainly

by his labours against Pelagianism. Other Christian writers besides

Augustin have achieved results of decisive influence on the Church and

its deposit of the Christian faith. St. Athanasius, "alone against the

world," has often been referred to as a splendid instance of what

constancy, aided by God's grace and a profound knowledge of theology,

could accomplish; St. Cyril of Alexandria, and St. Leo of Rome, might

be also quoted as signal proofs of the efficacy of catholic truth in

opposition to popular heresy: these men, under God, saved the Creed

from the ravages of Arianism, and the subtler injuries of Nestorius and

Eutyches. Then, again, in the curious learning of the primitive

Iren�us; in the critical skill, and wide knowledge, and indomitable

labours of Origen; in the catechetical teaching of the elder Cyril; in

the chaste descriptive power of Basil; in the simplicity and

self-denial of Ambrose; in the fervid eloquence of the "golden-mouthed"

Chrysostom; in the great learning of Jerome; in the scholastic accuracy

of Damascene; and in the varied sacred gifts of other Christian

worthies, from the impetuous Tertullian and the gentle Cyprian, with

all the Gregories of manifold endowments, down to the latest period of

patristic wisdom, graced by our own Anselm and the unrivalled preacher

Bernard,--in all these converging lines of diverse yet compatible

accomplishments, the Church of Christ has found, from age to age, ample

reinforcements against the attacks of heretical hostility. And in our

great Bishop of Hippo one may trace, operating on various occasions in

his various works, the manifold characteristics which we have just

enumerated of his brother saints,--with this difference, that in no one

of them are found combined the many traits which constitute his

greatness. We have here to do only with his anti-Pelagian writings.

Upon the whole, perhaps, these exhibit most of his wonderful resources

of Christian character. In many respects, one is reminded by him of the

great apostle, whom he reverenced, and whose profound doctrines he

republished and vindicated. He has himself, in several of his works,

especially in his Confessions, admitted us to a view of the sharp

convulsions and bitter conflicts through which he passed, before his

regeneration, into the Christian life, animated by the free and

sovereign grace of God, and adorned with his unflagging energies in

works of faith and love. From the depths of his own consciousness he

instinctively felt the dangers of Pelagianism, and he put forth his

strength, as God enabled him, to meet the evil; and the reader has in

this volume samples in great variety of the earnestness of his conflict

with the new heresy and its leaders. These leaders he has himself

characterized: "Ille [nempe Coelestius] apertior, iste [scilicet

Pelagius] occultior fuit; ille pertinacior, iste mendacior; vel certe

ille liberior, hic astutior;" [200] and illustrations of the general

correctness of this estimate will be forthcoming, especially in the

fourth treatise of this volume, where Coelestius is dealt with, and in

the fifth, which relates to the subterfuges and pretexts practised by

Pelagius in his proceedings in Palestine.

� 5. The difference in the characters of the two leaders in this heresy

contributed to different results in their earlier proceedings. We have

seen the disastrous issue to Coelestius at Carthage, from his outspoken

and unyielding conduct. The more reserved Pelagius, resorting to a

dexterous management of sundry favourable circumstances, obtained a

friendly hearing on two public occasions--at Jerusalem, in the summer

of A.D. 415, and again at the end of that year, in a council of

fourteen bishops, at Diospolis, the ancient Lydda. In the last treatise

of this volume, [201] the reader has a characteristic narrative of

these events from St. Augustin's own pen. The holy man's disappointment

at the untoward results of these two inquiries is apparent; but he

struggles to maintain his respect for the bishops concerned in the

affair, and comforts himself and all Catholics with the assurance,

which he thinks is warranted by the proceedings, that the acquittal

obtained by Pelagius, through the concealment of his real opinions,

amounted in fact to a condemnation of them. This volume terminates with

these transactions in Palestine; so that any remarks on the decline and

fall of Pelagianism proper must be postponed to a subsequent volume.

� 6. St. Jerome as well as St. Augustin engaged in this controversy,

and experienced in the East some loss and much danger from the rougher

followers of Pelagius. [202] It is not without interest that one

observes the difference of view entertained by these eminent men on the

general question of the Pelagian heresy. Augustin had but an imperfect

acquaintance with either the language or the writings of the Greek

Fathers, and had treated the Pelagian opinions as unheard-of novelties.

Jerome, however, who had acquired a competent knowledge of the

Christian literature of Greece during his long residence in the East,

traced these heretical opinions to the school of Origen, for whose

memory he entertained but scant respect. There is, no doubt,

extravagance in Jerome's censure, but withal a foundation of truth. For

from the beginning there was a tendency at least to divergent views

between the Eastern and the Western sections of Christendom, on the

relation of the human will to the grace of God in the matter of man's

conversion and salvation. On the general question, indeed, there was

always substantial agreement in the Catholic Church;--man, as he is

born into the world, is not in his originally perfect state; in order

to be able to live according to his original nature and to do good, he

requires an inward change by the almighty power of God. But this

general agreement did not hinder specific differences of opinion, which

having been developed with considerable regularity, in East and West

respectively, admit of some classification. The chief writers of the

West, especially Tertullian and Cyprian in the third century, and

Hilary of Poitiers and (notably) Ambrose in the fourth century,

prominently state the doctrine of man's corruption, and the consequent

necessity of a change of his nature by divine grace; whilst the

Alexandrian Fathers (especially Clement), and other Orientals (for

instance, Chrysostom), laid great stress upon human freedom, and on the

indispensable co-operation of this freedom with the grace of God. By

the fifth century these tendencies were ready to culminate; they were

at length precipitated to a decisive controversy. In the Pelagian

system, the liberty which had been claimed for man was pushed to the

heretical extreme of independence of God's help; while Augustin, in

resisting this heresy, found it hard to keep clear of the other

extreme, of the absorption of human responsibility into the divine

sovereignty. Our author, no doubt, moves about on the confines of a

deep insoluble mystery here; but, upon the whole, it must be apparent

to the careful reader how earnestly he tries to maintain and vindicate

man's responsibility even amidst the endowments of God's grace.

� 7. Much has been written on the conduct of the two leading opponents

in this controversy. Sides (as usual) have been taken, and extreme

opinions of praise and of blame have been freely bestowed on both

Augustin and Pelagius. It is impossible, even were it desirable, in

this limited space to enter upon a question which, after all, hardly

rises above the dignity of mere personalities. The orthodox bishop and

the heretical monk have had their share of censure as to their mode of

conducting the controversy. Augustin has been taxed with intolerance,

Pelagius with duplicity. We are perhaps not in a position to form an

impartial judgment on the case. To begin with, the evidence comes all

from one side; and then the critics pass their sentence according to

the suggestions of modern prejudice, rather than by the test of ancient

contemporary facts, motives, and principles of action. A good deal of

obloquy has been cast on Augustin, as if he were responsible for the

Rescript of Honorius and its penalties; but this is (to say the least)

a conclusion which outruns the premises. We need say nothing of the

peril which seriously threatened true religion when the half-informed

bishops of Palestine, and the vacillating Pope, all gave their hasty

and ill-grounded approval to Pelagius, as a justification of Augustin.

He deeply felt the seriousness of the crisis, and he unsheathed "the

sword of the Spirit," and dealt with it trenchant blows, every one of

which struck home with admirable precision; but it is not proved that

he ever wielded the civil sword of pains and penalties. Of all

theological writers in ancient, medieval, or earlier modern times, it

may be fairly maintained that St. Augustin has shown himself the most

considerate, courteous, and charitable towards opponents. The reader

will trace with some interest the progress of his criticism on

Pelagius. From the forbearance and love which he gave him at first,

[203] he passes slowly and painfully on to censure and condemnation,

but only as he detects stronger and stronger proofs of insincerity and

bad faith.

� 8. But whatever estimate we may form on the score of their personal

conduct, there can be no doubt of the bishop's superiority over the

monk, when we come to gauge the value of their principles and

doctrines, whether tested by Scripture or by the great facts of human

nature. Concerning the test of Scripture, our assertion will be denied

by no one. No ancient Christian writer approaches near St. Augustin in

his general influence on the opinions and belief of the Catholic

Church, in its custody and interpretation of Holy Scripture; and there

can be no mistake either as to the Church's uniform guardianship of the

Augustinian doctrine, taken as a whole, or as to its invariable

resistance to the Pelagian system, whenever and however it has been

reproduced in the revolutions of human thought. There cannot be found

in all ecclesiastical history a more remarkable fact than the deference

shown to the great Bishop of Hippo throughout Christendom, on all

points of salient interest connected with his name. Whatever basis of

doctrine exists in common between the great sections of Catholicism and

Protestantism, was laid at first by the genius and piety of St.

Augustin. In the conflicts of the early centuries he was usually the

champion of Scripture truth against dangerous errors. In the Middle

Ages his influence was paramount with the eminent men who built up the

scholastic system. In the modern Latin Church he enjoys greater

consideration than either Ambrose, or Hilary, or Jerome, or even

Gregory the Great; and lastly, and perhaps most strangely, he stands

nearest to evangelical Protestantism, and led the van of the great

movement in the sixteenth century, which culminated in the Reformation.

How unique the influence which directed the minds of Anselm, and

Bernard, and Aquinas, and Bonaventure, with no less power than it

swayed the thoughts of Luther, and Melanchthon, and Zuingle, and

Calvin!

� 9. The key to this wonderful influence is Augustin's knowledge of

Holy Scripture, and its profound suitableness to the facts and

experience of our entire nature. Perhaps to no one, not excepting St.

Paul himself, has it been ever given so wholly and so deeply to suffer

the manifold experiences of the human heart, whether of sorrow and

anguish from the tyranny of sin, or of spiritual joy from the precious

consolations of the grace of God. Augustin speaks with authority here;

he has traversed all the ground of inspired writ, and shown us how true

is its portraiture of man's life. And, to pass on to our last point, he

has threaded the mazes of human consciousness; and in building up his

doctrinal system, has been, in the main, as true to the philosophy of

fact as he is to the statements of revelation. He appears in as

favourable a contrast to his opponent in his philosophy as in his

Scripture exegesis. We cannot, however, in the limits of this Preface,

illustrate this criticism with all the adducible proofs; but we may

quote one or two weak points which radically compromise Pelagius as to

the scientific bearings of his doctrine. By science we mean accurate

knowledge, which stands the test of the widest induction of facts. Now,

it has been frequently remarked that Pelagius is scientifically

defective in the very centre of his doctrine,--on the freedom of the

will. His theory, especially in the hands of his vigorous followers,

Coelestius and Julianus, [204] ignored the influence of habit on human

volition, and the development of habits from action, isolating human

acts, making man's power of choice (his liberum arbitrium) a mere

natural faculty, of physical, not moral operation. How defective this

view is,--how it impoverishes the moral nature of man, strips it of the

very elements of its composition, and drops out of consideration the

many facts of human life, which interlace themselves in our experience

as the very web and woof of moral virtue,--is manifest to the students

of Aristotle and Butler. [205] Acts are not mere insulated atoms,

merely done, and then done with; but they have a relation to the will,

and an influence upon subsequent acts: and so acts generate habits, and

habits produce character, the formal cause of man's moral condition.

The same defect runs through the Pelagian system. Passing from the

subject of human freedom, and the effect of action upon conduct and

habit, we come to Pelagius' view of sin. According to him, Adam's

transgression consisted in an isolated act of disobedience to God's

command; and our sin now consists in the mere repetition and imitation

of his offence. There was no "original sin," and consequently no

hereditary guilt. Adam stood alone in his transgression, and

transmitted no evil taint to his posterity, much less any tendency or

predisposition to wrong-doing: there was no doubt a bad example, but

against this Pelagius complacently set the happier examples of good and

prudent men. Isolation, then, is the principle of Pelagius and his

school; organization is the principle of true philosophy, as tested by

the experience and observation of mankind.

� 10. We have said enough, and we hope not unfairly said it, to show

that Pelagius was radically at fault in his deductions, whether tested

by divine revelation or human experience. How superior to him in all

essential points his great opponent was, will be manifest to the reader

of this volume. Not a statement of Scripture, nor a fact of nature,

does Augustin find it necessary to soften, or repudiate, or ignore.

Hence his writings are valuable in illustrating the harmony between

revelation and true philosophy; we have seen how much of his far-seeing

and eminent knowledge was owing to his own deep convictions and

discoveries of sin and grace; perhaps we shall not be wrong in saying,

that even to his opponents is due something of his excellence. There

can be no doubt that in Pelagius and Coelestius, and his still more

able follower Julianus, of whom we shall hear in a future volume, he

had very able opponents--men of earnest character, acute in observation

and reasoning, impressed with the truth of their convictions, and

deeming it a fit occupation to rationalize the meaning of Scripture in

its bearings on human experience. There is a remarkable peculiarity in

this respect in the opinions of Pelagius. He accepted the mysteries of

theology, properly so called, with the most exemplary orthodoxy.

Nothing could be better than his exposition of the doctrine of the Holy

Trinity. But again we find him hemmed in with a perverse isolation. The

doctrine of the Trinity, according to him, stands alone; it sheds no

influence on man and his eternal interests; but in the blessed

Scripture, as read by Augustin, there is revealed to man a most

intimate relation between himself and God, the Father, the Son, and the

Holy Ghost, as his Creator, his Redeemer, and his Sanctifier. In

Pelagianism, then, we see a disjointed and unconnected theory,--a creed

which stands apart from practical life, and is not allowed to shape

man's conduct,--a system, in short, which falls to pieces for want of

the coherence of the true "analogy of the faith" which worketh by love.

By exposing, therefore, this incompatibility in the doctrine of his

opponents, Augustin shows how irreconcilable are the deductions of

their Rationalism with the statements of Revelation. But Rationalism is

not confined to any one period. We live to see a bolder Rationalism,

which, unlike Pelagius', is absolutely uncompromising in its aims, and

(as must be admitted) more consistent in its method. To institute the

supremacy of Reason, it destroys more or less the mysteries of

Religion. All the miraculous element of the gospel is discarded; God's

personal relation to man in the procedures of grace, and man's to God

in the discipline of repentance, faith, and love, are abolished: nay,

the Divine Personality itself merges into an impalpable, uninfluential

Pantheism; while man's individual responsibility is absorbed into a

mythical personification of the race. The only sure escape from such a

desolation as this, is to recur to the good old paths of gospel

faith--"stare super antiquas vias." Our directory for life's journey

through these is furnished to us in Holy Scripture; and if an

interpreter is wanted who shall be able by competent knowledge and

ample experience to explain to us any difficulties of direction, we

know none more suited for the purpose than our St. Augustin.

� 11. But Rationalism is not always so exaggerated as this: in its

ordinary development, indeed, it stops short of open warfare with

Revelation, and (at whatever cost of logical consistency) it will

accommodate its discussions to the form of Scripture. This adaptation

gives it double force: there is its own intrinsic principle of

uncontrolled liberty in will and action, and there is "the form of

godliness," which has weight with unreflective Christians. Hence

Pelagianism was undoubtedly popular: it offered dignity to human

nature, and flattered its capacity; and this it did without virulence

and with sincerity, under the form of religion. This acquiescence of

matter and manner gave it strength in men's sympathies, and has secured

for it durability, seeing that there is plenty of it still amongst us;

as indeed there always has been, and ever will be, so long as the fatal

ambition of Eden (Gen. iii. 5, 6) shall seduce men into a temper of

rivalry with God. Writers like Paley (in his Evidences) have treated of

the triumph of Christianity over difficulties of every kind. Of all the

stumbling-blocks to the holy religion of our blessed Saviour, not one

has proved so influential as its doctrine of Grace; the prejudice

against it, by what St. Paul calls "the natural man" (1 Cor. ii. 14),

is ineradicable--and, it may be added, inevitable: for in his

independence and self-sufficiency he cannot admit that in himself he is

nothing, but requires external help to rescue him from sin, and through

imparted holiness to elevate him to the perfection of the blessed. How

great, then, is the benefit which Augustin has accomplished for the

gospel, in probing the grounds of this natural prejudice against it,

and showing its ultimate untenableness--the moment it is tested on the

deeper principles of the divine appreciation! No, the ultimate effect

of the doctrine and operation of grace is not to depreciate the true

dignity of man. If there be the humbling process first, it is only that

out of the humility should emerge the exaltation at last (1 Pet. v. 6).

I know nothing in the whole range of practical or theoretical divinity

more beautiful than Augustin's analysis of the procedures of grace, in

raising man from the depths of his sinful prostration to the heights of

his last and eternal elevation in the presence and fellowship of God.

The most ambitious, who thinks "man was not made for meanness," might

be well content with the noble prospect. But his ambition must submit

to the conditions; and his capacity both for the attainment and the

fruition of such a destiny is given to him and trained by God Himself.

"It is so contrived," says Augustin, "in the discipline of the present

life, that the holy Church shall arrive at last at that condition of

unspotted purity which all holy men desire; and that it may in the

world to come, and in a state unmixed with all soil of evil men, and

undisturbed by any law of sin resisting the law of the mind, lead the

purest life in a divine eternity....But in whatever place and at what

time soever the love which animates the good shall reach that state of

absolute perfection which shall admit of no increase, it is certainly

not shed abroad in our hearts' by any energies either of the nature or

the volition that are within us, but by the Holy Ghost which is given

unto us' (Rom. v. 5), and which both helps our infirmity and

co-operates with our strength" (On Nature and Grace, chs. 74 and 84).

� 12. This translation has been made from the (Antwerp) Benedictine

edition of the works of St. Augustin, tenth volume, compared with the

beautiful reprint by Gaume. (Although left to his own resources in

making his version, the Translator has gladly availed himself of the

learned aid within his reach. He may mention the Kirchengeschichte both

of Gieseler and Neander [Clark's transl. vol. iv.]; Wiggers' Versuch

einer pragmatischen Darstellung des Augustinismus und Pelagianismus

[1st part]; Shedd's Christian Doctrine; Cunningham's Historical

Theology; Short's Bampton Lectures for 1846 [Lect. vii.]; Professor

Bright's History of the Church from A.D. 313 to A.D. 451; Bishop

Forbes' Explanation of the Thirty-nine Articles [vol. i.]; Canon

Robertson's History of the Christian Church, vol. i. pp. 376-392; and

especially Professor Mozley's Treatise on the Augustinian Doctrine of

Predestination, ch. iii. iv. vi.; and Dr. Philip Schaff's excellent

History of the Christian Church [Clark, Edinburgh 1869 [206] ], vol.

iii. pp.783-1028; of which work Dr. Dorner's is by no means exaggerated

commendation: "It is," says he, "on account of the beauty of its

descriptions, the lucid arrangement of its materials, and the

moderation of its decisions, a very praiseworthy work" (Dorner's

History of Protestant Theology [Clark's translation], vol. ii. p. 449,

note 2). This portion of Dr. Schaff's work is an expansion of his able

and interesting article on the Pelagian Controversy in the American

Bibliotheca Sacra of May 1848.

Peter Holmes.

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[198] It is satisfactory to observe how brief and scanty are his

"retractations" on the topics treated in the present volume.

[199] Marius Mercator mentions a seventh opinion broached by

Coelestius, to the effect that "infants, though they be unbaptized,

have everlasting life."

[200] De Peccato originali, [xii.] 13. See below.

[201] [i.e. On the Proceedings of Pelagius.]

[202] See the Proceedings of Pelagius, c. 66.

[203] For some time Augustin abstained from mentioning the name of

Pelagius, to save him as much as he could from exposure, and to avoid

the irritation which might urge him to heresy from obstinacy. Augustin

recognised early enough the motive which influenced Pelagius at first.

The latter dreaded the Antinomianism of the day, and concentrated his

teaching in a doctrine which was meant as a protest against it. "We

would rather not do injustice to our friends," says Augustin, as he

praises their "strong and active minds;" and he goes on to commend

Pelagius anonymously for "the zeal which he entertains against those

who find a defence for their sins in the infirmity of human nature."

See the third treatise of this volume, On Nature and Grace, ch. 6, 7.

[204] We make this qualification, because Pelagius himself seems to

have recognised to some extent the power of habit and its effect upon

the will, in his Letter to Demetrias, 8. See Dr. Philip Schaff's

History of the Christian Church, vol. iii. p. 804.

[205] Aristotle, Ethic. Nicom. ii. 2, 3, 6; Butler, Analogy, i. 5.

[206] [Revised edition. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, and T.

Clark, Edinburgh, 1884.]

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Preface to Volume II. Of the Edinburgh Edition.

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This volume contains a translation of the three following treatises by

St. Augustin on the Pelagian controversy:--

De Gratia Christi, et De Peccato originali contra Pelagium et

Coelestium, ad Albinam, Pinianum, et Melaniam; libri duo, scripti anno

Christi 418.

De Nuptiis et Concupiscenti� ad Valerium Comitem; libri duo, scriptus

alter circiter initium anni 419; alter anno Christi 420.

De Anim� et ejus origine, contra Vincentium Victorem; libri quatuor,

scriptus sub finem anni Christi 419.

These, with the contents of our former volume, comprise eight of the

fifteen works contributed by the great author to the defence of the

Catholic faith against Pelagius and his most conspicuous followers. The

prefaces and chapter headings, which have been, as heretofore,

transferred to their proper places in this volume from the Benedictine

edition of the original, will afford the reader preliminary help

enough, and thus render more than a few general prefatory remarks

unnecessary here.

The second book in the first of these treatises adds some facts to the

historical information contained in our preceding volume; Pelagius is

shown to be at one, in the main, with Coelestius, the bolder but less

specious heretic. They were condemned everywhere--even at Rome by Pope

Zosimus, who had at first shown some favour to them. These

authoritative proceedings against them gave a sensible check to their

progress in public; there is, however, reason to believe that the

opinions, which the Pelagian teachers had with great industry, and with

their varied ability, propounded, had created much interest and even

anxiety in private society. The early part of the first of the

following treatises throws some light on this point, and on the artful

methods by which the heretics sought to maintain and extend their

opinions; it affords some evidence also of the widespread influence of

St. Augustin. The controversy had engaged the attention of a pious

family in Palestine; Pelagius was in the neighbourhood; and when

frankly questioned by the friends, he strongly protested his adherence

to the doctrine of Grace. "I anathematize," he exclaimed with

suspicious promptitude, "the man who holds that the grace of God is not

necessary for us at every moment and in every act of our lives: and all

who endeavour to disannul it, deserve everlasting punishment." It was

an act of astonishing duplicity, which Augustin, to whom the case was

referred, soon detected and exposed. It is satisfactory to find that

the worthy Christians to whom the Saint addressed his loving labour

were confirmed in their simple faith; and in one of the last of his

extant letters, towards the close of his days on earth, the venerable

St. Jerome, in the course of the following year, united the gratitude

of Albina, Pinianus, and Melania, with his own to his renowned brother

in the west, whom he saluted as "the restorer of the ancient faith."

"Macte virtute," said the venerable man, "in orbe celebraris; et, quod

signum majoris est glori�, omnes heretici detestantur." [Go on and

prosper; the whole world endows thee with its praise, and all heretics

with their hatred.]

In the latter part of the first treatise in this volume, one of the

most formidable of the Pelagian objections to the Catholic doctrine of

original sin is thrown out against marriage: "Surely that could not be

a holy state, instituted of God, which produced human beings in sin!"

Augustin in a few weighty chapters removes the doubts of his perplexed

correspondents, and reserves his strength for the full treatment of the

subject in the second treatise, here translated, On Marriage and

Concupiscence. It is a noble monument of his firm grasp of Scripture

truth, his loyal adherence to its plain meaning, and his delicate and,

at the same time, intrepid handling of a subject, which could only be

touched by a man whose mind possessed a deep knowledge of human

nature--both in its moral and its physiological aspects, and in its

relations to God as affected by its creation, its fall, and its

redemption.

This treatise introduces us to a change of circumstances. The preceding

one was, as we have seen, addressed to a small group of simple

believers in sacred truth, who were not personally known to the author,

and, though zealous in the maintenance of the faith, occupied only a

private place in society; but the present work was written at the

urgent request of a nobleman in high office as a minister of state, and

well known to the writer. It is pleasant to trace a similar

earnestness, in such dissimilar ranks, in the defence of the assailed

faith: and it illustrates the wide stretch of mind and comprehensive

love of Augustin, that he could so promptly sympathize with the

anxieties of all classes and conditions in the Christian life; and,

what is more, so administer comfort and conviction out of the treasures

of his wisdom, as to settle their doubts and reassure them in faith.

Nor does the change end here. Instead of Pelagius and Coelestius,

Augustin has in this work to confute the powerful argument of Julianus,

bishop of Celanum, the ablest of his Pelagian opponents. This man was

really the mainstay of the heresy; he had greater resources of mind and

a firmer character than either of his associates;--more candid and

sincere than Pelagius, and less ambitious and impatient than

Coelestius, he seemed to contend for truth for its own sake, and this

disposition found a complete response in the Church's earnest and

accomplished champion. Notwithstanding the difficulty and delicacy of

the subject, which removes, no doubt, the treatise De Nuptiis et

Concupisenti� out of the category of what is called "general reading,"

the great author never did a higher service to the faith than when he

provided for it this defence of a fundamental point. The venerable

Jerome rejoiced at the good service, and longed to embrace his brother

Saint from his distant retreat of Bethlehem. "Testem invoco Deum," he

wrote to Augustin, and his dear friend and helper Alypius, "quod si

posset fieri, assumptis alis columb�, vestris amplexibus implicarer."

In the last and longest work, translated for this volume, we come upon

a change, both of subject and circumstances, as complete as that we

have just noticed. Vincentius Victor, whose unsafe opinions are

reviewed, was a young African of great ability and rhetorical

accomplishment. His fluent tongue had fairly bewitched not only crowds

of thoughtless hearers, but staid persons, whose faith should have been

proof against a seductive influence which was soon shown to be

transient and flimsy. The young disputant seems to have been more of a

schismatic in the Donatist party, than a heretic with Pelagius; showy,

however, and unstable, and hardly weighing the consequence of his own

opinions, he began to air his metaphysics, and soon fell into strange

errors about the nature and origin of the human soul. In his youthful

arrogance he happened to censure Augustin for his cautious teaching on

so profound a subject; kindly does the aged bishop receive the

criticism, show its unreasonableness, and point out to his rash

assailant some serious errors which he was propounding at random. He

also reproves one of Victor's friends, who happened to be a presbyter,

for allowing himself to be misled by the young man's eloquent

sophistry; and in the latter half of his treatise, with fatherly love

and earnestness, he advises Victor to renounce his dangerous errors,

some of which were rankly Pelagian, and something worse. The result of

Augustin's admonitions--adorned as they were with great depth and width

of reflection and knowledge (extending this time even to physical

science, on some facts of which he playfully comments with the ease of

a modern experimenter), with loving consideration for his opponent's

inexperience, kindly deference to his undoubted abilities, and a pious

desire to win him over to the cause of truth and godliness--was

entirely satisfactory. We find from the Retractations (ii. 56), that

Victor in time abjured all his errors, and doubtless, like another

Apollos, ably employed his best powers in the service of true religion.

This was a real trophy, great among the greatest of Augustin's

achievements for faith and charity. For so great a soul to stoop to the

level of so captious a spirit, and with industrious love and patience

to trace out and refute all its ambitious error, was "a labour of love"

indeed. He remembered the wise counsel of the apostle: "Count him not

as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother;" and he reaped the victory

the Saviour promised: "Thou hast gained thy brother."

The translation, as in the former volume of the Anti-Pelagian writings

of our author, has been made from the tenth volume of the Antwerp

reprint of the Benedictine edition of St. Augustin's works.

Peter Holmes.

[Volume III. of the Edinburgh edition appeared without dedication or

preface, in 1876. It contained translations of Augustin's treatises on

Grace and Free-Will, Rebuke and Grace, The Predestination of the

Saints, The Gift of Perseverance, and of his work Against Two Letters

of the Pelagians. Of these, only the first was from the pen of Dr.

Holmes, the rest being the work of Dr. Robert Ernest Wallis, whose name

has been accordingly placed on the general titlepage of this

revision.--W.]

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a treatise on the merits and forgiveness of sins, and on the baptism of

infants.

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Extract from Augustin's "Retractations,"

Book II. Chap. 23,

On the Following Treatise,

"De Peccatorum Meritis Et Remissione."

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A Necessity arose which compelled me to write against the new heresy of

Pelagius. Our previous opposition to it was confined to sermons and

conversations, as occasions suggested, and according to our respective

abilities and duties; but it had not yet assumed the shape of a

controversy in writing. Certain questions were then submitted to me [by

our brethren] at Carthage, to which I was to send them back answers in

writing; I accordingly wrote first of all three books, under the title

"On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins," in which I mainly discussed

the baptism of infants because of original sin, and the grace of God by

which we are justified, that is, made righteous; but [I remarked] no

man in this life can so keep the commandments which prescribe holiness

of life, as to be beyond the necessity of using this prayer for his

sins: "Forgive us our trespasses." [207] It is in direct opposition to

these principles that they have devised their new heresy. Now

throughout these three books I thought it right not to mention any of

their names, hoping and desiring that by such reserve they might the

more readily be set right; nay more, in the third book (which is really

a letter, but reckoned amongst the books, because I wished to connect

it with the two previous ones) I actually quoted Pelagius' name with

considerable commendation, because his conduct and life were made a

good deal of by many persons; and those statements of his which I

refuted, he had himself adduced in his writings, not indeed in his own

name, but had quoted them as the words of other persons. However, when

he was afterwards confirmed in heresy, he defended them with most

persistent animosity. Coelestius, indeed, a disciple of his, had

already been excommunicated for similar opinions at Carthage, in a

council of bishops, at which I was not present. In a certain passage of

my second book I used these words: "Upon some there will be bestowed

this blessing at the last day, that they shall not perceive the actual

suffering of death in the suddenness of the change which shall happen

to them;" [208] --reserving the passage for a more careful

consideration of the subject; for they will either die, or else by a

most rapid transition from this life to death, and then from death to

eternal life, as in the twinkling of an eye, they will not undergo the

feeling of mortality. This work of mine begins with this sentence:

"However absorbing and intense the anxieties and annoyances."

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[207] See Matt. vi. 12.

[208] See Book ii. ch. 50.

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A Treatise on the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, and on the Baptism of

Infants

by aurelius augustin, bishop of hippo;

In Three Books,

Addressed to Marcellinus, a.d. 412.

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Book I.

In which he refutes those who maintain, that Adam must have died even

if he had never sinned; and that nothing of his sin has been

transmitted to his posterity by natural descent. He also shows, that

death has not accrued to man by any necessity of his nature, but as the

penalty of sin; He then proceeds to prove that in Adam's sin his entire

offspring is implicated, showing that infants are baptized for the

express purpose of receiving the remission of original sin.

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Chapter 1 [I.]--Introductory, in the Shape of an Inscription to His

Friend Marcellinus.

Howeverabsorbing and intense the anxieties and annoyances in the whirl

and warmth of which we are engaged with sinful men [209] who forsake

the law of God,--even though we may well ascribe these very evils to

the fault of our own sins,--I am unwilling, and, to say the truth,

unable, any longer to remain a debtor, my dearest Marcellinus, [210] to

that zealous affection of yours, which only enhances my own grateful

and pleasant estimate of yourself. I am under the impulse [of a twofold

emotion]: on the one hand, there is that very love which makes us

unchangeably one in the one hope of a change for the better; on the

other hand, there is the fear of offending God in yourself, who has

given you so earnest a desire; in gratifying which I shall be only

serving Him who has given it to you. And so strongly has this impulse

led and attracted me to solve, to the best of my humble ability, the

questions which you have submitted to me in writing, that my mind has

gradually admitted this inquiry to an importance transcending that of

all others; [and it will now give me no rest] until I accomplish

something which shall make it manifest that I have yielded, if not a

sufficient, yet at any rate an obedient, compliance with your own kind

wish and the desire of those to whom these questions are a source of

anxiety.

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[209] This is probably an allusion to the Donatists, who were then

fiercely assailing the Catholics; [and over the conference between whom

and the Catholics, Marcellinus had presided the previous year

(411).--W.]

[210] [Flavius Marcellinus, a "tribune and notary," a Christian man of

high character and devout mind, who was much interested in theological

discussions. He was appointed by Honorius to preside over the

commission of inquiry into the disputes between the Catholics and

Donatists in 411, and held the famous conference between the parties,

that met in Carthage on the 1st, 3d, and 8th of June, 411. He

discharged this whole business with singular patience, moderation, and

good judgment; which appears to have cemented the intimate friendship

between him and Augustin. Augustin's treatise on The Spirit and Letter

is also addressed to him, and he undertook the City of God on his

suggestion. See below, p. 80.--W.]

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Chapter 2 [II.]--If Adam Had Not Sinned, He Would Never Have Died.

They who say that Adam was so formed that he would even without any

demerit of sin have died, not as the penalty of sin, but from the

necessity of his being, endeavour indeed to refer that passage in the

law, which says: "On the day ye eat thereof ye shall surely die," [211]

not to the death of the body, but to that death of the soul which takes

place in sin. It is the unbelievers who have died this death, to whom

the Lord pointed when He said, "Let the dead bury their dead." [212]

Now what will be their answer, when we read that God, when reproving

and sentencing the first man after his sin, said to him, "Dust thou

art, and unto dust shalt thou return?" [213] For it was not in respect

of his soul that he was "dust," but clearly by reason of his body, and

it was by the death of the self-same body that he was destined to

"return to dust." Still, although it was by reason of his body that he

was dust, and although he bare about the natural body in which he was

created, he would, if he had not sinned, have been changed into a

spiritual body, and would have passed into the incorruptible state,

which is promised to the faithful and the saints, without the peril of

death. [214] And for this issue we not only are conscious in ourselves

of having an earnest desire, but we learn it from the apostle's

intimation, when he says: "For in this we groan, longing to be clothed

upon with our habitation which is from heaven; if so be that being

clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle

do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but

clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life." [215]

Therefore, if Adam had not sinned, he would not have been divested of

his body, but would have been clothed upon with immortality and

incorruption, that "mortality might have been swallowed up of life;"

that is, that he might have passed from the natural body into the

spiritual body.

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[211] Gen. ii. 17.

[212] Matt. viii. 22; Luke ix. 60.

[213] Gen. iii. 19.

[214] 1 Cor. xv. 52, 53.

[215] 2 Cor. v. 2-4.

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Chapter 3 [III.]--It is One Thing to Be Mortal, Another Thing to Be

Subject to Death.

Nor was there any reason to fear that if he had happened to live on

here longer in his natural body, he would have been oppressed with old

age, and have gradually, by increasing age, arrived at death. For if

God granted to the clothes and the shoes of the Israelites that "they

waxed not old" during so many years, [216] what wonder if for obedience

it had been by the power of the same [God] allowed to man, that

although he had a natural and mortal body, he should have in it a

certain condition, in which he might grow full of years without

decrepitude, and, whenever God pleased, pass from mortality to

immortality without the medium of death? For even as this very flesh of

ours, which we now possess, is not therefore invulnerable, because it

is not necessary that it should be wounded; so also was his not

therefore immortal, because there was no necessity for its dying. Such

a condition, whilst still in their natural and mortal body, I suppose,

was granted even to those who were translated hence without death.

[217] For Enoch and Elijah were not reduced to the decrepitude of old

age by their long life. But yet I do not believe that they were then

changed into that spiritual kind of body, such as is promised in the

resurrection, and which the Lord was the first to receive; only they

probably do not need those aliments, which by their use minister

refreshment to the body; but ever since their translation they so live,

as to enjoy such a sufficiency as was provided during the forty days in

which Elijah lived on the cruse of water and the cake, without

substantial food; [218] or else, if there be any need of such

sustenance, they are, it may be, sustained in Paradise in some such way

as Adam was, before he brought on himself expulsion therefrom by

sinning. And he, as I suppose, was supplied with sustenance against

decay from the fruit of the various trees, and from the tree of life

with security against old age.

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[216] Deut. xxix. 5.

[217] Gen. v. 24; 2 Kings ii. 11.

[218] 1 Kings xix. 8.

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Chapter 4 [IV.]--Even Bodily Death is from Sin.

But in addition to the passage where God in punishment said, "Dust thou

art, unto dust shalt thou return," [219] --a passage which I cannot

understand how any one can apply except to the death of the

body,--there are other testimonies likewise, from which it most fully

appears that by reason of sin the human race has brought upon itself

not spiritual death merely, but the death of the body also. The apostle

says to the Romans: "But if Christ be in you, the body is dead because

of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. If therefore

the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He

that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your

mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." [220] I think that

so clear and open a sentence as this only requires to be read, and not

expounded. The body, says he, is dead, not because of earthly frailty,

as being made of the dust of the ground, but because of sin; what more

do we want? And he is most careful in his words: he does not say "is

mortal," but "dead."

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[219] Gen. iii. 19.

[220] Rom. viii. 10, 11.

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Chapter 5 [V.] --The Words, Mortale (Capable of Dying), Mortuum (Dead),

and Moriturus (Destined to Die).

Now previous to the change into the incorruptible state which is

promised in the resurrection of the saints, the body could be mortal

(capable of dying), although not destined to die (moriturus); just as

our body in its present state can, so to speak, be capable of sickness,

although not destined to be sick. For whose is the flesh which is

incapable of sickness, even if from some accident it die before it ever

is sick? In like manner was man's body then mortal; and this mortality

was to have been superseded by an eternal incorruption, if man had

persevered in righteousness, that is to say, obedience: but even what

was mortal (mortale) was not made dead (mortuum), except on account of

sin. For the change which is to come in at the resurrection is, in

truth, not only not to have death incidental to it, which has happened

through sin, but neither is it to have mortality, [or the very

possibility of death,] which the natural body had before it sinned. He

does not say: "He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall

quicken also your dead bodies" (although he had previously said, "the

body is dead" [221] ); but his words are: "He shall quicken also your

mortal bodies;" [222] so that they are not only no longer dead, but no

longer mortal [or capable of dying], since the natural is raised

spiritual, and this mortal body shall put on immortality, and mortality

shall be swallowed up in life. [223]

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[221] Rom. viii. 10.

[222] Rom. viii. 11.

[223] 1 Cor. xv. 44, 53, 55.

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Chapter 6 [VI.]--How It is that the Body Dead Because of Sin.

One wonders that anything is required clearer than the proof we have

given. But we must perhaps be content to hear this clear illustration

gainsaid by the contention, that we must understand "the dead body"

here [224] in the sense of the passage where it is said, "Mortify your

members which are upon the earth." [225] But it is because of

righteousness and not because of sin that the body is in this sense

mortified; for it is to do the works of righteousness that we mortify

our bodies which are upon the earth. Or if they suppose that the

phrase, "because of sin," is added, not that we should understand

"because sin has been committed," but "in order that sin may not be

committed"--as if it were said, "The body indeed is dead, in order to

prevent the commission of sin:" what then does he mean in the next

clause by adding the words, "because of righteousness," to the

statement, "The spirit is life?" [226] For it would have been enough

simply to have adjoined "the spirit is life," to have secured that we

should supply here too, "in order to prevent the commission of sin;" so

that we should thus understand the two propositions to point to one

thing--that both "the body is dead," and "the spirit is life," for the

one common purpose of "preventing the commission of sin." So likewise

if he had merely meant to say, "because of righteousness," in the sense

of "for the purpose of doing righteousness," the two clauses might

possibly be referred to this one purpose--to the effect, that both "the

body is dead," and "the spirit is life," "for the purpose of doing

righteousness." But as the passage actually stands, it declares that

"the body is dead because of sin," and "the spirit is life because of

righteousness," attributing different merits to different things--the

demerit of sin to the death of the body, and the merit of righteousness

to the life of the spirit. Wherefore if, as no one can doubt, "the

spirit is life because of righteousness," that is, as the desert, of

righteousness; how ought we, or can we, understand by the statement,

"The body is dead because of sin," anything else than that the body is

dead as the desert of sin, unless indeed we try to pervert or wrest the

plainest sense of Scripture to our own arbitrary will? But besides

this, additional light is afforded by the words which follow. For it is

with limitation to the present time, when he says, that on the one hand

"the body is dead because of sin," since, whilst the body is

unrenovated by the resurrection, there remains in it the desert of sin,

that is, the necessity of dying; and on the other hand, that "the

spirit is life because of righteousness," since, notwithstanding the

fact of our being still burdened with "the body of this death," [227]

we have already by the renewal which is begun in our inner man, new

aspirations [228] after the righteousness of faith. Yet, lest man in

his ignorance should fail to entertain hope of the resurrection of the

body, he says that the very body which he had just declared to be "dead

because of sin" in this world, will in the next world be made alive

"because of righteousness,"--and that not only in such a way as to

become alive from the dead, but immortal from its mortality.

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[224] Rom. viii. 10.

[225] Col. iii. 5.

[226] Rom. viii. 10.

[227] Rom. vii. 24.

[228] Respiramus.

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Chapter 7 [VII.]--The Life of the Body the Object of Hope, the Life of

the Spirit Being a Prelude to It.

Although I am much afraid that so clear a matter may rather be obscured

by exposition, I must yet request your attention to the luminous

statement of the apostle. "But if Christ," says he, "be in you, the

body indeed is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of

righteousness." [229] Now this is said, that men may not suppose that

they derive no benefit, or but scant benefit, from the grace of Christ,

seeing that they must needs die in the body. For they are bound to

remember that, although their body still bears that desert of sin,

which is irrevocably bound to the condition of death, yet their spirit

has already begun to live because of the righteousness of faith,

although it had actually become extinct by the death, as it were, of

unbelief. No small gift, therefore, he says, must you suppose to have

been conferred upon you, by the circumstance that Christ is in you;

inasmuch as in the body, which is dead because of sin, your spirit is

even now alive because of righteousness; so that therefore you should

not despair of the life even of your body. "For if the Spirit of Him

that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up

Christ from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies by His

Spirit that dwelleth in you." [230] How is it that fumes of controversy

still darken so clear a light? The apostle distinctly tells you, that

although the body is dead because of sin within you, yet even your

mortal bodies shall be made alive because of righteousness, because of

which even now your spirit is life,--the whole of which process is to

be perfected by the grace of Christ, that is, by His Spirit dwelling in

you: and men still contradict! He goes on to tell us how it comes to

pass that life converts death into itself by mortifying it. "Therefore,

brethren," says he, "we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after

the flesh; for if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye

through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live."

[231] What else does this mean but this: If ye live according to death,

ye shall wholly die; but if by living according to life ye mortify

death, ye shall wholly live?

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[229] Rom. viii. 10.

[230] Rom. viii. 11.

[231] Rom. viii. 12, 13.

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Chapter 8 [VIII.]--Bodily Death from Adam's Sin.

When to the like purport he says: "By man came death, by man also the

resurrection of the dead," [232] in what other sense can the passage be

understood than of the death of the body; for having in view the

mention of this, he proceeded to speak of the resurrection of the body,

and affirmed it in a most earnest and solemn discourse? In these words,

addressed to the Corinthians: "By man came death, and by man came also

the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ

shall all be made alive," [233] --what other meaning is indeed conveyed

than in the verse in which he says to the Romans, "By one man sin

entered into the world, and death by sin?" [234] Now they will have it,

that the death here meant is the death, not of the body, but of the

soul, on the pretence that another thing is spoken of to the

Corinthians, where they are quite unable to understand the death of the

soul, because the subject there treated is the resurrection of the

body, which is the antithesis of the death of the body. The reason,

moreover, why only death is here mentioned as caused by man, and not

sin also, is because the point of the discourse is not about

righteousness, which is the antithesis of sin, but about the

resurrection of the body, which is contrasted with the death of the

body.

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[232] 1 Cor. xv. 21.

[233] 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.

[234] Rom. v. 12.

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Chapter 9 [IX.]--Sin Passes on to All Men by Natural Descent, and Not

Merely by Imitation.

You tell me in your letter, that they endeavour to twist into some new

sense the passage of the apostle, in which he says: "By one man sin

entered into the world, and death by sin;" [235] yet you have not

informed me what they suppose to be the meaning of these words. But so

far as I have discovered from others, they think that the death which

is here mentioned is not the death of the body, which they will not

allow Adam to have deserved by his sin, but that of the soul, which

takes place in actual sin; and that this actual sin has not been

transmitted from the first man to other persons by natural descent, but

by imitation. Hence, likewise, they refuse to believe that in infants

original sin is remitted through baptism, for they contend that no such

original sin exists at all in people by their birth. But if the apostle

had wished to assert that sin entered into the world, not by natural

descent, but by imitation, he would have mentioned as the first

offender, not Adam indeed, but the devil, of whom it is written, [236]

that "he sinneth from the beginning;" of whom also we read in the Book

of Wisdom: "Nevertheless through the devil's envy death entered into

the world." [237] Now, forasmuch as this death came upon men from the

devil, not because they were propagated by him, but because they

imitated his example, it is immediately added: "And they that do hold

of his side do imitate him." [238] Accordingly, the apostle, when

mentioning sin and death together, which had passed by natural descent

from one upon all men, set him down as the introducer thereof from whom

the propagation of the human race took its beginning.

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[235] Rom. v. 12.

[236] 1 John iii. 8.

[237] Wisd. ii. 24.

[238] Ver. 25.

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Chapter 10.--The Analogy of Grace.

No doubt all they imitate Adam who by disobedience transgress the

commandment of God; but he is one thing as an example to those who sin

because they choose; and another thing as the progenitor of all who are

born with sin. All His saints, also, imitate Christ in the pursuit of

righteousness; whence the same apostle, whom we have already quoted,

says: "Be ye imitators of me, as I am also of Christ." [239] But

besides this imitation, His grace works within us our illumination and

justification, by that operation concerning which the same preacher of

His [name] says: "Neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that

watereth, but God that giveth the increase." [240] For by this grace He

engrafts into His body even baptized infants, who certainly have not

yet become able to imitate any one. As therefore He, in whom all are

made alive, besides offering Himself as an example of righteousness to

those who imitate Him, gives also to those who believe on Him the

hidden grace of His Spirit, which He secretly infuses even into

infants; so likewise he, in whom all die, besides being an example for

imitation to those who wilfully transgress the commandment of the Lord,

depraved also in his own person all who come of his stock by the hidden

corruption of his own carnal concupiscence. It is entirely on this

account, and for no other reason, that the apostle says: "By one man

sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so passed upon all

men; in which all have sinned." [241] Now if I were to say this, they

would raise an objection, and loudly insist that I was incorrect both

in expression and sense; for they would perceive no sense in these

words when spoken by an ordinary man, except that sense which they

refuse to see in the apostle. Since, however, these are the words of

him to whose authority and doctrine they submit, they charge us with

slowness of understanding, while they endeavour to wrest to some

unintelligible sense words which were written in a clear and obvious

purport. "By one man," says he, "sin entered into the world, and death

by sin." This indicates propagation, not imitation; for if imitation

were meant, he would have said, "By the devil." But as no one doubts,

he refers to that first man who is called Adam: "And so," says he, "it

passed upon all men."

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[239] 1 Cor. xi. 1.

[240] 1 Cor. iii. 7.

[241] Rom. v. 12.

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Chapter 11 [X.]--Distinction Between Actual and Original Sin. [242]

Again, in the clause which follows, "In which all have sinned," how

cautiously, rightly, and unambiguously is the statement expressed! For

if you understand that sin to be meant which by one man entered into

the world, "In which [sin] all have sinned," it is surely clear enough,

that the sins which are peculiar to every man, which they themselves

commit and which belong simply to them, mean one thing; and that the

one sin, in and by which all have sinned, means another thing; since

all were that one man. If, however, it be not the sin, but that one man

that is understood, "In which [one man] all have sinned," what again

can be plainer than even this clear statement? We read, indeed, of

those being justified in Christ who believe in Him, by reason of the

secret communion and inspiration of that spiritual grace which makes

every one who cleaves to the Lord "one spirit" with Him, [243] although

His saints also imitate His example; can I find, however, any similar

statement made of those who have imitated His saints? Can any man be

said to be justified in Paul or in Peter, or in any one whatever of

those excellent men whose authority stands high among the people of

God? We are no doubt said to be blessed in Abraham, according to the

passage in which it was said to him, "In thee shall all nations be

blessed" [244] --for Christ's sake, who is his seed according to the

flesh; which is still more clearly expressed in the parallel passage:

"In thy seed shall all nations be blessed." I do not believe that any

one can find it anywhere stated in the Holy Scriptures, that a man has

ever sinned or still sins "in the devil," although all wicked and

impious men "imitate" him. The apostle, however, has declared

concerning the first man, that "in him all have sinned;" [245] and yet

there is still a contest about the propagation of sin, and men oppose

to it I know not what nebulous theory of "imitation." [246]

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[242] See below, Book iii. c. vii.; also in the De Nuptiis, c. v.; also

Epist. 186, and Serm. 165.

[243] 1 Cor. vi. 17.

[244] Gal. iii. 8: comp. Gen. xii. 3, xviii. 18, xxii. 18.

[245] Rom. v. 12.

[246] This was the Pelagian term, expressive of their dogma that

original sin stands in the following [or "imitation"] of Adam, instead

of being the fault and corruption of the nature of every man who is

naturally engendered of Adam's offspring; which doctrine is expressed

by Augustin's word, propagatio, "propagation."

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Chapter 12.--The Law Could Not Take Away Sin.

Observe also what follows. Having said, "In which all have sinned," he

at once added, "For until the law, sin was in the world." [247] This

means that sin could not be taken away even by the law, which entered

that sin might the more abound, [248] whether it be the law of nature,

under which every man when arrived at years of discretion only proceeds

to add his own sins to original sin, or that very law which Moses gave

to the people. "For if there had been a law given which could have

given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the

Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith in

Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. [249] But sin is not

imputed where there is no law." [250] Now what means the phrase "is not

imputed," but "is ignored," or "is not reckoned as sin?" Although the

Lord God does not Himself regard it as if it had never been, since it

is written: "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish

without law." [251]

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[247] Rom. v. 13.

[248] Rom. v. 20.

[249] Gal. iii. 21, 22.

[250] Rom. v. 13.

[251] Rom. ii. 12.

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Chapter 13 [XI.]--Meaning of the Apostle's Phrase "The Reign of Death."

"Nevertheless," says he, "death reigned from Adam even unto Moses,"

[252] --that is to say, from the first man even to the very law which

was promulged by the divine authority, because even it was unable to

abolish the reign of death. Now death must be understood "to reign,"

whenever the guilt of sin [253] so dominates in men that it prevents

their attainment of that eternal life which is the only true life, and

drags them down even to the second death which is penally eternal. This

reign of death is only destroyed in any man by the Saviour's grace,

which wrought even in the saints of the olden time, all of whom, though

previous to the coming of Christ in the flesh, yet lived in relation to

His assisting grace, not to the letter of the law, which only knew how

to command, but not to help them. In the Old Testament, indeed, that

was hidden (conformably to the perfectly just dispensation of the

times) which is now revealed in the New Testament. Therefore "death

reigned from Adam unto Moses," in all who were not assisted by the

grace of Christ, that in them the kingdom of death might be destroyed,

"even in those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's

transgression," [254] that is, who had not yet sinned of their own

individual will, as Adam did, but had drawn from him original sin, "who

is the figure of him that was to come," [255] because in him was

constituted the form of condemnation to his future progeny, who should

spring from him by natural descent; so that from one all men were born

to a condemnation, from which there is no deliverance but in the

Saviour's grace. I am quite aware, indeed, that several Latin copies of

the Scriptures read the passage thus: "Death reigned from Adam to Moses

over them who have sinned after the similitude of Adam's

transgression;" [256] but even this version is referred by those who so

read it to the very same purport, for they understood those who have

sinned in him to have sinned after the similitude of Adam's

transgression; so that they are created in his likeness, not only as

men born of a man, but as sinners born of a sinner, dying ones of a

dying one, and condemned ones to a condemned one. However, the Greek

copies from which the Latin version was made, have all, without

exception or nearly so, the reading which I first adduced.

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[252] Rom. v. 14.

[253] Reatus peccati.

[254] Rom. v. 14.

[255] Rom. v. 14.

[256] Comp. Epist. 157, n. 19. [Some few Greek copies have come down to

us (e.g. 67\*\*) which omit the "not," but no Latin copy (unless d\* be an

exception), although other Latin writers (e.g. Ambrosiaster) testify to

their former existence.--W.]

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Chapter 14.--Superabundance of Grace.

"But," says he, "not as the offence so also is the free gift. For if,

through the offence of one, many be dead, much more the grace of God,

and the gift by grace, which is by One Man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded

unto many." [257] Not many more, that is, many more men, for there are

not more persons justified than condemned; but it runs, much more hath

abounded; inasmuch as, while Adam produced sinners from his one sin,

Christ has by His grace procured free forgiveness even for the sins

which men have of their own accord added by actual transgression to the

original sin in which they were born. This he states more clearly still

in the sequel.

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[257] Rom. v. 15.

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Chapter 15 [XII.]--The One Sin Common to All Men.

But observe more attentively what he says, that "through the offence of

one, many are dead." For why should it be on account of the sin of one,

and not rather on account of their own sins, if this passage is to be

understood of imitation, and not of propagation? [258] But mark what

follows: "And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift; for the

judgment was by one to condemnation, but the grace is of many offences

unto justification." [259] Now let them tell us, where there is room in

these words for imitation. "By one," says he, "to condemnation." By one

what except one sin? This, indeed, he clearly implies in the words

which he adds: "But the grace is of many offences unto justification."

Why, indeed, is the judgment from one offence to condemnation, while

the grace is from many offences to justification? If original sin is a

nullity, would it not follow, that not only grace withdraws men from

many offences to justification, but judgment leads them to condemnation

from many offences likewise? For assuredly grace does not condone many

offences, without judgment in like manner having many offences to

condemn. Else, if men are involved in condemnation because of one

offence, on the ground that all the offences which are condemned were

committed in imitation of that one offence; there is the same reason

why men should also be regarded as withdrawn from one offence unto

justification, inasmuch as all the offences which are remitted to the

justified were committed in imitation of that one offence. But this

most certainly was not the apostle's meaning, when he said: "The

judgment, indeed, was from one offence unto condemnation, but the grace

was from many offences unto justification." We on our side, indeed, can

understand the apostle, and see that judgment is predicated of one

offence unto condemnation entirely on the ground that, even if there

were in men nothing but original sin, it would be sufficient for their

condemnation. For however much heavier will be their condemnation who

have added their own sins to the original offence (and it will be the

more severe in individual cases, in proportion to the sins of

individuals); still, even that sin alone which was originally derived

unto men not only excludes from the kingdom of God, which infants are

unable to enter (as they themselves allow), unless they have received

the grace of Christ before they die, but also alienates from salvation

and everlasting life, which cannot be anything else than the kingdom of

God, to which fellowship with Christ alone introduces us.

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[258] See note to last word of ch. 11.

[259] Rom. v. 16.

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Chapter 16 [XIII.]--How Death is by One and Life by One.

And from this we gather that we have derived from Adam, in whom we all

have sinned, not all our actual sins, but only original sin; whereas

from Christ, in whom we are all justified, we obtain the remission not

merely of that original sin, but of the rest of our sins also, which we

have added. Hence it runs: "Not as by the one that sinned, so also is

the free gift." For the judgment, certainly, from one sin, if it is not

remitted--and that the original sin--is capable of drawing us into

condemnation; whilst grace conducts us to justification from the

remission of many sins,--that is to say, not simply from the original

sin, but from all others also whatsoever.

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Chapter 17.--Whom Sinners Imitate.

"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which

receive abundance of grace and of righteousness shall reign in life by

one, even Jesus Christ." [260] Why did death reign on account of the

sin of one, unless it was that men were bound by the chain of death in

that one man in whom all men sinned, even though they added no sins of

their own? Otherwise it was not on account of the sin of one that death

reigned through one; rather it was on account of the manifold offences

of many, [operating] through each individual sinner. For if the reason

why men have died for the transgression of another be, that they have

imitated him by following him as their predecessor in transgression, it

must even result, and that "much more," that that one died on account

of the transgression of another, whom the devil so preceded in

transgression as himself to persuade him to commit the transgression.

Adam, however, used no influence to persuade his followers; and the

many who are said to have imitated him have, in fact, either not heard

of his existence at all or of his having committed any such sin as is

ascribed to him, or altogether disbelieve it. How much more correctly,

therefore, as I have already remarked, [261] would the apostle have set

forth the devil as the author, from which "one" he would say that sin

and death had passed upon all, if he had in this passage meant to

speak, not of propagation, but of imitation? For there is much stronger

reason for saying that Adam is an imitator of the devil, since he had

in him an actual instigator to sin; if one may be an imitator even of

him who has never used any such persuasion, or of whom he is absolutely

ignorant. But what is implied in the clause, "They which receive

abundance of grace and righteousness," but that the grace of remission

is given not only to that sin in which all have sinned, but to those

offences likewise which men have actually committed besides; and that

on these [men] so great a righteousness is freely bestowed, that,

although Adam gave way to him who persuaded him to sin, they do not

yield even to the coercion of the same tempter? Again, what mean the

words, "Much more shall they reign in life," when the fact is, that the

reign of death drags many more down to eternal punishment, unless we

understand those to be really mentioned in both clauses, who pass from

Adam to Christ, in other words, from death to life; because in the life

eternal they shall reign without end, and thus exceed the reign of

death which has prevailed within them only temporarily and with a

termination?

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[260] Rom. v. 17.

[261] See above, ch. 9.

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Chapter 18.--Only Christ Justifies.

"Therefore as by the offence of one upon all men to condemnation, even

so by the justification of One upon all men unto justification of

life." [262] This "offence of one," if we are bent on "imitation," can

only be the devil's offence. Since, however, it is manifestly spoken in

reference to Adam and not the devil, it follows that we have no other

alternative than to understand the principle of natural propagation,

and not that of imitation, to be here implied. [XIV.] Now when he says

in reference to Christ, "By the justification of one," he has more

expressly stated our doctrine than if he were to say, "By the

righteousness of one;" inasmuch as he mentions that justification

whereby Christ justifies the ungodly, and which he did not propose as

an object of imitation, for He alone is capable of effecting this. Now

it was quite competent for the apostle to say, and to say rightly: "Be

ye imitators of me, as I also am of Christ;" [263] but he could never

say: Be ye justified by me, as I also am by Christ;--since there may

be, and indeed actually are and have been, many who were righteous and

worthy of imitation; but no one is righteous and a justifier but Christ

alone. Whence it is said: "To the man that believeth on him that

justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." [264]

Now if any man had it in his power confidently to declare, "I justify

you," it would necessarily follow that he could also say, "Believe in

me." But it has never been in the power of any of the saints of God to

say this except the Saint of saints, [265] who said: "Ye believe in

God, believe also in me;" [266] so that, inasmuch as it is He that

justifies the ungodly, to the man who believes in him that justifieth

the ungodly his faith is imputed for righteousness.

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[262] Rom. v. 18.

[263] 1 Cor. iv. 16; xi. 1.

[264] Rom. iv. 5.

[265] Sanctus sanctorum.

[266] John xiv. 1.

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Chapter 19 [XV.]--Sin is from Natural Descent, as Righteousness is from

Regeneration; How "All" Are Sinners Through Adam, and "All" Are Just

Through Christ.

Now if it is imitation only that makes men sinners through Adam, why

does not imitation likewise alone make men righteous through Christ?

"For," he says, "as by the offence of one upon all men to condemnation;

even so by the justification of one upon all men unto justification of

life." [267] [On the theory of imitation], then, the "one" and the

"one," here, must not be regarded as Adam and Christ, but Adam and

Abel. For although many sinners have preceded us in the time of this

present life, and have been imitated in their sin by those who have

sinned at a later date, yet they will have it, that only Adam is

mentioned as he in whom all have sinned by imitation, since he was the

first of men who sinned. And on the same principle, Abel ought

certainly to have been mentioned, as he "in which one" all likewise are

justified by imitation, inasmuch as he was himself the first man who

lived justly. If, however, it be thought necessary to take into the

account some critical period having relation to the beginning of the

New Testament, and Christ be taken as the leader of the righteous and

the object of their imitation, then Judas, who betrayed Him, ought to

be set down as the leader of the class of sinners. Moreover, if Christ

alone is He in whom all men are justified, on the ground that it is not

simply the imitation of His example which makes men just, but His grace

which regenerates men by the Spirit, then also Adam is the only one in

whom all have sinned, on the ground that it is not the mere following

of his evil example that makes men sinners, but the penalty which

generates through the flesh. Hence the terms "all men" and "all men."

For not they who are generated through Adam are actually the very same

as those who are regenerated through Christ; but yet the language of

the apostle is strictly correct, because as none partakes of carnal

generation except through Adam, so no one shares in the spiritual

except through Christ. For if any could be generated in the flesh, yet

not by Adam; and if in like manner any could be generated in the

Spirit, and not by Christ; clearly "all" could not be spoken of either

in the one class or in the other. But these "all" [268] the apostle

afterwards describes as "many;" [269] for obviously, under certain

circumstances, the "all" may be but a few. The carnal generation,

however, embraces "many," and the spiritual generation also includes

"many;" although the "many" of the spiritual are less numerous than the

"many" of the carnal. But as the one embraces all men whatever, so the

other includes all righteous men; because as in the former case none

can be a man without the carnal generation, so in the other class no

one can be a righteous man without the spiritual generation; in both

instances, therefore, there are "many:" "For as by the disobedience of

one man many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many

be made righteous." [270]

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[267] Rom. v. 18.

[268] The word is "all" in ver. 18.

[269] See ver. 19.

[270] Rom. v. 19.

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Chapter 20.--Original Sin Alone is Contracted by Natural Birth.

"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound." [271] This

addition to original sin men now made of their own wilfulness, not

through Adam; but even this is done away and remedied by Christ,

because "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin

hath reigned unto death" [272] --even that sin which men have not

derived from Adam, but have added of their own will--"even so might

grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life." [273] There is,

however, other righteousness apart from Christ, as there are other sins

apart from Adam. Therefore, after saying, "As sin hath reigned unto

death," he did not add in the same clause "by one," or "by Adam,"

because he had already spoken of that sin which was abounding when the

law entered, and which, of course, was not original sin, but the sin of

man's own wilful commission. But after he has said: "Even so might

grace also reign through righteousness unto eternal life," he at once

adds, "through Jesus Christ our Lord;" [274] because, whilst by the

generation of the flesh only that sin is contracted which is original;

yet by the regeneration of the Spirit there is effected the remission

not of original sin only, but also of the sins of man's own voluntary

and actual commission.

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[271] Rom. v. 20.

[272] Rom. v. 21.

[273] Rom. v. 21.

[274] Rom. v. 21.

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Chapter 21 [XVI.]--Unbaptized Infants Damned, But Most Lightly; [275]

The Penalty of Adam's Sin, the Grace of His Body Lost.

It may therefore be correctly affirmed, that such infants as quit the

body without being baptized will be involved in the mildest

condemnation of all. That person, therefore, greatly deceives both

himself and others, who teaches that they will not be involved in

condemnation; whereas the apostle says: "Judgment from one offence to

condemnation," [276] and again a little after: "By the offence of one

upon all persons to condemnation." [277] When, indeed, Adam sinned by

not obeying God, then his body--although it was a natural and mortal

body--lost the grace whereby it used in every part of it to be obedient

to the soul. Then there arose in men affections common to the brutes

which are productive of shame, and which made man ashamed of his own

nakedness. [278] Then also, by a certain disease which was conceived in

men from a suddenly injected and pestilential corruption, it was

brought about that they lost that stability of life in which they were

created, and, by reason of the mutations which they experienced in the

stages of life, issued at last in death. However many were the years

they lived in their subsequent life, yet they began to die on the day

when they received the law of death, because they kept verging towards

old age. For that possesses not even a moment's stability, but glides

away without intermission, which by constant change perceptibly

advances to an end which does not produce perfection, but utter

exhaustion. Thus, then, was fulfilled what God had spoken: "In the day

that ye eat thereof, ye shall surely die." [279] As a consequence,

then, of this disobedience of the flesh and this law of sin and death,

whoever is born of the flesh has need of spiritual regeneration--not

only that he may reach the kingdom of God, but also that he may be

freed from the damnation of sin. Hence men are on the one hand born in

the flesh liable to sin and death from the first Adam, and on the other

hand are born again in baptism associated with the righteousness and

eternal life of the second Adam; even as it is written in the book of

Ecclesiasticus: "Of the woman came the beginning of sin, and through

her we all die." [280] Now whether it be said of the woman or of Adam,

both statements pertain to the first man; since (as we know) the woman

is of the man, and the two are one flesh. Whence also it is written:

"And they twain shall be one flesh; wherefore," the Lord says, "they

are no more twain, but one flesh." [281]

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[275] See Augustin's Enchirid. c. 93, and Contra Julianum, v. 11.

[276] Rom. v. 16.

[277] Ver. 18.

[278] Gen. iii. 10.

[279] Gen. ii. 17.

[280] Ecclus. xxv. 24.

[281] Matt. xix. 5, 6.

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Chapter 22 [XVII.]--To Infants Personal Sin is Not to Be Attributed.

They, therefore, who say that the reason why infants are baptized, is,

that they may have the remission of the sin which they have themselves

committed in their life, not what they have derived from Adam, may be

refuted without much difficulty. For whenever these persons shall have

reflected within themselves a little, uninfluenced by any polemical

spirit, on the absurdity of their statement, how unworthy it is, in

fact, of serious discussion, they will at once change their opinion.

But if they will not do this, we shall not so completely despair of

men's common sense, as to have any fears that they will induce others

to adopt their views. They are themselves driven to adopt their

opinion, if I am not mistaken, by their prejudice for some other

theory; and it is because they feel themselves obliged to allow that

sins are remitted to the baptized, and are unwilling to allow that the

sin was derived from Adam which they admit to be remitted to infants,

that they have been obliged to charge infancy itself with actual sin;

as if by bringing this charge against infancy a man could become the

more secure himself, when accused and unable to answer his assailant!

However, let us, as I suggested, pass by such opponents as these;

indeed, we require neither words nor quotations of Scripture to prove

the sinlessness of infants, so far as their conduct in life is

concerned; this life they spend, such is the recency of their birth,

within their very selves, since it escapes the cognizance of human

perception, which has no data or support whereon to sustain any

controversy on the subject.

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Chapter 23 [XVIII.]--He Refutes Those Who Allege that Infants are

Baptized Not for the Remission of Sins, But for the Obtaining of the

Kingdom of Heaven. [282]

But those persons raise a question, and appear to adduce an argument

deserving of consideration and discussion, who say that new-born

infants receive baptism not for the remission of sin, but that, since

their procreation is not spiritual, they may be created in Christ, and

become partakers of the kingdom of heaven, and by the same means

children and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. And yet, when

you ask them, whether those that are not baptized, and are not made

joint-heirs with Christ and partakers of the kingdom of heaven, have at

any rate the blessing of eternal life in the resurrection of the dead,

they are extremely perplexed, and find no way out of their difficulty.

For what Christian is there who would allow it to be said, that any one

could attain to eternal salvation without being born again in

Christ,--[a result] which He meant to be effected through baptism, at

the very time when such a sacrament was purposely instituted for

regenerating in the hope of eternal salvation? Whence the apostle says:

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His

mercy He saved us by the laver [283] of regeneration." [284] This

salvation, however, he says, consists in hope, while we live here

below, where he says, "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen

is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we

hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." [285]

Who then could be so bold as to affirm, that without the regeneration

of which the apostle speaks, infants could attain to eternal salvation,

as if Christ died not for them? For "Christ died for the ungodly."

[286] As for them, however, who (as is manifest) never did an ungodly

act in all their own life, if also they are not bound by any bond of

sin in their original nature, how did He die for them, who died for the

ungodly? If they were hurt by no malady of original sin, how is it they

are carried to the Physician Christ, for the express purpose of

receiving the sacrament of eternal salvation, by the pious anxiety of

those who run to Him? Why rather is it not said to them in the Church:

Take hence these innocents: "they that are whole need not a physician,

but they that are sick;"--Christ "came not to call the righteous, but

sinners?" [287] There never has been heard, there never is heard, there

never will be heard in the Church, such a fiction concerning Christ.

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[282] See below, c. 26; also De Peccato orig. c. 19-24; also Serm. 294.

[283] Lavacrum.

[284] Tit. iii. 5.

[285] Rom. viii. 24, 25.

[286] Rom. v. 6.

[287] Luke v. 31, 32.

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Chapter 24 [XIX.]--Infants Saved as Sinners.

And let no one suppose that infants ought to be brought to baptism, on

the ground that, as they are not sinners, so they are not righteous;

how then do some remind us that the Lord commends this tender age as

meritorious; saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and

forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven?" [288] For if

this ["of such"] is not said because of likeness in humility (since

humility makes [us] children), but because of the laudable life of

children, then of course infants must be righteous persons; otherwise,

it could not be correctly said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," for

heaven can only belong to the righteous. But perhaps, after all, it is

not a right opinion of the meaning of the Lord's words, to make Him

commend the life of infants when He says, "Of such is the kingdom of

heaven;" inasmuch as that may be their true sense, which makes Christ

adduce the tender age of infancy as a likeness of humility. Even so,

however, perhaps we must revert to the tenet which I mentioned just

now, that infants ought to be baptized, because, although they are not

sinners, they are yet not righteous. But when He had said: "I came not

to call the righteous," as if responding to this, Whom, then, didst

Thou come to call? immediately He goes on to say: "--but sinners to

repentance." Therefore it follows, that, however righteous they may be,

if also they are not sinners, He came not to call them, who said of

Himself: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." They

therefore seem, not vainly only, but even wickedly to rush to the

baptism of Him who does not invite them,--an opinion which God forbid

that we should entertain. He calls them, then, as a Physician who is

not needed for those that are whole, but for those that are sick; and

who came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Now,

inasmuch as infants are not held bound by any sins of their own actual

life, it is the guilt of original sin which is healed in them by the

grace of Him who saves them by the laver of regeneration.

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[288] Matt. xix. 14.

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Chapter 25.--Infants are Described as Believers and as Penitents. Sins

Alone Separate Between God and Men.

Some one will say: How then are mere infants called to repentance? How

can such as they repent of anything? The answer to this is: If they

must not be called penitents because they have not the sense of

repenting, neither must they be called believers, because they likewise

have not the sense of believing. But if they are rightly called

believers, [289] because they in a certain sense profess faith by the

words of their parents, why are they not also held to be before that

penitents when they are shown to renounce the devil and this world by

the profession again of the same parents? The whole of this is done in

hope, in the strength of the sacrament and of the divine grace which

the Lord has bestowed upon the Church. But yet who knows not that the

baptized infant fails to be benefited from what he received as a little

child, if on coming to years of reason he fails to believe and to

abstain from unlawful desires? If, however, the infant departs from the

present life after he has received baptism, the guilt in which he was

involved by original sin being done away, he shall be made perfect in

that light of truth, which, remaining unchangeable for evermore,

illumines the justified in the presence of their Creator. For sins

alone separate between men and God; and these are done away by Christ's

grace, through whom, as Mediator, we are reconciled, when He justifies

the ungodly.

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[289] See below, c. 26 and 40; also Book iii. c. 2; also Epist. 98, and

Serm. 294.

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Chapter 26 [XX.]--No One, Except He Be Baptized, Rightly Comes to the

Table of the Lord.

Now they take alarm from the statement of the Lord, when He says,

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" [290]

because in His own explanation of the passage He affirms, "Except a man

be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of

God." [291] And so they try to ascribe to unbaptized infants, by the

merit of their innocence, the gift of salvation and eternal life, but

at the same time, owing to their being unbaptized, to exclude them from

the kingdom of heaven. But how novel and astonishing is such an

assumption, as if there could possibly be salvation and eternal life

without heirship with Christ, without the kingdom of heaven! Of course

they have their refuge, whither to escape and hide themselves, because

the Lord does not say, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit,

he cannot have life, but--"he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." If

indeed He had said the other, there could have risen not a moment's

doubt. Well, then, let us remove the doubt; let us now listen to the

Lord, and not to men's notions and conjectures; let us, I say, hear

what the Lord says--not indeed concerning the sacrament of the laver,

but concerning the sacrament of His own holy table, to which none but a

baptized person has a right to approach: "Except ye eat my flesh and

drink my blood, ye shall have no life in you." [292] What do we want

more? What answer to this can be adduced, unless it be by that

obstinacy which ever resists the constancy of manifest truth?

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[290] John iii. 3.

[291] Ver. 5.

[292] John vi. 53.

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Chapter 27.--Infants Must Feed on Christ.

Will, however, any man be so bold as to say that this statement has no

relation to infants, and that they can have life in them without

partaking of His body and blood--on the ground that He does not say,

Except one eat, but "Except ye eat;" as if He were addressing those who

were able to hear and to understand, which of course infants cannot do?

But he who says this is inattentive; because, unless all are embraced

in the statement, that without the body and the blood of the Son of man

men cannot have life, it is to no purpose that even the elder age is

solicitous of it. For if you attend to the mere words, and not to the

meaning, of the Lord as He speaks, this passage may very well seem to

have been spoken merely to the people whom He happened at the moment to

be addressing; because He does not say, Except one eat; but Except ye

eat. What also becomes of the statement which He makes in the same

context on this very point: "The bread that I will give is my flesh,

for the life of the world?" [293] For, it is according to this

statement, that we find that sacrament pertains also to us, who were

not in existence at the time the Lord spoke these words; for we cannot

possibly say that we do not belong to "the world," for the life of

which Christ gave His flesh. Who indeed can doubt that in the term

world all persons are indicated who enter the world by being born? For,

as He says in another passage, "The children of this world beget and

are begotten." [294] From all this it follows, that even for the life

of infants was His flesh given, which He gave for the life of the

world; and that even they will not have life if they eat not the flesh

of the Son of man.

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[293] John vi. 51.

[294] Generant et generantur; Luke xx. 34.

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Chapter 28.--Baptized Infants, of the Faithful; Unbaptized, of the

Lost.

Hence also that other statement: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath

given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath

everlasting life; while he that believeth not the Son shall not see

life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." [295] Now in which of these

classes must we place infants--amongst those who believe on the Son, or

amongst those who believe not the Son? In neither, say some, because,

as they are not yet able to believe, so must they not be deemed

unbelievers. This, however, the rule of the Church does not indicate,

for it joins baptized infants to the number of the faithful. Now if

they who are baptized are, by virtue of the excellence and

administration of so great a sacrament, nevertheless reckoned in the

number of the faithful, although by their own heart and mouth they do

not literally perform what appertains to the action of faith and

confession; surely they who have lacked the sacrament must be classed

amongst those who do not believe on the Son, and therefore, if they

shall depart this life without this grace, they will have to encounter

what is written concerning such--they shall not have life, but the

wrath of God abideth on them. Whence could this result to those who

clearly have no sins of their own, if they are not held to be obnoxious

to original sin?

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[295] John iii. 35, 36.

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Chapter 29 [XXI.]--It is an Inscrutable Mystery Why Some are Saved, and

Others Not.

Now there is much significance in that He does not say, "The wrath of

God shall come upon him," but "abideth on him." For from this wrath (in

which we are all involved under sin, and of which the apostle says,

"For we too were once by nature the children of wrath, even as others"

[296] ) nothing delivers us but the grace of God, through Jesus Christ

our Lord. The reason why this grace comes upon one man and not on

another may be hidden, but it cannot be unjust. For "is there

unrighteousness with God? God forbid." [297] But we must first bend our

necks to the authority of the Holy Scriptures, in order that we may

each arrive at knowledge and understanding through faith. For it is not

said in vain, "Thy judgments are a great deep." [298] The profundity of

this "deep" the apostle, as if with a feeling of dread, notices in that

exclamation: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the

knowledge of God!" He had indeed previously pointed out the meaning of

this marvellous depth, when he said: "For God hath concluded them all

in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all." [299] Then struck, as

it were, with a horrible fear of this deep: "O the depth of the riches

both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His

judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind

of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor?or who hath first given to

Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and

through Him, and in Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever.

Amen." [300] How utterly insignificant, then, is our faculty for

discussing the justice of God's judgments, and for the consideration of

His gratuitous grace, which, as men have no prevenient merits for

deserving it, cannot be partial or unrighteous, and which does not

disturb us when it is bestowed upon unworthy men, as much as when it is

denied to those who are equally unworthy!

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[296] Eph. ii. 3.

[297] Rom. ix. 14.

[298] Ps. xxxvi. 6.

[299] Rom. xi. 32.

[300] Rom. xi. 33-36.

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Chapter 30.--Why One is Baptized and Another Not, Not Otherwise

Inscrutable.

Now those very persons, who think it unjust that infants which depart

this life without the grace of Christ should be deprived not only of

the kingdom of God, into which they themselves admit that none but such

as are regenerated through baptism can enter, but also of eternal life

and salvation,--when they ask how it can be just that one man should be

freed from original sin and another not, although the condition of both

of them is the same, might answer their own question, in accordance

with their own opinion of how it can be so frequently just and right

that one should have baptism administered to him whereby to enter into

the kingdom of God, and another not be so favoured, although the case

of both is alike. For if the question disturbs him, why, of the two

persons, who are both equally sinners by nature, the one is loosed from

that bond, on whom baptism is conferred, and the other is not released,

on whom such grace is not bestowed; why is he not similarly disturbed

by the fact that of two persons, innocent by nature, one receives

baptism, whereby he is able to enter into the kingdom of God, and the

other does not receive it, so that he is incapable of approaching the

kingdom of God? Now in both cases one recurs to the apostle's outburst

of wonder "O the depth of the riches!" Again, let me be informed, why

out of the body of baptized infants themselves, one is taken away, so

that his understanding undergoes no change from a wicked life, [301]

and the other survives, destined to become an impious man? Suppose both

were carried off, would not both enter the kingdom of heaven? And yet

there is no unrighteousness with God. [302] How is it that no one is

moved, no one is driven to the expression of wonder amidst such depths,

by the circumstance that some children are vexed by the unclean spirit,

while others experience no such pollution, and others again, as

Jeremiah, are sanctified even in their mother's womb; [303] whereas all

men, if there is original sin, are equally guilty; or else equally

innocent if there is original sin? Whence this great diversity, except

in the fact that God's judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past

finding out?

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[301] Wisdom iv. 11.

[302] Rom. ix. 14.

[303] Jer. i. 5.

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Chapter 31 [XXII.]--He Refutes Those Who Suppose that Souls, on Account

of Sins Committed in Another State, are Thrust into Bodies Suited to

Their Merits, in Which They are More or Less Tormented.

Perhaps, however, the now exploded and rejected opinion must be

resumed, that souls which once sinned in their heavenly abode, descend

by stages and degrees to bodies suited to their deserts, and, as a

penalty for their previous life, are more or less tormented by

corporeal chastisements. To this opinion Holy Scripture indeed presents

a most manifest contradiction; for when recommending divine grace, it

says: "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any

good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might

stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said, The elder

shall serve the younger." [304] And yet they who entertain such an

opinion are actually unable to escape the perplexities of this

question, but, embarrassed and straitened by them, are compelled to

exclaim like others, "O the depth!" For whence does it come to pass

that a person shall from his earliest boyhood show greater moderation,

mental excellence, and temperance, and shall to a great extent conquer

lust, shall hate avarice, detest luxury, and rise to a greater eminence

and aptitude in the other virtues, and yet live in such a place as to

be unable to hear the grace of Christ preached?--for "how shall they

call on Him in whom they have not believed? or how shall they believe

in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a

preacher?" [305] While another man, although of a slow mind, addicted

to lust, and covered with disgrace and crime, shall be so directed as

to hear, and believe, and be baptized, and be taken away,--or, if

permitted to remain longer here, lead the rest of his life in a manner

that shall bring him praise? Now where did these two persons acquire

such diverse deserts,--I do not say, that the one should believe and

the other not believe, for that is a matter for a man's own will; but

that the one should hear in order to believe, and that the other should

not hear, for this is not within man's power? Where, I say, did they

acquire diverse deserts? If they had indeed passed any part of their

life in heaven, so as to be thrust down, or to sink down, to this

world, and to tenant such bodily receptacles as are congruous to their

own former life, then of course that man ought to be supposed to have

led the better life previous to his present mortal body, who did not

much deserve to be burdened with it, so as both to have a good

disposition, and to be importuned by milder desires which he could

easily overcome; and yet he did not deserve to have that grace preached

to him whereby alone he could be delivered from the ruin of the second

death. Whereas the other, who was hampered with a grosser body, as a

penalty--so they suppose--for worse deserts, and was accordingly

possessed of obtuser affections, whilst he was in the violent ardour of

his lust succumbing to the snares of the flesh, and by his wicked life

aggravating his former sins, which had brought him to such a pass, by a

still more abandoned course of earthly pleasures,--either heard upon

the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," [306] or else

joined himself to some apostle, by whose preaching he became a changed

man, and was saved by the washing of regeneration,--so that where sin

once abounded, grace did much more abound. I am at a loss to know what

answer they can give to this who wish to maintain God's righteousness

by human conjectures, and, knowing nothing of the depths of grace, have

woven webs of improbable fable.

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[304] Rom. ix. 11, 12.

[305] Rom. x. 14.

[306] Luke xxiii. 43.

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Chapter 32.--The Case of Certain Idiots and Simpletons.

Now a good deal may be said of men's strange vocations,--either such as

we have read about, or have experienced ourselves,--which go to

overthrow the opinion of those persons who think that, previous to the

possession of their bodies, men's souls passed through certain lives

peculiar to themselves, in which they must come to this, and experience

in the present life either good or evil, according to the difference of

their individual deserts. My anxiety, however, to bring this work to an

end does not permit me to dwell longer on these topics. But on one

point, which among many I have found to be a very strange one, I will

not be silent. If we follow those persons who suppose that souls are

oppressed with earthly bodies in a greater or a less degree of

grossness, according to the deserts of the life which had been passed

in celestial bodies previous to the assumption of the present one, who

would not affirm that those had sinned previous to this life with an

especial amount of enormity, who deserve so to lose all mental light,

that they are born with faculties akin to brute animals,--who are (I

will not say most slow in intellect, for this is very commonly said of

others also, but) so silly as to make a show of their fatuity for the

amusement of clever people, even with idiotic gestures, [307] and whom

the vulgar call, by a name, derived from the Greek, Moriones? [308] And

yet there was once a certain person of this class, who was so

Christian, that although he was patient to the degree of strange folly

with any amount of injury to himself, he was yet so impatient of any

insult to the name of Christ, or, in his own person, to the religion

with which he was imbued, that he could never refrain, whenever his gay

and clever audience proceeded to blaspheme the sacred name, as they

sometimes would in order to provoke his patience, from pelting them

with stones; and on these occasions he would show no favour even to

persons of rank. Well, now, such persons are predestinated and brought

into being, as I suppose, in order that those who are able should

understand that God's grace and the Spirit, "which bloweth where it

listeth," [309] does not pass over any kind of capacity in the sons of

mercy, nor in like manner does it pass over any kind of capacity in the

children of Gehenna, so that "he that glorieth, let him glory in the

Lord." [310] They, however, who affirm that souls severally receive

different earthly bodies, more or less gross according to the merits of

their former life, and that their abilities as men vary according to

the self-same merits, so that some minds are sharper and others more

obtuse, and that the grace of God is also dispensed for the liberation

of men from their sins according to the deserts of their former

existence:--what will they have to say about this man? How will they be

able to attribute to him a previous life of so disgraceful a character

that he deserved to be born an idiot, and at the same time of so highly

meritorious a character as to entitle him to a preference in the award

of the grace of Christ over many men of the acutest intellect?

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[307] We here follow the reading cerriti; other readings are,--curati

(with studied folly), cirrati (with effeminate foppery), and citrati

(decking themselves with citrus leaves).

[308] That is, "fools," from the Greek moros

[309] John iii. 8.

[310] 1 Cor. i. 31.

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Chapter 33.--Christ is the Saviour and Redeemer Even of Infants.

Let us therefore give in and yield our assent to the authority of Holy

Scripture, which knows not how either to be deceived or to deceive; and

as we do not believe that men as yet unborn have done any good or evil

for raising a difference in their moral deserts, so let us by no means

doubt that all men are under sin, which came into the world by one man

and has passed through unto all men; and from which nothing frees us

but the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. [XXIII.] His

remedial advent is needed by those that are sick, not by the whole: for

He came not to call the righteous, but sinners; and into His kingdom

shall enter no one that is not born again of water and the Spirit; nor

shall any one attain salvation and eternal life except in His

kingdom,--since the man who believes not in the Son, and eats not His

flesh, shall not have life, but the wrath of God remains upon him. Now

from this sin, from this sickness, from this wrath of God (of which by

nature they are children who have original sin, even if they have none

of their own on account of their youth), none delivers them, except the

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world; [311] except the

Physician, who came not for the sake of the sound, but of the sick;

except the Saviour, concerning whom it was said to the human race:

"Unto you there is born this day a Saviour;" [312] except the Redeemer,

by whose blood our debt is blotted out. For who would dare to say that

Christ is not the Saviour and Redeemer of infants? But from what does

He save them, if there is no malady of original sin within them? From

what does He redeem them, if through their origin from the first man

they are not sold under sin? Let there be then no eternal salvation

promised to infants out of our own opinion, without Christ's baptism;

for none is promised in that Holy Scripture which is to be preferred to

all human authority and opinion.

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[311] John i. 29.

[312] Luke ii. 11.

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Chapter 34 [XXIV.]--Baptism is Called Salvation, and the Eucharist,

Life, by the Christians of Carthage.

The Christians of Carthage have an excellent name for the sacraments,

when they say that baptism is nothing else than "salvation," and the

sacrament of the body of Christ nothing else than "life." Whence,

however, was this derived, but from that primitive, as I suppose, and

apostolic tradition, by which the Churches of Christ maintain it to be

an inherent principle, that without baptism and partaking of the supper

of the Lord it is impossible for any man to attain either to the

kingdom of God or to salvation and everlasting life? So much also does

Scripture testify, according to the words which we already quoted. For

wherein does their opinion, who designate baptism by the term

salvation, differ from what is written: "He saved us by the washing of

regeneration?" [313] or from Peter's statement: "The like figure

whereunto even baptism doth also now save us?" [314] And what else do

they say who call the sacrament of the Lord's Supper life, than that

which is written: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven;"

[315] and "The bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the

world;" [316] and "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink

His blood, ye shall have no life in you?" [317] If, therefore, as so

many and such divine witnesses agree, neither salvation nor eternal

life can be hoped for by any man without baptism and the Lord's body

and blood, it is vain to promise these blessings to infants without

them. Moreover, if it be only sins that separate man from salvation and

eternal life, there is nothing else in infants which these sacraments

can be the means of removing, but the guilt of sin,--respecting which

guilty nature it is written, that "no one is clean, not even if his

life be only that of a day." [318] Whence also that exclamation of the

Psalmist: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother

conceive me!" [319] This is either said in the person of our common

humanity, or if of himself only David speaks, it does not imply that he

was born of fornication, but in lawful wedlock. We therefore ought not

to doubt that even for infants yet to be baptized was that precious

blood shed, which previous to its actual effusion was so given, and

applied in the sacrament, that it was said, "This is my blood, which

shall be shed for many for the remission of sins." [320] Now they who

will not allow that they are under sin, deny that there is any

liberation. For what is there that men are liberated from, if they are

held to be bound by no bondage of sin?

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[313] Tit. iii. 5.

[314] 1 Pet. iii. 21.

[315] John vi. 51.

[316] John vi. 51.

[317] John vi. 53.

[318] Job xiv. 4.

[319] Ps. li. 5.

[320] Matt. xxvi. 28.

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Chapter 35.--Unless Infants are Baptized, They Remain in Darkness.

"I am come," says Christ, "a light into the world, that whosoever

believeth on me should not abide in darkness." [321] Now what does this

passage show us, but that every person is in darkness who does not

believe on Him, and that it is by believing on Him that he escapes from

this permanent state of darkness? What do we understand by the darkness

but sin? And whatever else it may embrace in its meaning, at any rate

he who believes not in Christ will "abide in darkness,"--which, of

course, is a penal state, not, as the darkness of the night, necessary

for the refreshment of living beings. [XXV.] So that infants, unless

they pass into the number of believers through the sacrament which was

divinely instituted for this purpose, will undoubtedly remain in this

darkness.

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[321] John xii. 46.

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Chapter 36.--Infants Not Enlightened as Soon as They are Born.

Some, however, understand that as soon as children are born they are

enlightened; and they derive this opinion from the passage: "That was

the true Light, which lighteth every one that cometh into the world."

[322] Well, if this be the case, it is quite astonishing how it can be

that those who are thus enlightened by the only-begotten Son, who was

in the beginning the Word with God, and [Himself] God, are not admitted

into the kingdom of God, nor are heirs of God and joint-heirs with

Christ. For that such an inheritance is not bestowed upon them except

through baptism, even they who hold the opinion in question do

acknowledge. Then, again, if they are (though already illuminated) thus

unfit for entrance into the kingdom of God, they at all events ought

gladly to receive the baptism, by which they are fitted for it; but,

strange to say, we see how reluctant infants are to submit to baptism,

resisting even with strong crying. And this ignorance of theirs we

think lightly of at their time of life, so that we fully administer the

sacraments, which we know to be serviceable to them, even although they

struggle against them. And why, too, does the apostle say, "Be not

children in understanding," [323] if their minds have been already

enlightened with that true Light, which is the Word of God?

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[322] John i. 9.

[323] 1 Cor. xiv. 20.

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Chapter 37.--How God Enlightens Every Person.

That statement, therefore, which occurs in the gospel, "That was the

true Light, which lighteth every one that cometh into the world," [324]

has this meaning, that no man is illuminated except with that Light of

the truth, which is God; so that no person must think that he is

enlightened by him whom he listens to as a learner, although that

instructor happen to be--I will not say, any great man--but even an

angel himself. For the word of truth is applied to man externally by

the ministry of a bodily voice, but yet "neither is he that planteth

any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

[325] Man indeed hears the speaker, be he man or angel, but in order

that he may perceive and know that what is said is true, his mind is

internally besprinkled with that light which remains for ever, and

which shines even in darkness. But just as the sun is not seen by the

blind, though they are clothed as it were with its rays, so is the

light of truth not understood by the darkness of folly.

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[324] John i. 9.

[325] 1 Cor. iii. 7.

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Chapter 38.--What "Lighteth" Means.

But why, after saying, "which lighteth every man," should he add, "that

cometh into the world," [326] --the clause which has suggested the

opinion that He enlightens the minds of newly-born babes while the

birth of their bodies from their mother's womb is still a recent thing?

The words, no doubt, are so placed in the Greek, that they may be

understood to express that the light itself "cometh into the world."

[327] If, nevertheless, the clause must be taken as expressing the man

who cometh into this world, I suppose that it is either a simple

phrase, like many others one finds in the Scriptures, which may be

removed without impairing the general sense; or else, if it is to be

regarded as a distinctive addition, it was perhaps inserted in order to

distinguish spiritual illumination from that bodily one which

enlightens the eyes of the flesh either by means of the luminaries of

the sky, or by the lights of ordinary fire. So that he mentioned the

inner man as coming into the world, because the outward man is of a

corporeal nature, just as this world itself; as if he said, "Which

lighteth every man that cometh into the body," in accordance with that

which is written: "I obtained a good spirit, and I came in a body

undefiled." [328] Or again, the passage, "Which lighteth every one that

cometh into the world,"--if it was added for the sake of expressing

some distinction,--might perhaps mean: Which lighteth every inner man,

because the inner man, when he becomes truly wise, is enlightened only

by Him who is the true Light. Or, once more, if the intention was to

designate reason herself, which causes the human soul to be called

rational (and this reason, although as yet quiet and as it were asleep,

for all that lies hidden in infants, innate and, so to speak,

implanted), by the term illumination, as if it were the creation of an

inner eye, then it cannot be denied that it is made when the soul is

created; and there is no absurdity in supposing this to take place when

the human being comes into the world. But yet, although his eye is now

created, he himself must needs remain in darkness, if he does not

believe in Him who said: "I am come a Light into the world, that

whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." [329] And that

this takes place in the case of infants, through the sacrament of

baptism, is not doubted by mother Church, which uses for them the heart

and mouth of a mother, that they may be imbued with the sacred

mysteries, seeing that they cannot as yet with their own heart "believe

unto righteousness," nor with their own mouth make "confession unto

salvation." [330] There is not indeed a man among the faithful, who

would hesitate to call such infants believers merely from the

circumstance that such a designation is derived from the act of

believing; for although incapable of such an act themselves, yet others

are sponsors for them in the sacraments.

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[326] John i. 9.

[327] O [scil. to phos] photizei panta anthropon erchomenon eis ton

kosmon.

[328] Wisd. viii. 19, 20.

[329] John xii. 46.

[330] Rom. x. 10.

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Chapter 39 [XXVI.]--The Conclusion Drawn, that All are Involved in

Original Sin.

It would be tedious, were we fully to discuss, at similar length, every

testimony bearing on the question. I suppose it will be the more

convenient course simply to collect the passages together which may

turn up, or such as shall seem sufficient for manifesting the truth,

that the Lord Jesus Christ came in the flesh, and, in the form of a

servant, became obedient even to the death of the cross, [331] for no

other reason than, by this dispensation of His most merciful grace, to

give life to all those to whom, as engrafted members of His body, He

becomes Head for laying hold upon the kingdom of heaven: to save, free,

redeem, and enlighten them,--who had aforetime been involved in the

death, infirmities, servitude, captivity, and darkness of sin, under

the dominion of the devil, the author of sin: and thus to become the

Mediator between God and man, by whom (after the enmity of our ungodly

condition had been terminated by His gracious help) we might be

reconciled to God unto eternal life, having been rescued from the

eternal death which threatened such as us. When this shall have been

made clear by more than sufficient evidence, it will follow that those

persons cannot be concerned with that dispensation of Christ which is

executed by His humiliation, who have no need of life, and salvation,

and deliverance, and redemption, and illumination. And inasmuch as to

this belongs baptism, in which we are buried with Christ, in order to

be incorporated into Him as His members (that is, as those who believe

in Him): it of course follows that baptism is unnecessary for them, who

have no need of the benefit of that forgiveness and reconciliation

which is acquired through a Mediator. Now, seeing that they admit the

necessity of baptizing infants,--finding themselves unable to

contravene that authority of the universal Church, which has been

unquestionably handed down by the Lord and His apostles,--they cannot

avoid the further concession, that infants require the same benefits of

the Mediator, in order that, being washed by the sacrament and charity

of the faithful, and thereby incorporated into the body of Christ,

which is the Church, they may be reconciled to God, and so live in Him,

and be saved, and delivered, and redeemed, and enlightened. But from

what, if not from death, and the vices, and guilt, and thraldom, and

darkness of sin? And, inasmuch as they do not commit any sin in the

tender age of infancy by their actual transgression, original sin only

is left.

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[331] Phil. ii. 8.

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Chapter 40 [XXVII.]--A Collection of Scripture Testimonies. From the

Gospels.

This reasoning will carry more weight, after I have collected the mass

of Scripture testimonies which I have undertaken to adduce. We have

already quoted: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." [332]

To the same purport [the Lord] says, on entering the home of Zaccheus:

"To-day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son

of Abraham; for the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which

was lost." [333] The same truth is declared in the parable of the lost

sheep and the ninety and nine which were left until the missing one was

sought and found; [334] as it is also in the parable of the lost one

among the ten silver coins. [335] Whence, as He said, "it behoved that

repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among

all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." [336] Mark likewise, at the end

of his Gospel, tells us how that the Lord said: "Go ye into all the

world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and

is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be

damned." [337] Now, who can be unaware that, in the case of infants,

being baptized is to believe, and not being baptized is not to believe?

From the Gospel of John we have already adduced some passages. However,

I must also request your attention to the following: John Baptist says

of Christ, "Behold the Lamb of God, Behold Him which taketh away the

sin of the world;" [338] and He too says of Himself, "My sheep hear my

voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them

eternal life; and they shall never perish." [339] Now, inasmuch as

infants are only able to become His sheep by baptism, it must needs

come to pass that they perish if they are not baptized, because they

will not have that eternal life which He gives to His sheep. So in

another passage He says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man

cometh unto the Father, but by me." [340]

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[332] Luke v. 32.

[333] Luke xix. 9, 10.

[334] Luke xv. 4.

[335] Luke xv. 8.

[336] Luke xxiv. 46, 47.

[337] Mark xvi. 15, 16.

[338] John i. 29.

[339] John x. 27, 28.

[340] John xiv. 6.

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Chapter 41.--From the First Epistle of Peter.

See with what earnestness the apostles declare this doctrine, when they

received it. Peter, in his first Epistle, says: "Blessed be the God and

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to His abundant mercy, who

hath regenerated us unto the hope of eternal life, by the resurrection

of Jesus Christ, to an inheritance immortal, and undefiled,

flourishing, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of

God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last

time." [341] And a little afterwards he adds: "May ye be found unto the

praise and honour of Jesus Christ: of whom ye were ignorant; but in

whom ye believe, though now ye see Him not; and in whom also ye shall

rejoice, when ye shall see Him, with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

[342] Again, in another place he says: "But ye are a chosen generation,

a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should

show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into

His marvellous light." [343] Once more he says: "Christ hath once

suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us

to God:" [344] and, after mentioning the fact of eight persons having

been saved in Noah's ark, he adds: "And by the like figure baptism

saveth you." [345] Now infants are strangers to this salvation and

light, and will remain in perdition and darkness, unless they are

joined to the people of God by adoption, holding to Christ who suffered

the just for the unjust, to bring them unto God.

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[341] 1 Pet. i. 3-5.

[342] 1 Pet. i. 7-9.

[343] 1 Pet. ii. 9.

[344] 1 Pet. iii. 18.

[345] 1 Pet. iii. 21.

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Chapter 42.--From the First Epistle of John.

Moreover, from John's Epistle I meet with the following words, which

seem indispensable to the solution of this question: "But if," says he,

"we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one

with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from

all sin." [346] To the like import he says, in another place: "If we

receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is

the witness of God, which is greater because He hath testified of His

Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself:

he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believed not

in the testimony that God testified of His Son. And this is the

testimony, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in

His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son

of God hath not life." [347] It seems, then, that it is not only the

kingdom of heaven, but life also, which infants are not to have, if

they have not the Son, whom they can only have by His baptism. So again

he says: "For this cause the Son of God was manifested, that He might

destroy the works of the devil." [348] Therefore infants will have no

interest in the manifestation of the Son of God, if He do not in them

destroy the works of the devil.

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[346] 1 John i. 7.

[347] 1 John v. 9-12.

[348] 1 John iii. 8.

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Chapter 43.--From the Epistle to the Romans.

Let me now request your attention to the testimony of the Apostle Paul

on this subject. And quotations from him may of course be made more

abundantly, because he wrote more epistles, and because it fell to him

to recommend the grace of God with especial earnestness, in opposition

to those who gloried in their works, and who, ignorant of God's

righteousness, and wishing to establish their own, submitted not to the

righteousness of God. [349] In his Epistle to the Romans he writes:

"The righteousness of God is upon all them that believe; for there is

no difference; since all have sinned, and come short of the glory of

God; being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that

is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth as a propitiation through

faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission

[350] of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to

declare, I say, at this time His righteousness; that He might be just,

and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." [351] Then in

another passage he says: "To him that worketh is the reward not

reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but

believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for

righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the

man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying,

Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are

covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth no sin." [352]

And then after no long interval he observes: "Now, it was not written

for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to

whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus

Christ our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and

was raised again for our justification." [353] Then a little after he

writes: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died

for the ungodly." [354] In another passage he says: "We know that the

law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do

I know not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that I

do. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it

is good. Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in

me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good

thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is

good I find not. For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which

I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I

that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when

I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of

God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members warring

against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law

of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall

deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God, through Jesus

Christ our Lord." [355] Let them, who can, say that men are not born in

the body of this death, that so they may be able to affirm that they

have no need of God's grace through Jesus Christ in order to be

delivered from the body of this death. Therefore he adds, a few verses

afterwards: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through

the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,

and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." [356] Let them say, who dare,

that Christ must have been born in the likeness of sinful flesh, if we

were not born in sinful flesh.

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[349] Rom. x. 3.

[350] [This is the reading of the Vulgate, as well as of the Greek; but

Augustin, following an Old Latin reading, actually has propositum,

instead of remissionem.--W.]

[351] Rom. iii. 22-26.

[352] Rom. iv. 4-8.

[353] Rom. iv. 23-25.

[354] Rom. v. 6.

[355] Rom. vii. 14-25.

[356] Rom. viii. 3.

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Chapter 44.--From the Epistles to the Corinthians.

Likewise to the Corinthians he says: "For I delivered to you first of

all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins

according to the Scriptures." [357] Again, in his Second Epistle to

these Corinthians: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we

thus judge, that if One died for all, then all died: and for all did

Christ die, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves,

but unto Him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore, henceforth

know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after

the flesh, yet from henceforth know we Him so no more. Therefore if any

man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away;

behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath

reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the

ministry of reconciliation. To what effect? That God was in Christ,

reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto

them, and putting on us the ministry of reconciliation. Now then are we

ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray

you in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to

be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might become the righteousness

of God in Him. [358] We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you

also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For He saith, I

have heard thee in an acceptable time, and in the day of salvation have

I succoured thee: behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is

the day of salvation.)" [359] Now, if infants are not embraced within

this reconciliation and salvation, who wants them for the baptism of

Christ? But if they are embraced, then are they reckoned as among the

dead for whom He died; nor can they be possibly reconciled and saved by

Him, unless He remit and impute not unto them their sins.

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[357] 1 Cor. xv. 3.

[358] 2 Cor. v. 14-21.

[359] 2 Cor. vi. 1, 2.

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Chapter 45.--From the Epistle to the Galatians.

Likewise to the Galatians the apostle writes: "Grace be to you, and

peace, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave

Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil

world." [360] While in another passage he says to them: "The law was

added because of transgressions, until the seed should come to whom the

promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a

mediator. Now a mediator belongs not to one party; but God is one. Is

the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had

been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness

should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under

sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them

that believe." [361]

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[360] Gal. i. 3, 4.

[361] Gal. iii. 19-22.

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Chapter 46.--From the Epistle to the Ephesians.

To the Ephesians he addresses words of the same import: "And you when

ye were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked

according to the course of this world according to the prince of the

power of the air, the spirit of him that now worketh in the children of

disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past

in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of

the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But

God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us,

even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ;

by whose grace ye are saved." [362] Again, a little afterwards, he

says: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves:

it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we

are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God

hath before ordained that we should walk in them." [363] And again,

after a short interval: "At that time ye were without Christ, being

aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the

covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but

now, in Christ Jesus, ye who were sometimes far off are made nigh by

the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and

hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having

abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments

contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man,

so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body

by the cross, having in Himself slain the enmity; and He came and

preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

[364] Then in another passage he thus writes: "As the truth is in

Jesus: that ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old

man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed

in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after

God is created in righteousness and true holiness." [365] And again:

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day

of redemption." [366]

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[362] Eph. ii. 1-5.

[363] Eph. ii. 8-10.

[364] Eph. ii. 12-18.

[365] Eph. iv. 21-24.

[366] Eph. iv. 30.

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Chapter 47.--From the Epistle to the Colossians.

To the Colossians he addresses these words: "Giving thanks unto the

Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of

the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness,

and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son; in whom we

have redemption in the remission of our sins." [367] And again he says:

"And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and

power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made

without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision

of Christ; buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with

Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from

the dead. And you, when ye were dead in your sins and the

uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him,

having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of the

decree that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out

of the way, nailing it to His cross; and putting the flesh off Him,

[368] He made a show of principalities and powers, confidently

triumphing over them in Himself." [369]

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[367] Col. i. 12-14.

[368] Exuens se carnem.

[369] Col. ii. 10-15.

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Chapter 48.--From the Epistles to Timothy.

And then to Timothy he says: "This is a faithful saying, [370] and

worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to

save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained

mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all

long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on

Him to life everlasting." [371] He also says: "For there is one God and

one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave

Himself a ransom for all." [372] In his second Epistle to the same

Timothy, he says: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of

our Lord, nor of me His prisoner: but be thou a fellow-labourer for the

gospel, according to the power of God; who hath saved us, and called us

with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His

own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the

world began; but is now manifested by the coming of our Lord Jesus

Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality

to light through the gospel." [373]

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[370] Humanus sermo.

[371] 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.

[372] 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

[373] 2 Tim. i. 8-10.

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Chapter 49.--From the Epistle to Titus.

Then again he writes to Titus as follows: "Looking for that blessed

hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus

Christ; who gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all

iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good

works." [374] And to the like effect in another passage: "But after

that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not

by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His

mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the

Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our

Saviour; that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs

according to the hope of eternal life." [375]

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[374] Tit. ii. 13, 14.

[375] Tit. iii. 3-7.

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Chapter 50.--From the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Although the authority of the Epistle to the Hebrews is doubted by

some, [376] nevertheless, as I find it sometimes thought by persons,

who oppose our opinion touching the baptism of infants, to contain

evidence in favour of their own views, we shall notice the pointed

testimony it bears in our behalf; and I quote it the more confidently,

because of the authority of the Eastern Churches, which expressly place

it amongst the canonical Scriptures. In its very exordium one thus

reads: "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time

past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken

to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom

also He made the worlds; who, being the brightness of His glory, and

the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word

of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the

right hand of the Majesty on high." [377] And by and by the writer

says: "For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every

transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward,

how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" [378] And again

in another passage: "Forasmuch then," says he, "as the children are

partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the

same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of

death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death

were all their lifetime subject to bondage." [379] Again, shortly

after, he says: "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like

unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest

in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the

people." [380] And in another place he writes: "Let us hold fast our

profession. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with

the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as

we are, yet without sin." [381] Again he says: "He hath an unchangeable

priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost

that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession

for them. For such a High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless,

undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who

needeth not daily (as those high priests) to offer up sacrifice, first

for His own sins, and then for the people's: for this He did once, when

He offered up Himself." [382] And once more: "For Christ is not entered

into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the

true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for

us: nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest

entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; (for then

must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world;) but now

once, in the end of the world, hath He appeared to put away sin by the

sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but

after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of

many: and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time,

without sin, unto salvation." [383]

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[376] Amongst the Latins, as Jerome tells us in more than one passage

(see his Commentaries, on Isa. vi., viii.; on Zech. viii.; on Matt.

xxvi.; also, in his Catal. Script. Eccles., c. xvi. [ad Paulum], and

lxx. [ad Gaium], etc.). The Greeks, however, held that the epistle was

the work of St. Paul. In his Epistle cxxix. [ad Dardanum] he thus

writes: "We must admit that the epistle written to the Hebrews is

regarded as the Apostle Paul's, not only by the churches of the East,

but by all church writers who have from the beginning (retro) written

in Greek."--Note of the Benedictine Editor. [See Augustin's City of

God, xvi. 22 and Christian Doctrine, ii. (8), 13. The matter is fairly

stated by Augustin, after whose day the Epistle was not doubted even in

the West.--W.]

[377] Heb. i. 1-3.

[378] Heb. ii. 2, 3.

[379] Heb. ii. 14, 15.

[380] Heb. ii. 17.

[381] Heb. iv. 14, 15.

[382] Heb. vii. 24-27.

[383] Heb. ix. 24-28.

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Chapter 51.--From the Apocalypse.

The Revelation of John likewise tells us that in a new song these

praises are offered to Christ: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and

to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to

God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and

nation." [384]

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[384] Rev. v. 9.

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Chapter 52.--From the Acts of the Apostles.

To the like effect, in the Acts of the Apostles, the Apostle Peter

designated the Lord Jesus as "the Author of life," upbraiding the Jews

for having put Him to death in these words: "But ye dishonoured and

denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted

unto you, and ye killed the Author of life." [385] While in another

passage he says: "This is the stone which was set at nought by you

builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there

salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given

among men whereby we must be saved." [386] And again, elsewhere: "The

God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, by hanging on a tree.

Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour,

for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." [387] Once

more: "To Him give all the prophets witness, that, through His name,

whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." [388]

Whilst in the same Acts of the Apostles Paul says: "Be it known

therefore unto you, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached

unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him every one that believeth

is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by

the law of Moses." [389]

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[385] Acts iii. 14, 15.

[386] Acts iv. 11, 12.

[387] Acts v. 30, 31.

[388] Acts x. 43.

[389] Acts xiii. 38, 39.

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Chapter 53.--The Utility of the Books of the Old Testament.

Under so great a weight of testimony, who would not be oppressed that

should dare lift up his voice against the truth of God? And many other

testimonies might be found, were it not for my anxiety to bring this

tract to an end,--an anxiety which I must not slight. I have deemed it

superfluous to quote from the books of the Old Testament, likewise,

many attestations to our doctrine in inspired words, since what is

concealed in them under the veil of earthly promises is clearly

revealed in the preaching of the New Testament. Our Lord Himself

briefly demonstrated and defined the use of the Old Testament writings,

when He said that it was necessary that what had been written

concerning Himself in the Law, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, should

be fulfilled, and that this was that Christ must suffer, and rise from

the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins

should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at

Jerusalem. [390] In agreement with this is that statement of Peter

which I have already quoted, how that all the prophets bear witness to

Christ, that at His hands every one that believes in Him receives

remission of his sins. [391]

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[390] See Luke xxiv. 44-47.

[391] Acts x. 43.

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Chapter 54.--By the Sacrifices of the Old Testament, Men Were Convinced

of Sins and Led to the Saviour.

And yet it is perhaps better to advance a few testimonies out of the

Old Testament also, which ought to have a supplementary, or rather a

cumulative value. The Lord Himself, speaking by the Psalmist, says: "As

for my saints which are upon earth, He hath caused all my purposes to

be admired in them." [392] Not their merits, but "my purposes." For

what is theirs except that which is afterwards mentioned,--"their

weaknesses are multiplied," [393] --above the weakness that they had?

Moreover, the law also entered, that the offence might abound. But why

does the Psalmist immediately add: "They hastened after?" [394] When

their sorrows and infirmities multiplied (that is, when their offence

abounded), they then sought the Physician more eagerly, in order that,

where sin abounded, grace might much more abound. He then says: "I will

not gather their assemblies together [with their offerings] of blood;"

for by their many sacrifices of blood, when they gathered their

assemblies into the tabernacle at first, and then into the temple, they

were rather convicted as sinners than cleansed. I shall no longer, He

says, gather their assemblies of blood-offerings together; because

there is one blood-shedding given for many, whereby they may be truly

cleansed. Then it follows: "Neither will I make mention of their names

with my lips," as if they were the names of renewed ones. For these

were their names at first: children of the flesh, children of the

world, children of wrath, children of the devil, unclean, sinners,

impious; but afterwards, children of God,--a new name to the new man, a

new song to the singer of what is new, by means of the New Testament.

Men must not be ungracious with God's grace, mean with great things;

[but be ever rising] from the less to the greater. The cry of the whole

Church is, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep." [395] From all the

members of Christ the voice is heard: "All we, as sheep, have gone

astray; and He hath Himself been delivered up for our sins." [396] The

whole of this passage of prophecy is that famous one in Isaiah which

was expounded by Philip to the eunuch of Queen Candace, and he believed

in Jesus. [397] See how often he commends this very subject, and, as it

were, inculcates it again and again on proud and contentious men: "He

was a man under misfortune, and one who well knows to bear infirmities;

wherefore also He turned away His face, He was dishonoured, and was not

much esteemed. He it is that bears our weaknesses, and for us is

involved in pains: and we accounted Him to be in pains, and in

misfortune, and in punishment. But it was He who was wounded for our

sins, was weakened for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace

was upon Him; and by His bruise we are healed. All we, as sheep, have

gone astray; and the Lord delivered Him up for our sins. And although

He was evilly entreated, yet He opened not His mouth: as a sheep was He

led to the slaughter, and as a lamb is dumb before the shearer, so He

opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His judgment was taken away:

His generation who shall declare? For His life shall be taken away from

the earth, and for the iniquities of my people was He led to death.

Therefore I will give the wicked for His burial, and the rich for His

death; because He did no iniquity, nor deceit with His mouth. The Lord

is pleased to purge Him from misfortune. If you could yourselves have

given your soul on account of your sins, ye should see a seed of a long

life. And the Lord is pleased to rescue His soul from pains, to show

Him light, and to form it through His understanding; to justify the

Just One, who serves many well; and He shall Himself bear their sins.

Therefore He shall inherit many, and He shall divide the spoils of the

mighty; and He was numbered amongst the transgressors; and Himself bare

the sins of many, and He was delivered for their iniquities." [398]

Consider also that passage of this same prophet which Christ actually

declared to be fulfilled in Himself, when He recited it in the

synagogue, in discharging the function of the reader: [399] "The Spirit

of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me: to preach glad

tidings to the poor hath He sent me, that so I may refresh all who are

broken-hearted,--to preach deliverance to the captives, and to the

blind sight." [400] Let us then all acknowledge Him; nor should there

be one exception among persons like ourselves, who wish to cleave to

His body, to enter through Him into the sheepfold, and to attain to

that life and eternal salvation which He has promised to His own.--Let

us, I repeat, all of us acknowledge Him who did no sin, who bare our

sins in His own body on the tree, that we might live with righteousness

separate from sins; by whose scars we are healed, when we were weak

[401] --like wandering sheep.

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[392] Ps. xvi. 3.

[393] Ps. xvi. 4.

[394] Ps. xvi. 4.

[395] Ps. cxix. 176.

[396] Isa. liii. 6.

[397] Acts viii. 30-37.

[398] Isa. liii. 3-12.

[399] See Luke iv. 16-21.

[400] Isa. lxi. 1.

[401] There seems to be here some omission.--Benedictine Note.

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Chapter 55 [XXVIII.]--He Concludes that All Men Need the Death of

Christ, that They May Be Saved. Unbaptized Infants Will Be Involved in

the Condemnation of the Devil. How All Men Through Adam are Unto

Condemnation; And Through Christ Unto Justification. No One is

Reconciled with God, Except Through Christ.

In such circumstances, no man of those who have come to Christ by

baptism has ever been regarded, according to sound faith and the true

doctrine, as excepted from the grace of forgiveness of sins; nor has

eternal life been ever thought possible to any man apart from His

kingdom. For this [eternal life] is ready to be revealed at the last

time, [402] that is, at the resurrection of the dead who are reserved

not for that eternal death which is called "the second death," but for

the eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promises to His saints and

faithful servants. Now none who shall partake of this life shall be

made alive except in Christ, even as all die in Adam. [403] For as none

whatever, of all those who belong to the generation according to the

will of the flesh, die except in Adam, in whom all sinned; so, out of

these, none at all who are regenerated by the will of the Spirit are

endowed with life except in Christ, in whom all are justified. Because

as through one all to condemnation, so through One all to

justification. [404] Nor is there any middle place for any man, and so

a man can only be with the devil who is not with Christ. Accordingly,

also the Lord Himself (wishing to remove from the hearts of

wrong-believers [405] that vague and indefinite middle condition, which

some would provide for unbaptized infants,--as if, by reason of their

innocence, they were embraced in eternal life, but were not, because of

their unbaptized state, with Christ in His kingdom) uttered that

definitive sentence of His, which shuts their mouths: "He that is not

with me is against me." [406] Take then the case of any infant you

please: If he is already in Christ, why is he baptized? If, however, as

the Truth has it, he is baptized just that he may be with Christ, it

certainly follows that he who is not baptized is not with Christ; and

because he is not "with" Christ, he is "against" Christ; for He has

pronounced His own sentence, which is so explicit that we ought not,

and indeed cannot, impair it or change it. And how can he be "against"

Christ, if not owing to sin? for it cannot possibly be from his soul or

his body, both of these being the creation of God. Now if it be owing

to sin, what sin can be found at such an age, except the ancient and

original sin? Of course that sinful flesh in which all are born to

condemnation is one thing, and that Flesh which was made "after the

likeness of sinful flesh," whereby also all are freed from

condemnation, is another thing. It is, however, by no means meant to be

implied that all who are born in sinful flesh are themselves actually

cleansed by that Flesh which is "like" sinful flesh; "for all men have

not faith;" [407] but that all who are born from the carnal union are

born entirely of sinful flesh, whilst all who are born from the

spiritual union are cleansed only by the Flesh which is in the likeness

of sinful flesh. In other words, the former class are in Adam unto

condemnation, the latter are in Christ unto justification. This is as

if we should say, for example, that in such a city there is a certain

midwife who delivers all; and in the same place there is an expert

teacher who instructs all. By all, in the one case, only those who are

born can possibly be understood; by all, in the other, only those who

are taught: and it does not follow that all who are born also receive

the instruction. But it is obvious to every one, that in the one case

it is correctly said, "she delivers all," since without her aid no one

is born; and in the other, it is rightly said, "he teaches all," since

without his tutoring, no one learns.

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[402] 1 Pet. i. 5.

[403] 1 Cor. xv. 22.

[404] Rom. v. 18.

[405] Mal� credentium.

[406] Matt. xii. 30.

[407] 2 Thess. iii. 2.

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Chapter 56.--No One is Reconciled to God Except Through Christ.

Taking into account all the inspired statements which I have

quoted,--whether I regard the value of each passage one by one, or

combine their united testimony in an accumulated witness or even

include similar passages which I have not adduced,--there can be

nothing discovered, but that which the catholic Church holds, in her

dutiful vigilance against all profane novelties: that every man is

separated from God, except those who are reconciled to God through

Christ the Mediator; and that no one can be separated from God, except

by sins, which alone cause separation; that there is, therefore, no

reconciliation except by the remission of sins, through the one grace

of the most merciful Saviour,--through the one sacrifice of the most

veritable Priest; and that none who are born of the woman, that trusted

the serpent and so was corrupted through desire, [408] are delivered

from the body of this death, except by the Son of the virgin who

believed the angel and so conceived without desire. [409]

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[408] Gen. iii. 6.

[409] Luke i. 38.

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Chapter 57 [XXIX.]--The Good of Marriage; Four Different Cases of the

Good and the Evil Use of Matrimony.

The good, then, of marriage lies not in the passion of desire, but in a

certain legitimate and honourable measure in using that passion,

appropriate to the propagation of children, not the gratification of

lust. [410] That, therefore, which is disobediently excited in the

members of the body of this death, and endeavours to draw into itself

our whole fallen soul, (neither arising nor subsiding at the bidding of

the mind), is that evil of sin in which every man is born. When,

however, it is curbed from unlawful desires, and is permitted only for

the orderly propagation and renewal of the human race, this is the good

of wedlock, by which man is born in the union that is appointed.

Nobody, however, is born again in Christ's body, unless he be

previously born in the body of sin. But inasmuch as it is evil to make

a bad use of a good thing, so is it good to use well a bad thing. These

two ideas therefore of good and evil, and those other two of a good use

and an evil use, when they are duly combined together, produce four

different conditions:--[1] A man makes a good use of a good thing, when

he dedicates his continence to God; [2.] He makes a bad use of a good

thing, when he dedicates his continence to an idol; [3.] He makes a bad

use of an evil thing, when he loosely gratifies his concupiscence by

adultery; [4.] He makes a good use of an evil thing, when he restrains

his concupiscence by matrimony. Now, as it is better to make good use

of a good thing than to make good rise of an evil thing,--since both

are good,--so "he that giveth his virgin in marriage doeth well; but he

that giveth her not in marriage doeth better." [411] This question,

indeed, I have treated at greater length, and more sufficiently, as God

enabled me according to my humble abilities, in two works of mine,--one

of them, On the Good of Marriage, and the other, On Holy Virginity.

They, therefore, who extol the flesh and blood of a sinful creature, to

the prejudice of the Redeemer's flesh and blood, must not defend the

evil of concupiscence through the good of marriage; nor should they,

from whose infant age the Lord has inculcated in us a lesson of

humility, [412] be lifted up into pride by the error of others. He only

was born without sin whom a virgin conceived without the embrace of a

husband,--not by the concupiscence of the flesh, but by the chaste

submission of her mind. [413] She alone was able to give birth to One

who should heal our wound, who brought forth the germ of a pure

offspring without the wound of sin.

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[410] [The editions, but apparently no Mss., add here the somewhat

sententious words: "Voluntas ista, non voluptas illa, nuptialis

est,"--which may, perhaps, be rendered: "Wedded desire is willingness,

not wantonness."--W.]

[411] 1 Cor. vii. 38.

[412] Matt. xviii. 4.

[413] Luke i. 34, 38.

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Chapter 58 [XXX.]--In What Respect the Pelagians Regarded Baptism as

Necessary for Infants.

Let us now examine more carefully, so far as the Lord enables us, that

very chapter of the Gospel where He says, "Except a man be born

again,--of water and the Spirit,-- he shall not enter into the kingdom

of God." [414] If it were not for the authority which this sentence has

with them, they would not be of opinion that infants ought to be

baptized at all. This is their comment on the passage: "Because He does

not say, Except a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he shall

not have salvation or eternal life,' but He merely said, he shall not

enter into the kingdom of God,' therefore infants are to be baptized,

in order that they may be with Christ in the kingdom of God, where they

will not be unless they are baptized. Should infants die, however, even

without baptism, they will have salvation and eternal life, seeing that

they are bound with no fetter of sin." Now in such a statement as this,

the first thing that strikes one is, that they never explain where the

justice is of separating from the kingdom of God that "image of God"

which has no sin. Next, we ought to see whether the Lord Jesus, the one

only good Teacher, has not in this very passage of the Gospel

intimated, and indeed shown us, that it only comes to pass through the

remission of their sins that baptized persons reach the kingdom of God;

although to persons of a right understanding, the words, as they stand

in the passage, ought to be sufficiently explicit: "Except a man be

born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" [415] and: "Except a man

be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of

God." [416] For why should he be born again, unless to be renewed? From

what is he to be renewed, if not from some old condition? From what old

condition, but that in which "our old man is crucified with Him, that

the body of sin might be destroyed?" [417] Or whence comes it to pass

that "the image of God" enters not into the kingdom of God, unless it

be that the impediment of sin prevents it? However, let us (as we said

before) see, as earnestly and diligently as we are able, what is the

entire context of this passage of the Gospel, on the point in question.

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[414] John iii. 3, 5.

[415] John iii. 3.

[416] John iii. 5.

[417] Rom. vi. 6.

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Chapter 59.--The Context of Their Chief Text.

"Now there was," we read, "a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a

ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him,

Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do

these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered

and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be

born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto Him,

How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into

his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say

unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot

enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is

flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that

I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it

listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence

it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the

Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto Him, How can these things be?

Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and

knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak

that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our

witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how

shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath

ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son

of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the

wilderness, [418] even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that

whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that

whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting

life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but

that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is

not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because

he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And

this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men

loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For

every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the

light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth

cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are

wrought in God." [419] Thus far the Lord's discourse wholly relates to

the subject of our present inquiry; from this point the sacred

historian digresses to another matter.

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[418] Num. xxi. 9.

[419] John iii. 1-21.

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Chapter 60 [XXXI.]--Christ, the Head and the Body; Owing to the Union

of the Natures in the Person of Christ, He Both Remained in Heaven, and

Walked About on Earth; How the One Christ Could Ascend to Heaven; The

Head, and the Body, the One Christ.

Now when Nicodemus understood not what was being told him, he inquired

of the Lord how such things could be. Let us look at what the Lord said

to him in answer to his inquiry; for of course, as He deigns to answer

the question, How can these things be? He will in fact tell us how

spiritual regeneration can come to a man who springs from carnal

generation. After noticing briefly the ignorance of one who assumed a

superiority over others as a teacher, and having blamed the unbelief of

all such, for not accepting His witness to the truth, He went on to

inquire and wonder whether, as He had told them about earthly things

and they had not believed they would believe heavenly things. He

nevertheless pursues the subject, and gives an answer such as others

should believe--though these refuse--to the question that he was asked,

How these things can be? "No man," says He, "hath ascended up to

heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is

in heaven." [420] Thus, He says, shall come the spiritual birth,--men,

from being earthly, shall become heavenly; and this they can only

obtain by being made members of me; so that he may ascend who

descended, since no one ascends who did not descend. All, therefore,

who have to be changed and raised must meet together in a union with

Christ, so that the Christ who descended may ascend, reckoning His body

(that is to say, His Church) as nothing else than Himself, because it

is of Christ and the Church that this is most truly understood: "And

they twain shall be one flesh;" [421] concerning which very subject He

expressly said Himself, "So then they are no more twain, but one

flesh." [422] To ascend, therefore, they would be wholly unable, since

"no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven,

even the Son of man which is in heaven." [423] For although it was on

earth that He was made the Son of man, yet He did not deem it unworthy

of that divinity, in which, although remaining in heaven, He came down

to earth, to designate it by the name of the Son of man, as He

dignified His flesh with the name of Son of God: that they might not be

regarded as if they were two Christs,--the one God, the other man,

[424] --but one and the same God and man,--God, because "in the

beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was

God;" [425] and man, inasmuch as "the Word was made flesh and dwelt

among us." [426] By this means--by the difference between His divinity

and His humiliation--He remained in heaven as Son of God, and as Son of

man walked on earth; whilst, by that unity of His person which made His

two natures one Christ, He both walked as Son of God on earth, and at

the same time as the very Son of man remained in heaven. Faith,

therefore, in more credible things arises from the belief of such

things as are more incredible. For if His divine nature, though a far

more distant object, and more sublime in its incomparable diversity,

had ability so to take upon itself the nature of man on our account as

to become one Person, and whilst appearing as Son of man on earth in

the weakness of the flesh, was able to remain all the while in heaven

in the divinity which partook of the flesh, how much easier for our

faith is it to suppose that other men, who are His faithful saints,

become one Christ with the Man Christ, so that, when all ascend by His

grace and fellowship, the one Christ Himself ascends to heaven who came

down from heaven? It is in this sense that the apostle says, "As we

have many members in one body, and all the members of the body, being

many, are one body, so likewise is Christ." [427] He did not say, "So

also is Christ's"--meaning Christ's body, or Christ's members--but his

words are, "So likewise is Christ," thus calling the head and body one

Christ.

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[420] John iii. 13.

[421] Gen. ii. 24.

[422] Mark x. 8.

[423] John iii. 13.

[424] This was the error which was subsequently condemned in the heresy

of Nestorius.

[425] John i. 1.

[426] John 1. 14.

[427] 1 Cor. xii. 12.

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Chapter 61 [XXXII.]--The Serpent Lifted Up in the Wilderness Prefigured

Christ Suspended on the Cross; Even Infants Themselves Poisoned by the

Serpent's Bite.

And since this great and wonderful dignity can only be attained by the

remission of sins, He goes on to say, "And as Moses lifted up the

serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up;

that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal

life." [428] We know what at that time happened in the wilderness. Many

were dying of the bite of serpents: the people then confessed their

sins, and, through Moses, besought the Lord to take away from them this

poison; accordingly, Moses, at the Lord's command, lifted up a brazen

serpent in the wilderness, and admonished the people that every one who

had been serpent-bitten should look upon the uplifted figure. When they

did so they were immediately healed. [429] What means the uplifted

serpent but the death of Christ, by that mode of expressing a sign,

whereby the thing which is effected is signified by that which effects

it? Now death came by the serpent, which persuaded man to commit the

sin, by which he deserved to die. The Lord, however, transferred to His

own flesh not sin, as the poison of the serpent, but He did transfer to

it death, that the penalty without the fault might transpire in the

likeness of sinful flesh, whence, in the sinful flesh, both the fault

might be removed and the penalty. As, therefore, it then came to pass

that whoever looked at the raised serpent was both healed of the poison

and freed from death, so also now, whosoever is conformed to the

likeness of the death of Christ by faith in Him and His baptism, is

freed both from sin by justification, and from death by resurrection.

For this is what He says: "That whosoever believeth in Him should not

perish, but have eternal life." [430] What necessity then could there

be for an infant's being conformed to the death of Christ by baptism,

if he were not altogether poisoned by the bite of the serpent?

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[428] John iii. 14, 15.

[429] Numb. xxi. 6-9.

[430] John iii. 15.

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Chapter 62 [XXXIII.]--No One Can Be Reconciled to God, Except by

Christ.

He then proceeds thus, saying: "God so loved the world, that He gave

His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not

perish, but have everlasting life." [431] Every infant, therefore, was

destined to perish, and to lose everlasting life, if through the

sacrament of baptism he believed not in the only-begotten Son of God;

while nevertheless, He comes not so that he may judge the world, but

that the world through Him may be saved. This especially appears in the

following clause, wherein He says, "He that believeth in Him is not

condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he

hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." [432]

In what class, then, do we place baptized infants but amongst

believers, as the authority of the catholic Church everywhere asserts?

They belong, therefore, among those who have believed; for this is

obtained for them by virtue of the sacrament and the answer of their

sponsors. And from this it follows that such as are not baptized are

reckoned among those who have not believed. Now if they who are

baptized are not condemned, these last, as not being baptized, are

condemned. He adds, indeed: "But this is the condemnation, that light

is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light. [433]

Of what does He say, "Light is come into the world," if not of His own

advent? and without the sacrament of His advent, how are infants said

to be in the light? And why should we not include this fact also in

"men's love of darkness," that as they do not themselves believe, so

they refuse to think that their infants ought to be baptized, although

they are afraid of their incurring the death of the body? "In God,"

however, he declares are the "works of him wrought, who cometh to the

light," [434] because he is quite aware that his justification results

from no merits of his own, but from the grace of God. "For it is God,"

says the apostle, "who worketh in you both to will and to do of His own

good pleasure." [435] This then is the way in which spiritual

regeneration is effected in all who come to Christ from their carnal

generation. He explained it Himself, and pointed it out, when He was

asked, How these things could be? He left it open to no man to settle

such a question by human reasoning, lest infants should be deprived of

the grace of the remission of sins. There is no other passage leading

to Christ; no man can be reconciled to God, or can come to God

otherwise, than through Christ.

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[431] John iii. 16.

[432] John iii. 18.

[433] John iii. 19.

[434] John iii. 21.

[435] Phil. ii. 13.

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Chapter 63 [XXXIV.]--The Form, or Rite, of Baptism. Exorcism.

What shall I say of the actual form of this sacrament? I only wish some

one of those who espouse the contrary side would bring me an infant to

be baptized. What does my exorcism work in that babe, if he be not held

in the devil's family? The man who brought the infant would certainly

have had to act as sponsor for him, for he could not answer for

himself. How would it be possible then for him to declare that he

renounced the devil, if there was no devil in him? that he was

converted to God, if he had never been averted from Him? that he

believed, besides other articles, in the forgiveness of sins, if no

sins were attributable to him? For my own part, indeed, if I thought

that his opinions were opposed to this faith, I could not permit him to

bring the infant to the sacraments. Nor can I imagine with what

countenance before men, or what mind before God, he can conduct himself

in this. But I do not wish to say anything too severe. That a false or

fallacious form of baptism should be administered to infants, in which

there might be the sound and semblance of something being done, but yet

no remission of sins actually ensue, has been seen by some amongst them

to be as abominable and hateful a thing as it was possible to mention

or conceive. Then, again, in respect of the necessity of baptism to

infants, they admit that even infants stand in need of redemption,--a

concession which is made in a short treatise written by one of their

party,--but yet there is not found in this work any open admission of

the forgiveness of a single sin. According, however, to an intimation

dropped in your letter to me, they now acknowledge, as you say, that a

remission of sins takes place even in infants through baptism. No

wonder; for it is impossible that redemption should be understood in

any other way. Their own words are these: "It is, however, not

originally, but in their own actual life, after they have been born,

that they have begun to have sin."

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Chapter 64.--A Twofold Mistake Respecting Infants.

You see how great a difference there is amongst those whom I have been

opposing at such length and persistency in this work,--one of whom has

written the book which contains the points I have refuted to the best

of my ability. You see as I was saying, the important difference

existing between such of them as maintain that infants are absolutely

pure and free from all sin, whether original or actual; and those who

suppose that so soon as born infants have contracted actual sins of

their own, from which they need cleansing by baptism. The latter class,

indeed, by examining the Scriptures, and considering the authority of

the whole Church as well as the form of the sacrament itself, have

clearly seen that by baptism remission of sins accrues to infants; but

they are either unwilling or unable to allow that the sin which infants

have is original sin. The former class, however, have clearly seen (as

they easily might) that in the very nature of man, which is open to the

consideration of all men, the tender age of which we speak could not

possibly commit any sin whatever in its own proper conduct; but, to

avoid acknowledging original sin, they assert that there is no sin at

all in infants. Now in the truths which they thus severally maintain,

it so happens that they first of all mutually agree with each other,

and subsequently differ from us in material aspect. For if the one

party concede to the other that remission of sins takes place in all

infants which are baptized, whilst the other concedes to their

opponents that infants (as infant nature itself in its silence loudly

proclaims) have as yet contracted no sin in their own living, then both

sides must agree in conceding to us, that nothing remains but original

sin, which can be remitted in baptism to infants.

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Chapter 65 [XXXV.]--In Infants There is No Sin of Their Own Commission.

Will this also be questioned, and must we spend time in discussing it,

in order to prove and show how that by their own will--without which

there can be no sin in their own life--infants could never commit an

offence, whom all, for this very reason, are in the habit of calling

innocent? Does not their great weakness of mind and body, their great

ignorance of things, their utter inability to obey a precept, the

absence in them of all perception and impression of law, either natural

or written, the complete want of reason to impel them in either

direction,--proclaim and demonstrate the point before us by a silent

testimony far more expressive than any argument of ours? The very

palpableness of the fact must surely go a great way to persuade us of

its truth; for there is no place where I do not find traces of what I

say, so ubiquitous is the fact of which we are speaking,--clearer,

indeed, to perceive than any thing we can say to prove it.

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Chapter 66.--Infants' Faults Spring from Their Sheer Ignorance.

I should, however, wish any one who was wise on the point to tell me

what sin he has seen or thought of in a new-born infant, for redemption

from which he allows baptism to be already necessary; what kind of evil

it has in its own proper life committed by its own mind or body. If it

should happen to cry and to be wearisome to its elders, I wonder

whether my informant would ascribe this to iniquity, and not rather to

unhappiness. What, too, would he say to the fact that it is hushed from

its very weeping by no appeal to its own reason, and by no prohibition

of any one else? This, however, comes from the ignorance in which it is

so deeply steeped, by reason of which, too, when it grows stronger, as

it very soon does, it strikes its mother in its little passion, and

often her very breasts which it sucks when it is hungry. Well, now,

these small freaks are not only borne in very young children, but are

actually loved,--and this with what affection except that of the flesh,

[436] by which we are delighted by a laugh or a joke, seasoned with fun

and nonsense by clever persons, although, if it were understood

literally, as it is spoken, they would not be laughed with as

facetious, but at as simpletons? We see, also, how those simpletons

whom the common people call Moriones [437] are used for the amusement

of the sane; and that they fetch higher prices than the sane when

appraised for the slave market. So great, then, is the influence of

mere natural feeling, even over those who are by no means simpletons,

in producing amusement at another's misfortune. Now, although a man may

be amused by another man's silliness, he would still dislike to be a

simpleton himself; and if the father, who gladly enough looks out for,

and even provokes, such things from his own prattling boy, were to

foreknow that he would, when grown up, turn out a fool, he would

without doubt think him more to be grieved for than if he were dead.

While, however, hope remains of growth, and the light of intellect is

expected to increase with the increase of years, then the insults of

young children even to their parents seem not merely not wrong, but

even agreeable and pleasant. No prudent man, doubtless, could possibly

approve of not only not forbidding in children such conduct in word or

deed as this, as soon as they are able to be forbidden, but even of

exciting them to it, for the vain amusement of their elders. For as

soon as children are of an age to know their father and mother, they

dare not use wrong words to either, unless permitted or bidden by

either, or both. But such things can only belong to such young children

as are just striving to lisp out words, and whose minds are just able

to give some sort of motion to their tongue. Let us, however, consider

the depth of the ignorance rather of the new-born babes, out of which,

as they advance in age, they come to this merely temporary stuttering

folly,--on their road, as it were, to knowledge and speech.

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[436] Carnali.

[437] See above, ch. 32.

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Chapter 67 [XXXVI.]--On the Ignorance of Infants, and Whence It Arises.

Yes, let us consider that darkness of their rational intellect, by

reason of which they are even completely ignorant of God, whose

sacraments they actually struggle against, while being baptized. Now my

inquiry is, When and whence came they to be immersed in this darkness?

Is it then the fact that they incurred it all here, and in this their

own proper life forgat God through too much negligence, after a life of

wisdom and religion in their mother's womb? Let those say so who dare;

let them listen to it who wish to; let them believe it who can. I,

however, am sure that none whose minds are not blinded by an obstinate

adherence to a foregone conclusion can possibly entertain such an

opinion. Is there then no evil in ignorance,--nothing which needs to be

purged away? What means that prayer "Remember not the sins of my youth

and of my ignorance?" [438] For although those sins are more to be

condemned which are knowingly committed, yet if there were no sins of

ignorance, we should not have read in Scripture what I have quoted,

"Remember not the sins of my youth and of my ignorance." Seeing now

that the soul of an infant fresh from its mother's womb is still the

soul of a human being,--nay, the soul of a rational creature,--not only

untaught, but even incapable of instruction, I ask why, or when, or

whence, it was plunged into that thick darkness of ignorance in which

it lies? If it is man's nature thus to begin, and that nature is not

already corrupt, then why was not Adam created thus? Why was he capable

of receiving a commandment? and able to give names to his wife, and to

all the animal creation? For of her he said, "She shall be called

Woman;" [439] and in respect of the rest we read: "Whatsoever Adam

called every living creature, that was the name thereof." [440] Whereas

this one, although he is ignorant where he is, what he is, by whom

created, of what parents born, is already guilty of offence, incapable

as yet of receiving a commandment, and so completely involved and

overwhelmed in a thick cloud of ignorance, that he cannot be aroused

out of his sleep, so as to recognize even these facts; but a time must

be patiently awaited, until he can shake off this strange intoxication,

as it were, (not indeed in a single night, as even the heaviest

drunkenness usually can be, but) little by little, through many months,

and even years; and until this be accomplished, we have to bear in

little children so many things which we punish in older persons, that

we cannot enumerate them. Now, as touching this enormous evil of

ignorance and weakness, if in this present life infants have contracted

it as soon as they were born, where, when, how, have they by the

perpetration of some great iniquity become suddenly implicated in such

darkness?

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[438] Ps. xxiv. 7.

[439] Gen. ii. 23.

[440] Gen. ii. 19.

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Chapter 68 [XXXVII.]--If Adam Was Not Created of Such a Character as

that in Which We are Born, How is It that Christ, Although Free from

Sin, Was Born an Infant and in Weakness?

Some one will ask, If this nature is not pure, but corrupt from its

origin, since Adam was not created thus, how is it that Christ, who is

far more excellent, and was certainly born without any sin of a virgin,

nevertheless appeared in this weakness, and came into the world in

infancy? To this question our answer is as follows: Adam was not

created in such a state, because, as no sin from a parent preceded him,

he was not created in sinful flesh. We, however, are in such a

condition, because by reason of his preceding sin we are born in sinful

flesh. While Christ was born in such a state, because, in order that He

might for sin condemn sin, He assumed the likeness of sinful flesh.

[441] The question which we are now discussing is not about Adam in

respect of the size of his body, why he was not made an infant but in

the perfect greatness of his members. It may indeed be said that the

beasts were thus created likewise,--nor was it owing to their sin that

their young were born small. Why all this came to pass we are not now

asking. But the question before us has regard to the vigor of man's

mind and his use of reason, by virtue of which Adam was capable of

instruction, and could apprehend God's precept and the law of His

commandment, and could easily keep it if he would; whereas man is now

born in such a state as to be utterly incapable of doing so, owing to

his dreadful ignorance and weakness, not indeed of body, but of

mind,--although we must all admit that in every infant there exists a

rational soul of the self-same substance (and no other) as that which

belonged to the first man. Still this great infirmity of the flesh,

clearly, in my opinion, points to a something, whatever it may be, that

is penal. It raises the doubt whether, if the first human beings had

not sinned, they would have had children who could use neither tongue,

nor hands, nor feet. That they should be born children was perhaps

necessary, on account of the limited capacity of the womb. But, at the

same time, it does not follow, because a rib is a small part of a man's

body, that God made an infant wife for the man, and then built her up

into a woman. In like manner, God's almighty power was competent to

make her children also, as soon as born, grown up at once.

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[441] Rom. viii. 3.

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Chapter 69 [XXXVIII.]--The Ignorance and the Infirmity of an Infant.

But not to dwell on this, that was at least possible to them which has

actually happened to many animals, the young of which are born small,

and do not advance in mind (since they have no rational soul) as their

bodies grow larger, and yet, even when most diminutive, run about, and

recognize their mothers, and require no external help or care when they

want to suck, but with remarkable ease discover their mothers' breasts

themselves, although these are concealed from ordinary sight. A human

being, on the contrary, at his birth is furnished neither with feet fit

for walking, nor with hands able even to scratch; and unless their lips

were actually applied to the breast by the mother, they would not know

where to find it; and even when close to the nipple, they would,

notwithstanding their desire for food, be more able to cry than to

suck. This utter helplessness of body thus fits in with their infirmity

of mind; nor would Christ's flesh have been "in the likeness of sinful

flesh," unless that sinful flesh had been such that the rational soul

is oppressed by it in the way we have described,--whether this too has

been derived from parents, or created in each case for the individual

separately, or inspired from above,--concerning which I forbear from

inquiring now.

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Chapter 70 [XXXIX.]--How Far Sin is Done Away in Infants by Baptism,

Also in Adults, and What Advantage Results Therefrom.

In infants it is certain that, by the grace of God, through His baptism

who came in the likeness of sinful flesh, it is brought to pass that

the sinful flesh is done away. This result, however, is so effected,

that the concupiscence which is diffused over and innate in the living

flesh itself is not removed all at once, so as to exist in it no

longer; but only that that might not be injurious to a man at his

death, which was inherent at his birth. For should an infant live after

baptism, and arrive at an age capable of obedience to a law, he finds

there somewhat to fight against, and, by God's help, to overcome, if he

has not received His grace in vain, and if he is not willing to be a

reprobate. For not even to those who are of riper years is it given in

baptism (except, perhaps, by an unspeakable miracle of the almighty

Creator), that the law of sin which is in their members, warring

against the law of their mind, should be entirely extinguished, and

cease to exist; but that whatever of evil has been done, said, or

thought by a man whilst he was servant to a mind subject to its

concupiscence, should be abolished, and regarded as if it had never

occurred. The concupiscence itself, however, (notwithstanding the

loosening of the bond of guilt in which the devil, by it, used to keep

the soul, and the destruction of the barrier which separated man from

his Maker,) remains in the contest in which we chasten our body and

bring it into subjection, whether to be relaxed for lawful and

necessary uses, or to be restrained by continence. [442] But inasmuch

as the Spirit of God, who knows so much better than we do all the past,

and present, and future of the human race, foresaw and foretold that

the life of man would be such that "no man living should be justified

in God's sight," [443] it happens that through ignorance or infirmity

we do not exert all the powers of our will against it, and so yield to

it in the commission of sundry unlawful things,--becoming worse in

proportion to the greatness and frequency of our surrender; and better,

in proportion to its unimportance and infrequency. The investigation,

however, of the point in which we are now interested--whether there

could possibly be (or whether in fact there is, has been, or ever will

be) a man without sin in this present life, except Him who said, "The

prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" [444] --requires a

much fuller discussion; and the arrangement of the present treatise is

such as to make us postpone the question to the commencement of another

book.

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[442] 1 Cor. ix. 27.

[443] Ps. cxliii. 2.

[444] John xiv. 30.

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Book II.

In which Augustin argues against such as say that in the present life

there are, have been, and will be, men who have absolutely no sin at

all. He lays down four propositions on this head: and teaches, first,

that a man might possibly live in the present life without sin, by the

grace of God and his own free will; he next shows that nevertheless in

fact there is no man who lives quite free from sin in this life;

thirdly, he sets forth the reason of this,--because there is no man who

exactly confines his wishes within the limits of the just requirement

of each case, which just requirement he either fails to perceive, or is

unwilling to carry out in practice; in the fourth place, he proves that

there is not, nor has been, nor ever will be, a human being--except the

one mediator, Christ--who is free from all sin.

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Chapter 1 [I.]--What Has Thus Far Been Dwelt On; And What is to Be

Treated in This Book.

We have, my dearest Marcellinus, discussed at sufficient length, I

think, in the former book the baptism of infants,--how that it is given

to them not only for entrance into the kingdom of God, but also for

attaining salvation and eternal life, which none can have without the

kingdom of God, or without that union with the Saviour Christ, wherein

He has redeemed us by His blood. I undertake in the present book to

discuss and explain the question, Whether there lives in this world, or

has yet lived, or ever will live, any one without any sin whatever,

except "the one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, who

gave Himself a ransom for all;" [445] --with as much care and ability

as He may Himself vouchsafe to me. And should there occasionally arise

in this discussion, either inevitably or casually from the argument,

any question about the baptism or the sin of infants, I must neither be

surprised nor must I shrink from giving the best answer I can, at such

emergencies, to whatever point challenges my attention.

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[445] 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

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Chapter 2 [II.]--Some Persons Attribute Too Much to the Freedom of

Man's Will; Ignorance and Infirmity.

A solution is extremely necessary of this question about a human life

unassailed by any deception or preoccupation of sin, in consequence

even of our daily prayers. For there are some persons who presume so

much upon the free determination of the human will, as to suppose that

it need not sin, and that we require no divine assistance,--attributing

to our nature, once for all, this determination of free will. An

inevitable consequence of this is, that we ought not to pray "not to

enter into temptation,"--that is, not to be overcome of temptation,

either when it deceives and surprises us in our ignorance, or when it

presses and importunes us in our weakness. Now how hurtful, and how

pernicious and contrary to our salvation in Christ, and how violently

adverse to the religion itself in which we are instructed, and to the

piety whereby we worship God, it cannot but be for us not to beseech

the Lord for the attainment of such a benefit, but be rather led to

think that petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Lead us not into

temptation," [446] a vain and useless insertion,--it is beyond my

ability to express in words.

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[446] Matt. vi. 13.

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Chapter 3 [III.]--In What Way God Commands Nothing Impossible. Works of

Mercy, Means of Wiping Out Sins.

Now these people imagine that they are acute (as if none among us knew

it) when they say, that "if we have not the will, we commit no sin; nor

would God command man to do what was impossible for human volition."

But they do not see, that in order to overcome certain things, which

are the objects either of an evil desire or an ill-conceived fear, men

need the strenuous efforts, and sometimes even all the energies, of the

will; and that we should only imperfectly employ these in every

instance, He foresaw who willed so true an utterance to be spoken by

the prophet: "In Thy sight shall no man living be justified." [447] The

Lord, therefore, foreseeing that such would be our character, was

pleased to provide and endow with efficacious virtue certain healthful

remedies against the guilt and bonds even of sins committed after

baptism,--for instance, the works of mercy,--as when he says: "Forgive,

and ye shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given unto you." [448]

For who could quit this life with any hope of obtaining eternal

salvation, with that sentence impending: "Whosoever shall keep the

whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," [449] if

there did not soon after follow: "So speak ye, and so do, as they that

shall be judged by the law of liberty: for he shall have judgment

without mercy that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against

judgment?" [450]

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[447] Ps. cxliii. 2.

[448] Luke vi. 37, 38.

[449] Jas. ii. 10.

[450] Jas. ii. 12.

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Chapter 4 [IV.]--Concupiscence, How Far in Us; The Baptized are Not

Injured by Concupiscence, But Only by Consent Therewith.

Concupiscence, therefore, as the law of sin which remains in the

members of this body of death, is born with infants. In baptized

infants, it is deprived of guilt, is left for the struggle [of life],

[451] but pursues with no condemnation, such as die before the

struggle. Unbaptized infants it implicates as guilty and as children of

wrath, even if they die in infancy, draws into condemnation. In

baptized adults, however, endowed with reason, whatever consent their

mind gives to this concupiscence for the commission of sin is an act of

their own will. After all sins have been blotted out, and that guilt

has been cancelled which by nature [452] bound men in a conquered

condition, it still remains,--but not to hurt in any way those who

yield no consent to it for unlawful deeds,--until death is swallowed up

in victory [453] and, in that perfection of peace, nothing is left to

be conquered. Such, however, as yield consent to it for the commission

of unlawful deeds, it holds as guilty; and unless, through the medicine

of repentance, and through works of mercy, by the intercession in our

behalf of the heavenly High Priest, they be healed, it conducts us to

the second death and utter condemnation. It was on this account that

the Lord, when teaching us to pray, advised us, besides other

petitions, to say: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;

and lead us not into tempation, but deliver us from evil." [454] For

evil remains in our flesh, not by reason of the nature in which man was

created by God and wisdom, but by reason of that offence into which he

fell by his own will, and in which, since its powers are lost, he is

not healed with the same facility of will as that with which he was

wounded. Of this evil the apostle says: "I know that in my flesh

dwelleth no good thing;" [455] and it is likewise to the same evil that

he counsels us to give no obedience, when he says: "Let not sin

therefore reign in your mortal body, to obey the lusts thereof." [456]

When, therefore, we have by an unlawful inclination of our will yielded

consent to these lusts of the flesh, we say, with a view to the cure of

this fault, "Forgive us our debts;" [457] and we at the same time apply

the remedy of a work of mercy, in that we add, "As we forgive our

debtors." That we may not, however, yield such consent, let us pray for

assistance, and say, "And lead us not into temptation;"--not that God

ever Himself tempts any one with such temptation, "for God is not a

tempter to evil, neither tempteth He any man;" [458] but in order that

whenever we feel the rising of temptation from our concupiscence, we

may not be deserted by His help, in order that thereby we may be able

to conquer, and not be carried away by enticement. We then add our

request for that which is to be perfected at the last, when mortality

shall be swallowed up of life: [459] "But deliver us from evil." [460]

For then there will exist no longer a concupiscence which we are bidden

to struggle against, and not to consent to. The whole substance,

accordingly, of these three petitions may be thus briefly expressed:

"Pardon us for those things in which we have been drawn away by

concupiscence; help us not to be drawn away by concupiscence; take away

concupiscence from us."

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[451] See above, Book i. chap. 70 (xxxix.)

[452] Originaliter, i.e. owing to birth-sin.

[453] 1 Cor. xv. 54.

[454] Matt. vi. 12, 13.

[455] Rom. vii. 18.

[456] Rom. vi. 12.

[457] Matt. vi. 12.

[458] Jas. i. 13.

[459] 2 Cor. v. 4.

[460] Matt. vi. 13.

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Chapter 5 [V.]--The Will of Man Requires the Help of God.

Now for the commission of sin we get no help from God; but we are not

able to do justly, and to fulfil the law of righteousness in every part

thereof, except we are helped by God. For as the bodily eye is not

helped by the light to turn away therefrom shut or averted, but is

helped by it to see, and cannot see at all unless it help it; so God,

who is the light of the inner man, helps our mental sight, in order

that we may do some good, not according to our own, but according to

His righteousness. But if we turn away from Him, it is our own act; we

then are wise according to the flesh, we then consent to the

concupiscence of the flesh for unlawful deeds. When we turn to Him,

therefore, God helps us; when we turn away from Him, He forsakes us.

But then He helps us even to turn to Him; and this, certainly, is

something that light does not do for the eyes of the body. When,

therefore, He commands us in the words, "Turn ye unto me, and I will

turn unto you," [461] and we say to Him, "Turn us, O God of our

salvation," [462] and again, "Turn us, O God of hosts;" [463] what else

do we say than, "Give what Thou commandest?" [464] When He commands us,

saying, "Understand now, ye simple among the people," [465] and we say

to Him, "Give me understanding, that I may learn Thy commandments;"

[466] what else do we say than, "Give what Thou commandest?" When He

commands us, saying, "Go not after thy lusts," [467] and we say to Him,

"We know that no man can be continent, except God gives it to him;"

[468] what else do we say than, "Give what Thou commandest?" When He

commands us, saying, "Do justice," [469] and we say, "Teach me Thy

judgments, O Lord;" [470] what else do we say than, "Give what Thou

commandest?" In like manner, when He says: "Blessed are they which

hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled," [471]

from whom ought we to seek for the meat and drink of righteousness, but

from Him who promises His fulness to such as hunger and thirst after

it?

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[461] Zech. i. 3.

[462] Ps. lxxxv. 4.

[463] Ps. lxxx. 3, 4.

[464] Da quod jubes; see the Confessions, Book x. chap. 26.

[465] Ps. xciv. 8.

[466] Ps. cxix. 73.

[467] Ecclus. xviii. 30.

[468] Wisd. viii. 21.

[469] Isa. lvi. 1.

[470] Ps. cxix. 108.

[471] Matt. v. 6.

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Chapter 6.--Wherein the Pharisee Sinned When He Thanked God; To God's

Grace Must Be Added the Exertion of Our Own Will.

Let us then drive away from our ears and minds those who say that we

ought to accept the determination of our own free will and not pray God

to help us not to sin. By such darkness as this even the Pharisee was

not blinded; for although he erred in thinking that he needed no

addition to his righteousness, and supposed himself to be saturated

with abundance of it, he nevertheless gave thanks to God that he was

not "like other men, unjust, extortioners, adulterers, or even as the

publican; for he fasted twice in the week, he gave tithes of all that

he possessed." [472] He wished, indeed, for no addition to his own

righteousness; but yet, by giving thanks to God, he confessed that all

he had he had received from Him. Notwithstanding, he was not approved,

both because he asked for no further food of righteousness, as if he

were already filled, and because he arrogantly preferred himself to the

publican, who was hungering and thirsting after righteousness. What,

then, is to be said of those who, whilst acknowledging that they have

no righteousness, or no fulness thereof, yet imagine that it is to be

had from themselves alone, not to be besought from their Creator, in

whom is its store and its fountain? And yet this is not a question

about prayers alone, as if the energy of our will also should not be

strenuously added. God is said to be "our Helper;" [473] but nobody can

be helped who does not make some effort of his own accord. For God does

not work our salvation in us as if he were working in insensate stones,

or in creatures in whom nature has placed neither reason nor will. Why,

however, He helps one man, but not another; or why one man so much, and

another so much; or why one man in one way, and another in another,--He

reserves to Himself according to the method of His own most secret

justice, and to the excellency of His power.

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[472] Luke xviii. 11, 12.

[473] Ps. xl. 17, lxx. 5.

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Chapter 7 [VI.]--Four Questions on the Perfection of Righteousness:

(1.) Whether a Man Can Be Without Sin in This Life.

Now those who aver that a man can exist in this life without sin, must

not be immediately opposed with incautious rashness; for if we should

deny the possibility, we should derogate both from the free will of

man, who in his wish desires it, and from the power or mercy of God,

who by His help effects it. But it is one question, whether he could

exist; and another question, whether he does exist. Again, it is one

question, if he does not exist when he could exist, why he does not

exist; and another question, whether such a man as had never sinned at

all, not only is in existence, but also could ever have existed, or can

ever exist. Now, if in the order of this fourfold set of interrogative

propositions, I were asked, [1st,] Whether it be possible for a man in

this life to be without sin? I should allow the possibility, through

the grace of God and the man's own free will; not doubting that the

free will itself is ascribable to God's grace, in other words, to the

gifts of God,--not only as to its existence, but also as to its being

good, that is, to its conversion to doing the commandments of God. Thus

it is that God's grace not only shows what ought to be done, but also

helps to the possibility of doing what it shows. "What indeed have we

that we have not received?" [474] Whence also Jeremiah says: "I know, O

Lord, that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man to walk

and direct his steps." [475] Accordingly, when in the Psalms one says

to God, "Thou hast commanded me to keep Thy precepts diligently," [476]

he at once adds not a word of confidence concerning himself but a wish

to be able to keep these precepts: "O that my ways," says he, "were

directed to keep Thy statutes! Then should I not be ashamed, when I

have respect to all Thy commandments? [477] Now who ever wishes for

what he has already so in his own power, that he requires no further

help for attaining it? To whom, however, he directs his wish,--not to

fortune, or fate, or some one else besides God,--he shows with

sufficient clearness in the following words, where he says: "Order my

steps in Thy word; and let not any iniquity have dominion over me."

[478] From the thraldom of this execrable dominion they are liberated,

to whom the Lord Jesus gave power to become the sons of God. [479] From

so horrible a domination were they to be freed, to whom He says, "If

the Son shall make you free, then shall ye be free indeed." [480] From

these and many other like testimonies, I cannot doubt that God has laid

no impossible command on man; and that, by God's aid and help, nothing

is impossible, by which is wrought what He commands. In this way may a

man, if he pleases, be without sin by the assistance of God.

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[474] 1 Cor. iv. 7.

[475] Jer. x. 23.

[476] Ps. cxix. 4.

[477] Ps. cxix. 5, 6.

[478] Ps. cxix. 133.

[479] John i. 12.

[480] John viii. 36.

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Chapter 8 [VII.]--(2) Whether There is in This World a Man Without Sin.

[2nd.] If, however, I am asked the second question which I have

suggested,--whether there be a sinless man,--I believe there is not.

For I rather believe the Scripture, which says: "Enter not into

judgment with Thy servant; for in Thy sight shall no man living be

justified." [481] There is therefore need of the mercy of God, which

"exceedingly rejoiceth against judgment," [482] and which that man

shall not obtain who does not show mercy. [483] And whereas the prophet

says, "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and Thou

forgavest the iniquity of my heart," [484] he yet immediately adds,

"For this shall every saint pray unto Thee in an acceptable time."

[485] Not indeed every sinner, but "every saint;" for it is the voice

of saints which says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive

ourselves, and the truth is not in us." [486] Accordingly we read, in

the Apocalypse of the same Apostle, of "the hundred and forty and four

thousand" saints, "which were not defiled with women; for they

continued virgins: and in their mouth was found no guile; for they are

without fault." [487] "Without fault," indeed, they no doubt are for

this reason,--because they truly found fault with themselves; and for

this reason, "in their mouth was discovered no guile,"--"because if

they said they had no sin, they deceived themselves, and the truth was

not in them." [488] Of course, where the truth was not, there would be

guile; and when a righteous man begins a statement by accusing himself,

he verily utters no falsehood.

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[481] Ps. cxliii. 2.

[482] Jas. ii. 13.

[483] Jas. ii. 13.

[484] Ps. xxxii. 5.

[485] Ps. xxxii. 6.

[486] 1 John i. 8.

[487] Rev. xiv. 3-5.

[488] 1 John i. 8.

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Chapter 9.--The Beginning of Renewal; Resurrection Called Regeneration;

They are the Sons of God Who Lead Lives Suitable to Newness of Life.

And hence in the passage, "Whosoever is born of God doth not sin, and

he cannot sin, for His seed remaineth in him," [489] and in every other

passage of like import, they much deceive themselves by an inadequate

consideration of the Scriptures. For they fail to observe that men

severally become sons of God when they begin to live in newness of

spirit, and to be renewed as to the inner man after the image of Him

that created them. [490] For it is not from the moment of a man's

baptism that all his old infirmity is destroyed, but renovation begins

with the remission of all his sins, and so far as he who is now wise is

spiritually wise. All things else, however, are accomplished in hope,

looking forward to their being also realized in fact, [491] even to the

renewal of the body itself in that better state of immortality and

incorruption with which we shall be clothed at the resurrection of the

dead. For this too the Lord calls a regeneration,--though, of course,

not such as occurs through baptism, but still a regeneration wherein

that which is now begun in the spirit shall be brought to perfection

also in the body. "In the regeneration," says He, "when the Son of man

shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve

thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." [492] For however entire

and full be the remission of sins in baptism, nevertheless, if there

was wrought by it at once, an entire and full change of the man into

his everlasting newness,--I do not mean change in his body, which is

now most clearly tending evermore to the old corruption and to death,

after which it is to be renewed into a total and true newness,--but,

the body being excepted, if in the soul itself, which is the inner man,

a perfect renewal was wrought in baptism, the apostle would not say:

"Even though our outward man perishes, yet the inward man is renewed

day by day." [493] Now, undoubtedly, he who is still renewed day by day

is not as yet wholly renewed; and in so far as he is not yet wholly

renewed, he is still in his old state. Since, then, men, even after

they are baptized, are still in some degree in their old condition,

they are on that account also still children of the world; but inasmuch

as they are also admitted into a new state, that is to say, by the full

and perfect remission of their sins, and in so far as they are

spiritually-minded, and behave correspondingly, they are the children

of God. Internally we put off the old man and put on the new; for we

then and there lay aside lying, and speak truth, and do those other

things wherein the apostle makes to consist the putting off of the old

man and the putting on of the new, which after God is created in

righteousness and true holiness. [494] Now it is men who are already

baptized and faithful whom he exhorts to do this,--an exhortation which

would be unsuitable to them, if the absolute and perfect change had

been already made in their baptism. And yet made it was, since we were

then actually saved; for "He saved us by the laver of regeneration."

[495] In another passage, however, he tells us how this took place.

"Not they only," says he, "but ourselves also, which have the

first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves,

waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we

are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man

seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not,

then do we with patience wait for it." [496]

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[489] 1 John iii. 9.

[490] See Col. iii. 10.

[491] Donec etiam in re fiant.

[492] Matt. xix. 28.

[493] 2 Cor. iv. 16.

[494] Eph. iv. 24.

[495] Tit. iii. 5.

[496] Rom. viii. 23-25.

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Chapter 10 [VIII.]--Perfection, When to Be Realized.

Our full adoption, then, as children, is to happen at the redemption of

our body. It is therefore the first-fruits of the Spirit which we now

possess, whence we are already really become the children of God; for

the rest, indeed, as it is by hope that we are saved and renewed, so

are we the children of God. But inasmuch as we are not yet actually

saved, we are also not yet fully renewed, nor yet also fully sons of

God, but children of the world. We are therefore advancing in renewal

and holiness of life,--and it is by this that we are children of God,

and by this also we cannot commit sin;--until at last the whole of that

by which we are kept as yet children of this world is changed into

this;--for it is owing to this that we are as yet able to sin. Hence it

comes to pass that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;"

[497] and as well, "if we were to say that we have no sin, we should

deceive ourselves, and the truth would not be in us." [498] There shall

be then an end put to that within us which keeps us children of the

flesh and of the world; whilst that other shall be perfected which

makes us the children of God, and renews us by His Spirit. Accordingly

the same John says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth

not yet appear what we shall be." [499] Now what means this variety in

the expressions, "we are," and "we shall be," but this --we are in

hope, we shall be in reality? For he goes on to say, "We know that when

He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

[500] We have therefore even now begun to be like Him, having the

first-fruits of the Spirit; but yet we are still unlike Him, by reason

of the remainders of the old nature. In as far, then, as we are like

Him, in so far are we, by the regenerating Spirit, sons of God; but in

as far as we are unlike Him, in so far are we the children of the flesh

and of the world. On the one side, we cannot commit sin; but, on the

other, if we say that we have no sin, we only deceive ourselves,--until

we pass entirely into the adoption, and the sinner be no more, and you

look for his place and find it not. [501]

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[497] 1 John iii. 9.

[498] 1 John i. 8.

[499] 1 John iii. 2.

[500] 1 John iii. 2.

[501] Ps. xxxvi. 10.

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Chapter 11 [IX.]--An Objection of the Pelagians: Why Does Not a

Righteous Man Beget a Righteous Man? [502]

In vain, then, do some of them argue: "If a sinner begets a sinner, so

that the guilt of original sin must be done away in his infant son by

his receiving baptism, in like manner ought a righteous man to beget a

righteous son." Just as if a man begat children in the flesh by reason

of his righteousness, and not because he is moved thereto by the

concupiscence which is in his members, and the law of sin is applied by

the law of his mind to the purpose of procreation. His begetting

children, therefore, shows that he still retains the old nature among

the children of this world; it does not arise from the fact of his

promotion to newness of life among the children of God. For "the

children of this world beget and are begotten." [503] Hence also what

is born of them is like them; for "that which is born of the flesh is

flesh." [504] Only the children of God, however, are righteous; but in

so far as they are the children of God, they do not carnally beget,

because it is of the Spirit, and not of the flesh, that they are

themselves begotten. But as many of them as become parents, beget

children from the circumstance that they have not yet put off the

entire remains of their old nature in exchange for the perfect

renovation which awaits them. It follows, therefore, that every son who

is born in this old and infirm condition of his father's nature, must

needs himself partake of the same old and infirm condition. In order,

then, that he may be begotten again, he must also himself be renewed by

the Spirit through the remission of sin; and if this change does not

take place in him, his righteous father will be of no use to him. For

it is by the Spirit that he is righteous, but it is not by the Spirit

that he begat his son. On the other hand, if this change does accrue to

him, he will not be damaged by an unrighteous father: for it is by the

grace of the Spirit that he has passed into the hope of the eternal

newness; whereas it is owing to his carnal mind that his father has

wholly remained in the old nature.

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[502] [See below, c. 25; also De Nuptiis, i. 18; also contra Julianum,

vi. 5.]

[503] Luke xx. 34.

[504] John iii. 6.

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Chapter 12 [X.]--He Reconciles Some Passages of Scripture.

The statement, therefore, "He that is born of God sinneth not," [505]

is not contrary to the passage in which it is declared by those who are

born of God, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and

the truth is not in us." [506] For however complete may be a man's

present hope, and however real may be his renewal by spiritual

regeneration in that part of his nature, he still, for all that,

carries about a body which is corrupt, and which presses down his soul;

and so long as this is the case, one must distinguish even in the same

individual the relation and source of each several action. Now, I

suppose it is not easy to find in God's Scripture so weighty a

testimony of holiness given of any man as that which is written of His

three servants, Noah, Daniel, and Job, whom the Prophet Ezekiel

describes as the only men able to be delivered from God's impending

wrath. [507] In these three men he no doubt prefigures three classes of

mankind to be delivered: in Noah, as I suppose, are represented

righteous leaders of nations, by reason of his government of the ark as

a type of the Church; in Daniel, men who are righteous in continence;

in Job, those who are righteous in wedlock;--to say nothing of any

other view of the passage, which it is unnecessary now to consider. It

is, at any rate, clear from this testimony of the prophet, and from

other inspired statements, how eminent were these worthies in

righteousness. Yet no man must be led by their history to say, for

instance, that drunkenness is not sin, although so good a man was

overtaken by it; for we read that Noah was once drunk, [508] but God

forbid that it should be thought that he was an habitual drunkard.

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[505] 1 John iii. 9.

[506] 1 John i. 8.

[507] Ezek. xiv. 14.

[508] Gen. ix. 21.

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Chapter 13.--A Subterfuge of the Pelagians.

Daniel, indeed, after the prayer which he poured out before God,

actually says respecting himself, "Whilst I was praying and confessing

my sins, and the sins of my people, before the Lord my God." [509] This

is the reason, if I am not mistaken, why in the above-mentioned Prophet

Ezekiel a certain most haughty person is asked, "Art thou then wiser

than Daniel?" [510] Nor on this point can that be possibly said which

some contend for in opposition to the Lord's Prayer: "For although,"

they say, "that prayer was offered by the apostles, after they became

holy and perfect, and had no sin whatever, yet it was not in behalf of

their own selves, but of imperfect and still sinful men that they said,

Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.' They used the

word our," they say, "in order to show that in one body are contained

both those who still have sins, and themselves, who were already

altogether free from sin." Now this certainly cannot be said in the

case of Daniel, who (as I suppose) foresaw as a prophet this

presumptuous opinion, when he said so often in his prayer, "We have

sinned;" and explained to us why he said this, not so as that we should

hear from him, Whilst I was praying and confessing the sins of my

people to the Lord, my God; nor yet confounding distinction, so as that

it would be uncertain whether he had said, on account of the fellowship

of one body, While I was confessing our sins to the Lord my God; but he

expresses himself in language so distinct and precise, as if he were

full of the distinction himself, and wanted above all things to commend

it to our notice: "My sins," says he, "and the sins of my people." Who

can gainsay such evidence as this, but he who is more pleased to defend

what he thinks than to find out what he ought to think?

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[509] Dan. ix. 20.

[510] Ezek. xxviii. 3.

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Chapter 14. --Job Was Not Without Sin.

But let us see what Job has to say of himself, after God's great

testimony of his righteousness. "I know of a truth," he says, "that it

is so: for how shall a mortal man be just before the Lord? For if He

should enter into judgment with him, he would not be able to obey Him."

[511] And shortly afterwards he asks: "Who shall resist His judgment?

Even if I should seem righteous, my mouth will speak profanely." [512]

And again, further on, he says: "I know He will not leave me

unpunished. But since I am ungodly, why have I not died? If I should

wash myself with snow, and be purged with clean hands, thou hadst

thoroughly stained me with filth." [513] In another of his discourses

he says: "For Thou hast written evil things against me, and hast

compassed me with the sins of my youth; and Thou hast placed my foot in

the stocks. Thou hast watched all my works, and hast inspected the

soles of my feet, which wax old like a bottle, or like a moth-eaten

garment. For man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live,

and is full of wrath; like a flower that hath bloomed, so doth he fall;

he is gone like a shadow, and continueth not. Hast Thou not taken

account even of him, and caused him to enter into judgment with Thee?

For who is pure from uncleanness? Not even one; even should his life

last but a day." [514] Then a little afterwards he says: "Thou hast

numbered all my necessities; and not one of my sins hath escaped Thee.

Thou hast sealed up my transgressions in a bag, and hast marked

whatever I have done unwillingly." [515] See how Job, too, confesses

his sins, and says how sure he is that there is none righteous before

the Lord. So he is sure of this also, that if we say we have no sin,

the truth is not in us. While, therefore, God bestows on him His high

testimony of righteousness, according to the standard of human conduct,

Job himself, taking his measure from that rule of righteousness, which,

as well as he can, he beholds in God, knows of a truth that so it is;

and he goes on at once to say, "How shall a mortal man be just before

the Lord? For if He should enter into judgment with him, he would not

be able to obey Him;" in other words, if, when challenged to judgment,

he wished to show that nothing could be found in him which He could

condemn, "he would not be able to obey him," since he misses even that

obedience which might enable him to obey Him who teaches that sins

ought to be confessed. Accordingly [the Lord] rebukes certain men,

saying, "Why will ye contend with me in judgment?" [516] This [the

Psalmist] averts, saying, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant;

for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." [517] In accordance

with this, Job also asks: "For who shall resist his judgment? Even if I

should seem righteous, my mouth will speak profanely;" which means: If,

contrary to His judgment, I should call myself righteous, when His

perfect rule of righteousness proves me to be unrighteous, then of a

truth my mouth would speak profanely, because it would speak against

the truth of God.

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[511] Job ix. 2, 3.

[512] Job ix. 19, 20.

[513] Job ix. 30.

[514] Job xiii. 26, to xiv. 5.

[515] Job xiv. 16, 17.

[516] Jer. ii. 29.

[517] Ps. cxliii. 2.

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Chapter 15.--Carnal Generation Condemned on Account of Original Sin.

He sets forth that this absolute weakness, or rather condemnation, of

carnal generation is from the transgression of original sin, when,

treating of his own sins, he shows, as it were, their causes, and says

that "man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is

full of wrath." Of what wrath, but of that in which all are, as the

apostle says, "by nature," that is, by origin, "children of wrath,"

[518] inasmuch as they are children of the concupiscence of the flesh

and of the world? He further shows that to this same wrath also

pertains the death of man. For after saying, "He hath but a short time

to live, and is full of wrath," he added, "Like a flower that hath

bloomed, so doth he fall; he is gone like a shadow, and continueth

not." He then subjoins: "Hast Thou not caused him to enter into

judgment with Thee? For who is pure from uncleanness? Not even one;

even should his life last but a day." In these words he in fact says,

Thou hast thrown upon man, short-lived though he be, the care of

entering into judgment with Thee. For how brief soever be his

life,--even if it last but a single day,--he could not possibly be

clean of filth; and therefore with perfect justice must he come under

Thy judgment. Then, when he says again, "Thou hast numbered all my

necessities, and not one of my sins hath escaped Thee: Thou hast sealed

up my transgressions in a bag, and hast marked whatever I have done

unwillingly;" is it not clear enough that even those sins are justly

imputed which are not committed through allurement of pleasure, but for

the sake of avoiding some trouble, or pain, or death? Now these sins,

too, are said to be committed under some necessity, whereas they ought

all to be overcome by the love and pleasure of righteousness. Again,

what he said in the clause, "Thou hast marked whatever I have done

unwillingly," may evidently be connected with the saying: "For what I

would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I." [519]

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[518] Eph. ii. 3.

[519] Rom. vii. 15.

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Chapter 16--Job Foresaw that Christ Would Come to Suffer; The Way of

Humility in Those that are Perfect.

Now it is remarkable [520] that the Lord Himself, after bestowing on

Job the testimony which is expressed in Scripture, that is, by the

Spirit of God, "In all the things which happened to him he sinned not

with his lips before the Lord," [521] did yet afterwards speak to him

with a rebuke, as Job himself tells us: "Why do I yet plead, being

admonished, and hearing the rebukes of the Lord?" [522] Now no man is

justly rebuked unless there be in him something which deserves rebuke.

[XI.] And what sort of rebuke is this,--which, moreover, is understood

to proceed from the person of Christ our Lord? He re-counts to him all

the divine operations of His power, rebuking him under this idea,--that

He seems to say to him, "Canst thou effect all these mighty works as I

can?" But to what purpose is all this but that Job might understand

(for this instruction was divinely inspired into him, that he might

foreknow Christ's coming to suffer),--that he might understand how

patiently he ought to endure all that he went through, since Christ,

although, when He became man for us, He was absolutely without sin, and

although as God He possessed so great power, did for all that by no

means refuse to obey even to the suffering of death? When Job

understood this with a purer intensity of heart, he added to his own

answer these words: "I used before now to hear of Thee by the hearing

of the ear; but behold now mine eye seeth Thee: therefore I abhor

myself and melt away, and account myself but dust and ashes." [523] Why

was he thus so deeply displeased with himself? God's work, in that he

was man, could not rightly have given him displeasure, since it is even

said to God Himself, "Despise not Thou the work of Thine own hands."

[524] It was indeed in view of that righteousness, in which he had

discovered his own unrighteousness, [525] that he abhorred himself and

melted away, and deemed himself dust and ashes,--beholding, as he did

in his mind, the righteousness of Christ, in whom there could not

possibly be any sin, not only in respect of His divinity, but also of

His soul and His flesh. It was also in view of this righteousness which

is of God that the Apostle Paul, although as "touching the

righteousness which is of the law he was blameless," yet "counted all

things" not only as loss, but even as dung. [526]

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[520] Quid quod.

[521] Job i. 22.

[522] Job xxxix. 34.

[523] Job xlii. 5, 6.

[524] Ps. cxxxviii. 8.

[525] Qua se noverat injustum. Several Mss. have justum [q. d. "had

discovered what his own righteousness was,"--i.e. nothing].

[526] Phil. iii. 6-8.

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Chapter 17 [XII.]--No One Righteous in All Things. [527]

That illustrious testimony of God, therefore, in which Job is

commended, is not contrary to the passage in which it is said, "In Thy

sight shall no man living be justified;" [528] for it does not lead us

to suppose that in him there was nothing at all which might either by

himself truly or by the Lord God rightly be blamed, although at the

same time he might with no untruth be said to be a righteous man, and a

sincere worshipper of God, and one who keeps himself from every evil

work. For these are God's words concerning him: "Hast thou diligently

considered my servant Job? For there is none like him on the earth,

blameless, righteous, a true worshipper of God, who keeps himself from

every evil work." [529] First, he is here praised for his excellence in

comparison with all men on earth. He therefore excelled all who were at

that time able to be righteous upon earth; and yet, because of this

superiority over others in righteousness, he was not therefore

altogether without sin. He is next said to be "blameless"--no one could

fairly bring an accusation against him in respect of his life;

"righteous"--he had advanced so greatly in moral probity, that no man

could be mentioned on a par with him; "a true worshipper of

God"--because he was a sincere and humble confessor of his own sins;

"who keeps himself from every evil work"--it would have been wonderful

if this had extended to every evil word and thought. How great a man

indeed Job was, we are not told; but we know that he was a just man; we

know, too, that in the endurance of terrible afflictions and trials he

was great; and we know that it was not on account of his sins, but for

the purpose of demonstrating his righteousness, that he had to bear so

much suffering. But the language in which the Lord commends Job might

also be applied to him who "delights in the law of God after the inner

man, whilst he sees another law in his members warring against the law

of his mind;" [530] especially as he says, "The good that I would I do

not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now, if I do that I

would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

[531] Observe how he too after the inward man is separate from every

evil work, because such work he does not himself effect, but the evil

which dwells in his flesh; and yet, since he does not have even that

ability to delight in the law of God except from the grace of God, he,

as still in want of deliverance, exclaims, "O wretched man that I am!

who shall deliver me from the body of this death? God's grace, through

Jesus Christ our Lord!" [532]

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[527] See below, chap. 23.

[528] Ps. cxliii. 2.

[529] Job i. 8.

[530] Rom. vii. 22, 23.

[531] Rom. vii. 19, 20.

[532] Rom. vii. 24, 25.

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Chapter 18 [XIII.]--Perfect Human Righteousness is Imperfect.

There are then on earth righteous men, there are great men, brave,

prudent, chaste, patient, pious, merciful, who endure all kinds of

temporal evil with an even mind for righteousness' sake. If, however,

there is truth--nay, because there is truth--in these words, "If we say

we have no sin, we deceive ourselves," [533] and in these, "In Thy

sight shall no man living be justified," they are not without sin; nor

is there one among them so proud and foolish as not to think that the

Lord's Prayer is needful to him, by reason of his manifold sins.

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[533] 1 John i. 8.

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Chapter 19.--Zacharias and Elisabeth, Sinners.

Now what must we say of Zacharias and Elisabeth, who are often alleged

against us in discussions on this question, except that there is clear

evidence in the Scripture [534] that Zacharias was a man of eminent

righteousness among the chief priests, whose duty it was to offer up

the sacrifices of the Old Testament? We also read, however, in the

Epistle to the Hebrews, in a passage which I have already quoted in my

previous book, [535] that Christ was the only High Priest who had no

need, as those who were called high priests, to offer daily a sacrifice

for his own sins first, and then for the people. "For such a High

Priest," it says, "became us, righteous, harmless, undefiled, separate

from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily,

as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins."

[536] Amongst the priests here referred to was Zacharias, amongst them

was Phinehas, yea, Aaron himself, from whom this priesthood had its

beginning, and whatever others there were who lived laudably and

righteously in this priesthood; and yet all these were under the

necessity, first of all, of offering sacrifice for their own

sins,--Christ, of whose future coming they were a type, being the only

one who, as an incontaminable priest, had no such necessity.

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[534] Luke i. 6-9.

[535] See above, Book i. c. 50.

[536] Heb. vii. 26, 27.

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Chapter 20.--Paul Worthy to Be the Prince of the Apostles, and Yet a

Sinner.

What commendation, however, is bestowed on Zacharias and Elisabeth

which is not comprehended in what the apostle has said about himself

before he believed in Christ? He said that, "as touching the

righteousness which is in the law, he had been blameless." [537] The

same is said also of them: "They were both righteous before God,

walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."

[538] It was because whatever righteousness they had in them was not a

pretence before men that it is said accordingly, "They walked before

the Lord." But that which is written of Zacharias and his wife in the

phrase, in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, the apostle

briefly expressed by the words, in the law. For there was not one law

for him and another for them previous to the gospel. It was one and the

same law which, as we read, was given by Moses to their fathers, and

according to which, also, Zacharias was priest, and offered sacrifices

in his course. And yet the apostle, who was then endued with the like

righteousness, goes on to say: "But what things were gain to me, those

I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but

loss for the excellency of the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; for

whose sake I have not only thought all things to be only detriments,

but I have even counted them as dung, that I may win Christ, and be

found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but

that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is

of God by faith: that I may know Him, and the power of His

resurrection, and the fellowship of His suffering, being made

comformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the

resurrection of the dead." [539] So far, then, is it from being true

that we should, from the words in which Scripture describes them,

suppose that Zacharias and Elisabeth had a perfect righteousness

without any sin, that we must even regard the apostle himself,

according to the selfsame rule, as not perfect, not only in that

righteousness of the law which he possessed in common with them, and

which he counts as loss and dung in comparison with that most excellent

righteousness which is by the faith of Christ, but also in the very

gospel itself, wherein he deserved the pre-eminence of his great

apostleship. Now I would not venture to say this if I did not deem it

very wrong to refuse credence to himself. He extends the passage which

we have quoted, and says: "Not as though I had already attained, or

were already perfect; but I follow after, if I may comprehend that for

which also I am apprehended in Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not

myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those

things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are

before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of

God in Christ Jesus." [540] Here he confesses that he has not yet

attained, and is not yet perfect in that plenitude of righteousness

which he had longed to obtain in Christ; but that he was as yet

pressing towards the mark, and, forgetting what was past, was reaching

out to the things which are before him. We are sure, then, that what he

says elsewhere is true even of himself: "Although our outward man is

perishing, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." [541] Although he

was already a perfect [542] traveller, he had not yet attained the

perfect end of his journey. All such he would fain take with him as

companions of his course. This he expresses in the words which follow

our former quotation: "Let as many, then, of us as are perfect, be thus

minded: and if ye be yet of another mind, God will reveal even this

also to you. Nevertheless, whereunto we have already attained, let us

walk by that rule." [543] This "walk" is not performed with the legs of

the body, but with the affections of the soul and the character of the

life, so that they who possess righteousness may arrive at perfection,

who, advancing in their renewal day by day along the straight path of

faith, have by this time become perfect as travellers in the selfsame

righteousness.

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[537] Phil. iii. 6.

[538] Luke i. 6. [See also his work, De Gratia Christi, 53.]

[539] Phil. iii. 7-11.

[540] Phil. iii. 12-14.

[541] 2 Cor. iv. 16.

[542] [Augustin plays on the word "perfect."--W.]

[543] Phil. iii. 15, 16.

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Chapter 21 [XIV.]--All Righteous Men Sinners.

In like manner, all who are described in the Scriptures as exhibiting

in their present life good will and the actions of righteousness, and

all who have lived like them since, although lacking the same testimony

of Scripture; or all who are even now so living, or shall hereafter so

live: all these are great, they are all righteous, and they are all

really worthy of praise,--yet they are by no means without sin:

inasmuch as, on the authority of the same Scriptures which make us

believe in their virtues, we believe also that in "God's sight no man

living is justified," [544] whence all ask that He will "not enter into

judgment with His servants:" [545] and that not only to all the

faithful in general, but to each of them in particular, the Lord's

Prayer is necessary, which He delivered to His disciples. [546]

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[544] Ps. cxliii. 2.

[545] Ps. cxliii. 2.

[546] Matt. vi. 12; Luke xi. 4.

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Chapter 22 [XV.]--An Objection of the Pelagians; Perfection is

Relative; He is Rightly Said to Be Perfect in Righteousness Who Has

Made Much Progress Therein.

"Well, but," they say, "the Lord says, Be ye perfect even as your

Father which is in heaven is perfect,' [547] --an injunction which He

would not have given, if He had known that what He enjoined was

impracticable." Now the present question is not whether it be possible

for any men, during this present life, to be without sin if they

receive that perfection for the purpose; for the question of

possibility we have already discussed: [548] --but what we have now to

consider is, whether any man in fact achieves perfection. We have,

however, already recognised the fact that no man wills as much as the

duty demands, as also the testimony of the Scriptures, which we have

quoted so largely above, declares. When, indeed, perfection is ascribed

to any particular person, we must look carefully at the thing in which

it is ascribed. For I have just above quoted a passage of the apostle,

wherein he confesses that he was not yet perfect in the attainment of

righteousness which he desired; but still he immediately adds, "Let as

many of us as are perfect be thus minded." Now he would certainly not

have uttered these two sentences if he had not been perfect in one

thing, and not in another. For instance, a man may be perfect as a

scholar in the pursuit of wisdom: and this could not yet be said of

those to whom [the apostle] said, "I have fed you with milk, and not

with meat: for hitherto ye have not been able to bear it, neither are

ye yet able;" [549] whereas to those of whom it could be said he says,

"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect,"--meaning, of

course, "perfect pupils" to be understood. It may happen, therefore, as

I have said, that a man may be already perfect as a scholar, though not

as yet perfect as a teacher of wisdom; may be perfect as a learner,

though not as yet perfect as a doer of righteousness; may be perfect as

a lover of his enemies, though not as yet perfect in bearing their

wrong. [550] Even in the case of him who is so far perfect as to love

all men, inasmuch as he has attained even to the love of his enemies,

it still remains a question whether he be perfect in that love,--in

other words, whether he so loves those whom he loves as is prescribed

to be exercised towards those to be loved, by the unchangeable love of

truth. Whenever, then, we read in the Scriptures of any man's

perfection, it must be carefully considered in what it is asserted,

since a man is not therefore to be understood as being entirely without

sin because he is described as perfect in some particular thing;

although the term may also be employed to show, not, indeed, that there

is no longer any point left for a man to reach his way to perfection,

but that he has in fact advanced a very great way, and on that account

may be deemed worthy of the designation. Thus, a man may be said to be

perfect in the science of the law, even if there be still something

unknown to him; and in the same manner the apostle called men perfect,

to whom he said at the same time, "Yet if in anything ye be otherwise

minded, God shall reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, whereto we

have already attained, let us walk by the same rule." [551]

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[547] Matt. v. 48.

[548] See above, chap. 7.

[549] 1 Cor. iii. 2.

[550] Ut sufferatis his antithesis here to ut diligat.

[551] Phil. iii. 15.

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Chapter 23 [XXI.]--Why God Prescribes What He Knows Cannot Be Observed.

We must not deny that God commands that we ought to be so perfect in

doing righteousness, as to have no sin at all. Now that cannot be sin,

whatever it may be, unless God has enjoined that it shall not be. Why

then, they ask, does He command what He knows no man living will

perform? In this manner it may also be asked, Why He commanded the

first human beings, who were only two, what He knew they would not

obey? For it must not be pretended that He issued that command, that

some of us might obey it, if they did not; for, that they should not

partake of the fruit of the particular tree, God commanded them, and

none besides. Because, as He knew what amount of righteousness they

would fail to perform, so did He also know what righteous measures He

meant Himself to adopt concerning them. In the same way, then, He

orders all men to commit no sin, although He knows beforehand that no

man will fulfil the command; in order that He may, in the case of all

who impiously and condemnably despise His precepts, Himself do what is

just in their condemnation; and, in the case of all who while

obediently and piously pressing on in his precepts, though failing to

observe to the utmost all things which He has enjoined, do yet forgive

others as they wish to to be forgiven themselves, Himself do what is

good in their cleansing. For how can forgiveness be bestowed by God's

mercy on the forgiving, when there is no sin? or how prohibition fail

to be given by the justice of God, when there is sin?

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Chapter 24.--An Objection of the Pelagians. The Apostle Paul Was Not

Free From Sin So Long as He Lived.

"But see," say they, "how the apostle says, I have fought a good fight,

I have kept the faith, I have finished my course: henceforth there is

laid up for me a crown of righteousness;' [552] which he would not have

said if he had any sin." It is for them, then, to explain how he could

have said this, when there still remained for him to encounter the

great conflict, the grievous and excessive weight of that suffering

which he had just said awaited him. [553] In order to finish his

course, was there yet wanting only a small thing, when that in fact was

still left to suffer wherein would be a fiercer and more cruel foe? If,

however, he uttered such words of joy feeling sure and secure, because

he had been made sure and secure by Him who had revealed to him the

imminence of his suffering, then he spoke these words, not in the

fulness of realization, but in the firmness of hope, and represents

what he foresees is to come as if it had already been done. If,

therefore, he had added to those words the further statement, "I have

no longer any sin," we must have understood him as even then speaking

of a perfection arising from a future prospect, not from an

accomplished fact. For his having no sin, which they suppose was

completed when he spoke these words, pertained to the finishing of his

course; just in the same way as his triumphing over his adversary in

the decisive conflict of his suffering had also reference to the

finishing of his course, although this they must needs themselves allow

remained yet to be effected, when he was speaking these words. The

whole of this, therefore, we declare to have been as yet awaiting its

accomplishment, at the time when the apostle, with his perfect trust in

the promise of God, spoke of it all as having been already realized.

For it was in reference to the finishing of his course that he forgave

the sins of those who sinned against him, and prayed that his own sins

might in like manner be forgiven him; and it was in his most certain

confidence in this promise of the Lord, that he believed he should have

no sin in that last end, which was still future, even when in his

trustfulness he spoke of it as already accomplished. Now, omitting all

other considerations, I wonder whether, when he uttered the words in

which he is thought to imply that he had no sin, that "thorn of the

flesh" had been already removed from him, for the taking away of which

he had three times entreated the Lord, and had received this answer:

"My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in

weakness." [554] For bringing so great a man to perfection, it was

needful that that "messenger of Satan" should not be taken away by whom

he was therefore to be buffeted, "lest he should be unduly exalted by

the abundance of his revelations," [555] and is there then any man so

bold as either to think or to say, that any one who has to bend beneath

the burden of this life is altogether clean from all sin whatever?

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[552] 2 Tim. iv. 7.

[553] 2 Tim. iv. 6.

[554] 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

[555] 2 Cor. xii. 7.

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Chapter 25.--God Punishes Both in Wrath and in Mercy.

Although there are some men who are so eminent in righteousness that

God speaks to them out of His cloudy pillar, such as "Moses and Aaron

among His priests, and Samuel among them that call upon His name,"

[556] the latter of whom is much praised for his piety and purity in

the Scriptures of truth, from his earliest childhood, in which his

mother, to accomplish her vow, placed him in God's temple, and devoted

him to the Lord as His servant;--yet even of such men it is written,

"Thou, O God, wast propitious unto them, though Thou didst punish all

their devices." [557] Now the children of wrath God punishes in anger;

whereas it is in mercy that He punishes the children of grace; since

"whom He loveth He correcteth, and scourgeth every son whom He

receiveth." [558] However, there are no punishments, no correction, no

scourge of God, but what are owing to sin, except in the case of Him

who prepared His back for the smiter, in order that He might experience

all things in our likeness without sin, in order that He might be the

saintly Priest of saints, making intercession even for saints, who with

no sacrifice of truth say each one even for himself, "Forgive us our

trespasses, even as we also forgive them that trespass against us."

[559] Wherefore even our opponents in this controversy, whilst they are

chaste in their life, and commendable in character, and although they

do not hesitate to do that which the Lord enjoined on the rich man, who

inquired of Him about the attainment of eternal life, after he had told

Him, in answer to His first question, that he had already fully kept

every commandment in the law,--that "if he wished to be perfect, he

must sell all that he had and give to the poor, and transfer his

treasure to heaven;" [560] yet they do not in any one instance venture

to say that they are without sin. But this, as we believe, they refrain

from saying, with deceitful intent; but if they are lying, in this very

act they begin either to augment or commit sin.

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[556] Ps. xcix. 6.

[557] Ps. xcix. 8.

[558] Prov. iii. 12; Heb. xii. 6.

[559] Matt. vi. 12, 14; Luke xi. 4.

[560] Matt. xix. 12.

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Chapter 26 [XVII.] -- (3) [561] Why No One in This Life is Without Sin.

[3d.] [562] Let us now consider the point which I mentioned as our

third inquiry. Since by divine grace assisting the human will, man may

possibly exist in this life without sin, why does he not? To this

question I might very easily and truthfully answer: Because men are

unwilling. But if I am asked why they are unwilling, we are drawn into

a lengthy statement. And yet, without prejudice to a more careful

examination, I may briefly say this much: Men are unwilling to do what

is right, either because what is right is unknown to them, or because

it is unpleasant to them. For we desire a thing more ardently in

proportion to the certainty of our knowledge of its goodness, and the

warmth of our delight in it. Ignorance, therefore, and infirmity are

faults which impede the will from moving either for doing a good work,

or for refraining from an evil one. But that what was hidden may come

to light, and what was unpleasant may be made agreeable, is of the

grace of God which helps the wills of men; and that they are not helped

by it, has its cause likewise in themselves, not in God, whether they

be predestinated to condemnation, on account of the iniquity of their

pride, or whether they are to be judged and disciplined contrary to

their very pride, if they are children of mercy. Accordingly Jeremiah,

after saying, "I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself,

and that it belongeth not to any man to walk and direct his steps,"

[563] immediately adds, "Correct me, O Lord, but with judgment, and not

in Thine anger;" [564] as much as to say, I know that it is for my

correction that I am too little assisted by Thee, for my footsteps to

be perfectly directed: but yet do not in this so deal with me as Thou

dost in Thine anger, when Thou dost determine to condemn the wicked;

but as Thou dost in Thy judgment whereby Thou dost teach Thy children

not to be proud. Whence in another passage it is said, "And Thy

judgments shall help me." [565]

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[561] See above, chs. 7 and 8.

[562] See above, chs. 7 and 8.

[563] Jer. x. 23.

[564] Jer. x. 24.

[565] Ps. cxix. 175.

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Chapter 27. [566] --The Divine Remedy for Pride.

You cannot therefore attribute to God the cause of any human fault. For

of all human offences, the cause is pride. For the conviction and

removal of this a great remedy comes from heaven. God in mercy humbles

Himself, descends from above, and displays to man, lifted up by pride,

pure and manifest grace in very manhood, which He took upon Himself out

of vast love for those who partake of it. For, not even did even this

One, so conjoined to the Word of God that by that conjunction he became

at once the one Son of God and the same One the one Son of man, act by

the antecedent merits of His own will. It behoved Him, without doubt,

to be one; had there been two, or three, or more, if this could have

been done, it would not have come from the pure and simple gift of God,

but from man's free will and choice. [567] This, then, is especially

commended to us; this, so far as I dare to think, is the divine lesson

especially taught and learned in those treasures of wisdom and

knowledge which are hidden in Christ. Every one of us, therefore, now

knows, now does not know--now rejoices, now does not rejoice--to begin,

continue, and complete our good work, in order that he may know that it

is due not to his own will, but to the gift of God, that he either

knows or rejoices; and thus he is cured of vanity which elated him, and

knows how truly it is said not of this earth of ours, but spiritually,

"The Lord will give kindness and sweet grace, and our land shall yield

her fruit." [568] A good work, moreover, affords greater delight, in

proportion as God is more and more loved as the highest unchangeable

Good, and as the Author of all good things of every kind whatever. And

that God may be loved, "His love is shed abroad in our hearts," not by

ourselves, but "by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us." [569]

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[566] See below, in ch. 33: also De Natur� et Grati�, 29-32; and De

Corrept. et Gratia, 10.

[567] [Augustin appears to say, in this obscure passage, that had there

been two persons, instead of two natures only, in our blessed Lord's

person, then no doubt salvation would have been due partly to a human

cause.--W.]

[568] Ps. lxxxv. 12.

[569] Rom. v. 5.

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Chapter 28 [XVIII.]--A Good Will Comes from God.

Men, however, are laboring to find in our own will some good thing of

our own,--not given to us by God; but how it is to be found I cannot

imagine. The apostle says, when speaking of men's good works, "What

hast thou that thou didst not receive? now, if thou didst receive it,

why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" [570] But,

besides this, even reason itself, which may be estimated in such things

by such as we are, sharply restrains every one of us in our

investigations so as that we may not so defend grace as to seem to take

away free will, or, on the other hand, so assert free will as to be

judged ungrateful to the grace of God, in our arrogant impiety. [571]

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[570] 1 Cor. iv. 7.

[571] See De Grati� Christi, 52; and De Grati� et Libero Arbitrio.

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Chapter 29.--A Subterfuge of the Pelagians.

Now, with reference to the passage of the apostle which I have quoted,

some would maintain it to mean that "whatever amount of good will a man

has, must be attributed to God on this account,--namely, because even

this amount could not be in him if he were not a human being. Now,

inasmuch as he has from God alone the capacity of being any thing at

all, and of being human, why should there not be also attributed to God

whatever there is in him of a good will, which could not exist unless

he existed in whom it is?" But in this same manner it may also be said

that a bad will also may be attributed to God as its author; because

even it could not exist in man unless he were a man in whom it existed;

but God is the author of his existence as man; and thus also of his bad

will, which could have no existence if it had not a man in whom it

might exist. But to argue thus is blasphemy.

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Chapter 30.--All Will is Either Good, and Then It Loves Righteousness,

or Evil, When It Does Not Love Righteousness.

Unless, therefore, we obtain not simply determination of will, which is

freely turned in this direction and that, and has its place amongst

those natural goods which a bad man may use badly; but also a good

will, which has its place among those goods of which it is impossible

to make a bad use:--unless the impossibility is given to us from God, I

know not how to defend what is said: "What hast thou that thou didst

not receive?" For if we have from God a certain free will, which may

still be either good or bad; but the good will comes from ourselves;

then that which comes from ourselves is better than that which comes

from Him. But inasmuch as it is the height of absurdity to say this,

they ought to acknowledge that we attain from God even a good will. It

would indeed be a strange thing if the will could so stand in some mean

as to be neither good nor bad; for we either love righteousness, and it

is good, and if we love it more, more good,--if less, it is less good;

or if we do not love it at all, it is not good. And who can hesitate to

affirm that, when the will loves not righteousness in any way at all,

it is not only a bad, but even a wholly depraved will? Since therefore

the will is either good or bad, and since of course we have not the bad

will from God, it remains that we have of God a good will; else, I am

ignorant, since our justification is from it, in what other gift from

Him we ought to rejoice. Hence, I suppose, it is written, "The will is

prepared of the Lord;" [572] and in the Psalms, "The steps of a man

will be rightly ordered by the Lord, and His way will be the choice of

his will;" [573] and that which the apostle says, "For it is God who

worketh in you both to will and to do of His own good pleasure." [574]

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[572] Prov. viii. 35.

[573] Ps. xxxvii. 23.

[574] Phil. ii. 13.

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Chapter 31.--Grace is Given to Some Men in Mercy; Is Withheld from

Others in Justice and Truth.

Forasmuch then as our turning away from God is our own act, and this is

evil will; but our turning to God is not possible, except He rouses and

helps us, and this is good will,--what have we that we have not

received? But if we received, why do we glory as if we had not

received? Therefore, as "he that glorieth must glory in the Lord,"

[575] it comes from His mercy, not their merit, that God wills to

impart this to some, but from His truth that He wills not to impart it

to others. For to sinners punishment is justly due, because "the Lord

God loveth mercy and truth," [576] and "mercy and truth are met

together;" [577] and "all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth."

[578] And who can tell the numberless instances in which Holy Scripture

combines these two attributes? Sometimes, by a change in the terms,

grace is put for mercy, as in the passage, "We beheld His glory, the

glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

[579] Sometimes also judgment occurs instead of truth, as in the

passage, "I will sing of mercy and judgment unto Thee, O Lord." [580]

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[575] Isa. xlv. 25; Jer. ix. 23, 24; 1 Cor. i. 31.

[576] Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

[577] Ps. lxxxv. 10.

[578] Ps. xxv. 10.

[579] John i. 14.

[580] Ps. ci. 1.

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Chapter 32.--God's Sovereignity in His Grace.

As to the reason why He wills to convert some, and to punish others for

turning away,--although nobody can justly censure the merciful One in

conferring His blessing, nor can any man justly find fault with the

truthful One in awarding His punishment (as no one could justly blame

Him, in the parable of the labourers, for assigning to some their

stipulated hire, and to others unstipulated largess [581] ), yet, after

all, the purpose of His more hidden judgment is in His own power.

[XIX.] So far as it has been given us, let us have wisdom, and let us

understand that the good Lord God sometimes withholds even from His

saints either the certain knowledge or the triumphant joy of a good

work, just in order that they may discover that it is not from

themselves, but from Him that they receive the light which illuminates

their darkness, and the sweet grace which causes their land [582] to

yield her fruit.

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[581] Matt. xx. 1-16.

[582] i.e., the soil of their hearts; see above, at the end of ch. 27.

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Chapter 33.--Through Grace We Have Both the Knowledge of Good, and the

Delight Which It Affords.

But when we pray Him to give us His help to do and accomplish

righteousness, what else do we pray for than that He would open what

was hidden, and impart sweetness to that which gave no pleasure? For

even this very duty of praying to Him we have learned by His grace,

whereas before it was hidden; and by His grace have come to love it,

whereas before it gave us no pleasure,--so that "he who glorieth must

glory not in himself, but in the Lord." To be lifted up, indeed, to

pride, is the result of men's own will, not of the operation of God;

for to such a thing God neither urges us nor helps us. There first

occurs then in the will of man a certain desire of its own power, to

become disobedient through pride. If it were not for this desire,

indeed, there would be nothing difficult; and whenever man willed it,

he might refuse without difficulty. There ensued, however, out of the

penalty which was justly due such a defect, that henceforth it became

difficult to be obedient unto righteousness; and unless this defect

were overcome by assisting grace, no one would turn to holiness; nor

unless it were healed by efficient grace would any one enjoy the peace

of righteousness. But whose grace is it that conquers and heals, but

His to whom the prayer is directed: "Convert us, O God of our

salvation, and turn Thine anger away from us?" [583] And both if He

does this, He does it in mercy, so that it is said of Him, "Not

according to our sins hath He dealt with us, nor hath He recompensed us

according to our iniquities;" [584] and when He refrains from doing

this to any, it is in judgment that He refrains. And who shall say to

Him, "What hast Thou done?" when with pious mind the saints sing to the

praise of His mercy and judgment? Wherefore even in the case of His

saints and faithful servants He applies to them a tardier cure in

certain of their failings, in order that, while they are involved in

these, a less pleasure than is sufficient for the fulfilling of

righteousness in all its perfection may be experienced by them at any

good they may achieve, whether hidden or manifest; so that in respect

of His most perfect rule of equity and truth "no man living can be

justified in His sight." [585] He does not in His own self, indeed,

wish us to fall under condemnation, but that we should become humble;

and He displays to us all the self-same grace of His own. Let us not,

however, after we have attained facility in all things, suppose that to

be our own which is really His; for that would be an error most

antagonistic to religion and piety. Nor let us think that we should,

because of His grace, continue in the same sins as of old; but against

that very pride, on account of which we are humiliated in them, let us,

above all things, both vigilantly strive and ardently pray Him, knowing

at the same time that it is by His gift that we have the power thus to

strive and thus to pray; so that in every case, while we look not at

ourselves, but raise our hearts above, we may render thanks to the Lord

our God, and whenever we glory, glory in Him alone.

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[583] Ps. lxxxv. 4.

[584] Ps. ciii. 10.

[585] Ps. cxliii. 2.

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Chapter 34 [XX.]--(4) That No Man, with the Exception of Christ, Has

Ever Lived, or Can Live Without Sin. [586]

[4th.] There now remains our fourth point, after the explanation of

which, as God shall help us, this lengthened treatise of ours may at

last be brought to an end. It is this: Whether the man who never has

had sin or is to have it, not merely is now living as one of the sons

of men, but even could ever have existed at any time, or will yet in

time to come exist? Now it is altogether most certain that such a man

neither does now live, nor has lived, nor ever will live, except the

one only Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus. We have

already said a good deal on this subject in our remarks on the baptism

of infants; for if these have no sin, not only are there at present,

but also there have been, and there will be, persons innumerable

without sin. Now if the point which we treated of under the second head

be truly substantiated, that there is in fact no man without sin, [587]

then of course not even infants are without sin. From which the

conclusion arises, that even supposing a man could possibly exist in

the present life so far advanced in virtue as to have reached the

perfect fulness of holy living which is absolutely free from sin, he

still must have been undoubtedly a sinner previously, and have been

converted from the sinful state to this subsequent newness of life. Now

when we were discussing the second head, a different question was

before us from that which is before us under this fourth head. For then

the point we had to consider was, Whether any man in this life could

ever attain to such perfection as to be absolutely without sin by the

grace of God, by the hearty desire of his own will? whereas the

question now proposed in this fourth place is, Whether there be among

the sons of men, or could possibly ever have been, or yet ever can be,

a man who has not indeed emerged out of sin and attained to perfect

righteousness, but has never, at any time whatever, been under the

bondage of sin? If, therefore, the remarks are true which we have made

at so great length concerning infants, there neither is, has been, nor

will be, among the sons of men any such man, except the one Mediator,

in whom there accrues to us propitiation and justification through

which we have reconciliation with God, by the termination of the enmity

produced by our sins. It will therefore be not unsuitable to retrace a

few considerations, so far as the present subject seems to require,

from the very commencement of the human race, in order that they may

inform and strengthen the reader's mind in answer to some objections

which may possibly disturb him.

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[586] See above, chs. 7, 8, 26.

[587] See above, chs. 8, 9.

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Chapter 35 [XXI.]--Adam and Eve; Obedience Most Strongly Enjoined by

God on Man.

When the first human beings--the one man Adam, and his wife Eve who

came out of him--willed not to obey the commandment which they had

received from God, a just and deserved punishment overtook them. The

Lord had threatened that, on the day they ate the forbidden fruit, they

should surely die. [588] Now, inasmuch as they had received the

permission of using for food every tree that grew in Paradise, among

which God had planted the tree of life, but had been forbidden to

partake of one only tree, which He called the tree of knowledge of good

and evil, to signify by this name the consequence of their discovering

whether what good they would experience if they kept the prohibition,

or what evil if they transgressed it: they are no doubt rightly

considered to have abstained from the forbidden food previous to the

malignant persuasion of the devil, and to have used all which had been

allowed them, and therefore, among all the others, and before all the

others, the tree of life. For what could be more absurd than to suppose

that they partook of the fruit of other trees, but not of that which

had been equally with others granted to them, and which, by its

especial virtue, prevented even their animal bodies from undergoing

change through the decay of age, and from aging into death, applying

this benefit from its own body to the man's body, and in a mystery

demonstrating what is conferred by wisdom (which it symbolized) on the

rational soul, even that, quickened by its fruit, it should not be

changed into the decay and death of iniquity? For of her it is rightly

said, "She is a tree of life to them that lay hold of her." [589] Just

as the one tree was for the bodily Paradise, the other is for the

spiritual; the one affording a vigour to the senses of the outward man,

the other to those of the inner man, such as will abide without any

change for the worse through time. They therefore served God, since

that dutiful obedience was committed to them, by which alone God can be

worshipped. And it was not possible more suitably to intimate the

inherent importance of obedience, or its sole sufficiency securely to

keep the rational creature under the Creator, than by forbidding a tree

which was not in itself evil. For God forbid that the Creator of good

things, who made all things, "and behold they were very good," [590]

should plant anything evil amidst the fertility of even that material

Paradise. Still, however, in order that he might show man, to whom

submission to such a Master would be very useful, how much good

belonged simply to obedience (and this was all that He had demanded of

His servant, and this would be of advantage not so much for the

lordship of the Master as for the profit of the servant), they were

forbidden the use of a tree, which, if it had not been for the

prohibition, they might have used without suffering any evil result

whatever; and from this circumstance it may be clearly understood, that

whatever evil they brought on themselves because they made use of it in

spite of the prohibition, the tree did not produce from any noxious or

pernicious quality in its fruit, but entirely on account of their

violated obedience.

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[588] Gen. ii. 17.

[589] Prov. iii. 18.

[590] Gen. i. 31.

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Chapter 36 [XXII.]--Man's State Before the Fall.

Before they had thus violated their obedience they were pleasing to

God, and God was pleasing to them; and though they carried about an

animal body, they yet felt in it no disobedience moving against

themselves. This was the righteous appointment, that inasmuch as their

soul had received from the Lord the body for its servant, as it itself

obeyed the Lord, even so its body should obey Him, and should exhibit a

service suitable to the life given it without resistance. Hence "they

were both naked, and were not ashamed." [591] It is with a natural

instinct of shame that the rational soul is now indeed affected,

because in that flesh, over whose service it received the right of

power, it can no longer, owing to some indescribable infirmity, prevent

the motion of the members thereof, notwithstanding its own

unwillingness, nor excite them to motion even when it wishes. Now these

members are on this account, in every man of chastity, rightly called

"pudenda," [592] because they excite themselves, just as they like, in

opposition to the mind which is their master, as if they were their own

masters; and the sole authority which the bridle of virtue possesses

over them is to check them from approaching impure and unlawful

pollutions. Such disobedience of the flesh as this, which lies in the

very excitement, even when it is not allowed to take effect, did not

exist in the first man and woman whilst they were naked and not

ashamed. For not yet had the rational soul, which rules the flesh,

developed such a disobedience to its Lord, as by a reciprocity of

punishment to bring on itself the rebellion of its own servant the

flesh, along with that feeling of confusion and trouble to itself which

it certainly failed to inflict upon God by its own disobedience to Him;

for God is put to no shame or trouble when we do not obey Him, nor are

we able in any wise to lessen His very great power over us; but we are

shamed in that the flesh is not submissive to our government,--a result

which is brought about by the infirmity which we have earned by

sinning, and is called "the sin which dwelleth in our members." [593]

But this sin is of such a character that it is the punishment of sin.

As soon, indeed, as that transgression was effected, and the

disobedient soul turned away from the law of its Lord, then its

servant, the body, began to cherish a law of disobedience against it;

and then the man and the woman grew ashamed of their nakedness, when

they perceived the rebellious motion of the flesh, which they had not

felt before, and which perception is called "the opening of their

eyes;" [594] for, of course, they did not walk about among the trees

with closed eyes. The same thing is said of Hagar: "Her eyes were

opened, and she saw a well." [595] Then the man and the woman covered

their parts of shame, which God had made for them as members, but they

had made parts of shame.

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[591] Gen. ii. 25.

[592] i.e. "Parts of shame."

[593] Rom. vii. 17, 23.

[594] Gen. iii. 7.

[595] Gen. xxi. 19.

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Chapter 37 [XXIII.]--The Corruption of Nature is by Sin, Its Renovation

is by Christ.

From this law of sin is born the flesh of sin, which requires cleansing

through the sacrament of Him who came in the likeness of sinful flesh,

that the body of sin might be destroyed, which is also called "the body

of this death," from which only God's grace delivers wretched man

through Jesus Christ our Lord. [596] For this law, the origin of death,

passed on from the first pair to their posterity, as is seen in the

labour with which all men toil in the earth, and the travail of women

in the pains of childbirth. For these sufferings they merited by the

sentence of God, when they were convicted of sin; and we see them

fulfilled not only in them, but also in their descendants, in some

more, in others less, but nevertheless in all. Whereas, however, the

primeval righteousness of the first human beings consisted in obeying

God, and not having in their members the law of their own concupiscence

against the law of their mind; now, since their sin, in our sinful

flesh which is born of them, it is obtained by those who obey God, as a

great acquisition, that they do not obey the desires of this evil

concupiscence, but crucify in themselves the flesh with its affections

and lusts, in order that they may be Jesus Christ's, who on His cross

symbolized this, and who gave them power through His grace to become

the sons of God. For it is not to all men, but to as many as have

received Him, that He has given to be born again to God of the Spirit,

after they were born to the world by the flesh. Of these indeed it is

written: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become

the sons of God; which were born, not of the flesh, nor of blood, nor

of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God." [597]

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[596] Rom. vii. 24, 25.

[597] John i. 12, 13.

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Chapter 38 [XXIV.]--What Benefit Has Been Conferred on Us by the

Incarnation of the Word; Christ's Birth in the Flesh, Wherein It is

Like and Wherein Unlike Our Own Birth.

He goes on to add, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;"

[598] as much as to say, A great thing indeed has been done among them,

even that they are born again to God of God, who had before been born

of the flesh to the world, although created by God Himself; but a far

more wonderful thing has been done that, although it accrued to them by

nature to be born of the flesh, but by the divine goodness to be born

of God,--in order that so great a benefit might be imparted to them, He

who was in His own nature born of God, vouchsafed in mercy to be also

born of the flesh;--no less being meant by the passage, "And the Word

was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Hereby, he says in effect, it has

been wrought that we who were born of the flesh as flesh, by being

afterwards born of the Spirit, may be spirit and dwell in God; because

also God, who was born of God, by being afterwards born of the flesh,

became flesh, and dwelt among us. For the Word, which became flesh, was

in the beginning, and was God with God. [599] But at the same time His

participation in our inferior condition, in order to our participation

in His higher state, held a kind of medium [600] in His birth of the

flesh; so that we indeed were born in sinful flesh, but He was born in

the likeness of sinful flesh,--we not only of flesh and blood, but also

of the will of man, and of the flesh, but He was born only of flesh and

blood, not of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of

God: we, therefore, to die on account of sin, He, to die on our account

without sin. So also, just as His inferior circumstances, into which He

descended to us, were not in every particular exactly the same with our

inferior circumstances, in which He found us here; so our superior

state, into which we ascend to Him, will not be quite the same with His

superior state, in which we are there to find Him. For we by His grace

are to be made the sons of God, whereas He was evermore by nature the

Son of God; we, when we are converted, shall cleave to God, though not

as His equals; He never turned from God, and remains ever equal to God;

we are partakers of eternal life, He is eternal life. He, therefore,

alone having become man, but still continuing to be God, never had any

sin, nor did he assume a flesh of sin, though born of a maternal [601]

flesh of sin. For what He then took of flesh, He either cleansed in

order to take it, or cleansed by taking it. His virgin mother,

therefore, whose conception was not according to the law of sinful

flesh (in other words, not by the excitement of carnal concupiscence),

but who merited by her faith that the holy seed should be framed within

her, He formed in order to choose her, and chose in order to be formed

from her. How much more needful, then, is it for sinful flesh to be

baptized in order to escape the judgment, when the flesh which was

untainted by sin was baptized to set an example for imitation?

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[598] John i. 14.

[599] John i. 1.

[600] Medietatem.

[601] De matern� carne peccati, which is the reading of the best and

oldest Mss. Another reading has, De natur� carnis peccati ("of the

nature of sinful flesh"); and a third, De materi� carnis peccati ("of

the matter of sinful flesh"). Compare Contr. Julianum, v. 9, and De

Gen. ad. Lit. x. 18-20.

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Chapter 39 [XXV.]--An Objection of Pelagians.

The answer, which we have already given, [602] to those who say, "If a

sinner has begotten a sinner, a righteous man ought also to have

begotten a righteous man," we now advance in reply to such as argue

that one who is born of a baptized man ought himself to be regarded as

already baptized. "For why," they ask, "could he not have been baptized

in the loins of his father, when, according to the Epistle to the

Hebrews, Levi, [603] was able to pay tithes in the loins of Abraham?"

They who propose this argument ought to observe that Levi did not on

this account subsequently not pay tithes, because he had paid tithes

already in the loins of Abraham, but because he was ordained to the

office of the priesthood in order to receive tithes, not to pay them;

otherwise neither would his brethren, who all contributed their tithes

to him, have been tithed--because they too, whilst in the loins of

Abraham, had already paid tithes to Melchisedec.

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[602] See above, c. 11.

[603] The allusion is to Heb. vii. 9.

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Chapter 40.--An Argument Anticipated.

And let no one contend that the descendants of Abraham might fairly

enough have paid tithes, although they had already paid tithes in the

loins of their forefather, seeing that paying tithes was an obligation

of such a nature as to require constant repetition from each several

person, just as the Israelites used to pay such contributions every

year all through life to their Levites, to whom were due various tithes

from all kinds of produce; whereas baptism is a sacrament of such a

nature as is administered once for all, and if one had already received

it when in his father, he must be considered as no other than baptized,

since he was born of a man who had been himself baptized. Well, whoever

thus argues (I will simply say, without discussing the point at

length,) should look at circumcision, which was administered once for

all, and yet was administered to each person separately and

individually. Just as therefore it was necessary in the time of that

ancient sacrament for the son of a circumcised man to be himself

circumcised, so now the son of one who has been baptized must himself

also receive baptism.

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Chapter 41.--Children of Believers are Called "Clean" By the Apostle.

[604]

The apostle indeed says, "Else were your children unclean, but now are

they holy;" [605] and "therefore" they infer "there was no necessity

for the children of believers to be baptized." I am surprised at the

use of such language by persons who deny that original sin has been

transmitted from Adam. For, if they take this passage of the apostle to

mean that the children of believers are born in a state of holiness,

how is it that even they have no doubt about the necessity of their

being baptized? Why, in fine, do they refuse to admit that any original

sin is derived from a sinful parent, if some holiness is received from

a holy parent? Now it certainly does not contravene our assertion, even

if from the faithful "holy" children are propagated, when we hold that

unless they are baptized those go into damnation, to whom our opponents

themselves shut the kingdom of heaven, although they insist that they

are without sin, whether actual or original. [606] Or, if they think it

an unbecoming thing for "holy ones" to be damned, how can it be a

becoming thing to exclude "holy ones" from the kingdom of God? They

should rather pay especial attention to this point, How can something

sinful help being derived from sinful parents, if something holy is

derived from holy parents, and uncleanness from unclean parents? For

the twofold principle was affirmed when he said, "Else were your

children unclean, but now are they holy." They should also explain to

us how it is right that the holy children of believers and the unclean

children of unbelievers are, notwithstanding their different

circumstances, equally prohibited from entering the kingdom of God, if

they have not been baptized. What avails that sanctity of theirs to the

one? Now if they were to maintain that the unclean children of

unbelievers are damned, but that the holy children of believers are

unable to enter the kingdom of heaven unless they are baptized,--but

nevertheless are not damned, because they are "holy,"--that would be

some sort of a distinction; but as it is, they equally declare

respecting the holy children of holy parents and the unclean offspring

of unclean parents, that they are not damned, since they have not any

sin; and that they are excluded from the kingdom of God because they

are unbaptized. What an absurdity! Who can suppose that such splendid

geniuses do not perceive it?

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[604] [See Gelasius, in his Treatise against the Pelagians.]

[605] 1 Cor. vii. 14.

[606] See above, Book i. chs. 21-23.

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Chapter 42.--Sanctification Manifold; Sacrament of Catechumens.

Our opinions on this point are strictly in unison with the apostle's

himself, who said, "From one all to condemnation," and "from one all to

justification of life." [607] Now how consistent these statements are

with what he elsewhere says, when treating of another point, "Else were

your children unclean, but now are they holy," consider a while.

[XXVI.] Sanctification is not of merely one measure; for even

catechumens, I take it, are sanctified in their own measure by the sign

of Christ, and the prayer of imposition of hands; and what they receive

is holy, although it is not the body of Christ,--holier than any food

which constitutes our ordinary nourishment, because it is a sacrament.

[608] However, that very meat and drink, wherewithal the necessities of

our present life are sustained, are, according to the same apostle,

"sanctified by the word of God and prayer," [609] even the prayer with

which we beg that our bodies may be refreshed. Just as therefore this

sanctification of our ordinary food does not hinder what enters the

mouth from descending into the belly, and being ejected into the

draught, [610] and partaking of the corruption into which everything

earthly is resolved, whence the Lord exhorts us to labour for the other

food which never perishes: [611] so the sanctification of the

catechumen, if he is not baptized, does not avail for his entrance into

the kingdom of heaven, nor for the remission of his sins. And, by

parity of reasoning, that sanctification likewise, of whatever measure

it be, which, according to the apostle, is in the children of

believers, has nothing whatever to do with the question of baptism and

of the origin or the remission of sin. [612] The apostle, in this very

passage which has occupied our attention, says that the unbeliever of a

married couple is sanctified by a believing partner: "For the

unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife

is sanctified by the husband. Else were your children unclean, but now

are they holy." [613] Now, I should say, there is not a man whose mind

is so warped by unbelief, as to suppose that, whatever sense he gives

to these words, they can possibly mean that a husband who is not a

Christian should not be baptized, because his wife is a Christian, and

that he has already obtained remission of his sins, with the certain

prospect of entering the kingdom of heaven, because he is described as

being sanctified by his wife.

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[607] See Rom. v. 18.

[608] Catechumens received the sacramentum salis--salt placed in the

mouth--with other rites, such as exorcism and the sign of the cross;

the Lord's Prayer and other invocations concluding the ceremony. See

Canon 5 of the third Council of Carthage; also Augustin's De Catechiz.

Rud. 50; and his Confessions, i. 11, where (speaking of his own

catechumenical course) he says: "I was now signed with the sign of His

cross, and was seasoned with His salt."

[609] 1 Tim. iv. 5.

[610] Mark vii. 19.

[611] John vi. 27.

[612] See below, Book iii. ch. 21; and his Sermons, xxix. 4.

[613] 1 Cor. vii. 14.

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Chapter 43 [XXVII.]--Why the Children of the Baptized Should Be

Baptized.

If any man, however, is still perplexed by the question why the

children of baptized persons are baptized, let him briefly consider

this: Inasmuch as the generation of sinful flesh through the one man,

Adam, draws into condemnation all who are born of such generation, so

the generation of the Spirit of grace through the one man Jesus Christ,

draws to the justification of eternal life all who, because

predestinated, partake of this regeneration. But the sacrament of

baptism is undoubtedly the sacrament of regenation: Wherefore, as the

man who has never lived cannot die, and he who has never died cannot

rise again, so he who has never been born cannot be born again. From

which the conclusion arises, that no one who has not been born could

possibly have been born again in his father. Born again, however, a man

must be, after he has been born; because, "Except a man be born again,

he cannot see the kingdom of God" [614] Even an infant, therefore, must

be imbued with the sacrament of regeneration, lest without it his would

be an unhappy exit out of this life; and this baptism is not

administered except for the remission of sins. And so much does Christ

show us in this very passage; for when asked, How could such things be?

He reminded His questioner of what Moses did when he lifted up the

serpent. Inasmuch, then, as infants are by the sacrament of baptism

conformed to the death of Christ, it must be admitted that they are

also freed from the serpent's poisonous bite, unless we wilfully wander

from the rule of the Christian faith. This bite, however, they did not

receive in their own actual life, but in him on whom the wound was

primarily inflicted.

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[614] John iii. 3.

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Chapter 44.--An Objection of the Pelagians.

Nor do they fail to see this point, that his own sins are no detriment

to the parent after his conversion; they therefore raise the question:

"How much more impossible is it that they should be a hinderance to his

son?" But they who thus think do not attend to this consideration, that

as his own sins are not injurious to the father for the very reason

that he is born again of the Spirit, so in the case of his son, unless

he be in the same manner born again, the sins which he derived from his

father will prove injurious to him. Because even renewed parents beget

children, not out of the first-fruits of their renewed condition, but

carnally out of the remains of the old nature; and the children who are

thus the offspring of their parents' remaining old nature, and are born

in sinful flesh, escape from the condemnation which is due to the old

man by the sacrament of spiritual regeneration and renewal. Now this is

a consideration which, on account of the controversies that have

arisen, and may still arise, on this subject, we ought to keep in our

view and memory,--that a full and perfect remission of sins takes place

only in baptism, that the character of the actual man does not at once

undergo a total change, but that the first-fruits of the Spirit in such

as walk worthily change the old carnal nature into one of like

character by a process of renewal, which increases day by day, until

the entire old nature is so renovated that the very weakness of the

natural body attains to the strength and incorruptibility of the

spiritual body.

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Chapter 45 [XXVIII.]--The Law of Sin is Called Sin; How Concupiscence

Still Remains After Its Evil Has Been Removed in the Baptized.

This law of sin, however, which the apostle also designates "sin," when

he says, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye

should obey it in the lusts thereof," [615] does not so remain in the

members of those who are born again of water and the Spirit, as if no

remission thereof has been made, because there is a full and perfect

remission of our sins, all the enmity being slain, which separated us

from God; but it remains in our old carnal nature, as if overcome and

destroyed, if it does not, by consenting to unlawful objects, somehow

revive, and recover its own reign and dominion. There is, however, so

clear a distinction to be seen between this old carnal nature, in which

the law of sin, or sin, is already repealed, and that life of the

Spirit, in the newness of which they who are baptized are through God's

grace born again, that the apostle deemed it too little to say of such

that they were not in sin; unless he also said that they were not in

the flesh itself, even before they departed out of this mortal life.

"They that are in the flesh," says he, "cannot please God; but ye are

not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God

dwell in you." [616] And indeed, as they turn to good account the flesh

itself, however corruptible it be, who apply its members to good works,

and no longer are in that flesh, since they do not mould their

understanding nor their life according to its principles; and as they

in like manner make even a good use of death, which is the penalty of

the first sin, who encounter it with fortitude and patience for their

brethren's sake, and for the faith, and in defence of whatever is true

and holy and just,--so also do all "true yokefellows" in the faith turn

to good account that very law of sin which still remains, though

remitted, in their old carnal nature, who, because they have the new

life in Christ, do not permit lust to have dominion over them. And yet

these very persons, because they still carry about Adam's old nature,

mortally generate children to be immortally regenerated, with that

propagation of sin, in which such as are born again are not held bound,

and from which such as are born are released by being born again. As

long, then, as the law by concupiscence [617] dwells in the members,

although it remains, the guilt of it is released; but it is released

only to him who has received the sacrament of regeneration, and has

already begun to be renewed. But whatsoever is born of the old nature,

which still abides with its concupiscence, requires to be born again in

order to be healed. Seeing that believing parents, who have been both

carnally born and spiritually born again, have themselves begotten

children in a carnal manner, how could their children by any

possibility, previous to their first birth, have been born again?

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[615] Rom. vi. 12.

[616] Rom. viii. 8, 9.

[617] We follow the reading, lex [scil. peccati] concupiscentialiter,

etc.

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Chapter 46. [618] --Guilt May Be Taken Away But Concupiscence Remain.

You must not be surprised at what I have said, that although the law of

sin remains with its concupiscence, the guilt thereof is done away

through the grace of the sacrament. For as wicked deeds, and words, and

thoughts have already passed away, and cease to exist, so far as

regards the mere movements of the mind and the body, and yet their

guilt remains after they have passed away and no longer exist, unless

it be done away by the remission of sins; so, contrariwise, in this law

of concupiscence, which is not yet done away but still remains, its

guilt is done away, and continues no longer, since in baptism there

takes place a full forgiveness of sins. Indeed, if a man were to quit

this present life immediately after his baptism, there would be nothing

at all left to hold him liable, inasmuch as all which held him is

released. As, on the one hand, therefore, there is nothing strange in

the fact that the guilt of past sins of thought, and word, and deed

remains before their remission; so, on the other hand, there ought to

be nothing to create surprise, that the guilt of remaining

concupiscence passes away after the remission of sin.

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[618] Compare Augustin's Contra Julianum, vi. c. 22.

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Chapter 47 [XXIX.]--All the Predestinated are Saved Through the One

Mediator Christ, and by One and the Same Faith.

This being the case, ever since the time when by one man sin thus

entered into this world and death by sin, and so it passed through to

all men, up to the end of this carnal generation and perishing world,

the children of which beget and are begotten, there never has existed,

nor ever will exist, a human being of whom, placed in this life of

ours, it could be said that he had no sin at all, with the exception of

the one Mediator, who reconciles us to our Maker through the

forgiveness of sins. Now this same Lord of ours has never yet refused,

at any period of the human race, nor to the last judgment will He ever

refuse, this His healing to those whom, in His most sure foreknowledge

and future loving-kindness, He has predestinated to reign with Himself

to life eternal. For, previous to His birth in the flesh, and weakness

in suffering, and power in His own resurrection, He instructed all who

then lived, in the faith of those then future blessings, that they

might inherit everlasting life; whilst those who were alive when all

these things were being accomplished in Christ, and who were witnessing

the fulfilment of prophecy, He instructed in the faith of these then

present blessings; whilst again, those who have since lived, and

ourselves who are now alive, and all those who are yet to live, He does

not cease to instruct, in the faith of these now past blessings. It is

therefore "one faith" which saves all, who after their carnal birth are

born again of the Spirit, and it terminates in Him, who came to be

judged for us and to die,--the Judge of quick and dead. But the

sacraments of this "one faith" are varied from time to time in order to

its suitable signification.

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Chapter 48.--Christ the Saviour Even of Infants; Christ, When an

Infant, Was Free from Ignorance and Mental Weakness.

He is therefore the Saviour at once of infants and of adults, of whom

the angel said, "There is born unto you this day a Saviour;" [619] and

concerning whom it was declared to the Virgin Mary, [620] "Thou shalt

call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins,"

where it is plainly shown that He was called Jesus because of the

salvation which He bestows upon us,--Jesus being tantamount to the

Latin Salvator, "Saviour." Who then can be so bold as to maintain that

the Lord Christ is Jesus only for adults and not for infants also? who

came in the likeness of sinful flesh, to destroy the body of sin, with

infants' limbs fitted and suitable for no use in the extreme weakness

of such body, and His rational soul oppressed with miserable ignorance!

Now that such entire ignorance existed, I cannot suppose in the infant

in whom the Word was made flesh, that He might dwell among us; nor can

I imagine that such weakness of the mental faculty ever existed in the

infant Christ which we see in infants generally. For it is owing to

such infirmity and ignorance that infants are disturbed with irrational

affections, and are restrained by no rational command or government,

but by pains and penalties, or the terror of such; so that you can

quite see that they are children of that disobedience, which excites

itself in the members of our body in opposition to the law of the

mind,--and refuses to be still, even when the reason wishes; nay, often

is either repressed only by some actual infliction of bodily pain, as

for instance by flogging; or is checked only by fear, or by some such

mental emotion, but not by any admonishing of the will. Inasmuch,

however, as in Him there was the likeness of sinful flesh, He willed to

pass through the changes of the various stages of life, beginning even

with infancy, so that it would seem as if even His flesh might have

arrived at death by the gradual approach of old age, if He had not been

killed while young. Nevertheless, the death is inflicted in sinful

flesh as the due of disobedience, but in the likeness of sinful flesh

it was undergone in voluntary obedience. For when He was on His way to

it, and was soon to suffer it, He said, "Behold, the prince of this

world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that all may know that I am

doing my Father's will, arise, let us go hence." [621] Having said

these words, He went straightway, and encountered His undeserved death,

having become obedient even unto death.

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[619] Luke ii. 11.

[620] Rather to Joseph, Mary's husband; Matt. i. 21.

[621] John xiv. 30, 31.

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Chapter 49 [XXX.]--An Objection of the Pelagians.

They therefore who say, "If through the sin of the first man it was

brought about that we must die, by the coming of Christ it should be

brought about that, believing in Him, we shall not die;" and they add

what they deem a reason, saying, "For the sin of the first transgressor

could not possibly have injured us more than the incarnation or

redemption of the Saviour has benefited us." But why do they not rather

give an attentive ear, and an unhesitating belief, to that which the

apostle has stated so unambiguously: "Since by man came death, by Man

came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so

in Christ shall all be made alive?" [622] For it is of nothing else

than of the resurrection of the body that he was speaking. Having said

that the bodily death of all men has come about through one man, he

adds the promise that the bodily resurrection of all men to eternal

life shall happen through one, even Christ. How can it therefore be

that "the one has injured us more by sinning than the other has

benefited us by redeeming," when by the sin of the former we die a

temporal death, but by the redemption of the latter we rise again not

to a temporal, but to a perpetual life? Our body, therefore, is dead

because of sin, but Christ's body only died without sin, in order that,

having poured out His blood without fault, "the bonds" [623] which

contain the register of all faults "might be blotted out," by which

they who now believe in Him were formerly held as debtors by the devil.

And accordingly He says, "This is my blood, which is shed for many for

the remission of sins." [624]

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[622] 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.

[623] Col. ii. 14. Chirographa, i.e. "handwritings."

[624] Matt. xxvi. 28.

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Chapter 50 [XXXI.]--Why It is that Death Itself is Not Abolished, Along

with Sin, by Baptism.

He might, however, have also conferred this upon believers, that they

should not even experience the death of their body. But if He had done

this, there might no doubt have been added a certain felicity to the

flesh, but the fortitude of faith would have been diminished; for men

have such a fear of death, that they would declare Christians happy,

for nothing else than their mere immunity from dying. And no one would,

for the sake of that life which is to be so happy after death, hasten

to the grace of Christ by the power of his contempt of death itself;

but with a view to remove the trouble of death, would rather resort to

a more delicate mode of believing in Christ. More grace, therefore,

than this has He conferred on those who believe on Him; and a greater

gift, undoubtedly, has He vouchsafed to them! What great matter would

it have been for a man, on seeing that people did not die when they

became believers, himself also to believe that he was not to die? How

much greater a thing is it, how much braver, how much more laudable, so

to believe, that although one is sure to die, he can still hope to live

hereafter for evermore! At last, upon some there will be bestowed this

blessing at the last day, that they shall not feel death itself in

sudden change, but shall be caught up along with the risen in the

clouds to meet Christ in the air, and so shall they ever live with the

Lord. [625] And rightly shall it be these who receive this grace, since

there will be no posterity after them to be led to believe, not by the

hope of what they see not, but by the love of what they see. This faith

is weak and nerveless, and must not be called faith at all, inasmuch as

faith is thus defined: "Faith is the firmness of those who hope, [626]

the clear proof of things which they do not see." [627] Accordingly, in

the same Epistle to the Hebrews, where this passage occurs, after

enumerating in subsequent sentences certain worthies who pleased God by

their faith, he says: "These all died in faith, not having received the

promises, but seeing them afar off, and hailing them, and confessing

that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." [628] And then

afterwards he concluded his eulogy on faith in these words: "And these

all, having obtained a good report through faith, did not indeed

receive God's promises; for they foresaw better things for us, and that

without us they could not themselves become perfect." [629] Now this

would be no praise for faith, nor (as I said) would it be faith at all,

were men in believing to follow after rewards which they could see,--in

other words, if on believers were bestowed the reward of immortality in

this present world.

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[625] 1 Thess. iv. 17. Compare Retrac. ii. 33 and Letter 193.

[626] Augustin constantly quotes this text with the active participle

sperantium, instead of sperandorum. The Greek elpizomenon is not always

construed passively in the passage; some regard it as of the middle

voice.

[627] Heb. xi. 1.

[628] Heb. xi. 13.

[629] Heb. xi. 39, 40.

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Chapter 51.--Why the Devil is Said to Hold the Power and Dominion of

Death.

Hence the Lord Himself willed to die, "in order that," as it is written

of Him, "through death He might destroy him that had the power of

death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death

were all their lifetime subject to bondage." [630] From this passage it

is shown with sufficient clearness that even the death of the body came

about by the instigation and work of the devil,--in a word, from the

sin which he persuaded man to commit; nor is there any other reason why

he should be said in strictness of truth to hold the power of death.

Accordingly, He who died without any sin, original or actual, said in

the passage I have already quoted: "Behold, the prince of this world,"

that is, the devil, who had the power of death, "cometh and findeth

nothing in me,"--meaning, he shall find no sin in me, because of which

he has caused men to die. As if the question were asked Him: Why then

should you die? He says, "That all may know that I am doing the will of

my Father, arise, let us go hence;" [631] that is, that I may die,

though I have no cause of death from sin under the author of sin, but

only from obedience and righteousness, having become obedient unto

death. Proof is likewise afforded us by this passage, that the fact of

the faithful overcoming the fear of death is a part of the struggle of

faith itself; for all struggle would indeed be at an end, if

immortality were at once to become the reward of them that believe.

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[630] Heb. ii. 14.

[631] John xiv. 30, 31.

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Chapter 52 [XXXII.]--Why Christ, After His Resurrection, Withdrew His

Presence from the World.

Although, therefore, the Lord wrought many visible miracles in order

that faith might sprout at first and be fed by infant nourishment, and

grow to its full strength by and by out of this softness (for as faith

becomes stronger the less does it seek such help); He nevertheless

wished us to wait quietly, without visible inducements, for the

promised hope, in order that "the just might live by faith;" [632] and

so great was this wish of His, that though He rose from the dead the

third day, He did not desire to remain among men, but, after leaving a

proof of his resurrection by showing Himself in the flesh to those whom

He deigned to have for His witnesses of this event, He ascended into

heaven, withdrawing Himself thus from their sight, and conferring no

such thing on the flesh of any one of them as He had displayed in His

own flesh, in order that they too "might live by faith," and in the

present world might wait in patience and without visible inducements

for the reward of that righteousness in which men live by faith,--a

reward which should hereafter be visibly and openly bestowed. To this

signification I believe that passage must be referred which He speaks

concerning the Holy Ghost: "He will not come, unless I depart." [633]

For this was in fact saying Ye shall not be able to live righteously by

faith, which ye shall have as a gift of mine,--that is, from the Holy

Ghost,--unless I withdraw from your eyes that which ye now gaze upon,

in order that your heart may advance in spiritual growth by fixing its

faith on invisible things. This righteousness of faith He constantly

commends to them. Speaking of the Holy Ghost, He says, "He shall

reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of

sin, because they have not believed on me: of righteousness, because I

go to the Father, and ye shall see me no more." [634] What is that

righteousness, whereby men were not to see Him, except that "the just

is to live by faith," and that we, not looking at the things which are

seen, but at those which are not seen, are to wait in the Spirit for

the hope of the righteousness that is by faith?

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[632] Hab. ii. 4.

[633] John xvi. 7.

[634] John xvi. 8-10.

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Chapter 53 [XXXIII.]--An Objection of the Pelagians.

But those persons who say, "If the death of the body has happened by

sin, we of course ought not to die after that remission of sins which

the Redeemer has bestowed upon us," do not understand how it is that

some things, whose guilt God has cancelled in order that they may not

stand in our way after this life, He yet permits to remain for the

contest of faith, in order that they may become the means of

instructing and exercising those who are advancing in the struggle

after holiness. Might not some man, by not understanding this, raise a

question and ask, If God has said to man because of his sin, "In the

sweat of thy brow thou shall eat thy bread: thorns also and thistles

shall the ground bring forth to thee," [635] how comes it to pass that

this labour and toil continues since the remission of sins, and that

the ground of believers yields them this rough and terrible harvest?

Again, since it was said to the woman in consequence of her sin, "In

sorrow shall thou bring forth children," [636] how is it that believing

women, notwithstanding the remission of their sins, suffer the same

pains in the process of parturition? And nevertheless it is an

incontestable fact, that by reason of the sin which they had committed,

the primeval man and woman heard these sentences pronounced by God, and

deserved them; nor does any one resist these words of the sacred

volume, which I have quoted about man's labour and woman's travail,

unless some one who is utterly hostile to the catholic faith, and an

adversary to the inspired writings.

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[635] Gen. iii. 18, 19.

[636] Gen. iii. 16.

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Chapter 54 [XXXIV.]--Why Punishment is Still Inflicted, After Sin Has

Been Forgiven.

But, inasmuch as there are not wanting persons of such character, just

as we say in answer to those who raise this question, that those things

are punishments of sins before remission, which after remission become

contests and exercises of the righteous; so again to such persons as

are similarly perplexed about the death of the body, our answer ought

to be so drawn as to show both that we acknowledge it to have accrued

because of sin, and that we are not discouraged by the punishment of

sins having been bequeathed to us for an exercise of discipline, in

order that our great fear of it may be overcome by us as we advance in

holiness. For if only small virtue accrued to "the faith which worketh

by love" in conquering the fear of death, there would be no great glory

for the martyrs; nor could the Lord say, "Greater love hath no man than

this, that he lay down his life for his friends;" [637] which John in

his epistle expresses in these terms: "As He laid down His life for us,

so ought we to lay down our lives for the brethren." [638] In vain,

therefore, would commendation be bestowed on the most eminent suffering

in encountering or despising death for righteousness' sake, if there

were not in death itself a really great and very severe trial. And the

man who overcomes the fear of it by his faith, procures a great glory

and just recompense for his faith itself. Wherefore it ought to

surprise no one, either that the death of the body could not possibly

have happened to man unless sin had been previously committed, since it

was of this that it was to become the punishment; nor that after the

remission of their sins it comes to the faithful, in order that in

their triumphing over the fear of it, the fortitude of righteousness

may be exercised.

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[637] John xv. 13.

[638] 1 John iii. 16.

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Chapter 55.--To Recover the Righteousness Which Had Been Lost by Sin,

Man Has to Struggle, with Abundant Labour and Sorrow.

The flesh which was originally created was not that sinful flesh in

which man refused to maintain his righteousness amidst the delights of

Paradise, wherefore God determined that sinful flesh should propagate

itself after it had sinned, and struggle for the recovery of holiness,

in many toils and troubles. Therefore, after Adam was driven out of

Paradise, he had to dwell over against Eden,--that is, over against the

garden of delights,--to indicate that it is by labours and sorrows,

which are the very contraries of delights, that sinful flesh had to be

educated, after it had failed amidst its first pleasures to maintain

its holiness, previous to its becoming sinful flesh. As therefore our

first parents, by their subsequent return to righteous living, by which

they are supposed to have been released from the worst penalty of their

sentence through the blood of the Lord, were still not deemed worthy to

be recalled to Paradise during their life on earth, so in like manner

our sinful flesh, even if a man lead a righteous life in it after the

remission of his sins, does not deserve to be immediately exempted from

that death which it has derived from its propagation of sin. [639]

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[639] See also his treatise, De Natur� et Grati�, ch. xxiii.

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Chapter 56.--The Case of David, in Illustration.

Some such thought has occurred to us about the patriarch David, in the

Book of Kings. After the prophet was sent to him, and threatened him

with the evils which were to arise from the anger of God on account of

the sin which he had committed, he obtained pardon by the confession of

his sin, and the prophet replied that the shame and crime had been

remitted to him; but yet, for all that, the evils with which God had

threatened him followed in due course, so that he was brought low by

his son. Now why is not an objection at once raised here: "If it was on

account of his sin that God threatened him, why, when the sin was

forgiven, did He fulfil His threat?" except because, if the cavil had

been raised, it would have been most correctly answered, that the

remission of the sin was given that the man might not be hindered from

gaining the life eternal, but the threatened evil was still carried

into effect, in order that the man's piety might be exercised and

approved in the lowly condition to which he was reduced. Thus also God

has both inflicted on man the death of his body, because of his sin,

and, after his sins are forgiven, has not released him in order that he

may be exercised in righteousness.

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Chapter 57 [XXXV.]--Turn to Neither Hand.

Let us hold fast, then, the confession of this faith, without faltering

or failure. One alone is there who was born without sin, in the

likeness of sinful flesh, who lived without sin amid the sins of

others, and who died without sin on account of our sins. "Let us turn

neither to the right hand nor to the left." [640] For to turn to the

right hand is to deceive oneself, by saying that we are without sin;

and to turn to the left is to surrender oneself to one's sins with a

sort of impunity, in I know not how perverse and depraved a

recklessness. "God indeed knoweth the ways on the right hand," [641]

even He who alone is without sin, and is able to blot out our sins;

"but the ways on the left hand are perverse," [642] in friendship with

sins. Of such inflexibility were those youths of twenty years, [643]

who foretokened in figure God's new people; they entered the land of

promise; they, it is said, turned neither to the right hand nor to the

left. [644] Now this age of twenty is not to be compared with the age

of children's innocence, but if I mistake not, this number is the

shadow and echo of a mystery. For the Old Testament has its excellence

in the five books of Moses, while the New Testament is most refulgent

in the authority of the four Gospels. These numbers, when multiplied

together, reach to the number twenty: four times five, or five times

four, are twenty. Such a people (as I have already said), instructed in

the kingdom of heaven by the two Testaments--the Old and the

New--turning neither to the right hand, in a proud assumption of

righteousness, nor to the left hand, in a reckless delight in sin,

shall enter into the land of promise, where we shall have no longer

either to pray that sins may be forgiven to us, or to fear that they

may be punished in us, having been freed from them all by that

Redeemer, who, not being "sold under sin," [645] "hath redeemed Israel

out of all his iniquities," [646] whether committed in the actual life,

or derived from the original transgression.

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[640] Prov. iv. 27.

[641] Same verse [in the Latin and Septuagint; the clause does not

occur in the Hebrew].

[642] [See the last note.]

[643] Num. xiv. 29, 31.

[644] Josh. xxiii. 6, 8.

[645] Rom. vii. 14.

[646] Ps. xxv. 22.

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Chapter 58 [XXXVI.]--"Likeness of Sinful Flesh" Implies the Reality.

It is no small concession to the authority and truthfulness of the

inspired pages which those persons have made, who, although unwilling

to admit openly in their writings that remission of sins is necessary

for infants, have yet confessed that they need redemption. Nothing that

they have said differs indeed from another word, even that which is

derived from Christian instruction. Whilst by those who faithfully

read, faithfully hear, and faithfully hold fast the Holy Scriptures, it

cannot be doubted that from that flesh, which first became sinful flesh

by the choice of sin, and which has been subsequently transmitted to

all through successive generations, there has been propagated a sinful

flesh, with the single exception of that "likeness of sinful flesh,"

[647] --which likeness, however, there could not have been, had there

not been also the reality of sinful flesh.

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[647] Rom. viii. 3.

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Chapter 59.--Whether the Soul is Propagated; On Obscure Points,

Concerning Which the Scriptures Give Us No Assistance, We Must Be on

Our Guard Against Forming Hasty Judgments and Opinions; The Scriptures

are Clear Enough on Those Subjects Which are Necessary to Salvation.

Concerning the soul, indeed, the question arises, whether it, too, is

propagated in the same way [as the flesh,] and bound by the same guilt,

which is forgiven to it--for we cannot say that it is only the flesh of

the infant, and not his soul also, which requires the help of a Saviour

and Redeemer, or that the latter must not be included in that

thanksgiving in the Psalms, where we read and repeat, "Bless the Lord,

O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine

iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from

destruction." [648] Or if it be not likewise propagated, we may ask,

whether, by the very fact of its being mingled with and weighed down by

the sinful flesh, it still has need of the remission of its own sin,

and of a redemption of its own, God being judge, in the height of His

foreknowledge, [649] what infants do not deserve [650] to be absolved

from that guilt, even before they are born, or have in any instance

ever done anything good or evil. The question also arises, how God

(even if He does not create souls by natural propagation) can yet not

be the Author of that very guilt, on account of which redemption by the

sacrament is necessary to the infant's soul. The subject is a wide and

important one, [651] and requires another treatise. The discussion,

however, so far as I can judge, ought to be conducted with temper and

moderation, so as to deserve the praise of cautious inquiry, rather

than the censure of headstrong assertion. For whenever a question

arises on an unusually obscure subject, on which no assistance can be

rendered by clear and certain proofs of the Holy Scriptures, the

presumption of man ought to restrain itself; nor should it attempt

anything definite by leaning to either side. But if I must indeed be

ignorant concerning any points of this sort, as to how they can be

explained and proved, this much I should still believe, that from this

very circumstance the Holy Scriptures would possess a most clear

authority, whenever a point arose which no man could be ignorant of,

without imperilling the salvation which has been promised him. You have

now before you, [my dear Marcellinus,] this treatise, worked out to the

best of my ability. I only wish that its value equalled its length; for

its length I might probably be able to justify, only I should fear

that, by adding the justification, I should stretch the prolixity

beyond your endurance.

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[648] Ps. ciii. 2-4.

[649] We follow the reading, per summam pr�scientiam.

[650] Non mereantur.

[651] He treats it in his Epistle, 166; in his work, De Anim� et ejus

Origine; and in his De Libero Arbitrio, 42.

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Book III.

In the Shape of a Letter Addressed to the Same Marcellinus.

In which Augustin refutes some errors of Pelagius on the question of

the merits of sins and the baptism of infants--being sundry arguments

of his which he had interspersed among his expositions of Saint Paul,

in opposition to original sin.

To his beloved son Marcellinus, Augustin, bishop and servant of Christ

and of the servants of Christ, sendeth greeting in the Lord.

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Chapter 1 [I.]--Pelagius Esteemed a Holy Man; His Expositions on Saint

Paul.

The questions which you proposed that I should write to you about, in

opposition to those persons who say that Adam would have died even if

he had not sinned, and that nothing of his sin has passed to his

posterity by natural transmission; and especially on the subject of the

baptism of infants, which the universal Church, with most pious and

maternal care, maintains in constant celebration; and whether in this

life there are, or have been, or ever will be, children of men without

any sin at all--I have already discussed in two lengthy books. And I

venture to think that if in them I have not met all the points which

perplex all men's minds on such matters (an achievement which, I

apprehend,--nay, which I have no doubt,--lies beyond the power either

of myself, or of any other person), I have at all events prepared

something in the shape of a firm ground on which those who defend the

faith delivered to us by our fathers, against the novel opinions of its

opponents, may at any time take their stand, not unarmed for the

contest. However, within the last few days I have read some writings by

Pelagius,--a holy man, as I am told, who has made no small progress in

the Christian life,--containing some very brief expository notes on the

epistles of the Apostle Paul; [652] and therein I found, on coming to

the passage where the apostle says, "By one man sin entered into the

world, and death by sin; and so it passed upon all men," [653] an

argument which is used by those who say that infants are not burdened

with original sin. Now I confess that I have not refuted this argument

in my lengthy treatise, because it did not indeed once occur to me that

anybody was capable of thinking such sentiments. Being, however,

unwilling to add to that work, which I had concluded, I have thought it

right to insert in this epistle both the argument itself in the very

words in which I read it, and the answer which it seems to me proper to

give to it.

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[652] [This commentary is also made known to us by Marius Mercator's

Commonitoria, cap. 2, and has been preserved for us among the works of

Jerome (Vallarsius' ed., tom. xi.), although probably not without

alterations. It seems to have been composed before A.D. 410, at

Rome.--W.]

[653] Rom. v. 12.

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Chapter 2 [II.]--Pelagius' Objection; Infants Reckoned Among the Number

of Believers and the Faithful.

In these terms, then, the argument is stated:--"But they who deny the

transmission of sin endeavour to impugn it thus: If (say they) Adam's

sin injured even those who do not sin, therefore Christ's righteousness

also profits even those who do not believe; because In like manner,

nay, much more,' he says, are men saved by one, than they had

previously perished by one.'" Now to this argument, I repeat, I

advanced no reply in the two books which I previously addressed to you;

nor, indeed, had I proposed to myself such a task. But now I beg you

first of all to observe, when they say, "If Adam's sin injures even

those who do not sin, then Christ's righteousness also profits even

those who do not believe," how absurd and false they judge it to be,

that the righteousness of Christ should profit even those who do not

believe; and that thence they think to put together such an argument as

this: That no more could the first man's sin possibly do injury to

infants who commit no sin, than the righteousness of Christ can benefit

any who do not believe. Let them therefore tell us what is the benefit

of Christ's righteousness to baptized infants; let them by all means

tell us what they mean. For of course, since they do not forget that

they are Christians themselves, they have no doubt that there is some

benefit. But whatever be this benefit, it is incapable (as they

themselves assert) of benefiting those who do not believe. Whence they

are compelled to class baptized infants in the number of believers, and

to assent to the authority of the Holy Universal Church, which does not

account those unworthy of the name of believers, to whom the

righteousness of Christ could be, according to them, of no use except

as believers. As, therefore, by the answer of those, through whose

agency they are born again, the Spirit of righteousness transfers to

them that faith which, of their own will, they could not yet have; so

the sinful flesh of those, through whose agency they are born,

transfers to them that injury, which they have not yet contracted in

their own life. And even as the Spirit of life regenerates them in

Christ as believers, so also the body of death had generated them in

Adam as sinners. The one generation is carnal, the other Spiritual; the

one makes children of the flesh, the other children of the Spirit; the

one children of death, the other children of the resurrection; the one

the children of the world, the other the children of God; the one

children of wrath, the other children of mercy; and thus the one binds

them under original sin, the other liberates them from the bond of

every sin.

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Chapter 3.--Pelagius Makes God Unjust.

We are driven at last to yield our assent on divine authority to that

which we are unable to investigate with even the clearest intellect. It

is well that they remind us themselves that Christ's righteousness is

unable to profit any but believers, while they yet allow that it

somewhat profits infants; according to this (as we have already said)

they must, without evasion, find room for baptized infants among the

number of believers. Consequently, if they are not baptized, they will

have to rank amongst those who do not believe; and therefore they will

not even have life, but "the wrath of God abideth on them," inasmuch as

"he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God

abideth on him;" [654] and they are under judgment, since "he that

believeth not is condemned already;" [655] and they shall be condemned,

since "he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that

believeth not shall be damned." [656] Let them, now, then see to it

with what justice they can hold or strive to maintain that human beings

have no part in eternal life, but in the wrath of God, and incur the

divine judgment and condemnation, who are without sin; if, that is, as

they cannot have any actual sin, so also they have within them no

original sin.

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[654] John iii. 36.

[655] John iii. 18.

[656] Mark xvi. 16.

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Chapter 4.

To the other points which Pelagius makes them urge who argue against

original sin, I have already, I think, sufficiently and clearly replied

in the two former books of my lengthy treatise. Now if my reply should

seem to any persons to be brief or obscure, I beg their pardon, and

request the favour of their coming to terms with those who perhaps

censure my treatise, not for being too brief, but rather as being too

long; whilst any who still do not understand the points which I cannot

help thinking I have explained as clearly as the nature of the subject

allowed me, shall certainly hear no blame or reproach from me for

indifference, or want of understanding me. [657] I would rather that

they should pray God to give them intelligence.

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[657] [Or, "because they lack my own faculty of understanding the

subject."].

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Chapter 5 [III.]--Pelagius Praised by Some; Arguments Against Original

Sin Proposed by Pelagius in His Commentary.

But we must not indeed omit to observe that this good and praiseworthy

man (as they who know him describe him to be) has not advanced this

argument against the natural transmission of sin in his own person, but

has reproduced what is alleged by those persons who disapprove of the

doctrine, and this, not merely so far as I have just quoted and

confuted the allegation, but also as to those other points on which I

have now further undertaken to furnish a reply. Now, after saying, "If

(they say) Adam's sin injured even those who do not sin, therefore

Christ's righteousness also profits even those who do not

believe,"--which sentence, you will perceive from what I have said in

answer to it, is not only not repugnant to what we hold, but even

reminds us what we ought to hold,--he at once goes on to add, "Then

they contend, if baptism cleanses away that old sin, those children who

are born of two baptized parents must needs be free from this sin, for

they could not have transmitted to their children what they did not

possess themselves. Besides," says he, "if the soul is not of

transmission, but only the flesh, then only the latter has the

transmission of sin, and it alone deserves punishment; for they allege

that it would be unjust for the soul, which is only now born, and comes

not of the lump of Adam, to bear the burden of so old an alien sin.

They say, likewise," says Pelagius, "that it cannot by any means be

conceded that God, who remits to a man his own sins, should impute to

him another's."

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Chapter 6.--Why Pelagius Does Not Speak in His Own Person.

Pray, don't you see how Pelagius has inserted the whole of this

paragraph in his writings, not in his own person, but in that of

others, knowing so well the novelty of this unheard-of doctrine, which

is now beginning to raise its voice against the ancient ingrafted

opinion of the Church, that he was ashamed or afraid to acknowledge it

himself? And perhaps he does not himself think that a man is born

without sin for whom he confesses that baptism to be necessary by which

comes the remission of sins; or that the man is condemned without sin

who must be reckoned, when unbaptized, in the class of non-believers,

since the gospel of course cannot deceive us, when it most clearly

asserts, "He that believeth not shall be damned;" [658] or, lastly,

that the image of God, when without sin, is not admitted into the

kingdom of God, forasmuch as "except a man be born of water and of the

Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," [659] --and so must

either be precipitated into eternal death without sin, or, what is

still more absurd, must have eternal life outside the kingdom of God;

for the Lord, when foretelling what He should say to His people at

last,--"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for

you from the beginning of the world," [660] --also clearly indicated

what the kingdom was of which He was speaking, by concluding thus: "So

these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into

life eternal." [661] These opinions, then, and others which spring from

the central error, I believe so worthy a man, and so good a Christian,

does not at all accept, as being too perverse and repugnant to

Christian truth. But it is quite possible that he may, by the very

arguments of those who deny the transmission of sin, be still so far

distressed as to be anxious to hear or know what can be said in reply

to them; and on this account he was both unwilling to keep silent the

tenets propounded by them who deny the transmission of sin, in order

that he might get the question in due time discussed, and, at the same

time, declined to report the opinions in his own person, lest he should

be supposed to entertain them himself.

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[658] Mark xvi. 16.

[659] John iii. 5.

[660] Matt. xxv. 34.

[661] Matt. xxv. 46.

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Chapter 7 [IV.]--Proof of Original Sin in Infants.

Now, although I may not be able myself to refute the arguments of these

men, I yet see how necessary it is to adhere closely to the clearest

statements of the Scriptures, in order that the obscure passages may be

explained by help of these, or, if the mind be as yet unequal to either

perceiving them when explained, or investigating them whilst abstruse,

let them be believed without misgiving. But what can be plainer than

the many weighty testimonies of the divine declarations, which afford

to us the clearest proof possible that without union with Christ there

is no man who can attain to eternal life and salvation; and that no man

can unjustly be damned,--that is, separated from that life and

salvation,--by the judgment of God? The inevitable conclusion from

these truths is this, that, as nothing else is effected when infants

are baptized except that they are incorporated into the church, in

other words, that they are united with the body and members of Christ,

unless this benefit has been bestowed upon them, they are manifestly in

danger of [662] damnation. Damned, however, they could not be if they

really had no sin. Now, since their tender age could not possibly have

contracted sin in its own life, it remains for us, even if we are as

yet unable to understand, at least to believe that infants inherit

original sin.

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[662] Pertinere ad.

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Chapter 8.--Jesus is the Saviour Even of Infants.

And therefore, if there is an ambiguity in the apostle's words when he

says, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so

it passed upon all men;" [663] and if it is possible for them to be

drawn aside, and applied to some other sense,--is there anything

ambiguous in this statement: "Except a man be born again of water and

of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God?" [664] Is this,

again, ambiguous: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save

His people from their sins?" [665] Is there any doubt of what this

means: "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick?" [666]

--that is, Jesus is not needed by those who have no sin, but by those

who are to be saved from sin. Is there anything, again, ambiguous in

this: "Except men eat the flesh of the Son of man," that is, become

partakers of His body, "they shall not have life?" [667] By these and

similar statements, which I now pass over, --absolutely clear in the

light of God, and absolutely certain by His authority,--does not truth

proclaim without ambiguity, that unbaptized infants not only cannot

enter into the kingdom of God, but cannot have everlasting life, except

in the body of Christ, in order that they may be incorporated into

which they are washed in the sacrament of baptism? Does not truth,

without any dubiety, testify that for no other reason are they carried

by pious hands to Jesus (that is, to Christ, the Saviour and

Physician), than that they may be healed of the plague of their sin by

the medicine of His sacraments? Why then do we delay so to understand

the apostle's very words, of which we perhaps used to have some doubt,

that they may agree with these statements of which we can have no

manner of doubt?

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[663] Rom. v. 12.

[664] John iii. 5.

[665] Matt. i. 21.

[666] Matt. ix. 12.

[667] See John vi. 53.

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Chapter 9.--The Ambiguity of "Adam is the Figure of Him to Come."

To me, however, no doubt presents itself about the whole of this

passage, in which the apostle speaks of the condemnation of many

through the sin of one, and the justification of many through the

righteousness of One, except as to the words, "Adam is the figure of

Him that was to come." [668] For this phrase in reality not only suits

the sense which understands that Adam's posterity were to be born of

the same form as himself along with sin, but the words are also capable

of being drawn out into several distinct meanings. For we have

ourselves perhaps actually contended for various senses from the words

in question at different times, [669] and very likely we shall propound

yet another view, which, however, will not be incompatible with the

sense here mentioned; and even Pelagius has not always expounded the

passage in one way. All the rest, however, of the passage in which

these doubtful words occur, if its statements are carefully examined

and treated, as I have tried my best to do in the first book of this

treatise, will not (in spite of the obscurity of style necessarily

engendered by the subject itself) fail to show the incompatibility of

any other meaning than that which has secured the adhesion of the

universal Church from the earliest times--that believing infants have

obtained through the baptism of Christ the remission of original sin.

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[668] "Adam formam futuri;" see Rom. v. 14.

[669] Comp. above, Book i. c. 13; Epist. 157; De Nuptiis, ii. 44; and

Contra Julianum, vi. 8.

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Chapter 10 [V.]--He Shows that Cyprian Had Not Doubted the Original Sin

of Infants.

Accordingly, it is not without reason that the blessed Cyprian [670]

carefully shows how from the very first the Church has held this as a

well understood article of faith. When he was asserting the fitness of

infants only just born to receive Christ's baptism, on a certain

occasion when he was consulted whether this ought to be administered

before the eighth day, he endeavoured, as far as he could, to prove

that they were perfect, [671] lest any one should suppose, from the

number of the days (because it was on the eighth day that infants were

before circumcised), that they so far lacked perfection. However, after

bestowing upon them the full support of his argument, he still

confessed that they were not free from original sin; because if he had

denied this, he would have removed all reason for the very baptism

which he was maintaining their fitness to receive. You can, if you

wish, read for yourself the epistle of the illustrious martyr On the

Baptism of Little Children; for it cannot fail to be within reach at

Carthage. But I have deemed it right to transcribe some few statements

of it into this letter of mine, so far as applies to the question

before us; and I pray you to mark them carefully. "Now with respect,"

says he, "to the case of infants, whom you declared it would be

improper to baptize if presented within the second and third day after

their birth, since that due regard ought to be paid to the law of

circumcision of old, so that you thought that the infant should not be

baptized and sanctified before the eighth day after its birth,--a far

different view has been formed of the question in our council. Not a

man there assented to what you thought ought to be done; but the whole

of us rather determined that to no one born of men ought God's mercy

and grace to be denied. For since the Lord in His gospel says, The Son

of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them,' [672] so

far as in us lies, not a soul ought, if possible, to be lost." You

observe how in these words he supposes that it is fraught with ruin and

death, not only to the flesh, but also to the soul, for one to depart

this life without that saving sacrament. Wherefore, if he said nothing

else, it was competent to us to conclude from his words that without

sin the soul could not perish. See, however, what (when he shortly

afterwards maintains the innocence of infants) he at the same time

allows concerning them in the plainest terms: "But if," says he,

"anything could hinder men from the attainment of grace, then their

heavier sins might rather hinder those who have reached the stages of

adults, and advanced life, and old age. Since, however, remission of

sins is given even to the greatest sinners after they have believed,

however much they have previously sinned against God, and since nobody

is forbidden baptism and grace, how much more ought an infant not to be

forbidden who newborn has done no sin, except that from having been

born carnally after Adam he has contracted from his very birth the

contagion of the primeval death! How, too, does this fact contribute in

itself the more easily to their reception of the forgiveness of sins,

that the remission which they have is not of their own sins, but of

those of another!"

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[670] See Cyprian's Epistle, 64 (ad Fidum): also Augustin, Epist. 166;

De Nuptis, ii. 49; Contra Julianum, ii. 5; Ad Bonifacium, iv. 3;

Sermons, 294.

[671] The word implies "of ripe age;" i.e., for "baptism."

[672] Luke ix. 56.

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Chapter 11.--The Ancients Assumed Original Sin.

You see with what confidence this great man expresses himself after the

ancient and undoubted rule of faith. In advancing such very certain

statements, his object was by help of these firm conclusions to prove

the uncertain point which had been submitted to him by his

correspondent, and concerning which he informs him that a decree of a

council had been passed, to the effect that, if an infant were brought

even before the eighth day after his birth, no one should hesitate to

baptize him. Now it was not then determined or confirmed by the council

that infants were held bound by original sin as if it were new, or as

if it were attacked by the opposition of some one; but when another

controversy was being conducted, and the question was discussed, in

reference to the law of the circumcision of the flesh, whether they

ought to be baptized before the eighth day. None agreed with the person

who denied this; because it was not an open question admitting of

discussion, but was fixed and unassailable, that the soul would forfeit

eternal salvation if it ended this life without obtaining the sacrament

of baptism: but at the same time infants fresh from the womb were held

to be affected only by the guilt of original sin. On this account,

although remission of sins was easier in their case, because the sins

were derived from another, it was nevertheless indispensable. It was on

sure grounds like these that the uncertain question of the eighth day

was solved, and the council decided that after a man was born, not a

day ought to be lost in rendering him that succour which should prevent

his perishing for ever. When also a reason was given for the

circumcision of the flesh as being itself a shadow of what was to be,

its purport was not that we should understand that baptism ought to be

administered on the eighth day after birth, but rather that we are

spiritually circumcised in the resurrection of Christ, who rose from

the dead on the third day, indeed, after His passion, but among the

days of the week, by which time is counted, on the eighth, that is, on

the first day after the Sabbath.

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Chapter 12 [VI.]--The Universal Consensus Respecting Original Sin.

And now, again, with a strange boldness in new controversy, certain

persons are endeavouring to make us uncertain on a point which our

forefathers used to bring forward as most certainly fixed, whenever

they would solve such questions as seemed uncertain to some. When this

controversy, indeed, first began, I am unable to say; but one thing I

know, that even the holy Jerome, who is in our own day renowned for

great industry and learning in ecclesiastical literature, for the

solution of sundry questions treated in his writings, makes use of the

same most certain assumption without exhibition of proofs. For

instance, in his commentary on the prophet Jonah, when he comes to the

passage where the infants were mentioned as chastened by the fast, he

says: [673] "The greatest age comes first, and then all the rest is

pervaded down to the least. [674] For there is no man without sin,

whether the span of his age be but that of a single day, or he reckon

many years to his life. For if the very stars are unclean in the sight

of God, [675] how much more is a worm and corruption, such as are they

who are held subject to the sin of the offending Adam?" If, indeed, we

could readily interrogate this most learned man, how many authors who

have treated of the divine Scriptures. in both languages, [676] and

have written on Christian controversies, would he mention to us, who

have never held any other opinion since the Church of Christ was

founded,--who neither received any other from their forefathers, nor

handed down any other to their posterity? My own reading, indeed, has

been far more limited, but yet I do not recollect ever having heard of

any other doctrine on this point from Christians, who accept the two

Testaments, whether established in the Catholic Church, or in any

heretical or schismatic body whatever. I do not remember, I say, that I

have at any time found any other doctrine in such writers as have

contributed anything to literature of this kind, whether they have

followed the canonical Scriptures, or have supposed that they have

followed them, or had wished to be so supposed. From what quarter this

question has suddenly come upon us I know not. A short time ago, [677]

in a passing conversation with certain persons while we were at

Carthage, my ears were suddenly offended with such a proposition as

this: "That infants are not baptized for the purpose of receiving

remission of sin, but that they may be sanctified in Christ." Although

I was much disturbed by so novel an opinion, still, as there was no

opportunity afforded me for gainsaying it, and as its propounders were

not persons whose influence gave me anxiety, I readily let the subject

slip into neglect and oblivion. And lo! it is now maintained with

burning zeal against the Church; lo! it is committed to our permanent

notice by writing; nay, the matter is brought to such a pitch of

distracting influence, that we are even consulted on it by our

brethren; and we are actually obliged to oppose its progress both by

disputation and by writing.

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[673] St. Jerome, on Jon. iii.

[674] Ver. 3.

[675] Job xxv. 4.

[676] Or "who have treated of both languages of the divine Scriptures."

[677] Probably in the year 411, when a conference was held at Carthage

with the Donatists. Augustin says that he then saw Pelagius; see his

work, De Gestis Pelagii, c. 46.

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Chapter 13 [VII.]--The Error of Jovinianus Did Not Extend So Far.

A few years ago there lived at Rome one Jovinian, [678] who is said to

have persuaded nuns of even advanced age to marry,--not, indeed, by

seduction, as if he wanted to make any of them his wife, but by

contending that virgins who dedicated themselves to the ascetic life

had no more merit before God than believing wives. It never entered his

mind, however, along with this conceit, to venture to affirm that

children of men are born without original sin. If, indeed, he had added

such an opinion, the women might have more readily consented to marry,

to give birth to such pure offspring. When this man's writings (for he

dared to write) were by the brethren forwarded to Jerome to refute, he

not only discovered no such error in them, but, while looking out his

conceits for refutation, he found among other passages this very clear

testimony to the doctrine of man's original sin, from which Jerome

indeed felt satisfied of the man's belief of that doctrine. [679] These

are his words when treating of it: "He who says that he abides in

Christ, ought himself also to walk even as He walked. [680] We give our

opponent the option to choose which alternative he likes. Does he abide

in Christ, or does he not? If he does, then, let him walk like Christ.

If, however, it is a rash thing to undertake to resemble the

excellences of Christ, he abides not in Christ, because he walks not as

Christ did. He did no sin, neither was any guile found in His mouth;

[681] who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; and as a lamb before

its shearer is dumb, so He opened not His mouth; [682] to whom the

prince of this world came, and found nothing in Him; [683] whom, though

He had done no sin, God made sin for us. [684] We, however, according

to the Epistle of James, all commit many sins; [685] and none of us is

pure from uncleanness, even if his life should be but of one day. [686]

For who shall boast that he has a clean heart? Or who shall be

confident that he is pure from sins? We are held guilty according to

the likeness of Adam's transgression. Accordingly David also says:

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive

me.'" [687]

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[678] [This "Christian Epicurus," as he is called by the intemperate

zeal of the asceticism of his day, was condemned as a heretic by

councils at Rome and Milan in 390. According to Jerome, who wrote a

book against him, he not only opposed asceticism, but also contended

for the essential equality of all sins and of the punishments and

rewards of the next world, and for the sinlessness of those baptized by

the Spirit.--W.]

[679] See Jerome's work Against Jovinian, ii. near the beginning.

[680] John ii. 6.

[681] Isa. liii. 9.

[682] Isa. liii. 7.

[683] John xiv. 30.

[684] 2 Cor. v. 21.

[685] Jas. iii. 2.

[686] Job xiv. 5.

[687] Ps. li. 5.

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Chapter 14.--The Opinions of All Controversialists Whatever are Not,

However, Canonical Authority; Original Sin, How Another's; We Were All

One Man in Adam.

I have not quoted these words as if we might rely upon the opinions of

every disputant as on canonical authority; but I have done it, that it

may be seen how, from the beginning down to the present age, which has

given birth to this novel opinion, the doctrine of original sin has

been guarded with the utmost constancy as a part of the Church's faith,

so that it is usually adduced as most certain ground whereon to refute

other opinions when false, instead of being itself exposed to

refutation by any one as false. Moreover, in the sacred books of the

canon, the authority of this doctrine is vigorously asserted in the

clearest and fullest way. The apostle exclaims: "By one man sin entered

into the world, and death by sin; and so it passed upon all men, in

which all have sinned. [688] Now from these words it cannot certainly

be said, that Adam's sin has injured even those who commit no sin, for

the Scripture says, "In which all have sinned." Nor, indeed, are those

sins of infancy so said to be another's, as if they did not belong to

the infants at all, inasmuch as all then sinned in Adam, when in his

nature, by virtue of that innate power whereby he was able to produce

them, they were all as yet the one Adam; but they are called another's,

[689] because as yet they were not living their own lives, but the life

of the one man contained whatsoever was in his future posterity.

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[688] Rom. v. 12.

[689] Aliena.

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Chapter 15 [VIII.]--We All Sinned Adam's Sin.

"It is," they say, "by no means conceded that God who remits to a man

his own sins imputes to him another's." He remits, indeed, but it is to

those regenerated by the Spirit, not to those generated by the flesh;

but He imputes to a man no longer the sins of another, but only his

own. They were no doubt the sins of another, whilst as yet they were

not in existence who bore them when propagated; but now the sins belong

to them by carnal generation, to whom they have not yet been remitted

by spiritual regeneration.

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Chapter 16.--Origin of Errors; A Simile Sought from the Foreskin of the

Circumcised, and from the Chaff of Wheat.

"But surely," say they, "if baptism cleanses the primeval sin, they who

are born of two baptized parents ought to be free from this sin; for

these could not have transmitted to their children that thing which

they did not themselves possess." Now observe whence error usually

thrives: it is when persons are able to start subjects which they are

not able to understand. For before what audience, and in what words,

can I explain how it is that sinful mortal beginnings bring no obstacle

to those who have inaugurated other, immortal, beginnings, and at the

same time prove an obstacle to those whom those very persons, against

whom it was not an obstacle, have begotten out of the self-same sinful

beginnings? How can a man understand these things, whose labouring mind

is impeded both by its own prejudiced opinions and by the chain of its

own stolid obstinacy? If indeed I had undertaken my cause in opposition

to those who either altogether forbid the baptism of infants, or else

contend that it is superfluous to baptize them alleging that as they

are born of believing parents, they must needs enjoy the merit of their

parents; then it would have been my duty to have roused myself perhaps

to greater labour and effort for the purpose of refuting their opinion.

In that case, if I encountered a difficulty before obtuse and

contentious men in refuting error and inculcating truth, owing to the

obscurity which besets the nature of the subject, I should probably

resort to such illustrations as were palpable and at hand; and I should

in my turn ask them some questions,--how, for instance, if they were

puzzled to know in what way sin, after being cleansed by baptism, still

remained in those who were begotten of baptized parents, they would

explain how it is that the foreskin, after being removed by

circumcision, should still remain in the sons of the circumcised? or

again, how it happens that the chaff which is winnowed off so carefully

by human labour still keeps its place in the grain which springs from

the winnowed wheat?

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Chapter 17 [IX.]--Christians Do Not Always Beget Christian, Nor the

Pure, Pure Children.

With these and such like palpable arguments, should I endeavour, as I

best could, to convince those persons who believed that sacraments of

cleansing were superfluously applied to the children of the cleansed,

how right is the judgment of baptizing the infants of baptized parents,

and how it may happen that to a man who has within him the twofold

seed--of death in the flesh, and of immortality in the spirit--that may

prove no obstacle, regenerated as he is by the Spirit, which is an

obstacle to his son, who is generated by the flesh; and that that may

be cleansed in the one by remission, which in the other still requires

cleansing by like remission, just as in the case supposed of

circumcision, and as in the case of the winnowing and thrashing. But

now, when we are contending with those who allow that the children of

the baptized ought to be baptized, we may much more conveniently

conduct our discussion, and can say: You who assert that the children

of such persons as have been cleansed from the pollution of sin ought

to have been born without sin, why do you not perceive that by the same

rule you might just as well say that the children of Christian parents

ought to have been born Christians? Why, therefore, do you rather

maintain that they ought to become Christians? Was there not in their

parents, to whom it is said, "Know ye not that your bodies are the

members of Christ?" [690] a Christian body? Perhaps you suppose that a

Christian body may be born of Christian parents, without having

received a Christian soul? Well, this would render the case much more

wonderful still. For you would think of the soul one of two things as

you pleased,--because, of course, you hold with the apostle, that

before birth it had done nothing good or evil: [691] --either that it

was derived by transmission, and just as the body of Christians is

Christian, so should also their soul be Christian; or else that it was

created by Christ, either in the Christian body, or for the sake of the

Christian body, and it ought therefore to have been created or given in

a Christian condition. Unless perchance you shall pretend that,

although Christian parents had it in their power to beget a Christian

body, yet Christ Himself was not able to produce a Christian soul.

Believe then the truth, and see that, as it has been possible (as you

yourselves admit) for one who is not a Christian to be born of

Christian parents, for one who is not a member of Christ to be born of

members of Christ, and (that we may answer all, who, however falsely,

are yet in some sense possessed with a sense of religion) for a man who

is not consecrated to be born of parents who are consecrated; so also

it is quite possible for one who is not cleansed to be born of parents

who are cleansed. Now what account will you give us, of why from

Christian parents is born one who is not a Christian, unless it be that

not generation, but regeneration makes Christians? Resolve therefore

your own question with a like reason, that cleansing from sin comes to

no one by being born, but to all by being born again. And thus any

child who is born of parents who are cleansed, because born again, must

himself be born again, in order that he too may be cleansed. For it has

been quite possible for parents to transmit to their children that

which they did not possess themselves,--thus resembling not only the

wheat which yielded the chaff, and the circumcised the foreskin, but

also the instance which you yourselves adduce, even that of believers

who convey unbelief to their posterity; which, however, does not accrue

to the faithful as regenerated by the Spirit, but it is owing to the

fault of the mortal seed by which they have been born of the flesh. For

in respect of the infants whom you judge it necessary to make believers

by the sacrament of the faithful you do not deny that they were born in

unbelief although of believing parents.

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[690] 1 Cor. vi. 15.

[691] Rom. ix. 11.

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Chapter 18 [X.]--Is the Soul Derived by Natural Propagation?

Well, but "if the soul is not propagated, but the flesh alone, then the

latter alone has propagation of sin, and it alone deserves punishment:"

this is what they think, saying "that it is unjust that the soul which

is only recently produced, and that not out of Adam's substance, should

bear the sin of another committed so long ago." Now observe, I pray

you, how the circumspect Pelagius felt the question about the soul to

be a very difficult one, and acted accordingly,--for the words which I

have just quoted are copied from his book. He does not say absolutely,

"Because the soul is not propagated," but hypothetically, If the soul

is not propagated, rightly determining on so obscure a subject (on

which we can find in Holy Scriptures no certain and obvious

testimonies, or with very great difficulty discover any) to speak with

hesitation rather than with confidence. Wherefore I too, on my side,

answer this proposition with no hasty assertion: If the soul is not

propagated, where is the justice that, what has been but recently

created and is quite free from the contagion of sin, should be

compelled in infants to endure the passions and other torments of the

flesh, and, what is more terrible still, even the attacks of evil

spirits? For never does the flesh so suffer anything of this kind that

the living and feeling soul does not rather undergo the punishment. If

this, indeed, is shown to be just, it may be shown, on the same terms,

with what justice original sin comes to exist in our sinful flesh, to

be subsequently cleansed by the sacrament of baptism and God's gracious

mercy. If the former point cannot be shown, I imagine that the latter

point is equally incapable of demonstration. We must therefore either

bear with both positions in silence, and remember that we are human, or

else we must prepare, at some other time, another work on the soul, if

it shall appear necessary, discussing the whole question with caution

and sobriety.

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Chapter 19 [XI.]--Sin and Death in Adam, Righteousness and Life in

Christ.

What the apostle says: "By one man sin entered into the world, and

death by sin; and so it passed upon all men, in which all have sinned;"

[692] we must, however, for the present so accept as not to seem rashly

and foolishly to oppose the many great passages of Holy Scripture,

which teach us that no man can obtain eternal life without that union

with Christ which is effected in Him and with Him, when we are imbued

with His sacraments and incorporated with the members of His body. Now

this statement which the apostle addresses to the Romans, "By one man

sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so it passed upon all

men, in which all have sinned," tallies in sense with his words to the

Corinthians: "Since by man came death, by Man came also the

resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ

shall all be made alive." [693] For nobody doubts that the subject here

referred to is the death of the body, because the apostle was with much

earnestness dwelling on the resurrection of the body; and he seems to

be silent here about sin for this reason, namely, because the question

was not about righteousness. Both points are mentioned in the Epistle

to the Romans, and both points are, at very great length, insisted on

by the apostle,--sin in Adam, righteousness in Christ; and death in

Adam, life in Christ. However, as I have observed already, I have

thoroughly examined and opened, in the first book of this treatise, all

these words of the apostle's argument, as far as I was able, and as

much as seemed necessary.

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[692] Rom. v. 12.

[693] 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.

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Chapter 20.--The Sting of Death, What?

But even in the passage to the Corinthians, where he had been treating

fully of the resurrection, the apostle concludes his statement in such

a way as not to permit us to doubt that the death of the body is the

result of sin. For after he had said, "This corruptible must put on

incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality: so when this

corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal

immortality, then," he added, "shall be brought to pass the saying

which is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is

thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" and at last he subjoined

these words: "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the

law." [694] Now, because (as the apostle's words most plainly declare)

death shall then be swallowed up in victory when this corruptible and

mortal shall have put on incorruption and immortality,--that is, when

"God shall quicken even our mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth

in us,"--it manifestly follows that the sting of the body of this

death, which is the contrary of the resurrection of the body, is sin.

The sting, however, is that by which death was made, and not that which

death made, since it is by sin that we die, and not by death that we

sin. It is therefore called "the sting of death" on the principle which

originated the phrase "the tree of life,"--not because the life of man

produced it, but because by it the life of man was made. In like manner

"the tree of knowledge" was that whereby man's knowledge was made, not

that which man made by his knowledge. So also "the sting of death" is

that by which death was produced, not that which death made. We

similarly use the expression "the cup of death," since by it some one

has died, or might die,--not meaning, of course, a cup made by a dying

or dead man. [695] The sting of death is therefore sin, because by the

puncture of sin the human race has been slain. Why ask further: the

death of what,--whether of the soul, or of the body? Whether the first

which we are all of us now dying, or the second which the wicked

hereafter shall die? There is no occasion for plying the question so

curiously; there is no room for subterfuge. The words in which the

apostle expresses the case answer the questions: "When this mortal,"

says he, "shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass

the saying which is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death,

where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death

is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." He was treating of the

resurrection of the body, wherein death shall be swallowed up in

victory, when this mortal shall have put on immortality. Then over

death itself shall be raised the shout of triumph, when at the

resurrection of the body it shall be swallowed up in victory; then

shall be said to it, "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is

thy sting?" To the death of the body, therefore, is this said. For

victorious immortality shall swallow it up, when this mortal shall put

on immortality. I repeat it, to the death of the body shall it be said,

"Where is thy victory?"--that victory in which thou didst conquer all,

so that even the Son of God engaged in conflict with thee, and by not

shrinking but grappling with thee overcame. In these that die thou hast

conquered; but thou art thyself conquered in these that rise again. Thy

victory was but temporal, in which thou didst swallow up the bodies of

them that die. Our victory will abide eternal, in which thou art

swallowed up in the bodies of them that rise again. "Where is thy

sting?"--that is, the sin wherewithal we are punctured and poisoned, so

that thou didst fix thyself in our very bodies, and for so long a time

didst hold them in possession. "The sting of death is sin, and the

strength of sin is the law." We all sinned in one, so that we all die

in one; we received the law, not by amendment according to its precepts

to put an end to sin, but by transgression to increase it. For "the law

entered that sin might abound;" [696] and "the Scripture hath concluded

all under sin;" [697] but "thanks be to God, who hath given us the

victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," [698] in order that "where sin

abounded, grace might much more abound;" [699] and "that the promise by

faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe;" [700] and

that we might overcome death by a deathless resurrection, and sin, "the

sting" thereof, by a free justification.

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[694] 1 Cor. xv. 53-56.

[695] [This is only one of many examples of the care with which

Augustin, writing for the popular eye, illustrates his exegetical

points. "Of death" he thus shows is genitive of the object, not of the

subject; giving to the phrase the meaning of "the sting which slays

man."--W.]

[696] Rom. v. 20.

[697] Gal. iii. 22.

[698] 1 Cor. xv. 57.

[699] Rom. v. 20.

[700] Gal. iii. 22.

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Chapter 21 [XII.]--The Precept About Touching the Menstruous Woman Not

to Be Figuratively Understood; The Necessity of the Sacraments.

Let no one, then, on this subject be either deceived or a deceiver. The

manifest sense of Holy Scripture which we have considered, removes all

obscurities. Even as death is in this our mortal body derived from the

beginning, so from the beginning has sin been drawn into this sinful

flesh of ours, for the cure of which, both as it is derived by

propagation and augmented by wilful transgression, as well as for the

quickening of our flesh itself, our Physician came in the likeness of

sinful flesh, who is not needed by the sound, but only by the

sick,--and who came not to call the righteous, but sinners. [701]

Therefore the saying of the apostle, when advising believers not to

separate themselves from unbelieving partners: "For the unbelieving

husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is

sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are

they holy," [702] must be either so understood as both we ourselves

elsewhere, [703] and as Pelagius in his notes on this same Epistle to

the Corinthians, [704] has expounded it, according to the purport of

the passages already mentioned, that sometimes wives gained husbands to

Christ, and sometimes husbands converted wives, whilst the Christian

will of even one of the parents prevailed towards making their children

Christians; or else (as the apostle's words seem rather to indicate,

and to a certain degree compel us) some particular sanctification is to

be here understood, by which an unbelieving husband or wife was

sanctified by the believing partner, and by which the children of the

believing parents were sanctified,--whether it was that the husband or

the wife, during the woman's menstruation, abstained from cohabiting,

having learned that duty in the law (for Ezekiel classes this amongst

the precepts which were not to be taken in a metaphorical sense [705]

), or on account of some other voluntary sanctification which is not

there expressly prescribed,--a sprinkling of holiness arising out of

the close ties of married life and children. Nevertheless, whatever be

the sanctification meant, this must be steadily held: that there is no

other valid means of making Christians and remitting sins, except by

men becoming believers through the sacrament according to the

institution of Christ and the Church. For neither are unbelieving

husbands and wives, notwithstanding their intimate union with holy and

righteous spouses, cleansed of the sin which separates men from the

kingdom of God and drives them into condemnation, nor are the children

who are born of parents, however just and holy, absolved from the guilt

of original sin, unless they have been baptized into Christ; and in

behalf of these our plea should be the more earnest, the less able they

are to urge one themselves.

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[701] Mark ii. 17.

[702] 1 Cor. vii. 14.

[703] See Augustin's work On the Sermon on the Mount, i. 16.

[704] See the Commentaries on St. Paul in Jerome's works, vol. xi.

(Vallarsius), the work of either Pelagius or one of his followers.

[705] Ezek. xviii. 6.

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Chapter 22 [XIII.]--We Ought to Be Anxious to Secure the Baptism of

Infants.

For this is the point aimed at by the controversy, against the novelty

of which we have to struggle by the aid of ancient truth: that it is

clearly altogether superfluous for infants to be baptized. Not that

this opinion is avowed in so many words, lest so firmly established a

custom of the Church should be unable to endure its assailants. But if

we are taught to render help to orphans, how much more ought we to

labour in behalf of those children who, though under the protection of

parents, will still be left more destitute and wretched than orphans,

should that grace of Christ be denied them, which they are all unable

to demand for themselves?

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Chapter 23.--Epilogue.

As for what they say, that some men, by the use of their reason, have

lived, and do live, in this world without sin, we should wish that it

were true, we should strive to make it true, we should pray that it be

true; but, at the same time, we should confess that it is not yet true.

For to those who wish and strive and worthily pray for this result,

whatever sins remain in them are daily remitted because we sincerely

pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." [706]

Whosoever shall deny that this prayer is in this life necessary for

every righteous man who knows and does the will of God, except the one

Saint of saints, greatly errs, and is utterly incapable of pleasing Him

whom he praises. Moreover, if he supposes himself to be such a

character, "he deceives himself, and the truth is not in him," [707]

--for no other reason than that he thinks what is false. That

Physician, then, who is not needed by the sound, but by the sick, knows

how to heal us, and by healing to perfect us unto eternal life; and He

does not in this world take away death, although inflicted because of

sin, from those whose sins He remits, in order that they may enter on

their conflict, and overcome the fear of death with full sincerity of

faith. In some cases, too, He declines to help even His righteous

servants, so long as they are capable of still higher elevation, to the

attainment of a perfect righteousness, in order that (while in His

sight no man living is justified [708] ) we may always feel it to be

our duty to give Him thanks for mercifully bearing with us, and so, by

holy humility, be healed of that first cause of all our failings, even

the swellings of pride. This letter, as my intention first sketched it,

was to have been a short one; it has grown into a lengthy book. Would

that it were as perfect as it has at last become complete!

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[706] Matt. vi. 12.

[707] 1 John i. 8.

[708] Ps. cxliii. 2.

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a treatise on the spirit and the letter.

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Extract from Augustin's "Retractations,"

Book II. Chap. 37,

On the Following Treatise,

"De spiritu et littera."

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The person [709] to whom I had addressed the three books entitled De

Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione, in which I carefully discussed also

the baptism of infants, informed me, when acknowledging my

communication, that he was much distrurbed because I declared it to be

possible that a man might be without sin, if he wanted not the will, by

the help of God, although no man either had lived, was living, or would

live in this life so perfect in righteousness. He asked how I could say

that it was possible of which no example could be adduced. Owing to

this inquiry on the part of this person, I wrote the treatise entitled

De Spiritu et Littera, in which I considered at large the apostle's

statement, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." [710] In

this work, so far as God enabled me, I earnestly disputed with those

who oppose that grace of God which justifies the servances of the Jews,

who abstain from sundry meats and drinks in accordance with their

ancient law, I mentioned the "ceremonies of certain meats" [quarumdam

escarum cerimoni�] [711] --a phrase which, though not used in Holy

Scriptures, seemed to me very convenient, because I remembered that

cerimoni� is tantamount to carimoni�, as if from carere, to be without,

and expresses the abstinence of the worshippers from certain things. If

however, there is any other derivation of the word, which is

inconsistent with the true religion, I meant no refernce whatever to

it; I confined my use to the sense above indicated. This work of mine

begins thus: "After reading the short treatise which I lately drew up

for you, my beloved son Marcellinus," etc.

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[709] The Tribune Marcellinus with whose name are connected many other

treatises of Augustin. In this work the author informs us that the

occasion of its composition was furnished by this person, who mooted an

inquiry touching a statement in the preceding books Concerning the

Merits and the Remission of Sins. Those books, as we have already

indicated, were published A.D., 412. Now in the Retractations there is

placed after these very books the present work Concerning the Spirit

and the Letter,--not indeed, immediately next, but in the fourth place

after,--so that it was written, no doubt, about the end of the same

year, A.D. 412, some time previous to the death of Marcellinus, who was

killed in the month or September of the following year, 413. This

present work is also mentioned in the book On Faith and Works, c. 14;

and in that On Christian Doctrine, iii. 33. Compare the notes on p. 15

and p. 130.

[710] 2 Cor. iii. 6.

[711] See chap. 36 [xxi.].

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A Treatise on the spirit and the letter,

by aurelius augustin, bishop of hippo;

In One Book,

Addressed to Marcellinus, a.d. 412.

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Marcellinus, in a letter to Augustin, had expressed some surprise at

having read, in the preceding work, of the possibility being allowed of

a man continuing if he willed it, by God's help, without sin in the

present life, although not a single human example anywhere of such

perfect righteousness has ever existed. Augustin takes the opportunity

of discussing, in opposition to the Pelagians, the subject of the aid

of God's grace; and he shows that the divine help to the working of

righteousness by us does not lie in the fact of God's having given us a

law which is full of good and holy precepts; but in the fact that our

will itself, without which we can do nothing good, is assisted and

elevated by the Spirit of grace being imparted to us, without the aid

of which the teaching of the law is "the letter that killeth," because

instead of justifying the ungodly, it rather holds them guilty of

transgression. He begins to treat of the question proposed to him at

the commencement of this work, and returns to it towards its

conclusion; he shows that, as all allow, many things are possible with

God's help, of which there occurs indeed no example; and then concludes

that, although a perfect righteousness is unexampled among men, it is

for all that not impossible.

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Chapter 1 [I.] --The Occasion of Writing This Work; A Thing May Be

Capable of Being Done, and Yet May Never Be Done.

After reading the short treatises which I lately drew up for you, my

beloved son Marcellinus, about the baptism of infants, and the

perfection of man's righteousness,--how that no one in this life seems

either to have attained or to be likely to attain to it, except only

the Mediator, who bore humanity in the likeness of sinful flesh,

without any sin whatever,--you wrote me in answer that you were

embarrassed by the point which I advanced in the second book, [712]

that it was possible for a man to be without sin, if he wanted not the

will, and was assisted by the aid of God; and yet that except One in

whom "all shall be made alive," [713] no one has ever lived or will

live by whom this perfection has been attained whilst living here. It

appeared to you absurd to say that anything was possible of which no

example ever occurred,--although I suppose you would not hesitate to

admit that no camel ever passed through a needle's eye, [714] and yet

He said that even this was possible with God; you may read, too, that

twelve thousand legions [715] of angels could possibly have fought for

Christ and rescued Him from suffering, but in fact did not; you may

read that it was possible for the nations to be exterminated at once

out of the land which was given to the children of Israel, [716] and

yet that God willed it to be gradually effected. [717] And one may meet

with a thousand other incidents, the past or the future possibility of

which we might readily admit, and yet be unable to produce any proofs

of their having ever really happened. Accordingly, it would not be

right for us to deny the possibility of a man's living without sin, on

the ground that amongst men none can be found except Him who is in His

nature not man only, but also God, in whom we could prove such

perfection of character to have existed.

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[712] On the Merits of Sins, etc., ii. 6, 7, 20.

[713] 1 Cor. xv. 22.

[714] Matt. xix. 24, 26.

[715] Matt. xxvi. 53, but observe the "thousand" inserted.

[716] Deut. xxxi. 3.

[717] Judg. ii. 3.

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Chapter 2 [II.]--The Examples Apposite.

Here, perhaps, you will say to me in answer, that the things which I

have instanced as not having been realized, although capable of

realization, are divine works; whereas a man's being without sin falls

in the range of a man's own work,--that being indeed his very noblest

work which effects a full and perfect righteousness complete in every

part; and therefore that it is incredible that no man has ever existed,

or is existing, or will exist in this life, who has achieved such a

work, if the achievement is possible for a human being. But then you

ought to reflect that, although this great work, no doubt, belongs to

human agency to accomplish, yet it is also a divine gift, and

therefore, not doubt that it is a divine work; "for it is God who

worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." [718]

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[718] Phil. ii. 13.

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Chapter 3.--Theirs is Comparatively a Harmless Error, Who Say that a

Man Lives Here Without Sin.

They therefore are not a very dangerous set of persons and they ought

to be urged to show, if they are able, that they are themselves such,

who hold that man lives or has lived here without any sin whatever.

There are indeed passages of Scripture, in which I apprehend it is

definitely stated that no man who lives on earth, although enjoying

freedom of will, can be found without sin; as, for instance, the place

where it is written, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in

Thy sight shall no man living be justified." [719] If, however, anybody

shall have succeeded in showing that this text and the other similar

ones ought to be taken in a different sense from their obvious one, and

shall have proved that some man or men have spent a sinless life on

earth,--whoever does not, not merely refrain from much opposing him,

but also does not rejoice with him to the full, is afflicted by

extraordinary goads of envy. Moreover, if there neither is, has been,

nor will be any man endowed with such perfection of purity (which I am

more inclined to believe), and yet it is firmly set forth and thought

there is or has been, or is to be,--so far as I can judge, no great

error is made, and certainly not a dangerous one, when a man is thus

carried away by a certain benevolent feeling; provided that he who

thinks so much of another, does not think himself to be such a being,

unless he has ascertained that he really and clearly is such.

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[719] Ps. cxliii. 2.

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Chapter 4.--Theirs is a Much More Serious Error, Requiring a Very

Vigorous Refutation, Who Deny God's Grace to Be Necessary.

They, however, must be resisted with the utmost ardor and vigor who

suppose that without God's help, the mere power of the human will in

itself, can either perfect righteousness, or advance steadily towards

it; and when they begin to be hard pressed about their presumption in

asserting that this result can be reached without the divine

assistance, they check themselves, and do not venture to utter such an

opinion, because they see how impious and insufferable it is. But they

allege that such attainments are not made without God's help on this

account, namely, because God both created man with the free choice of

his will, and, by giving him commandments, teaches him, Himself, how

man ought to live; and indeed assists him, in that He takes away his

ignorance by instructing him in the knowledge of what he ought to avoid

and to desire in his actions: and thus, by means of the free-will

naturally implanted within him, he enters on the way which is pointed

out to him, and by persevering in a just and pious course of life,

deserves to attain to the blessedness of eternal life.

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Chapter 5 [III.]--True Grace is the Gift of the Holy Ghost, Which

Kindles in the Soul the Joy and Love of Goodness.

We, however, on our side affirm that the human will is so divinely

aided in the pursuit of righteousness, that (in addition to man's being

created with a free-will, and in addition to the teaching by which he

is instructed how he ought to live) he receives the Holy Ghost, by whom

there is formed in his mind a delight in, and a love of, that supreme

and unchangeable good which is God, even now while he is still "walking

by faith" and not yet "by sight;" [720] in order that by this gift to

him of the earnest, as it were, of the free gift, he may conceive an

ardent desire to cleave to his Maker, and may burn to enter upon the

participation in that true light, that it may go well with him from Him

to whom he owes his existence. A man's free-will, indeed, avails for

nothing except to sin, if he knows not the way of truth; and even after

his duty and his proper aim shall begin to become known to him, unless

he also take delight in and feel a love for it, he neither does his

duty, nor sets about it, nor lives rightly. Now, in order that such a

course may engage our affections, God's "love is shed abroad in our

hearts," not through the free-will which arises from ourselves, but

"through the Holy Ghost, which is given to us." [721]

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[720] 2 Cor. v. 7.

[721] Rom. v. 5.

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Chapter 6 [IV.]--The Teaching of Law Without the Life-Giving Spirit is

"The Letter that Killeth."

For that teaching which brings to us the command to live in chastity

and righteousness is "the letter that killeth," unless accompanied with

"the spirit that giveth life." For that is not the sole meaning of the

passage, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," [722] which

merely prescribes that we should not take in the literal sense any

figurative phrase which in the proper meaning of its words would

produce only nonsense, but should consider what else it signifies,

nourishing the inner man by our spiritual intelligence, since "being

carnally-minded is death, whilst to be spiritually-minded is life and

peace." [723] If, for instance, a man were to take in a literal and

carnal sense much that is written in the Song of Solomon, he would

minister not to the fruit of a luminous charity, but to the feeling of

a libidinous desire. Therefore, the apostle is not to be confined to

the limited application just mentioned, when he says, "The letter

killeth, but the spirit giveth life;" [724] but this is also (and

indeed especially) equivalent to what he says elsewhere in the plainest

words: "I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not

covet;" [725] and again, immediately after: "Sin, taking occasion by

the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." [726] Now from this

you may see what is meant by "the letter that killeth." There is, of

course, nothing said figuratively which is not to be accepted in its

plain sense, when it is said, "Thou shall not covet;" but this is a

very plain and salutary precept, and any man who shall fulfil it will

have no sin at all. The apostle, indeed, purposely selected this

general precept, in which he embraced everything, as if this were the

voice of the law, prohibiting us from all sin, when he says, "Thou

shalt not covet;" for there is no sin committed except by evil

concupiscence; so that the law which prohibits this is a good and

praiseworthy law. But, when the Holy Ghost withholds His help, which

inspires us with a good desire instead of this evil desire (in other

words, diffuses love in our hearts), that law, however good in itself,

only augments the evil desire by forbidding it. Just as the rush of

water which flows incessantly in a particular direction, becomes more

violent when it meets with any impediment, and when it has overcome the

stoppage, falls in a greater bulk, and with increased impetuosity

hurries forward in its downward course. In some strange way the very

object which we covet becomes all the more pleasant when it is

forbidden. And this is the sin which by the commandment deceives and by

it slays, whenever transgression is actually added, which occurs not

where there is no law. [727]

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[722] 2 Cor. iii. 6.

[723] Rom. viii. 6.

[724] 2 Cor. iii. 6.

[725] Rom. vii. 7.

[726] Rom. vii. 11.

[727] Rom. iv. 15.

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Chapter 7 [V.]--What is Proposed to Be Here Treated.

We will, however, consider, if you please, the whole of this passage of

the apostle and thoroughly handle it, as the Lord shall enable us. For

I want, if possible, to prove that the apostle's words, "The letter

killeth, but the spirit giveth life," do not refer to figurative

phrases,--although even in this sense a suitable signification might be

obtained from them,--but rather plainly to the law, which forbids

whatever is evil. When I shall have proved this, it will more

manifestly appear that to lead a holy life is the gift of God,--not

only because God has given a free-will to man, without which there is

no living ill or well; nor only because He has given him a commandment

to teach him how he ought to live; but because through the Holy Ghost

He sheds love abroad in the hearts [728] of those whom he foreknew, in

order to predestinate them; whom He predestinated, that He might call

them; whom He called, that he might justify them; and whom he

justified, that He might glorify them. [729] When this point also shall

be cleared, you will, I think, see how vain it is to say that those

things only are unexampled possibilities, which are the works of

God,--such as the passage of the camel through the needle's eye, which

we have already referred to, and other similar cases, which to us no

doubt are impossible, but easy enough to God; and that man's

righteousness is not to be counted in this class of things, on the

ground of its being properly man's work, not God's; although there is

no reason for supposing, without an example, that his perfection

exists, even if it is possible. That these assertions are vain will be

clear enough, after it has been also plainly shown that even man's

righteousness must be attributed to the operation of God, although not

taking place without man's will; and we therefore cannot deny that his

perfection is possible even in this life, because all things are

possible with God, [730] --both those which He accomplishes of His own

sole will, and those which He appoints to be done with the cooperation

with Himself of His creature's will. Accordingly, whatever of such

things He does not effect is no doubt without an example in the way of

accomplished facts, although with God it possesses both in His power

the cause of its possibility, and in His wisdom the reason of its

unreality. And should this cause be hidden from man, let him not forget

that he is a man; nor charge God with folly simply because he cannot

fully comprehend His wisdom.

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[728] Rom. vii. 7.

[729] Rom. viii. 29, 30.

[730] Mark x. 27.

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Chapter 8.--Romans Interprets Corinthians.

Attend, then, carefully, to the apostle while in his Epistle to the

Romans he explains and clearly enough shows that what he wrote to the

Corinthians, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," [731]

must be understood in the sense which we have already indicated,--that

the letter of the law, which teaches us not to commit sin, kills, if

the life-giving spirit be absent, forasmuch as it causes sin to be

known rather than avoided, and therefore to be increased rather than

diminished, because to an evil concupiscense there is now added the

transgression of the law.

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[731] 2 Cor. iii. 6.

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Chapter 9 [VI].--Through the Law Sin Has Abounded.

The apostle, then, wishing to commend the grace which has come to all

nations through Jesus Christ, lest the Jews should extol themselves at

the expense of the other peoples on account of their having received

the law, first says that sin and death came on the human race through

one man, and that righteousness and eternal life came also through one,

expressly mentioning Adam as the former, and Christ as the latter; and

then says that "the law, however, entered, that the offence might

abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin

hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through

righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." [732] Then,

proposing a question for himself to answer, he adds, "What shall we say

then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid."

[733] He saw, indeed, that a perverse use might be made by perverse men

of what he had said: "The law entered, that the offence might abound:

but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound,"--as if he had said

that sin had been of advantage by reason of the abundance of grace.

Rejecting this, he answers his question with a "God forbid!" and at

once adds: "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer

therein?" [734] as much as to say, When grace has brought it to pass

that we should die unto sin, what else shall we be doing, if we

continue to live in it, than showing ourselves ungrateful to grace? The

man who extols the virtue of a medicine does not contend that the

diseases and wounds of which the medicine cures him are of advantage to

him; on the contrary, in proportion to the praise lavished on the

remedy are the blame and horror which are felt of the diseases and

wounds healed by the much-extolled medicine. In like manner, the

commendation and praise of grace are vituperation and condemnation of

offences. For there was need to prove to man how corruptly weak he was,

so that against his iniquity, the holy law brought him no help towards

good, but rather increased than diminished his iniquity; seeing that

the law entered, that the offence might abound; that being thus

convicted and confounded, he might see not only that he needed a

physician, but also God as his helper so to direct his steps that sin

should not rule over him, and he might be healed by betaking himself to

the help of the divine mercy; and in this way, where sin abounded grace

might much more abound,--not through the merit of the sinner, but by

the intervention of his Helper.

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[732] Rom. v. 20, 21.

[733] Rom. vi. 1. 2.

[734] Rom. vi. 2.

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Chapter 10.--Christ the True Healer.

Accordingly, the apostle shows that the same medicine was mystically

set forth in the passion and resurrection of Christ, when he says,

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ

were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him by

baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by

the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of

life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His

death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: knowing

this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin

might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he

that is dead is justified from sin. Now, if we be dead with Christ, we

believe that we shall also live with Him: knowing that Christ, being

raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over

Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth,

He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead

indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

[735] Now it is plain enough that here by the mystery of the Lord's

death and resurrection is figured the death of our old sinful life, and

the rising of the new; and that here is shown forth the abolition of

iniquity and the renewal of righteousness. Whence then arises this vast

benefit to man through the letter of the law, except it be through the

faith of Jesus Christ?

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[735] Rom. vi. 3-11.

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Chapter 11 [VII.]--From What Fountain Good Works Flow.

This holy meditation preserves "the children of men, who put their

trust under the shadow of God's wings," [736] so that they are "drunken

with the fatness of His house, and drink of the full stream of His

pleasure. For with Him is the fountain of life, and in His light shall

they see light. For He extendeth His mercy to them that know Him, and

His righteousness to the upright in heart." [737] He does not, indeed,

extend His mercy to them because they know Him, but that they may know

Him; nor is it because they are upright in heart, but that they may

become so, that He extends to them His righteousness, whereby He

justifies the ungodly. [738] This meditation does not elevate with

pride: this sin arises when any man has too much confidence in himself,

and makes himself the chief end of living. Impelled by this vain

feeling, he departs from that fountain of life, from the draughts of

which alone is imbibed the holiness which is itself the good life,--and

from that unchanging light, by sharing in which the reasonable soul is

in a certain sense inflamed, and becomes itself a created and reflected

luminary; even as "John was a burning and a shining light," [739] who

notwithstanding acknowledged the source of his own illumination in the

words, "Of His fulness have all we received." [740] Whose, I would ask,

but His, of course, in comparison with whom John indeed was no light at

all? For "that was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh

into the world." [741] Therefore, in the same psalm, after saying,

"Extend Thy mercy to them that know Thee, and Thy righteousness to the

upright in heart," [742] he adds, "Let not the foot of pride come

against me, and let not the hands of sinners move me. There have fallen

all the workers of iniquity: they are cast out, and are not able to

stand." [743] Since by that impiety which leads each to attribute to

himself the excellence which is God's, he is cast out into his own

native darkness, in which consist the works of iniquity. For it is

manifestly these works which he does, and for the achievement of such

alone is he naturally fit. The works of righteousness he never does,

except as he receives ability from that fountain and that light, where

the life is that wants for nothing, and where is "no variableness, nor

the shadow of turning." [744]

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[736] Ps. xxxvi. 7.

[737] Ps. xxxvi. 8-10.

[738] Rom. iv. 5.

[739] John v. 35.

[740] John i. 16.

[741] John i. 9.

[742] Ps. xxxvi. 10.

[743] Ps. xxxvi. 11, 12.

[744] Jas. i. 17.

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Chapter 12.--Paul, Whence So Called; Bravely Contends for Grace.

Accordingly Paul, who, although he was formerly called Saul, [745]

chose this new designation, for no other reason, as it seems to me,

than because he would show himself little, [746] --the "least of the

apostles," [747] --contends with much courage and earnestness against

the proud and arrogant, and such as plume themselves on their own

works, in order that he may commend the grace of God. This grace,

indeed, appeared more obvious and manifest in his case, inasmuch as,

while he was pursuing such vehement measures of persecution against the

Church of God as made him worthy of the greatest punishment, he found

mercy instead of condemnation, and instead of punishment obtained

grace. Very properly, therefore, does he lift voice and hand in defence

of grace, and care not for the envy either of those who understood not

a subject too profound and abstruse for them, or of those who

perversely misinterpreted his own sound words; whilst at the same time

he unfalteringly preaches that gift of God, whereby alone salvation

accrues to those who are the children of the promise, children of the

divine goodness, children of grace and mercy, children of the new

covenant. In the salutation with which he begins every epistle, he

prays: "Grace be to you, and peace, from God the Father, and from the

Lord Jesus Christ;" [748] whilst this forms almost the only topic

discussed for the Romans, and it is plied with so much persistence and

variety of argument, as fairly to fatigue the reader's attention, yet

with a fatigue so useful and salutary, that it rather exercises than

breaks the faculties of the inner man.

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[745] Acts. xiii. 9.

[746] See Augustin's Confessions, viii. 4.

[747] 1 Cor. xv. 9.

[748] See Rom. i. 7, 1 Cor. i. 3, and Gal. i. 3.

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Chapter 13 [VIII.]--Keeping the Law; The Jews' Glorying; The Fear of

Punishment; The Circumcision of the Heart.

Then comes what I mentioned above; then he shows what the Jew is, and

says that he is called a Jew, but by no means fulfils what he promises

to do. "But if," says he, "thou callest thyself a Jew, and restest in

the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest His will, and triest

the things that are different, being instructed out of the law; and art

confident that thou art thyself a guide of the blind, a light of them

that are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes,

which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou

therefore who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that

preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest a

man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that

abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? thou that makest thy boast

of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God? For the name

of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

Circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a

breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore,

if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his

uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not

uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee,

who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is

not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is

outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and

circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the

letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." [749] Here he plainly

showed in what sense he said, "Thou makest thy boast of God." For

undoubtedly if one who was truly a Jew made his boast of God in the way

which grace demands (which is bestowed not for merit of works, but

gratuitously), then his praise would be of God, and not of men. But

they, in fact, were making their boast of God, as if they alone had

deserved to receive His law, as the Psalmist said: "He did not the like

to any nation, nor His judgments has He displayed to them." [750] And

yet, they thought they were fulfilling the law of God by their

righteousness, when they were rather breakers of it all the while!

Accordingly, it "wrought wrath" [751] upon them, and sin abounded,

committed as it was by them who knew the law. For whoever did even what

the law commanded, without the assistance of the Spirit of grace, acted

through fear of punishment, not from love of righteousness, and hence

in the sight of God that was not in the will, which in the sight of men

appeared in the work; and such doers of the law were held rather guilty

of that which God knew they would have preferred to commit, if only it

had been possible with impunity. He calls, however, "the circumcision

of the heart" the will that is pure from all unlawful desire; which

comes not from the letter, inculcating and threatening, but from the

Spirit, assisting and healing. Such doers of the law have their praise

therefore, not of men but of God, who by His grace provides the grounds

on which they receive praise, of whom it is said, "My soul shall make

her boast of the Lord;" [752] and to whom it is said, "My praise shall

be of Thee:" [753] but those are not such who would have God praised

because they are men; but themselves, because they are righteous.

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[749] Rom. ii. 17-29.

[750] Ps. cxlvii. 20.

[751] Rom. iv. 15.

[752] Ps. xxxiv. 2.

[753] Ps. xxii. 25

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Chapter 14.--In What Respect the Pelagians Acknowledge God as the

Author of Our Justification.

"But," say they, "we do praise God as the Author of our righteousness,

in that He gave the law, by the teaching of which we have learned how

we ought to live." But they give no heed to what they read: "By the law

there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God." [754] This may

indeed be possible before men, but not before Him who looks into our

very heart and inmost will, where He sees that, although the man who

fears the law keeps a certain precept, he would nevertheless rather do

another thing if he were permitted. And lest any one should suppose

that, in the passage just quoted from him, the apostle had meant to say

that none are justified by that law, which contains many precepts,

under the figure of the ancient sacraments, and among them that

circumcision of the flesh itself, which infants were commanded to

receive on the eighth day after birth; he immediately adds what law he

meant, and says, "For by the law is the knowledge of sin." [755] He

refers then to that law of which he afterwards declares, "I had not

known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust except the law had

said, Thou shalt not covet." [756] For what means this but that "by the

law comes the knowledge of sin?"

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[754] Rom. iii. 20.

[755] Rom. iii. 20.

[756] Rom. vii. 7.

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Chapter 15 [IX.]--The Righteousness of God Manifested by the Law and

the Prophets.

Here, perhaps, it may be said by that presumption of man, which is

ignorant of the righteousness of God, and wishes to establish one of

its own, that the apostle quite properly said, "For by the law shall no

man be justified," [757] inasmuch as the law merely shows what one

ought to do, and what one ought to guard against, in order that what

the law thus points out may be accomplished by the will, and so man be

justified, not indeed by the power of the law, but by his free

determination. But I ask your attention, O man, to what follows. "But

now the righteousness of God," says he, "without the law is manifested,

being witnessed by the law and the prophets." [758] Does this then

sound a light thing in deaf ears? He says, "The righteousness of God is

manifested." Now this righteousness they are ignorant of, who wish to

establish one of their own; they will not submit themselves to it.

[759] His words are, "The righteousness of God is manifested:" he does

not say, the righteousness of man, or the righteousness of his own

will, but the "righteousness of God,"--not that whereby He is Himself

righteous, but that with which He endows man when He justifies the

ungodly. This is witnessed by the law and the prophets; in other words,

the law and the prophets each afford it testimony. The law, indeed, by

issuing its commands and threats, and by justifying no man,

sufficiently shows that it is by God's gift, through the help of the

Spirit, that a man is justified; and the prophets, because it was what

they predicted that Christ at His coming accomplished. Accordingly he

advances a step further, and adds, "But righteousness of God by faith

of Jesus Christ," [760] that is by the faith wherewith one believes in

Christ for just as there is not meant the faith with which Christ

Himself believes, so also there is not meant the righteousness whereby

God is Himself righteous. Both no doubt are ours, but yet they are

called God's, and Christ's, because it is by their bounty that these

gifts are bestowed upon us. The righteousness of God then is without

the law, but not manifested without the law; for if it were manifested

without the law, how could it be witnessed by the law? That

righteousness of God, however, is without the law, which God by the

Spirit of grace bestows on the believer without the help of the

law,--that is, when not helped by the law. When, indeed, He by the law

discovers to a man his weakness, it is in order that by faith he may

flee for refuge to His mercy, and be healed. And thus concerning His

wisdom we are told, that "she carries law and mercy upon her tongue,"

[761] --the "law," whereby she may convict the proud, the "mercy,"

wherewith she may justify the humbled. "The righteousness of God,"

then, "by faith of Jesus Christ, is unto all that believe; for there is

no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"

[762] --not of their own glory. For what have they, which they have not

received? Now if they received it, why do they glory as if they had not

received it? [763] Well, then, they come short of the glory of God; now

observe what follows: "Being justified freely by His grace." [764] It

is not, therefore, by the law, nor is it by their own will, that they

are justified; but they are justified freely by His grace,--not that it

is wrought without our will; but our will is by the law shown to be

weak, that grace may heal its infirmity; and that our healed will may

fulfil the law, not by compact under the law, nor yet in the absence of

law.

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[757] Rom. iii. 20.

[758] Rom. iii. 21.

[759] Rom. x. 3.

[760] Rom. iii. 22.

[761] Prov. iii. 16.

[762] Rom. iii. 22, 23.

[763] 1 Cor. iv. 7.

[764] Rom. iii. 24.

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Chapter 16 [X.]--How the Law Was Not Made for a Righteous Man.

Because "for a righteous man the law was not made;" [765] and yet "the

law is good, if a man use it lawfully." [766] Now by connecting

together these two seemingly contrary statements, the apostle warns and

urges his reader to sift the question and solve it too. For how can it

be that "the law is good, if a man use it lawfully," if what follows is

also true: "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous

man?" [767] For who but a righteous man lawfully uses the law? Yet it

is not for him that it is made, but for the unrighteous. Must then the

unrighteous man, in order that he may be justified,--that is, become a

righteous man,--lawfully use the law, to lead him, as by the

schoolmaster's hand, [768] to that grace by which alone he can fulfil

what the law commands? Now it is freely that he is justified

thereby,--that is, on account of no antecedent merits of his own works;

"otherwise grace is no more grace," [769] since it is bestowed on us,

not because we have done good works, but that we may be able to do

them,--in other words, not because we have fulfilled the law, but in

order that we may be able to fulfil the law. Now He said, "I am not

come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it," [770] of whom it was said,

"We have seen His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the

Father, full of grace and truth." [771] This is the glory which is

meant in the words, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of

God;" [772] and this the grace of which he speaks in the next verse,

"Being justified freely by His grace." [773] The unrighteous man

therefore lawfully uses the law, that he may become righteous; but when

he has become so, he must no longer use it as a chariot, for he has

arrived at his journey's end,--or rather (that I may employ the

apostle's own simile, which has been already mentioned) as a

schoolmaster, seeing that he is now fully learned. How then is the law

not made for a righteous man, if it is necessary for the righteous man

too, not that he may be brought as an unrighteous man to the grace that

justifies, but that he may use it lawfully, now that he is righteous?

Does not the case perhaps stand thus,--nay, not perhaps, but rather

certainly,--that the man who is become righteous thus lawfully uses the

law, when he applies it to alarm the unrighteous, so that whenever the

disease of some unusual desire begins in them, too, to be augmented by

the incentive of the law's prohibition and an increased amount of

transgression, they may in faith flee for refuge to the grace that

justifies, and becoming delighted with the sweet pleasures of holiness,

may escape the penalty of the law's menacing letter through the

spirit's soothing gift? In this way the two statements will not be

contrary, nor will they be repugnant to each other: even the righteous

man may lawfully use a good law, and yet the law be not made for the

righteous man; for it is not by the law that he becomes righteous, but

by the law of faith, which led him to believe that no other resource

was possible to his weakness for fulfilling the precepts which "the law

of works" [774] commanded, except to be assisted by the grace of God.

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[765] 1 Tim. i. 8.

[766] 1 Tim. i. 9.

[767] 1 Tim. i. 9.

[768] Gal. iii. 24.

[769] Rom. xi. 6.

[770] Matt. v. 17.

[771] John i. 14.

[772] Rom. iii. 23.

[773] Rom. iii. 24.

[774] Rom. iii. 27.

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Chapter 17.--The Exclusion of Boasting.

Accordingly he says, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what

law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith." [775] He may either mean,

the laudable boasting, which is in the Lord; and that it is excluded,

not in the sense that it is driven off so as to pass away, but that it

is clearly manifested so as to stand out prominently. Whence certain

artificers in silver are called "exclusores." [776] In this sense it

occurs also in that passage in the Psalms: "That they may be excluded,

who have been proved with silver," [777] --that is, that they may stand

out in prominence, who have been tried by the word of God. For in

another passage it is said: "The words of the Lord are pure words, as

silver which is tried in the fire." [778] Or if this be not his

meaning, he must have wished to mention that vicious boasting which

comes of pride--that is, of those who appear to themselves to lead

righteous lives, and boast of their excellence as if they had not

received it,--and further to inform us, that by the law of faith, not

by the law of works, this boasting was excluded, in the other sense of

shut out and driven away; because by the law of faith every one learns

that whatever good life he leads he has from the grace of God, and that

from no other source whatever can he obtain the means of becoming

perfect in the love of righteousness.

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[775] Rom. iii. 27.

[776] [The allusion appears to be to the special workmen engaged in

producing hammered or beaten (repouss�) work. For other special classes

of silver workers, see Guhl and Koner: The Life of the Greeks and

Romans, p. 449.--W.]

[777] Ps. lxviii. 30.

[778] Ps. xii. 6.

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Chapter 18 [XI.]--Piety is Wisdom; That is Called the Righteousness of

God, Which He Produces.

Now, this meditation makes a man godly, and this godliness is true

wisdom. By godliness I mean that which the Greeks designate

theosebeia,--that very virtue which is commended to man in the passage

of Job, where it is said to him, "Behold, godliness is wisdom." [779]

Now if the word theosebeia be interpreted according to its derivation,

it might be called "the worship of God;" [780] and in this worship the

essential point is, that the soul be not ungrateful to Him. Whence it

is that in the most true and excellent sacrifice we are admonished to

"give thanks unto our Lord God." [781] Ungrateful however, our soul

would be, were it to attribute to itself that which it received from

God, especially the righteousness, with the works of which (the

especial property, as it were, of itself, and produced, so to speak, by

the soul itself for itself) it is not puffed up in a vulgar pride, as

it might be with riches, or beauty of limb, or eloquence, or those

other accomplishments, external or internal, bodily or mental, which

wicked men too are in the habit of possessing, but, if I may say so, in

a wise complacency, as of things which constitute in an especial manner

the good works of the good. It is owing to this sin of vulgar pride

that even some great men have drifted from the sure anchorage of the

divine nature, and have floated down into the shame of idolatry. Whence

the apostle again in the same epistle, wherein he so firmly maintains

the principle of grace, after saying that he was a debtor both to the

Greeks and to the Barbarians, to the wise and to the unwise, and

professing himself ready, so far as to him pertained, to preach the

gospel even to those who lived in Rome, adds: "I am not ashamed of the

Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every

one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For

therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it

is written, The just shall live by faith." [782] This is the

righteousness of God, which was veiled in the Old Testament, and is

revealed in the New; and it is called the righteousness of God, because

by His bestowal of it He makes us righteous, just as we read that

"salvation is the Lord's," [783] because He makes us safe. And this is

the faith "from which" and "to which" it is revealed,--from the faith

of them who preach it, to the faith of those who obey it. By this faith

of Jesus Christ--that is, the faith which Christ has given to us--we

believe it is from God that we now have, and shall have more and more,

the ability of living righteously; wherefore we give Him thanks with

that dutiful worship with which He only is to be worshipped.

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[779] Job xxviii. 28.

[780] Cultus Dei is Augustin's Latin expression for the synonym.

[781] One of the suffrages of the Sursum Corda in the Communion Service

[preserved also in the English service, which reads as follows:

"Priest. Lift up your hearts. Answer. We lift them up to the Lord.

Priest. Let us give thanks unto our Lord God. Answer. It is meet and

right so to do."--W.]

[782] Rom. i. 14-17.

[783] Ps. iii. 8.

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Chapter 19 [XII]--The Knowledge of God Through the Creation.

And then the apostle very properly turns from this point to describe

with detestation those men who, light-minded and puffed up by the sin

which I have mentioned in the preceding chapter, have been carried away

of their own conceit, as it were, through empty space where they could

find no resting-place, only to fall shattered to pieces against the

vain figments of their idols, as against stones. For, after he had

commended the piety of that faith, whereby, being justified, we must

needs be pleasing to God, he proceeds to call our attention to what we

ought to abominate as the opposite. "For the wrath of God," says he,

"is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of

men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may

be known of God is manifest in them: for God hath showed it unto them.

For the invisible things of Him are clearly seen from the creation of

the world, being understood through the things that are made, even His

eternal power and divinity; so that they are without excuse: because,

knowing God, they yet glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful;

but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was

darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and they

changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to

corruptible man, and to birds, and to four footed beasts, and to

creeping things." [784] Observe, he does not say that they were

ignorant of the truth, but that they held down the truth in

unrighteousness. For it occurred to him, that he would inquire whence

the knowledge of the truth could be obtained by those to whom God had

not given the law; and he was not silent on the source whence they

could have obtained it: for he declares that it was through the visible

works of creation that they arrived at the knowledge of the invisible

attributes of the Creator. And, in very deed, as they continued to

possess great faculties for searching, so they were able to find.

Wherein then lay their impiety? Because "when they knew God, they

glorified Him not as God, nor gave Him thanks, but became vain in their

imaginations." Vanity is a disease especially of those who mislead

themselves, and "think themselves to be something, when they are

nothing." [785] Such men, indeed, darken themselves in that swelling

pride, the foot of which the holy singer prays that it may not come

against him, [786] after saying, "In Thy light shall we see light;"

[787] from which very light of unchanging truth they turn aside, and

"their foolish heart is darkened." [788] For theirs was not a wise

heart, even though they knew God; but it was foolish rather, because

they did not glorify Him as God, or give Him thanks; for "He said unto

man, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom." [789] So by this

conduct, while "professing themselves to be wise" (which can only be

understood to mean that they attributed this to themselves), "they

became fools." [790]

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[784] Rom. i. 18-23.

[785] Gal. vi. 3.

[786] Ps. xxxvi. 11.

[787] Ps. xxxvi. 9.

[788] Rom. i. 21.

[789] Job xxviii. 28.

[790] Rom. i. 22.

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Chapter 20.--The Law Without Grace.

Now why need I speak of what follows? For why it was that by this their

impiety those men--I mean those who could have known the Creator

through the creature--fell (since "God resisteth the proud" [791] ) and

whither they plunged, is better shown in the sequel of this epistle

than we can here mention. For in this letter of mine we have not

undertaken to expound this epistle, but only mainly on its authority,

to demonstrate, so far as we are able, that we are assisted by divine

aid towards the achievement of righteousness,--not merely because God

has given us a law full of good and holy precepts, but because our very

will without which we cannot do any good thing, is assisted and

elevated by the importation of the Spirit of grace, without which help

mere teaching is "the letter that killeth," [792] forasmuch as it

rather holds them guilty of transgression, than justifies the ungodly.

Now just as those who come to know the Creator through the creature

received no benefit towards salvation, from their knowledge,--because

"though they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, nor gave Him

thanks, although professing themselves to be wise;" [793] --so also

they who know from the law how man ought to live, are not made

righteous by their knowledge, because, "going about to establish their

own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves unto the

righteousness of God." [794]

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[791] Jas. iv. 6.

[792] 2 Cor. iii. 6.

[793] Rom. i. 21.

[794] Rom. x. 3.

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Chapter 21 [XIII.]--The Law of Works and the Law of Faith.

The law, then, of deeds, that is, the law of works, whereby this

boasting is not excluded, and the law of faith, by which it is

excluded, differ from each other; and this difference it is worth our

while to consider, if so be we are able to observe and discern it.

Hastily, indeed, one might say that the law of works lay in Judaism,

and the law of faith in Christianity; forasmuch as circumcision and the

other works prescribed by the law are just those which the Christian

system no longer retains. But there is a fallacy in this distinction,

the greatness of which I have for some time been endeavoring to expose;

and to such as are acute in appreciating distinctions, especially to

yourself and those like you, I have possibly succeeded in my effort.

Since, however, the subject is an important one, it will not be

unsuitable, if with a view to its illustration, we linger over the many

testimonies which again and again meet our view. Now, the apostle says

that that law by which no man is justified, [795] entered in that the

offence might abound, [796] and yet in order to save it from the

aspersions of the ignorant and the accusations of the impious, he

defends this very law in such words as these: "What shall we say then?

Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law:

for I had not known concupiscence, except the law had said, Thou shall

not covet. But sin, taking occasion, wrought, by the commandment, in me

all manner of concupiscence." [797] He says also: "The law indeed is

holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good; but sin, that it

might appear sin, worked death in me by that which is good." [798] It

is therefore the very letter that kills which says, "Thou shalt not

covet," and it is of this that he speaks in a passage which I have

before referred to: "By the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the

righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by

the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by

faith of Jesus Christ upon all them that believe; for there is no

difference: seeing that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of

God: being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that

is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation

through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the

remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to

declare His righteousness at this time; that He might be just, and the

justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." [799] And then he adds the

passage which is now under consideration: "Where, then, is your

boasting? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of

faith." [800] And so it is the very law of works itself which says,

"Thou shalt not covet;" because thereby comes the knowledge of sin. Now

I wish to know, if anybody will dare to tell me, whether the law of

faith does not say to us, "Thou shalt not covet"? For if it does not

say so to us, what reason is there why we, who are placed under it,

should not sin in safety and with impunity? Indeed, this is just what

those people thought the apostle meant, of whom he writes: "Even as

some affirm that we say, Let us do evil, that good may come; whose

damnation is just." [801] If, on the contrary, it too says to us, "Thou

shall not covet" (even as numerous passages in the gospels and epistles

so often testify and urge), then why is not this law also called the

law of works? For it by no means follows that, because it retains not

the "works" of the ancient sacraments,--even circumcision and the other

ceremonies,--it therefore has no "works" in its own sacraments, which

are adapted to the present age; unless, indeed, the question was about

sacramental works, when mention was made of the law, just because by it

is the knowledge of sin, and therefore nobody is justified by it, so

that it is not by it that boasting is excluded, but by the law of

faith, whereby the just man lives. But is there not by it too the

knowledge of sin, when even it says, "Thou shall not covet?"

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[795] Rom. iii. 20.

[796] Rom. v. 20.

[797] Rom. vii. 7, 8.

[798] Rom. vii. 12, 13.

[799] Rom. iii. 20-26.

[800] Rom. iii. 27.

[801] Rom. iii. 8.

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Chapter 22.--No Man Justified by Works.

What the difference between them is, I will briefly explain. What the

law of works enjoins by menace, that the law of faith secures by faith.

The one says, "Thou shalt not covet;" [802] the other says, "When I

perceived that nobody could be continent, except God gave it to him;

and that this was the very point of wisdom, to know whose gift she was;

I approached unto the Lord, and I besought Him." [803] This indeed is

the very wisdom which is called piety, in which is worshipped "the

Father of lights, from whom is every best giving and perfect gift."

[804] This worship, however, consists in the sacrifice of praise and

giving of thanks, so that the worshipper of God boasts not in himself,

but in Him. [805] Accordingly, by the law of works, God says to us, Do

what I command thee; but by the law of faith we say to God, Give me

what Thou commandest. Now this is the reason why the law gives its

command,--to admonish us what faith ought to do, that is, that he to

whom the command is given, if he is as yet unable to perform it, may

know what to ask for; but if he has at once the ability, and complies

with the command, he ought also to be aware from whose gift the ability

comes. "For we have received not the spirit of this world," says again

that most constant preacher of grace, "but the Spirit which is of God,

that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

[806] What, however, "is the spirit of this world," but the spirit of

pride? By it their foolish heart is darkened, who, although knowing

God, glorified Him not as God, by giving Him thanks. [807] Moreover, it

is really by this same spirit that they too are deceived, who, while

ignorant of the righteousness of God, and wishing to establish their

own righteousness, have not submitted to God's righteousness. [808] It

appears to me, therefore, that he is much more "a child of faith" who

has learned from what source to hope for what he has not yet, than he

who attributes to himself whatever he has; although, no doubt, to both

of these must be preferred the man who both has, and at the same time

knows from whom he has it, if nevertheless he does not believe himself

to be what he has not yet attained to. Let him not fall into the

mistake of the Pharisee, who, while thanking God for what he possessed,

yet failed to ask for any further gift, just as if he stood in want of

nothing for the increase or perfection of his righteousness. [809] Now,

having duly considered and weighed all these circumstances and

testimonies, we conclude that a man is not justified by the precepts of

a holy life, but by faith in Jesus Christ,--in a word, not by the law

of works, but by the law of faith; not by the letter, but by the

spirit; not by the merits of deeds, but by free grace.

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[802] Ex. xx. 17.

[803] Wisdom viii. 21.

[804] Jas. i. 17.

[805] 2 Cor. x. 17.

[806] 1 Cor. ii. 12.

[807] Rom. i. 21.

[808] Rom. x. 3.

[809] Luke xviii. 11, 12.

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Chapter 23 [XIV.]--How the Decalogue Kills, If Grace Be Not Present.

Although, therefore, the apostle seems to reprove and correct those who

were being persuaded to be circumcised, in such terms as to designate

by the word "law" circumcision itself and other similar legal

observances, which are now rejected as shadows of a future substance by

Christians who yet hold what those shadows figuratively promised; he at

the same time nevertheless would have it to be clearly understood that

the law, by which he says no man is justified, lies not merely in those

sacramental institutions which contained promissory figures, but also

in those works by which whosoever has done them lives holily, and

amongst which occurs this prohibition: "Thou shalt not covet." Now, to

make our statement all the clearer, let us look at the Decalogue

itself. It is certain, then, that Moses on the mount received the law,

that he might deliver it to the people, written on tables of stone by

the finger of God. It is summed up in these ten commandments, in which

there is no precept about circumcision, nor anything concerning those

animal sacrifices which have ceased to be offered by Christians. Well,

now, I should like to be told what there is in these ten commandments,

except the observance of the Sabbath, which ought not to be kept by a

Christian,--whether it prohibit the making and worshipping of idols and

of any other gods than the one true God, or the taking of God's name in

vain; or prescribe honour to parents; or give warning against

fornication, murder, theft, false witness, adultery, or coveting other

men's property? Which of these commandments would any one say that the

Christian ought not to keep? Is it possible to contend that it is not

the law which was written on those two tables that the apostle

describes as "the letter that killeth," but the law of circumcision and

the other sacred rites which are now abolished? But then how can we

think so, when in the law occurs this precept, "Thou shall not covet,"

by which very commandment, notwithstanding its being holy, just, and

good, "sin," says the apostle, "deceived me, and by it slew me?" [810]

What else can this be than "the letter" that "killeth"?

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[810] See Rom. vii. 7-12.

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Chapter 24.--The Passage in Corinthians.

In the passage where he speaks to the Corinthians about the letter that

kills, and the spirit that gives life, he expresses himself more

clearly, but he does not mean even there any other "letter" to be

understood than the Decalogue itself, which was written on the two

tables. For these are His words: "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly

declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with

ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but

in fleshy tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to

God-ward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as

of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who hath made us fit, as

ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit:

for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the

ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so

that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of

Moses for the glory of his countenance, which was to be done away; how

shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the

ministration of condemnation be glory, much more shall the ministration

of righteousness abound in glory. [811] A good deal might be said about

these words; but perhaps we shall have a more fitting opportunity at

some future time. At present, however, I beg you to observe how he

speaks of the letter that killeth, and contrasts therewith the spirit

that giveth life. Now this must certainly be "the ministration of death

written and engraven in stones," and "the ministration of

condemnation," since the law entered that sin might abound. [812] But

the commandments themselves are so useful and salutary to the doer of

them, that no one could have life unless he kept them. Well, then, is

it owing to the one precept about the Sabbath-day, which is included in

it, that the Decalogue is called "the letter that killeth?" Because,

forsooth, every man that still observes that day in its literal

appointment is carnally wise, but to be carnally wise is nothing else

than death? And must the other nine commandments, which are rightly

observed in their literal form, not be regarded as belonging to the law

of works by which none is justified, but to the law of faith whereby

the just man lives? Who can possibly entertain so absurd an opinion as

to suppose that "the ministration of death, written and engraven in

stones," is not said equally of all the ten commandments, but only of

the solitary one touching the Sabbath-day? In which class do we place

that which is thus spoken of: "The law worketh wrath: for where no law

is, there is no transgression?" [813] and again thus: "Until the law

sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law?"

[814] and also that which we have already so often quoted: "By the law

is the knowledge of sin?" [815] and especially the passage in which the

apostle has more clearly expressed the question of which we are

treating: "I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt

not covet?" [816]

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[811] 2 Cor. iii. 3-9.

[812] Rom. v. 20.

[813] Rom. iv. 15.

[814] Rom. v. 13.

[815] Rom. iii. 20.

[816] Rom. vii. 7.

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Chapter 25.--The Passage in Romans.

Now carefully consider this entire passage, and see whether it says

anything about circumcision, or the Sabbath, or anything else

pertaining to a foreshadowing sacrament. Does not its whole scope

amount to this, that the letter which forbids sin fails to give man

life, but rather "killeth," by increasing concupiscence, and

aggravating sinfulness by transgression, unless indeed grace liberates

us by the law of faith, which is in Christ Jesus, when His love is

"shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us?"

[817] The apostle having used these words: "That we should serve in

newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter," [818] goes on

to inquire, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay; I

had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the

law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the

commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the

law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once; but when the

commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which

was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking

occasion by the commandment deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore

the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then

that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it

might appear sin, worked death in me by that which is good; that sin by

the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law

is spiritual; whereas I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do

I allow not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that I

do. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it

is good. But then it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwelleth

in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good

thing. To will, indeed, is present with me; but how to perform that

which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the

evil which I would not, that I do. Now, if I do that which I would not,

it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a

law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight

in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my

members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into

captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that

I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of

God, through Jesus Christ out Lord. So then with the mind I myself

serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." [819]

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[817] Rom. v. 5.

[818] Rom. vii. 6.

[819] Rom. vii. 7-25.

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Chapter 26.--No Fruit Good Except It Grow from the Root of Love.

It is evident, then, that the oldness of the letter, in the absence of

the newness of the spirit, instead of freeing us from sin, rather makes

us guilty by the knowledge of sin. Whence it is written in another part

of Scripture, "He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow," [820]

--not that the law is itself evil, but because the commandment has its

good in the demonstration of the letter, not in the assistance of the

spirit; and if this commandment is kept from the fear of punishment and

not from the love of righteousness, it is servilely kept, not freely,

and therefore it is not kept at all. For no fruit is good which does

not grow from the root of love. If, however, that faith be present

which worketh by love, [821] then one begins to delight in the law of

God after the inward man, [822] and this delight is the gift of the

spirit, not of the letter; even though there is another law in our

members still warring against the law of the mind, until the old state

is changed, and passes into that newness which increases from day to

day in the inward man, whilst the grace of God is liberating us from

the body of this death through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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[820] Eccles. i. 18.

[821] Gal. v. 6.

[822] Rom. vii. 22.

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Chapter 27 [XV.]--Grace, Concealed in the Old Testament, is Revealed in

the New.

This grace hid itself under a veil in the Old Testament, but it has

been revealed in the New Testament according to the most perfectly

ordered dispensation of the ages, forasmuch as God knew how to dispose

all things. And perhaps it is a part of this hiding of grace, that in

the Decalogue, which was given on Mount Sinai, only the portion which

relates to the Sabbath was hidden under a prefiguring precept. The

Sabbath is a day of sanctification; and it is not without significance

that, among all the works which God accomplished, the first sound of

sanctification was heard on the day when He rested from all His

labours. On this, indeed, we must not now enlarge. But at the same time

I deem it to be enough for the point now in question, that it was not

for nothing that the nation was commanded on that day to abstain from

all servile work, by which sin is signified; but because not to commit

sin belongs to sanctification, that is, to God's gift through the Holy

Spirit. And this precept alone among the others, was placed in the law,

which was written on the two tables of stone, in a prefiguring shadow,

under which the Jews observe the Sabbath, that by this very

circumstance it might be signified that it was then the time for

concealing the grace, which had to be revealed in the New Testament by

the death of Christ,--the rending, as it were, of the veil. [823] "For

when," says the apostle, "it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be

taken away." [824]

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[823] Matt. xxvii. 51.

[824] 2 Cor. iii. 16.

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Chapter 28 [XVI]--Why the Holy Ghost is Called the Finger of God.

"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is,

there is liberty." [825] Now this Spirit of God, by whose gift we are

justified, whence it comes to pass that we delight not to sin,--in

which is liberty; even as, when we are without this Spirit, we delight

to sin,--in which is slavery, from the works of which we must

abstain;--this Holy Spirit, through whom love is shed abroad in our

hearts, which is the fulfilment of the law, is designated in the gospel

as "the finger of God." [826] Is it not because those very tables of

the law were written by the finger of God, that the Spirit of God by

whom we are sanctified is also the finger of God, in order that, living

by faith, we may do good works through love? Who is not touched by this

congruity, and at the same time diversity? For as fifty days are

reckoned from the celebration of the Passover (which was ordered by

Moses to be offered by slaying the typical lamb, [827] to signify,

indeed, the future death of the Lord) to the day when Moses received

the law written on the tables of stone by the finger of God, [828] so,

in like manner, from the death and resurrection of Him who was led as a

lamb to the slaughter, [829] there were fifty complete days up to the

time when the finger of God--that is, the Holy Spirit--gathered

together in one [830] perfect company those who believed.

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[825] 2 Cor. iii. 17.

[826] Luke xi. 20.

[827] Ex. xii. 3.

[828] Ex. xxxi. 18.

[829] Isa. liii. 7.

[830] Acts ii. 2.

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Chapter 29 [XVII.]--A Comparison of the Law of Moses and of the New

Law.

Now, amidst this admirable correspondence, there is at least this very

considerable diversity in the cases, in that the people in the earlier

instance were deterred by a horrible dread from approaching the place

where the law was given; whereas in the other case the Holy Ghost came

upon them who were gathered together in expectation of His promised

gift. There it was on tables of stone that the finger of God operated;

here it was on the hearts of men. There the law was given outwardly, so

that the unrighteous might be terrified; [831] here it was given

inwardly, so that they might be justified. [832] For this, "Thou shalt

not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not covet; and if

there be any other commandment,"--such, of course, as was written on

those tables,--"it is briefly comprehended," says he, "in this saying,

namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill

to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." [833]

Now this was not written on the tables of stone, but "is shed abroad in

our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." [834] God's law,

therefore, is love. "To it the carnal mind is not subject, neither

indeed can be;" [835] but when the works of love are written on tables

to alarm the carnal mind, there arises the law of works and "the letter

which killeth" the transgressor; but when love itself is shed abroad in

the hearts of believers, then we have the law of faith, and the spirit

which gives life to him that loves.

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[831] Ex. xix. 12, 16.

[832] Acts ii. 1-47.

[833] Rom. xiii. 9, 10.

[834] Rom. v. 5.

[835] Rom. viii. 7.

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Chapter 30.--The New Law Written Within.

Now, observe how consonant this diversity is with those words of the

apostle which I quoted not long ago in another connection, and which I

postponed for a more careful consideration afterwards: "Forasmuch,"

says he, "as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ

ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the

living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."

[836] See how he shows that the one is written without man, that it may

alarm him from without; the other within man himself, that it may

justify him from within. He speaks of the "fleshy tables of the heart,"

not of the carnal mind, but of a living agent possessing sensation, in

comparison with a stone, which is senseless. The assertion which he

subsequently makes,--that "the children of Israel could not look

stedfastly on the end of the face of Moses," and that he accordingly

spoke to them through a veil, [837] --signifies that the letter of the

law justifies no man, but that rather a veil is placed on the reading

of the Old Testament, until it shall be turned to Christ, and the veil

be removed;--in other words, until it shall be turned to grace, and be

understood that from Him accrues to us the justification, whereby we do

what He commands. And He commands, in order that, because we lack in

ourselves, we may flee to Him for refuge. Accordingly, after most

guardedly saying, "Such trust have we through Christ to God-ward,"

[838] the apostle immediately goes on to add the statement which

underlies our subject, to prevent our confidence being attributed to

any strength of our own. He says: "Not that we are sufficient of

ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of

God; who also hath made us fit to be ministers of the New Testament;

not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the

spirit giveth life." [839]

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[836] 2 Cor. iii. 3.

[837] 2 Cor. iii. 13.

[838] 2 Cor. iii. 4.

[839] 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6.

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Chapter 31 [XVIII.]--The Old Law Ministers Death; The New,

Righteousness.

Now, since, as he says in another passage, "the law was added because

of transgression," [840] meaning the law which is written externally to

man, he therefore designates it both as "the ministration of death,"

[841] and "the ministration of condemnation;" [842] but the other, that

is, the law of the New Testament, he calls "the ministration of the

Spirit" [843] and "the ministration of righteousness," [844] because

through the Spirit we work righteousness, and are delivered from the

condemnation due to transgression. The one, therefore, vanishes away,

the other abides; for the terrifying schoolmaster will be dispensed

with, when love has succeeded to fear. Now "where the Spirit of the

Lord is, there is liberty." [845] But that this ministration is

vouchsafed to us, not on account of our deserving, but from His mercy,

the apostle thus declares: "Seeing then that we have this ministry, as

we have received mercy, let us faint not; but let us renounce the

hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor

adulterating the word of God with deceit." [846] By this "craftiness"

and "deceitfulness" he would have us understand the hypocrisy with

which the arrogant would fain be supposed to be righteous. Whence in

the psalm, which the apostle cites in testimony of this grace of God,

it is said, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin,

and in whose mouth is no guile." [847] This is the confession of lowly

saints, who do not boast to be what they are not. Then, in a passage

which follows not long after, the apostle writes thus: "For we preach

not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants

for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of

darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge

of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." [848] This is the

knowledge of His glory, whereby we know that He is the light which

illumines our darkness. And I beg you to observe how he inculcates this

very point: "We have," says he, "this treasure in earthen vessels, that

the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." [849] When

further on he commends in glowing terms this same grace, in the Lord

Jesus Christ, until he comes to that vestment of the righteousness of

faith, "clothed with which we cannot be found naked," and whilst

longing for which "we groan, being burdened" with mortality, "earnestly

desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven," "that

mortality might be swallowed up of life;" [850] --observe what he says:

"Now He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also

hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit;" [851] and after a little

he thus briefly draws the conclusion of the matter: "That we might be

made the righteousness of God in Him." [852] This is not the

righteousness whereby God is Himself righteous, but that whereby we are

made righteous by Him.

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[840] Gal. iii. 19.

[841] 2 Cor. iii. 7.

[842] 2 Cor. iii. 9.

[843] 2 Cor. iii. 8.

[844] 2 Cor. iii. 9.

[845] 2 Cor. iii. 17.

[846] 2 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

[847] Ps. xxxii. 2.

[848] 2 Cor. iv. 5, 6.

[849] 2 Cor. iv. 7.

[850] See 2 Cor. v. 1-4.

[851] 2 Cor. v. 5.

[852] 2 Cor. v. 21.

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Chapter 32 [XIX.]--The Christian Faith Touching the Assistance of

Grace.

Let no Christian then stray from this faith, which alone is the

Christian one; nor let any one, when he has been made to feel ashamed

to say that we become righteous through our own selves, without the

grace of God working this in us,--because he sees, when such an

allegation is made, how unable pious believers are to endure

it,--resort to any subterfuge on this point, by affirming that the

reason why we cannot become righteous without the operation of God's

grace is this, that He gave the law, He instituted its teaching, He

commanded its precepts of good. For there is no doubt that, without His

assisting grace, the law is "the letter which killeth;" but when the

life-giving spirit is present, the law causes that to be loved as

written within, which it once caused to be feared as written without.

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Chapter 33.--The Prophecy of Jeremiah Concerning the New Testament.

Observe this also in that testimony which was given by the prophet on

this subject in the clearest way: "Behold, the days come, saith the

Lord, that I will consummate a new covenant with the house of Israel,

and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant which I made

with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring

them out of the land of Egypt. Because they continued not in my

covenant, I also have rejected them, saith the Lord. But this shall be

the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those

days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and

write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my

people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every

man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me,

from the least unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will

forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." [853]

What say we to this? One nowhere, or hardly anywhere, except in this

passage of the prophet, finds in the Old Testament Scriptures any

mention so made of the New Testament as to indicate it by its very

name. It is no doubt often referred to and foretold as about to be

given, but not so plainly as to have its very name mentioned. Consider

then carefully, what difference God has testified as existing between

the two testaments--the old covenant and the new.

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[853] Jer. xxxi. 31-34.

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Chapter 34.--The Law; Grace.

After saying, "Not according to the covenant which I made with their

fathers in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of

the land of Egypt," observe what He adds: "Because they continued not

in my covenant." He reckons it as their own fault that they did not

continue in God's covenant, lest the law, which they received at that

time, should seem to be deserving of blame. For it was the very law

that Christ "came not to destroy, but to fulfil." [854] Nevertheless,

it is not by that law that the ungodly are made righteous, but by

grace; and this change is effected by the life-giving Spirit, without

whom the letter kills. "For if there had been a law given which could

have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But

the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith

of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." [855] Out of this

promise, that is, out of the kindness of God, the law is fulfilled,

which without the said promise only makes men transgressors, either by

the actual commission of some sinful deed, if the flame of

concupiscence have greater power than even the restraints of fear, or

at least by their mere will, if the fear of punishment transcend the

pleasure of lust. In what he says, "The Scripture hath concluded all

under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to

them that believe," it is the benefit of this "conclusion" itself which

is asserted. For what purposes "hath it concluded," except as it is

expressed in the next sentence: "Before, indeed, faith came, we were

kept under the law, concluded for the faith which was afterwards

revealed?" [856] The law was therefore given, in order that grace might

be sought; grace was given, in order that the law might be fulfilled.

Now it was not through any fault of its own that the law was not

fulfilled, but by the fault of the carnal mind; and this fault was to

be demonstrated by the law, and healed by grace. "For what the law

could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His

own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in

the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us,

who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." [857] Accordingly,

in the passage which we cited from the prophet, he says, "I will

consummate a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house

of Judah," [858] --and what means I will consummate but I will

fulfil?--"not, according to the covenant which I made with their

fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of

the land of Egypt." [859]

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[854] Matt. v. 17.

[855] Gal. iii. 21, 22.

[856] Gal. iii. 23.

[857] Rom. viii. 3, 4.

[858] Jer. xxxi. 31.

[859] Jer. xxxi. 32.

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Chapter 35 [XX.]--The Old Law; The New Law.

The one was therefore old, because the other is new. But whence comes

it that one is old and the other new, when the same law, which said in

the Old Testament, "Thou shalt not covet," [860] is fulfilled by the

New Testament? "Because," says the prophet, "they continued not in my

covenant, I have also rejected them, saith the Lord." [861] It is then

on account of the offence of the old man, which was by no means healed

by the letter which commanded and threatened, that it is called the old

covenant; whereas the other is called the new covenant, because of the

newness of the spirit, which heals the new man of the fault of the old.

Then consider what follows, and see in how clear a light the fact is

placed, that men who bare faith are unwilling to trust in themselves:

"Because," says he, "this is the covenant which I will make with the

house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in

their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." [862] See how

similarly the apostle states it in the passage we have already quoted:

"Not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart," [863]

because "not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God." [864]

And I apprehend that the apostle in this passage had no other reason

for mentioning "the New Testament" ("who hath made us able ministers of

the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit"), than because

he had an eye to the words of the prophet, when he said "Not in tables

of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart," inasmuch as in the

prophet it runs: "I will write it in their hearts." [865]

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[860] Ex. xx. 17.

[861] Jer. xxxi. 32.

[862] Jer. xxxi. 33.

[863] 2 Cor. iii. 3.

[864] 2 Cor. iii. 3.

[865] Jer. xxxi. 33.

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Chapter 36 [XXI.]--The Law Written in Our Hearts.

What then is God's law written by God Himself in the hearts of men, but

the very presence of the Holy Spirit, who is "the finger of God," and

by whose presence is shed abroad in our hearts the love which is the

fulfilling of the law, [866] and the end of the commandment? [867] Now

the promises of the Old Testament are earthly; and yet (with the

exception of the sacramental ordinances which were the shadow of things

to come, such as circumcision, the Sabbath and other observances of

days, and the ceremonies of certain meats, [868] and the complicated

ritual of sacrifices and sacred things which suited "the oldness" of

the carnal law and its slavish yoke) it contains such precepts of

righteousness as we are even now taught to observe, which were

especially expressly drawn out on the two tables without figure or

shadow: for instance, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Thou shalt do

no murder," "Thou shalt not covet," [869] "and whatsoever other

commandment is briefly comprehended in the saying, Thou shall love thy

neighbour as thyself." [870] Nevertheless, whereas as in the said

Testament earthly and temporal promises are, as I have said, recited,

and these are goods of this corruptible flesh (although they prefigure

those heavenly and everlasting blessings which belong to the New

Testament), what is now promised is a good for the heart itself, a good

for the mind, a good of the spirit, that is, an intellectual good;

since it is said, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in

their hearts will I write them," [871] --by which He signified that men

would not fear the law which alarmed them externally, but would love

the very righteousness of the law which dwelt inwardly in their hearts.

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[866] Rom. xiii. 10.

[867] 1 Tim. i. 5.

[868] See Retractations, ii. 37, printed at the head of this treatise.

[869] Ex. xx. 13, 14, 17.

[870] Rom. xiii. 9.

[871] Jer. xxxi. 33.

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Chapter 37 [XXII.]--The Eternal Reward.

He then went on to state the reward: "I will be their God, and they

shall be my people." [872] This corresponds to the Psalmist's words to

God: "It is good for me to hold me fast by God." [873] "I will be,"

says God, "their God, and they shall be my people." What is better than

this good, what happier than this happiness,--to live to God, to live

from God, with whom is the fountain of life, and in whose light we

shall see light? [874] Of this life the Lord Himself speaks in these

words: "This is life eternal that they may know Thee the only true God,

and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent," [875] --that is, "Thee and Jesus

Christ whom Thou hast sent," the one true God. For no less than this

did Himself promise to those who love Him: "He that loveth me, keepeth

my commandments; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and

I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him" [876] --in the

form, no doubt, of God, wherein He is equal to the Father; not in the

form of a servant, for in this He will display Himself even to the

wicked also. Then, however, shall that come to pass which is written,

"Let the ungodly man be taken away, that he see not the glory of the

Lord." [877] Then also shall "the wicked go into everlasting

punishment, and the righteous into life eternal." [878] Now this

eternal life, as I have just mentioned, has been defined to be, that

they may know the one true God. [879] Accordingly John again says:

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what

we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like

Him; for we shall see Him as He is." [880] This likeness begins even

now to be reformed in us, while the inward man is being renewed from

day to day, according to the image of Him that created him. [881]

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[872] Jer. xxxi. 33.

[873] Ps. lxxiii. 28.

[874] Ps. xxxvi. 9.

[875] John xvii. 3.

[876] John xiv. 21.

[877] Isa. xxvi. 10.

[878] Matt. xxv. 46.

[879] John xvii. 3.

[880] 1 John iii. 2.

[881] Col. iii. 10.

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Chapter 38 [XXIII.]--The Re-Formation Which is Now Being Effected,

Compared with the Perfection of the Life to Come.

But what is this change, and how great, in comparison with the perfect

eminence which is then to be realized? The apostle applies some sort of

illustration, derived from well-known things, to these indescribable

things, comparing the period of childhood with the age of manhood.

"When I was a child," says he, "I used to speak as a child, to

understand as a child, to think as a child; but when I became a man, I

put aside childish things." [882] He then immediately explains why he

said this in these words: "For now we see by means of a mirror, darkly

but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even

as also I am known." [883]

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[882] 1 Cor. xiii. 11.

[883] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

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Chapter 39 [XXIV]--The Eternal Reward Which is Specially Declared in

the New Testament, Foretold by the Prophet.

Accordingly, in our prophet likewise, whose testimony we are dealing

with, this is added, that in God is the reward, in Him the end, in Him

the perfection of happiness, in Him the sum of the blessed and eternal

life. For after saying, "I will be their God, and they shall be my

people," he at once adds, "And they shall no more teach every man his

neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they

shall all know me, from the least even unto the greatest of them."

[884] Now, the present is certainly the time of the New Testament, the

promise of which is given by the prophet in the words which we have

quoted from his prophecy. Why then does each man still say even now to

his neighbour and his brother, "Know the Lord?" Or is it not perhaps

meant that this is everywhere said when the gospel is preached, and

when this is its very proclamation? For on what ground does the apostle

call himself "a teacher of the Gentiles," [885] if it be not that what

he himself implies in the following passage becomes realized: "How

shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall

they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they

hear without a preacher?" [886] Since, then, this preaching is now

everywhere spreading, in what way is it the time of the New Testament

of which the prophet spoke in the words, "And they shall not every man

teach his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord;

for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of

them," [887] unless it be that he has included in his prophetic

forecast the eternal reward of the said New Testament, by promising us

the most blessed contemplation of God Himself?

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[884] Jer. xxxi. 34.

[885] 1 Tim. ii. 7.

[886] Rom. x. 14.

[887] Jer. xxxi. 34.

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Chapter 40.--How that is to Be the Reward of All; The Apostle Earnestly

Defends Grace.

What then is the import of the "All, from the least unto the greatest

of them," but all that belong spiritually to the house of Israel and to

the house of Judah,--that is, to the children of Isaac, to the seed of

Abraham? For such is the promise, wherein it was said to him, "In Isaac

shall thy seed be called; for they which are the children of the flesh

are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are

counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time

will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this; but when

Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, (for the

children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that

the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but

of Him that calleth,) it was said unto her, "The elder shall serve the

younger." [888] This is the house of Israel, or rather the house of

Judah, on account of Christ, who came of the tribe of Judah. This is

the house of the children of promise,--not by reason of their own

merits, but of the kindness of God. For God promises what He Himself

performs: He does not Himself promise, and another perform; which would

no longer be promising, but prophesying. Hence it is "not of works, but

of Him that calleth," [889] lest the result should be their own, not

God's; lest the reward should be ascribed not to His grace, but to

their due; and so grace should be no longer grace which was so

earnestly defended and maintained by him who, though the least of the

apostles, laboured more abundantly than all the rest,--yet not himself,

but the grace of God that was with him. [890] "They shall all know me,"

[891] He says,--"All," the house of Israel and house of Judah. "All,"

however, "are not Israel which are of Israel," [892] but they only to

whom it is said in "the psalm concerning the morning aid" [893] (that

is, concerning the new refreshing light, meaning that of the new

testament), "All ye the seed of Jacob, glorify Him; and fear Him, all

ye the seed of Israel." [894] All the seed, without exception, even the

entire seed of the promise and of the called, but only of those who are

the called according to His purpose. [895] "For whom He did

predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also

justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified." [896]

"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the

promise might be sure to all the seed: not to that only which is of the

law,"--that is, which comes from the Old Testament into the New,--"but

to that also which is of faith," which was indeed prior to the law,

even "the faith of Abraham,"--meaning those who imitate the faith of

Abraham,--"who is the father of us all; as it is written, I have made

thee the father of many nations." [897] Now all these predestinated,

called, justified, glorified ones, shall know God by the grace of the

new testament, from the least to the greatest of them.

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[888] Rom. ix. 7-12.

[889] Rom. ix. 11.

[890] 1 Cor. xv. 9, 10.

[891] Jer. xxxi. 34.

[892] Rom. ix. 6.

[893] See title of Ps. xxii. (xxi. Sept.) in the Sept. and Latin.

[894] Ps. xxii. 23.

[895] Rom. viii. 28.

[896] Rom. viii. 30.

[897] Rom. iv. 16, 17.

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Chapter 41.--The Law Written in the Heart, and the Reward of the

Eternal Contemplation of God, Belong to the New Covenant; Who Among the

Saints are the Least and the Greatest.

As then the law of works, which was written on the tables of stone, and

its reward, the land of promise, which the house of the carnal Israel

after their liberation from Egypt received, belonged to the old

testament, so the law of faith, written on the heart, and its reward,

the beatific vision which the house of the spiritual Israel, when

delivered from the present world, shall perceive, belong to the new

testament. Then shall come to pass what the apostle describes: "Whether

there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they

shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away," [898]

--even that imperfect knowledge of "the child" [899] in which this

present life is passed, and which is but "in part," "by means of a

mirror darkly." [900] Because of this, indeed, "prophecy" is necessary,

for still to the past succeeds the future; and because of this, too,

"tongues" are required,--that is, a multiplicity of expressions, since

it is by different ones that different things are suggested to him who

does not as yet contemplate with a perfectly purified mind the

everlasting light of transparent truth. "When that, however, which is

perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away," [901]

then, what appeared to the flesh in assumed flesh shall display Itself

as It is in Itself to all who love It; then, there shall be eternal

life for us to know the one very God; [902] then shall we be like Him,

[903] because "we shall then know, even as we are known;" [904] then

"they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his

brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the

least unto the greatest of them." [905] Now this may be understood in

several ways: Either, that in that life the saints shall differ one

from another in glory, as star from star. It matters not how the

expression runs,--whether (as in the passage before us) it be, "From

the least unto the greatest of them," or the other way, From the

greatest unto the least. And, in like manner, it matters not even if we

understand "the least" to mean those who simply believe, and "the

greatest" those who have been further able to understand--so far as may

be in this world--the light which is incorporeal and unchangeable. Or,

"the least" may mean those who are later in time; whilst by "the

greatest" He may have intended to indicate those who were prior in

time. For they are all to receive the promised vision of God hereafter,

since it was for us that they foresaw the future which would be better

than their present, that they without us should not arrive at complete

perfection. [906] And so the earlier are found to be the lesser,

because they were less deferred in time; as in the case of the gospel

"penny a day," which is given for an illustration. [907] This penny

they are the first to receive who came last into the vineyard. Or, "the

least and the greatest" ought perhaps to be taken in some other sense,

which at present does not occur to my mind.

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[898] 1 Cor. xiii. 8.

[899] Ib. ver. 11.

[900] Ib. ver. 12.

[901] 1 Cor. xiii. 10.

[902] John xvii. 3.

[903] 1 John iii. 2.

[904] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

[905] Jer. xxxi. 34.

[906] Heb. xi. 40.

[907] Matt. xx. 8.

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Chapter 42 [XXV.]--Difference Between the Old and the New Testaments.

I beg of you, however, carefully to observe, as far as you can, what I

am endeavouring to prove with so much effort. When the prophet promised

a new covenant, not according to the covenant which had been formerly

made with the people of Israel when liberated from Egypt, he said

nothing about a change in the sacrifices or any sacred ordinances,

although such change, too, was without doubt to follow, as we see in

fact that it did follow, even as the same prophetic scripture testifies

in many other passages; but he simply called attention to this

difference, that God would impress His laws on the mind of those who

belonged to this covenant, and would write them in their hearts, [908]

whence the apostle drew his conclusion,--"not with ink, but with the

Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables

of the heart;" [909] and that the eternal recompense of this

righteousness was not the land out of which were driven the Amorites

and Hittites, and other nations who dwelt there, [910] but God Himself,

"to whom it is good to hold fast," [911] in order that God's good that

they love, may be the God Himself whom they love, between whom and men

nothing but sin produces separation; and this is remitted only by

grace. Accordingly, after saying, "For all shall know me, from the

least to the greatest of them," He instantly added, "For I will forgive

their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." [912] By the

law of works, then, the Lord says, "Thou shalt not covet:" [913] but by

the law of faith He says, "Without me ye can do nothing;" [914] for He

was treating of good works, even the fruit of the vine-branches. It is

therefore apparent what difference there is between the old covenant

and the new,--that in the former the law is written on tables, while in

the latter on hearts; so that what in the one alarms from without, in

the other delights from within; and in the former man becomes a

transgressor through the letter that kills, in the other a lover

through the life-giving spirit. We must therefore avoid saying, that

the way in which God assists us to work righteousness, and "works in us

both to will and to do of His good pleasure," [915] is by externally

addressing to our faculties precepts of holiness; for He gives His

increase internally, [916] by shedding love abroad in our hearts by the

Holy Ghost, which is given to us." [917]

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[908] Jer. xxxi. 32, 33.

[909] 2 Cor. iii. 3.

[910] Josh. xii.

[911] Ps. lxxiii. 28.

[912] Jer. xxxi. 34.

[913] Ex. xx. 17.

[914] John xv. 5.

[915] Phil. ii. 13.

[916] 1 Cor. iii. 7.

[917] Rom. v. 5.

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Chapter 43 [XXVI.]--A Question Touching the Passage in the Apostle

About the Gentiles Who are Said to Do by Nature the Law's Commands,

Which They are Also Said to Have Written on Their Hearts.

Now we must see in what sense it is that the apostle says, "For when

the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained

in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which

show the work of the law written in their hearts," [918] lest there

should seem to be no certain difference in the new testament, in that

the Lord promised that He would write His laws in the hearts of His

people, inasmuch as the Gentiles have this done for them naturally.

This question therefore has to be sifted, arising as it does as one of

no inconsiderable importance. For some one may say, "If God

distinguishes the new testament from the old by this circumstance, that

in the old He wrote His law on tables, but in the new He wrote them on

men's hearts, by what are the faithful of the new testament

discriminated from the Gentiles, which have the work of the law written

on their hearts, whereby they do by nature the things of the law, [919]

as if, forsooth, they were better than the ancient people, which

received the law on tables, and before the new people, which has that

conferred on it by the new testament which nature has already bestowed

on them?"

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[918] Rom. ii. 14, 15.

[919] Rom. ii. 14.

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Chapter 44.--The Answer Is, that the Passage Must Be Understood of the

Faithful of the New Covenant.

Has the apostle perhaps mentioned those Gentiles as having the law

written in their hearts who belong to the new testament? We must look

at the previous context. First, then, referring to the gospel, he says,

"It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to

the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness

of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall

live by faith." [920] Then he goes on to speak of the ungodly, who by

reason of their pride profit not by the knowledge of God, since they

did not glorify Him as God, neither were thankful. [921] He then passes

to those who think and do the very things which they condemn,--having

in view, no doubt, the Jews, who made their boast of God's law, but as

yet not mentioning them expressly by name; and then he says,

"Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man

that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile: but glory,

honour, and peace, to every soul that doeth good; to the Jew first, and

also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God. For

as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and

as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law; for not

the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law

shall be justified." [922] Who they are that are treated of in these

words, he goes on to tell us: "For when the Gentiles, which have not

the law, do by nature the things contained in the law," [923] and so

forth in the passage which I have quoted already. Evidently, therefore,

no others are here signified under the name of Gentiles than those whom

he had before designated by the name of "Greek" when he said, "To the

Jew first, and also to the Greek." [924] Since then the gospel is "the

power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew

first, and, also to the Greek;" [925] and since "indignation and wrath,

tribulation and anguish, are upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of

the Jew first, and also of the Greek: but glory, honour, and peace, to

every man that doeth good; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek;"

since, moreover, the Greek is indicated by the term "Gentiles" who do

by nature the things contained in the law, and which have the work of

the law written in their hearts: it follows that such Gentiles as have

the law written in their hearts belong to the gospel, since to them, on

their believing, it is the power of God unto salvation. To what

Gentiles, however, would he promise glory, and honour, and peace, in

their doing good works, if living without the grace of the gospel?

Since there is no respect of persons with God, [926] and since it is

not the hearers of the law, but the doers thereof, that are justified,

[927] it follows that any man of any nation, whether Jew or Greek, who

shall believe, will equally have salvation under the gospel. "For there

is no difference," as he says afterwards; "for all have sinned, and

come short of the glory of God: being justified freely by His grace."

[928] How then could he say that any Gentile person, who was a doer of

the law, was justified without the Saviour's grace?

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[920] Rom. i. 16, 17.

[921] Rom. i. 21.

[922] Rom. ii. 8-13.

[923] Rom. ii. 14.

[924] Rom. i. 16.

[925] Rom. i. 16.

[926] Rom. ii. 11.

[927] Rom. ii. 13.

[928] Rom. iii. 22-24.

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Chapter 45.--It is Not by Their Works, But by Grace, that the Doers of

the Law are Justified; God's Saints and God's Name Hallowed in

Different Senses.

Now he could not mean to contradict himself in saying, "The doers of

the law shall be justified," [929] as if their justification came

through their works, and not through grace; since he declares that a

man is justified freely by His grace without the works of the law,

[930] intending by the term "freely" nothing else than that works do

not precede justification. For in another passage he expressly says,

"If by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no longer

grace." [931] But the statement that "the doers of the law shall be

justified" [932] must be so understood, as that we may know that they

are not otherwise doers of the law, unless they be justified, so that

justification does not subsequently accrue to them as doers of the law,

but justification precedes them as doers of the law. For what else does

the phrase "being justified" signify than being made righteous,--by

Him, of course, who justifies the ungodly man, that he may become a

godly one instead? For if we were to express a certain fact by saying,

"The men will be liberated," the phrase would of course be understood

as asserting that the liberation would accrue to those who were men

already; but if we were to say, The men will be created, we should

certainly not be understood as asserting that the creation would happen

to those who were already in existence, but that they became men by the

creation itself. If in like manner it were said, The doers of the law

shall be honoured, we should only interpret the statement correctly if

we supposed that the honour was to accrue to those who were already

doers of the law: but when the allegation is, "The doers of the law

shall be justified," what else does it mean than that the just shall be

justified? for of course the doers of the law are just persons. And

thus it amounts to the same thing as if it were said, The doers of the

law shall be created,--not those who were so already, but that they may

become such; in order that the Jews who were hearers of the law might

hereby understand that they wanted the grace of the Justifier, in order

to be able to become its doers also. Or else the term "They shall be

justified" is used in the sense of, They shall be deemed, or reckoned

as just, as it is predicated of a certain man in the Gospel, "But he,

willing to justify himself," [933] --meaning that he wished to be

thought and accounted just. In like manner, we attach one meaning to

the statement, "God sanctifies His saints," and another to the words,

"Sanctified be Thy name;" [934] for in the former case we suppose the

words to mean that He makes those to be saints who were not saints

before, and in the latter, that the prayer would have that which is

always holy in itself be also regarded as holy by men,--in a word, be

feared with a hallowed awe.

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[929] Rom. ii. 13.

[930] Rom. iii. 24, 28.

[931] Rom. xi. 6.

[932] Rom. ii. 13.

[933] Luke x. 29.

[934] Matt. vi. 9.

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Chapter 46.--How the Passage of the Law Agrees with that of the

Prophet.

If therefore the apostle, when he mentioned that the Gentiles do by

nature the things contained in the law, and have the work of the law

written in their hearts, [935] intended those to be understood who

believed in Christ,--who do not come to the faith like the Jews,

through a precedent law,--there is no good reason why we should

endeavour to distinguish them from those to whom the Lord by the

prophet promises the new covenant, telling them that He will write His

laws in their hearts, [936] inasmuch as they too, by the grafting which

he says had been made of the wild olive, belong to the self-same

olive-tree, [937] --in other words, to the same people of God. There is

therefore a good agreement of this passage of the apostle with the

words of the prophet so that belonging to the new testament means

having the law of God not written on tables, but on the heart,--that

is, embracing the righteousness of the law with innermost affection,

where faith works by love. [938] Because it is by faith that God

justifies the Gentiles; and the Scripture foreseeing this, preached the

gospel before to Abraham, saying, "In thy seed shall all nations be

blessed," [939] in order that by this grace of promise the wild olive

might be grafted into the good olive, and believing Gentiles might be

made children of Abraham, "in Abraham's seed, which is Christ," [940]

by following the faith of him who, without receiving the law written on

tables, and not yet possessing even circumcision, "believed God, and it

was counted to him for righteousness." [941] Now what the apostle

attributed to Gentiles of this character,--how that "they have the work

of the law written in their hearts;" [942] must be some such thing as

what he says to the Corinthians: "not in tables of stone, but in fleshy

tables of the heart." [943] For thus do they become of the house of

Israel, when their uncircumcision is accounted circumcision, by the

fact that they do not exhibit the righteousness of the law by the

excision of the flesh, but keep it by the charity of the heart. "If,"

says he, "the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall

not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?" [944] And

therefore in the house of the true Israel, in which is no guile, [945]

they are partakers of the new testament, since God puts His laws into

their mind, and writes them in their hearts with his own finger, the

Holy Ghost, by whom is shed abroad in them the love [946] which is the"

fulfilling of the law." [947]

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[935] Rom. ii. 14, 15.

[936] Jer. xxxii. 32.

[937] Rom. xi. 24.

[938] Gal. v. 6.

[939] Gal. iii. 8; Gen. xxii. 18.

[940] Gal. iii. 16.

[941] Gen. xv. 6; Rom. iv. 2.

[942] Rom. ii. 15.

[943] 2 Cor. iii. 3.

[944] Rom. ii. 26.

[945] See John i. 47.

[946] Rom. v. 5.

[947] Rom. xiii. 10.

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Chapter 47 [XXVII.]--The Law "Being Done by Nature" Means, Done by

Nature as Restored by Grace.

Nor ought it to disturb us that the apostle described them as doing

that which is contained in the law "by nature,"--not by the Spirit of

God, not by faith, not by grace. For it is the Spirit of grace that

does it, in order to restore in us the image of God, in which we were

naturally created. [948] Sin, indeed, is contrary to nature, and it is

grace that heals it,--on which account the prayer is offered to God,

"Be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against Thee."

[949] Therefore it is by nature that men do the things which are

contained in the law; [950] for they who do not, fail to do so by

reason of their sinful defect. In consequence of this sinfulness, the

law of God is erased out of their hearts; and therefore, when, the sin

being healed, it is written there, the prescriptions of the law are

done "by nature,"--not that by nature grace is denied, but rather by

grace nature is repaired. For "by one man sin entered into the world,

and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men; in which all have

sinned;" [951] wherefore "there is no difference: they all come short

of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace." [952] By

this grace there is written on the renewed inner man that righteousness

which sin had blotted out; and this mercy comes upon the human race

through our Lord Jesus Christ. "For there is one God, and one Mediator

between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." [953]

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[948] Gen. i. 27.

[949] Ps. xli. 4.

[950] Rom. ii. 14.

[951] Rom. v. 12.

[952] Rom. iii. 22-24.

[953] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

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Chapter 48.--The Image of God is Not Wholly Blotted Out in These

Unbelievers; Venial Sins.

According to some, however, they who do by nature the things contained

in the law must not be regarded as yet in the number of those whom

Christ's grace justifies, but rather as among those some of whose

actions (although they are those of ungodly men, who do not truly and

rightly worship the true God) we not only cannot blame, but even justly

and rightly praise, since they have been done--so far as we read, or

know, or hear--according to the rule of righteousness; though at the

same time, were we to discuss the question with what motive they are

done, they would hardly be found to be such as deserve the praise and

defence which are due to righteous conduct. [XXVIII.] Still, since

God's image has not been so completely erased in the soul of man by the

stain of earthly affections, as to have left remaining there not even

the merest lineaments of it whence it might be justly said that man,

even in the ungodliness of his life, does, or appreciates, some things

contained in the law; if this is what is meant by the statement that

"the Gentiles, which have not the law" (that is, the law of God), "do

by nature the things contained in the law," [954] and that men of this

character "are a law to themselves," and "show the work of the law

written in their hearts,"--that is to say, what was impressed on their

hearts when they were created in the image of God has not been wholly

blotted out:--even in this view of the subject, that wide difference

will not be disturbed, which separates the new covenant from the old,

and which lies in the fact that by the new covenant the law of God is

written in the hearts of believers, whereas in the old it was inscribed

on tables of stone. For this writing in the heart is effected by

renovation, although it had not been completely blotted out by the old

nature. For just as that image of God is renewed in the mind of

believers by the new testament, which impiety had not quite abolished

(for there had remained undoubtedly that which the soul of man cannot

be except it be rational), so also the law of God, which had not been

wholly blotted out there by unrighteousness, is certainly written

thereon, renewed by grace. Now in the Jews the law which was written on

tables could not effect this new inscription, which is justification,

but only transgression. For they too were men, and there was inherent

in them that power of nature, which enables the rational soul both to

perceive and do what is lawful; but the godliness which transfers to

another life happy and immortal has "a spotless law, converting souls,"

[955] so that by the light thereof they may be renewed, and that be

accomplished in them which is written, "There has been manifested over

us, O Lord, the light of Thy countenance." [956] Turned away from

which, they have deserved to grow old, whilst they are incapable of

renovation except by the grace of Christ,--in other words, without the

intercession of the Mediator; there being "one God and one Mediator

between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom

for all." [957] Should those be strangers to His grace of whom we are

treating, and who (after the manner of which we have spoken with

sufficient fulness already) "do by nature the things contained in the

law," [958] of what use will be their "excusing thoughts" to them "in

the day when God shall judge the secrets of men," [959] unless it be

perhaps to procure for them a milder punishment? For as, on the one

hand, there are certain venial sins which do not hinder the righteous

man from the attainment of eternal life, and which are unavoidable in

this life, so, on the other hand, there are some good works which are

of no avail to an ungodly man towards the attainment of everlasting

life, although it would be very difficult to find the life of any very

bad man whatever entirely without them. But inasmuch as in the kingdom

of God the saints differ in glory as one star does from another, [960]

so likewise, in the condemnation of everlasting punishment, it will be

more tolerable for Sodom than for that other city; [961] whilst some

men will be twofold more the children of hell than others. [962] Thus

in the judgment of God not even this fact will be without its

influence,--that one man will have sinned more, or less, than another,

even when both are involved in the ungodliness that is worthy of

damnation.

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[954] Rom. ii. 14.

[955] Ps. xix. 7.

[956] Ps. iv. 6.

[957] 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

[958] Rom. ii. 14.

[959] Rom. ii. 15, 16.

[960] 1 Cor. xv. 41.

[961] Luke x. 12.

[962] Matt. xxiii. 15.

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Chapter 49.--The Grace Promised by the Prophet for the New Covenant.

What then could the apostle have meant to imply by,--after checking the

boasting of the Jews, by telling them that "not the hearers of the law

are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified,"

[963] --immediately afterwards speaking of them "which, having not the

law, do by nature the things contained in the law," [964] if in this

description not they are to be understood who belong to the Mediator's

grace, but rather they who, while not worshipping the true God with

true godliness, do yet exhibit some good works in the general course of

their ungodly lives? Or did the apostle perhaps deem it probable,

because he had previously said that "with God there is no respect of

persons," [965] and had afterwards said that "God is not the God of the

Jews only, but also of the Gentiles," [966] --that even such scanty

little works of the law, as are suggested by nature, were not

discovered in such as received not the law, except as the result of the

remains of the image of God; which He does not disdain when they

believe in Him, with whom there is no respect of persons? But whichever

of these views is accepted, it is evident that the grace of God was

promised to the new testament even by the prophet, and that this grace

was definitively announced to take this shape,--God's laws were to be

written in men's hearts; and they were to arrive at such a knowledge of

God, that they were not each one to teach his neighbour and brother,

saying, Know the Lord; for all were to know Him, from the least to the

greatest of them. [967] This is the gift of the Holy Ghost, by which

love is shed abroad in our hearts, [968] --not, indeed, any kind of

love, but the love of God, "out of a pure heart, and a good conscience,

and an unfeigned faith," [969] by means of which the just man, while

living in this pilgrim state, is led on, after the stages of "the

glass," and "the enigma," and "what is in part," to the actual vision,

that, face to face, he may know even as he is known. [970] For one

thing has he required of the Lord, and that he still seeks after, that

he may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life, in

order to behold the pleasantness of the Lord. [971]

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[963] Rom. ii. 13.

[964] Rom. ii. 14.

[965] Rom. ii. 11.

[966] Rom. iii. 29.

[967] Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.

[968] Rom. v. 5.

[969] 1 Tim. i. 5.

[970] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

[971] Ps. xxvii. 4.

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Chapter 50 [XXIX.]--Righteousness is the Gift of God.

Let no man therefore boast of that which he seems to possess, as if he

had not received it; [972] nor let him think that he has received it

merely because the external letter of the law has been either exhibited

to him to read, or sounded in his ear for him to hear. For "if

righteousness is by the law, then Christ has died in vain." [973]

Seeing, however, that if He has not died in vain, He has ascended up on

high, and has led captivity captive, and has given gifts to men, [974]

it follows that whosoever has, has from this source. But whosoever

denies that he has from Him, either has not, or is in great danger of

being deprived of what he has. [975] "For it is one God which justifies

the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith;" [976]

in which clauses there is no real difference in the sense, as if the

phrase "by faith" meant one thing, and "through faith" another, but

only a variety of expression. For in one passage, when speaking of the

Gentiles,--that is, of the uncircumcision,--he says, "The Scripture,

foreseeing that God would justify the heathen by faith;" [977] and

again, in another, when speaking of the circumcision, to which he

himself belonged, he says, "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners

of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of

the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed in Jesus

Christ." [978] Observe, he says that both the uncircumcision are

justified by faith, and the circumcision through faith, if, indeed, the

circumcision keep the righteousness of faith. For the Gentiles, which

followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even

the righteousness which is by faith, [979] --by obtaining it of God,

not by assuming it of themselves. But Israel, which followed after the

law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

And why? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works

[980] --in other words, working it out as it were by themselves, not

believing that it is God who works within them. "For it is God which

worketh in us both to will and to do of His own good pleasure." [981]

And hereby "they stumbled at the stumbling-stone." [982] For what he

said, "not by faith, but as it were by works," [983] he most clearly

explained in the following words: "They, being ignorant of God's

righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness,

have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ

is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

[984] Then are we still in doubt what are those works of the law by

which a man is not justified, if he believes them to be his own works,

as it were, without the help and gift of God, which is "by the faith of

Jesus Christ?" And do we suppose that they are circumcision and the

other like ordinances, because some such things in other passages are

read concerning these sacramental rites too? In this place, however, it

is certainly not circumcision which they wanted to establish as their

own righteousness, because God established this by prescribing it

Himself. Nor is it possible for us to understand this statement, of

those works concerning which the Lord says to them, "Ye reject the

commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition;" [985]

because, as the apostle says, Israel, which followed after the law of

righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness." [986] He

did not say, Which followed after their own traditions, framing them

and relying on them. This then is the sole distinction, that the very

precept, "Thou shalt not covet," [987] and God's other good and holy

commandments, they attributed to themselves; whereas, that man may keep

them, God must work in him through faith in Jesus Christ, who is "the

end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." [988]

That is to say, every one who is incorporated into Him and made a

member of His body, is able, by His giving the increase within, to work

righteousness. It is of such a man's works that Christ Himself has

said, "Without me ye can do nothing." [989]

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[972] 1 Cor. iv. 7.

[973] Gal. ii. 21.

[974] Ps. lxviii. 18; Eph. iv. 8.

[975] Luke viii. 18; xix. 26.

[976] Rom. iii. 30.

[977] Gal. iii. 8.

[978] Gal. ii. 15, 16. [The discussion turns on the difference in the

Latin prepositions ex and per, representing the Greek ek and dia.--W.]

[979] Rom. ix. 30.

[980] Rom. ix. 31, 32.

[981] Phil. ii. 13.

[982] Rom. ix. 32.

[983] Rom. ix. 32.

[984] Rom. x. 3, 4.

[985] Mark vii. 9.

[986] Rom. ix. 31.

[987] Ex. xx. 17.

[988] Rom. x. 4.

[989] John xv. 5.

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Chapter 51.--Faith the Ground of All Righteousness.

The righteousness of the law is proposed in these terms,--that

whosoever shall do it shall live in it; and the purpose is, that when

each has discovered his own weakness, he may not by his own strength,

nor by the letter of the law (which cannot be done), but by faith,

conciliating the Justifier, attain, and do, and live in it. For the

work in which he who does it shall live, is not done except by one who

is justified. His justification, however, is obtained by faith; and

concerning faith it is written, "Say not in thine heart, Who shall

ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring down Christ therefrom;) or, Who

shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from

the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth,

and in thy heart: that is (says he), the word of faith which we preach:

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt

believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou

shalt be saved." [990] As far as he is saved, so far is he righteous.

For by this faith we believe that God will raise even us from the

dead,--even now in the spirit, that we may in this present world live

soberly, righteously, and godly in the renewal of His grace; and by and

by in our flesh, which shall rise again to immortality, which indeed is

the reward of the Spirit, who precedes it by a resurrection which is

appropriate to Himself,--that is, by justification. "For we are buried

with Christ by baptism unto death, that like as Christ was raised up

from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk

in newness of life." [991] By faith, therefore, in Jesus Christ we

obtain salvation,--both in so far as it is begun within us in reality,

and in so far as its perfection is waited for in hope; "for whosoever

shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." [992] "How

abundant," says the Psalmist, "is the multitude of Thy goodness, O

Lord, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee, and hast

perfected for them that hope in Thee!" [993] By the law we fear God; by

faith we hope in God: but from those who fear punishment grace is

hidden. And the soul which labours under this fear, since it has not

conquered its evil concupiscence, and from which this fear, like a

harsh master, has not departed,--let it flee by faith for refuge to the

mercy of God, that He may give it what He commands, and may, by

inspiring into it the sweetness of His grace through His Holy Spirit,

cause the soul to delight more in what He teaches it, than it delights

in what opposes His instruction. In this manner it is that the great

abundance of His sweetness,--that is, the law of faith,--His love which

is in our hearts, and shed abroad, is perfected in them that hope in

Him, that good may be wrought by the soul, healed not by the fear of

punishment, but by the love of righteousness.

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[990] Rom. x. 6-9.

[991] Rom. vi. 4.

[992] Rom. x. 13; Joel ii. 32.

[993] Ps. xxxi. 19.

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Chapter 52 [XXX.]--Grace Establishes Free Will.

Do we then by grace make void free will? God forbid! Nay, rather we

establish free will. For even as the law by faith, so free will by

grace, is not made void, but established. [994] For neither is the law

fulfilled except by free will; but by the law is the knowledge of sin,

by faith the acquisition of grace against sin, by grace the healing of

the soul from the disease of sin, by the health of the soul freedom of

will, by free will the love of righteousness, by love of righteousness

the accomplishment of the law. Accordingly, as the law is not made

void, but is established through faith, since faith procures grace

whereby the law is fulfilled; so free will is not made void through

grace, but is established, since grace cures the will whereby

righteousness is freely loved. Now all the stages which I have here

connected together in their successive links, have severally their

proper voices in the sacred Scriptures. The law says: "Thou shall not

covet." [995] Faith says: "Heal my soul, for I have sinned against

Thee." [996] Grace says: "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more,

lest a worse thing come unto thee." [997] Health says: "O Lord my God,

I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me." [998] Free will says: "I

will freely sacrifice unto Thee." [999] Love of righteousness says:

"Transgressors told me pleasant tales, but not according to Thy law, O

Lord." [1000] How is it then that miserable men dare to be proud,

either of their free will, before they are freed, or of their own

strength, if they have been freed? They do not observe that in the very

mention of free will they pronounce the name of liberty. But "where the

Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." [1001] If, therefore, they

are the slaves of sin, why do they boast of free will? For by what a

man is overcome, to the same is he delivered as a slave. [1002] But if

they have been freed, why do they vaunt themselves as if it were by

their own doing, and boast, as if they had not received? Or are they

free in such sort that they do not choose to have Him for their Lord

who says to them: "Without me ye can do nothing;" [1003] and "If the

Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed?" [1004]

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[994] Rom. iii. 31.

[995] Ex. xx. 17.

[996] Ps. xli. 4.

[997] John v. 14.

[998] Ps. xxx. 2.

[999] Ps. liv. 6.

[1000] Ps. cxix. 85.

[1001] 2 Cor. iii. 17.

[1002] 2 Pet. ii. 19.

[1003] John xv. 5.

[1004] John viii. 36.

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Chapter 53 [XXXI.]--Volition and Ability.

Some one will ask whether the faith itself, in which seems to be the

beginning either of salvation, or of that series leading to salvation

which I have just mentioned, is placed in our power. We shall see more

easily, if we first examine with some care what "our power" means.

Since, then, there are two things,--will and ability; it follows that

not every one that has the will has therefore the ability also, nor has

every one that possesses the ability the will also; for as we sometimes

will what we cannot do, so also we sometimes can do what we do not

will. From the words themselves when sufficiently considered, we shall

detect, in the very ring of the terms, the derivation of volition from

willingness, and of ability from ableness. [1005] Therefore, even as

the man who wishes has volition, so also the man who can has ability.

But in order that a thing may be done by ability, the volition must be

present. For no man is usually said to do a thing with ability if he

did it unwillingly. Although, at the same time, if we observe more

precisely, even what a man is compelled to do unwillingly, he does, if

he does it, by his volition; only he is said to be an unwilling agent,

or to act against his will, because he would prefer some other thing.

He is compelled, indeed, by some unfortunate influence, to do what he

does under compulsion, wishing to escape it or to remove it out of his

way. For if his volition be so strong that he prefers not doing this to

not suffering that, then beyond doubt he resists the compelling

influence, and does it not. And accordingly, if he does it, it is not

with a full and free will, but yet it is not without will that he does

it; and inasmuch as the volition is followed by its effect, we cannot

say that he lacked the ability to do it. If, indeed, he willed to do

it, yielding to compulsion, but could not, although we should allow

that a coerced will was present, we should yet say that ability was

absent. But when he did not do the thing because he was unwilling, then

of course the ability was present, but the volition was absent, since

he did it not, by his resistance to the compelling influence. Hence it

is that even they who compel, or who persuade, are accustomed to say,

Why don't you do what you have in your ability, in order to avoid this

evil? While they who are utterly unable to do what they are compelled

to do, because they are supposed to be able usually answer by excusing

themselves, and say, I would do it if it were in my ability. What then

do we ask more, since we call that ability when to the volition is

added the faculty of doing? Accordingly, every one is said to have that

in his ability which he does if he likes, and does not if he dislikes.

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[1005] [That is, in the Latin, "voluntas" (choice, will, volition)

comes from velle (to wish, desire, determine), and "potestas" (power,

ability) from "posse" (to be able).--W.]

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Chapter 54.--Whether Faith Be in a Man's Own Power.

Attend now to the point which we have laid down for discussion: whether

faith is in our own power? We now speak of that faith which we employ

when we believe anything, not that which we give when we make a

promise; for this too is called faith. [1006] We use the word in one

sense when we say, "He had no faith in me," and in another sense when

we say, "He did not keep faith with me." The one phrase means, "He did

not believe what I said;" the other, "He did not do what he promised."

According to the faith by which we believe, we are faithful to God; but

according to that whereby a thing is brought to pass which is promised,

God Himself even is faithful to us; for the apostle declares, "God is

faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are

able." [1007] Well, now, the former is the faith about which we

inquire, Whether it be in our power? even the faith by which we believe

God, or believe on God. For of this it is written, "Abraham believed

God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." [1008] And again,

"To him that believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is

counted for righteousness." [1009] Consider now whether anybody

believes, if he be unwilling; or whether he believes not, if he shall

have willed it. Such a position, indeed, is absurd (for what is

believing but consenting to the truth of what is said? and this consent

is certainly voluntary): faith, therefore, is in our own power. But, as

the apostle says: "There is no power but comes from God," [1010] what

reason then is there why it may not be said to us even of this: "What

hast thou which thou hast not received?" [1011] --for it is God who

gave us even to believe. Nowhere, however, in Holy Scripture do we find

such an assertion as, There is no volition but comes from God. And

rightly is it not so written, because it is not true: otherwise God

would be the author even of sins (which Heaven forbid!), if there were

no volition except what comes from Him; inasmuch as an evil volition

alone is already a sin, even if the effect be wanting,--in other words,

if it has not ability. But when the evil volition receives ability to

accomplish its intention, this proceeds from the judgment of God, with

whom there is no unrighteousness. [1012] He indeed punishes after this

manner; nor is His chastisement unjust because it is secret. The

ungodly man, however, is not aware that he is being punished, except

when he unwillingly discovers by an open penalty how much evil he has

willingly committed. This is just what the apostle says of certain men:

"God hath given them up to the evil desires of their own hearts, . .

.to do those things that are not convenient." [1013] Accordingly, the

Lord also said to Pilate: "Thou couldest have no power at all against

me, except it were given thee from above." [1014] But still, when the

ability is given, surely no necessity is imposed. Therefore, although

David had received ability to kill Saul, he preferred sparing to

striking him. [1015] Whence we understand that bad men receive ability

for the condemnation of their depraved will, while good men receive

ability for trying of their good will.

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[1006] [That is, in Latin, faith ("fides") is both active and passive,

and means both trust and trustworthiness, both faith and faithfulness.

This is also true in English, as Augustin's own examples

illustrate--W.]

[1007] 1 Cor. x. 13.

[1008] Rom. iv. 3; comp. Gen. xv. 6.

[1009] Rom. iv. 5.

[1010] Rom. xiii. 1.

[1011] 1 Cor. iv. 7.

[1012] Rom. ix. 14.

[1013] Rom. i. 24, 28.

[1014] John xix. 11.

[1015] 1 Sam. xxiv. 7, and xxvi. 9.

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Chapter 55 [XXXII.]--What Faith is Laudable.

Since faith, then, is in our power, inasmuch as every one believes when

he likes, and, when he believes, believes voluntarily; our next

inquiry, which we must conduct with care, is, What faith it is which

the apostle commends with so much earnestness? For indiscriminate faith

is not good. Accordingly we find this caution: "Brethren, believe not

every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." [1016] Nor

must the clause in commendation of love, that it "believeth all

things," [1017] be so understood as if we should detract from the love

of any one, if he refuses to believe at once what he hears. For the

same love admonishes us that we ought not readily to believe anything

evil about a brother; and when anything of the kind is said of him,

does it not judge it to be more suitable to its character not to

believe? Lastly, the same love, "which believeth all things," does not

believe every spirit. Accordingly, charity believes all things no

doubt, but it believes in God. Observe, it is not said, Believes in all

things. It cannot therefore be doubted that the faith which is

commended by the apostle is the faith whereby we believe in God. [1018]

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[1016] 1 John iv. 1.

[1017] 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

[1018] Rom. iv. 3.

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Chapter 56.--The Faith of Those Who are Under the Law Different from

the Faith of Others.

But there is yet another distinction to be observed,--since they who

are under the law both attempt to work their own righteousness through

fear of punishment, and fail to do God's righteousness, because this is

accomplished by the love to which only what is lawful is pleasing, and

never by the fear which is forced to have in its work the thing which

is lawful, although it has something else in its will which would

prefer, if it were only possible, that to be lawful which is not

lawful. These persons also believe in God; for if they had no faith in

Him at all, neither would they of course have any dread of the penalty

of His law. This, however, is not the faith which the apostle commends.

He says: "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but

ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

[1019] The fear, then, of which we speak is slavish; and therefore,

even though there be in it a belief in the Lord, yet righteousness is

not loved by it, but condemnation is feared. God's children, however,

exclaim, "Abba, Father,"--one of which words they of the circumcision

utter; the other, they of the uncircumcision,--the Jew first, and then

the Greek; [1020] since there is "one God, which justifieth the

circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith." [1021]

When indeed they utter this call, they seek something; and what do they

seek, but that which they hunger and thirst after? And what else is

this but that which is said of them, "Blessed are they which do hunger

and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled?" [1022] Let,

then, those who are under the law pass over hither, and become sons

instead of slaves; and yet not so as to cease to be slaves, but so as,

while they are sons, still to serve their Lord and Father freely. For

even this have they received; for the Only-begotten "gave them power to

become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name;" [1023]

and He advised them to ask, to seek, and to knock, in order to receive,

to find, and to have the gate opened to them, [1024] adding by way of

rebuke, the words : "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to

your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give

good things to them that ask Him?" [1025] When, therefore, that

strength of sin, the law, [1026] inflamed the sting of death, even sin,

to take occasion and by the commandment work all manner of

concupiscence in them, [1027] of whom were they to ask for the gift of

continence but of Him who knows how to give good gifts to His children?

Perhaps, however, a man, in his folly, is unaware that no one can be

continent except God give him the gift. To know this, indeed, he

requires Wisdom herself. [1028] Why, then, does he not listen to the

Spirit of his Father, speaking through Christ's apostle, or even Christ

Himself, who says in His gospel, "Seek and ye shall find;" [1029] and

who also says to us, speaking by His apostle: "If any one of you lack

wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and

upbraideth not, and it shall be given to him. Let him, however, ask in

faith, nothing wavering?" [1030] This is the faith by which the just

man lives; [1031] this is the faith whereby he believes on Him who

justifies the ungodly; [1032] this is the faith through which boasting

is excluded, [1033] either by the retreat of that with which we become

self-inflated, or by the rising of that with which we glory in the

Lord. This, again, is the faith by which we procure that largess of the

Spirit, of which it is said: "We indeed through the Spirit wait for the

hope of righteousness by faith." [1034] But this admits of the further

question, Whether he meant by "the hope of righteousness" that by which

righteousness hopes, or that whereby righteousness is itself hoped for?

For the just man, who lives by faith, hopes undoubtedly for eternal

life; and the faith likewise, which hungers and thirsts for

righteousness, makes progress therein by the renewal of the inward man

day by day, [1035] and hopes to be satiated therewith in that eternal

life, where shall be realized that which is said of God by the psalm:

"Who satisfieth thy desire with good things." [1036] This, moreover, is

the faith whereby they are saved to whom it is said: "By grace are ye

saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship,

created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained

that we should walk in them." [1037] This, in short, is the faith which

works not by fear, but by love; [1038] not by dreading punishment, but

by loving righteousness. Whence, therefore, arises this love,--that is

to say, this charity,--by which faith works, if not from the source

whence faith itself obtained it? For it would not be within us, to what

extent soever it is in us, if it were not diffused in our hearts by the

Holy Ghost who is given to us. [1039] Now "the love of God" is said to

be shed abroad in our hearts, not because He loves us, but because He

makes us lovers of Himself; just as "the righteousness of God" [1040]

is used in the sense of our being made righteous by His gift; and "the

salvation of the Lord," [1041] in that we are saved by Him; and "the

faith of Jesus Christ," [1042] because He makes us believers in Him.

This is that righteousness of God, which He not only teaches us by the

precept of His law, but also bestows upon us by the gift of His Spirit.

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[1019] Rom. viii. 15.

[1020] Rom. ii. 9.

[1021] Rom. iii. 30.

[1022] Matt. v. 6.

[1023] John i. 12.

[1024] See Matt. vii. 7.

[1025] Matt. vii. 11.

[1026] 1 Cor. xv. 56.

[1027] Rom. vii. 8.

[1028] Wisd. viii. 21.

[1029] Matt. vii. 7.

[1030] Jas. i. 5, 6.

[1031] Rom. i. 17.

[1032] Rom. iv. 5.

[1033] Rom. iii. 27.

[1034] Gal. v. 5.

[1035] 2 Cor. iv. 16.

[1036] Ps. ciii. 5.

[1037] Eph. ii. 8-10.

[1038] Gal. v. 6.

[1039] Rom. v. 5.

[1040] Rom. iii. 21.

[1041] Ps. iii. 8.

[1042] Gal. ii. 16.

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Chapter 57 [XXXIII.]--Whence Comes the Will to Believe?

But it remains for us briefly to inquire, Whether the will by which we

believe be itself the gift of God, or whether it arise from that free

will which is naturally implanted in us? If we say that it is not the

gift of God, we must then incur the fear of supposing that we have

discovered some answer to the apostle's reproachful appeal: "What hast

thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why

dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" [1043] --even some

such an answer as this: "See, we have the will to believe, which we did

not receive. See in what we glory,--even in what we did not receive!"

If, however, we were to say that this kind of will is nothing but the

gift of God, we should then have to fear lest unbelieving and ungodly

men might not unreasonably seem to have some fair excuse for their

unbelief, in the fact that God has refused to give them this will. Now

this that the apostle says, "It is God that worketh in you both to will

and to do of His own good pleasure," [1044] belongs already to that

grace which faith secures, in order that good works may be within the

reach of man,--even the good works which faith achieves through the

love which is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost which is given

to us. If we believe that we may attain this grace (and of course

believe voluntarily), then the question arises whence we have this

will?--if from nature, why it is not at everybody's command, since the

same God made all men? if from God's gift, then again, why is not the

gift open to all, since "He will have all men to be saved, and to come

unto the knowledge of the truth?" [1045]

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[1043] 1 Cor. iv. 7.

[1044] Phil. ii. 13.

[1045] 1 Tim. ii. 4.

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Chapter 58.--The Free Will of Man is an Intermediate Power.

Let us then, first of all, lay down this proposition, and see whether

it satisfies the question before us: that free will, naturally assigned

by the Creator to our rational soul, is such a neutral [1046] power, as

can either incline towards faith, or turn towards unbelief.

Consequently a man cannot be said to have even that will with which he

believes in God, without having received it; since this rises at the

call of God out of the free will which he received naturally when he

was created. God no doubt wishes all men to be saved [1047] and to come

into the knowledge of the truth; but yet not so as to take away from

them free will, for the good or the evil use of which they may be most

righteously judged. This being the case, unbelievers indeed do contrary

to the will of God when they do not believe His gospel; nevertheless

they do not therefore overcome His will, but rob their own selves of

the great, nay, the very greatest, good, and implicate themselves in

penalties of punishment, destined to experience the power of Him in

punishments whose mercy in His gifts they despised. Thus God's will is

for ever invincible; but it would be vanquished, unless it devised what

to do with such as despised it, or if these despises could in any way

escape from the retribution which He has appointed for such as they.

Suppose a master, for example, who should say to his servants, I wish

you to labour in my vineyard, and, after your work is done, to feast

and take your rest but who, at the same time, should require any who

refused to work to grind in the mill ever after. Whoever neglected such

a command would evidently act contrary to the master's will; but he

would do more than that,--he would vanquish that will, if he also

escaped the mill. This, however, cannot possibly happen under the

government of God. Whence it is written, "God hath spoken once,"--that

is, irrevocably,--although the passage may refer also to His one only

Word. [1048] He then adds what it is which He had irrevocably uttered,

saying: "Twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God. Also

unto Thee, O Lord, doth mercy belong: because Thou wilt render to every

man according to his work." [1049] He therefore will be guilty unto

condemnation under God's power, who shall think too contemptuously of

His mercy to believe in Him. But whosoever shall put his trust in Him,

and yield himself up to Him, for the forgiveness of all his sins, for

the cure of all his corruption, and for the kindling and illumination

of his soul by His warmth and light, shall have good works by his

grace; and by them [1050] he shall be even in his body redeemed from

the corruption of death, crowned, satisfied with blessings,--not

temporal, but eternal,--above what we can ask or understand.

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[1046] ["Media vis," a "midway power," as Dr. Bright translates it;

i.e., it is indifferent in itself, and neither good nor bad, but may be

used for either.--W.]

[1047] 1 Tim. ii. 4.

[1048] John i. 1.

[1049] Ps. lxii. 11, 12.

[1050] Ex quibus.

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Chapter 59.--Mercy and Pity in the Judgment of God.

This is the order observed in the psalm, where it is said: "Bless the

Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His recompenses; who forgiveth all

thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life

from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender

mercy; who satisfieth thy desire with good things." [1051] And lest by

any chance these great blessings should be despaired of under the

deformity of our old, that is, mortal condition, the Psalmist at once

says, "Thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's;" [1052] as much as

to say, All that you have heard belongs to the new man and to the new

covenant. Now let us consider together briefly these things, and with

delight contemplate the praise of mercy, that is, of the grace of God.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul," he says, "and forget not all His

recompenses." Observe, he does not say blessings, but recompenses;

[1053] because He recompenses evil with good. "Who forgiveth all thine

iniquities:" this is done in the sacrament of baptism. "Who healeth all

thy diseases:" this is effected by the believer in the present life,

while the flesh so lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the

flesh, that we do not the things we would; [1054] whilst also another

law in our members wars against the law of our mind; [1055] whilst to

will is present indeed to us but not how to perform that which is good.

[1056] These are the diseases of a man's old nature which, however, if

we only advance with persevering purpose, are healed by the growth of

the new nature day by day, by the faith which operates through love.

[1057] "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;" this will take place

at the resurrection of the dead in the last day. "Who crowneth thee

with loving-kindness and tender mercy;" this shall be accomplished in

the day of judgment; for when the righteous King shall sit upon His

throne to render to every man according to his works, who shall then

boast of having a pure heart? or who shall glory of being clean from

sin? It was therefore necessary to mention God's loving-kindness and

tender mercy there, where one might expect debts to be demanded and

deserts recompensed so strictly as to leave no room for mercy. He

crowns, therefore, with loving-kindness and tender mercy; but even so

according to works. For he shall be separated to the right hand, to

whom, it is said, "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat." [1058]

There will, however, be also "judgment without mercy;" but it will be

for him "that hath not showed mercy." [1059] But "blessed are the

merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" [1060] of God. Then, as soon as

those on the left hand shall have gone into eternal fire, the

righteous, too, shall go into everlasting life, [1061] because He says:

"This is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God, and

Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." [1062] And with this knowledge, this

vision, this contemplation, shall the desire of their soul be

satisfied; for it shall be enough for it to have this and nothing

else,--there being nothing more for it to desire, to aspire to, or to

require. It was with a craving after this full joy that his heart

glowed who said to the Lord Christ, "Show us the Father, and it

sufficeth us;" and to whom the answer was returned, "He that hath seen

me hath seen the Father." [1063] Because He is Himself the eternal

life, in order that men may know the one true God, Thee and whom Thou

hast sent, Jesus Christ. If, however, he that has seen the Son has also

seen the Father, then assuredly he who sees the Father and the Son sees

also the Holy Spirit of the Father and the Son. So we do not take away

free will, whilst our soul blesses the Lord and forgets not all His

recompenses; [1064] nor does it, in ignorance of God's righteousness,

wish to set up one of its own; [1065] but it believes in Him who

justifies the ungodly, [1066] and until it arrives at sight, it lives

by faith,--even the faith which works by love. [1067] And this love is

shed abroad in our hearts, not by the sufficiency of our own will, nor

by the letter of the law, but by the Holy Ghost who has been given to

us. [1068]

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[1051] Ps. ciii. 2-5.

[1052] Ps. ciii. 5.

[1053] Non tributiones, sed retributiones.

[1054] Gal. v. 17.

[1055] Rom. vii. 23.

[1056] Rom. vii. 18.

[1057] Gal. v. 6.

[1058] Matt. xxv. 35.

[1059] Jas. ii. 13.

[1060] Matt. v. 7.

[1061] Matt. xxv. 46.

[1062] John xvii. 3.

[1063] John xiv. 8, 9.

[1064] Ps. ciii. 2.

[1065] Rom. x. 3.

[1066] Rom. iv. 5.

[1067] Gal. v. 6.

[1068] Rom. v. 5.

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Chapter 60 [XXXIV.]--The Will to Believe is from God.

Let this discussion suffice, if it satisfactorily meets the question we

had to solve. It may be, however, objected in reply, that we must take

heed lest some one should suppose that the sin would have to be imputed

to God which is committed by free will, if in the passage where it is

asked, "What hast thou which thou didst not receive?" [1069] the very

will by which we believe is reckoned as a gift of God, because it

arises out of the free will which we received at our creation. Let the

objector, however, attentively observe that this will is to be ascribed

to the divine gift, not merely because it arises from our free will,

which was created naturally with us; but also because God acts upon us

by the incentives of our perceptions, to will and to believe, either

externally by evangelical exhortations, where even the commands of the

law also do something, if they so far admonish a man of his infirmity

that he betakes himself to the grace that justifies by believing; or

internally, where no man has in his own control what shall enter into

his thoughts, although it appertains to his own will to consent or to

dissent. Since God, therefore, in such ways acts upon the reasonable

soul in order that it may believe in Him (and certainly there is no

ability whatever in free will to believe, unless there be persuasion or

summons towards some one in whom to believe), it surely follows that it

is God who both works in man the willing to believe, and in all things

prevents us with His mercy. To yield our consent, indeed, to God's

summons, or to withhold it, is (as I have said) the function of our own

will. And this not only does not invalidate what is said, "For what

hast thou that thou didst not receive?" [1070] but it really confirms

it. For the soul cannot receive and possess these gifts, which are here

referred to, except by yielding its consent. And thus whatever it

possesses, and whatever it receives, is from God; and yet the act of

receiving and having belongs, of course, to the receiver and possessor.

Now, should any man be for constraining us to examine into this

profound mystery, why this person is so persuaded as to yield, and that

person is not, there are only two things occurring to me, which I

should like to advance as my answer: "O the depth of the riches!"

[1071] and "Is there unrighteousness with God?" [1072] If the man is

displeased with such an answer, he must seek more learned disputants;

but let him beware lest he find presumptuous ones.

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[1069] 1 Cor. iv. 7.

[1070] 1 Cor. iv. 7.

[1071] Rom. xi. 33.

[1072] Rom. ix. 14.

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Chapter 61 [XXXV.]--Conclusion of the Work.

Let us at last bring our book to an end. I hardly know whether we have

accomplished our purpose at all by our great prolixity. It is not in

respect of you, [my Marcellinus,] that I have this misgiving, for I

know your faith; but with reference to the minds of those for whose

sake you wished me to write,--who so much in opposition to my opinion,

but (to speak mildly, and not to mention Him who spoke in His apostles)

certainly against not only the opinion of the great Apostle Paul, but

also his strong, earnest, and vigilant conflict, prefer maintaining

their own views with tenacity to listening to him, when he "beseeches

them by the mercies of God," and tells them, "through the grace of God

which was given to him, not to think of themselves more highly than

they ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God had dealt

to every man the measure of faith." [1073]

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[1073] Rom. xii. 1, 3.

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Chapter 62.--He Returns to the Question Which Marcellinus Had Proposed

to Him.

But I beg of you to advert to the question which you proposed to me,

and to what we have made out of it in the lengthy process of this

discussion. You were perplexed how I could have said that it was

possible for a man to be without sin, if his will were not wanting, by

the help of God's aid, although no man in the present life had ever

lived, was living, or would live, of such perfect righteousness. Now,

in the books which I formerly addressed to you, I set forth this very

question. I said: "If I were asked whether it be possible for a man to

be without sin in this life, I should allow the possibility, by the

grace of God, and his own free will; for I should have no doubt that

the free will itself is of God's grace,--that is, has its place among

the gifts of God,--not only as to its existence, but also in respect of

its goodness; that is, that it applies itself to doing the commandments

of God. And so, God's grace not only shows what ought to be done, but

also helps to the possibility of doing what it shows." [1074] You

seemed to think it absurd, that a thing which was possible should be

unexampled. Hence arose the subject treated of in this book; and thus

did it devolve on me to show that a thing was possible although no

example of it could be found. We accordingly adduced certain cases out

of the gospel and of the law, at the beginning of this work,--such as

the passing of a camel through the eye of a needle; [1075] and the

twelve thousand legions of angels, who could fight for Christ, if He

pleased; [1076] and those nations which God said He could have

exterminated at once from the face of His people, [1077] --none of

which possibilities were ever reduced to fact. To these instances may

be added those which are referred to in the Book of Wisdom, [1078]

suggesting how many are the strange torments and troubles which God was

able to employ against ungodly men, by using the creature which was

obedient to His beck, which, however, He did not employ. One might also

allude to that mountain, which faith could remove into the sea, [1079]

although, nevertheless, it was never done, so far as we have ever read

[1080] or heard. Now you see how thoughtless and foolish would be the

man who should say that any one of these things is impossible with God,

and how opposed to the sense of Scripture would be his assertion. Many

other cases of this kind may occur to anybody who reads or thinks, the

possibility of which with God we cannot deny, although an example of

them be lacking.

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[1074] See his work preceding this, De Peccat. Meritis, ii. 7.

[1075] Matt. xix. 24.

[1076] Matt. xxvi. 53.

[1077] Deut. xxxi. 3; comp. Judg. ii. 3.

[1078] Wisdom xvi.

[1079] Matt. xxi. 21.

[1080] Augustin, it would then seem had not met with the statement of

Eusebius, as translated by Rufinus (Hist. vi. 24), to the effect that

Gregory, bishop of Neoc�sarea, in Pontus, once performed the miracle of

removing a mountain or rock from its place; which Bede also mentions,

Comment. on Mark xi., Book iii.

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Chapter 63.--An Objection.

But inasmuch as it may be said that the instances which I have been

quoting are divine works, whereas to live righteously is a work that

belongs to ourselves, I undertook to show that even this too is a

divine work. This I have done in the present book, with perhaps a

fuller statement than is necessary, although I seem to myself to have

said too little against the opponents of the grace of God. And I am

never so much delighted in my treatment of a subject as when Scripture

comes most copiously to my aid; and when the question to be discussed

requires that "he that glorieth should glory in the Lord;" [1081] and

that we should in all things lift up our hearts and give thanks to the

Lord our God, from whom, "as the Father of lights, every good and every

perfect gift cometh down." [1082] Now if a gift is not God's gift,

because it is wrought by us, or because we act by His gift, then it is

not a work of God that "a mountain should be removed into the sea,"

inasmuch as, according to the Lord's statement, it is by the faith of

men that this is possible. Moreover, He attributes the deed to their

actual operation: "If ye have faith in yourselves as a grain of

mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, "Be thou removed, and be

thou cast into the sea; and it shall be done, and nothing shall be

impossible to you." [1083] Observe how He said "to you," not "to Me" or

"to the Father;" and yet it is certain that no man does such a thing

without God's gift and operation. See how an instance of perfect

righteousness is unexampled among men, and yet is not impossible. For

it might be achieved if there were only applied so much of will as

suffices for so great a thing. There would, however, be so much will,

if there were hidden from us none of those conditions which pertain to

righteousness; and at the same time these so delighted our mind, that

whatever hindrance of pleasure or pain might else occur, this delight

in holiness would prevail over every rival affection. And that this is

not realized, is not owing to any intrinsic impossibility, but to God's

judicial act. For who can be ignorant, that what he should know is not

in man's power; nor does it follow that what he has discovered to be a

desirable object is actually desired, unless he also feel a delight in

that object, commensurate with its claims on his affection? For this

belongs to health of soul.

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[1081] 2 Cor. x. 17.

[1082] Jas. i. 17.

[1083] Compare Matt. xvii. 20, Mark xi. 23, Luke xvii. 6.

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Chapter 64 [XXXVI.]--When the Commandment to Love is Fulfilled.

But somebody will perhaps think that we lack nothing for the knowledge

of righteousness, since the Lord, when He summarily and briefly

expounded His word on earth, informed us that the whole law and the

prophets depend on two commandments; [1084] nor was He silent as to

what these were, but declared them in the plainest words: "Thou shall

love," said He, "the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy

soul, and with all thy mind;" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as

thyself." [1085] What is more surely true than that, if these be

fulfilled, all righteousness is fulfilled? But the man who sets his

mind on this truth must also carefully attend to another,--in how many

things we all of us offend, [1086] while we suppose that what we do is

pleasant, or, at all events, not unpleasing, to God whom we love; and

afterwards, having (through His inspired word, or else by being warned

in some clear and certain way) learned what is not pleasing to Him, we

pray to Him that He would forgive us on our repentance. The life of man

is full of examples of this. But whence comes it that we fall short of

knowing what is pleasing to Him, if it be not that He is to that extent

unknown to us? "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face

to face." [1087] Who, however, can make so bold, on arriving far

enough, to say: "Then shall I know even as also I am known," [1088] as

to think that they who shall see God will have no greater love towards

Him than they have who now believe in Him? or that the one ought to be

compared to the other, as if they were very near to each other? Now, if

love increases just in proportion as our knowledge of its object

becomes more intimate, of course we ought to believe that there is as

much wanting now to the fulfilment of righteousness as there is

defective in our love of it. A thing may indeed be known or believed,

and yet not loved; but it is an impossibility that a thing can be loved

which is neither known nor believed. But if the saints, in the exercise

of their faith, could arrive at that great love, than which (as the

Lord Himself testified) no greater can possibly be exhibited in the

present life,--even to lay down their lives for the faith, or for their

brethren, [1089] --then after their pilgrimage here, in which their

walk is by "faith," when they shall have reached the "sight" of that

final happiness [1090] which we hope for, though as yet we see it not,

and wait for in patience, [1091] then undoubtedly love itself shall be

not only greater than that which we here experience, but far higher

than all which we ask or think; [1092] and yet it cannot be possibly

more than "with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our

mind." For there remains in us nothing which can be added to the whole;

since, if anything did remain, there would not be the whole. Therefore

the first commandment about righteousness, which bids us love the Lord

with all our heart, and soul, and mind [1093] (the next to which is,

that we love our neighbour as ourselves), we shall completely fulfil in

that life when we shall see face to face. [1094] But even now this

commandment is enjoined upon us, that we may be reminded what we ought

by faith to require, and what we should in our hope look forward to,

and, "forgetting the things which are behind, reach forth to the things

which are before." [1095] And thus, as it appears to me, that man has

made a far advance, even in the present life, in the righteousness

which is to be perfected hereafter, who has discovered by this very

advance how very far removed he is from the completion of

righteousness.

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[1084] Matt. xxii. 40.

[1085] Matt. xxii. 37, 39.

[1086] Jas. iii. 2.

[1087] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

[1088] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

[1089] John xv. 13.

[1090] 2 Cor. v. 7.

[1091] Rom. viii. 23.

[1092] Eph. iii. 20.

[1093] Matt. xxii. 37.

[1094] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

[1095] Phil. iii. 13.

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Chapter 65.--In What Sense a Sinless Righteousness in This Life Can Be

Asserted.

Forasmuch, however, as an inferior righteousness may be said to be

competent to this life, whereby the just man lives by faith [1096]

although absent from the Lord, and, therefore, walking by faith and not

yet by sight, [1097] --it may be without absurdity said, no doubt, in

respect of it, that it is free from sin; for it ought not to be

attributed to it as a fault, that it is not as yet sufficient for so

great a love to God as is due to the final, complete, and perfect

condition thereof. It is one thing to fail at present in attaining to

the fulness of love, and another thing to be swayed by no lust. A man

ought therefore to abstain from every unlawful desire, although he

loves God now far less than it is possible to love Him when He becomes

an object of sight; just as in matters connected with the bodily

senses, the eye can receive no pleasure from any kind of darkness,

although it may be unable to look with a firm sight amidst refulgent

light. Only let us see to it that we so constitute the soul of man in

this corruptible body, that, although it has not yet swallowed up and

consumed the motions of earthly lust in that super-eminent perfection

of the love of God, it nevertheless, in that inferior righteousness to

which we have referred, gives no consent to the aforesaid lust for the

purpose of effecting any unlawful thing. In respect, therefore, of that

immortal life, the commandment is even now applicable: "Thou shalt love

the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with

all thy might;" [1098] but in reference to the present life the

following: "Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey

it in the lusts thereof." [1099] To the one, again, belongs, "Thou

shalt not covet;" [1100] to the other, "Thou shalt not go after thy

lusts." [1101] To the one it appertains to seek for nothing more than

to continue in its perfect state; to the other it belongs actively to

do the duty committed to it, and to hope as its reward for the

perfection of the future life,--so that in the one the just man may

live forevermore in the sight of that happiness which in this life was

his object of desire; in the other, he may live by that faith whereon

rests his desire for the ultimate blessedness as its certain end.

(These things being so, it will be sin in the man who lives by faith

ever to consent to an unlawful delight,--by committing not only

frightful deeds and crimes, but even trifling faults; sinful, if he

lend an ear to a word that ought not to be listened to, or a tongue to

a phrase which should not be uttered; sinful, if he entertains a

thought in his heart in such a way as to wish that an evil pleasure

were a lawful one, although known to be unlawful by the

commandment,--for this amounts to a consent to sin, which would

certainly be carried out in act, unless fear of punishment deterred.)

[1102] Have such just men, while living by faith, no need to say:

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors?" [1103] And do they

prove this to be wrong which is written, "In Thy sight shall no man

living be justified?" [1104] and this: "If we say that we have no sin,

we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us?" [1105] and, "There

is no man that sinneth not;" [1106] and again, "There is not on the

earth a righteous man, who doeth good and sinneth not" [1107] (for both

these statements are expressed in a general future sense,--"sinneth

not," "will not sin,"--not in the past time, "has not sinned")?--and

all other places of this purport contained in the Holy Scripture?

Since, however, these passages cannot possibly be false, it plainly

follows, to my mind, that whatever be the quality or extent of the

righteousness which we may definitely ascribe to the present life,

there is not a man living in it who is absolutely free from all sin;

and that it is necessary for every one to give, that it may be given to

him; [1108] and to forgive, that it may be forgiven him; [1109] and

whatever righteousness he has, not to presume that he has it of

himself, but from the grace of God, who justifies him, and still to go

on hungering and thirsting for righteousness [1110] from Him who is the

living bread, [1111] and with whom is the fountain of life; [1112] who

works in His saints, whilst labouring amidst temptation in this life,

their justification in such manner that He may still have somewhat to

impart to them liberally when they ask, and something mercifully to

forgive them when they confess.

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[1096] Rom. i. 17.

[1097] 2 Cor. v. 7.

[1098] Deut. vi. 5.

[1099] Rom. vi. 12.

[1100] Ex. xx. 17.

[1101] Ecclus. xviii. 30.

[1102] The Benedictine editor is not satisfied with the place of the

lines in the parenthesis. He would put them in an earlier position,

perhaps before the clause beginning with, "Only let us see to it," etc.

[1103] Matt. vi. 12.

[1104] Ps. cxliii. 2.

[1105] 1 John i. 8.

[1106] 1 Kings viii. 46.

[1107] Ecclus. vii. 21.

[1108] Luke vi. 30, 38.

[1109] Luke xi. 4.

[1110] Matt. v. 6.

[1111] John vi. 51.

[1112] Ps. xxxvi. 9.

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Chapter 66.--Although Perfect Righteousness Be Not Found Here on Earth,

It is Still Not Impossible.

But let objectors find, if they can, any man, while living under the

weight of this corruption, in whom God has no longer anything to

forgive; unless nevertheless they acknowledge that such an individual

has been aided in the attainment of his good character not merely by

the teaching of the law which God gave, but also by the infusion of the

Spirit of grace--they will incur the charge of ungodliness itself, not

of this or that particular sin. Of course they are not at all able to

discover such a man, if they receive in a becoming manner the testimony

of the divine writings. Still, for all that, it must not by any means

be said that the possibility is lacking to God whereby the will of man

can be so assisted, that there can be accomplished in every respect

even now in a man, not that righteousness only which is of faith,

[1113] but that also in accordance with which we shall by and by have

to live for ever in the very vision of God. For if he should now wish

even that this corruptible in any particular man should put on

incorruption, [1114] and to command him so to live among mortal men

(not destined himself to die) that his old nature should be wholly and

entirely withdrawn, and there should be no law in his members warring

against the law of his mind, [1115] --moreover, that he should discover

God to be everywhere present, as the saints shall hereafter know and

behold Him,--who will madly venture to affirm that this is impossible?

Men, however, ask why He does not do this; but they who raise the

question consider not duly the fact that they are human. I am quite

certain that, as nothing is impossible with God [1116] so also there is

no iniquity with Him. [1117] Equally sure am I that He resists the

proud, and gives grace to the humble. [1118] I know also that to him

who had a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him,

lest he should be exalted above measure, it was said, when he besought

God for its removal once, twice, nay thrice: "My grace is sufficient

for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." [1119] There

is, therefore, in the hidden depths of God's judgments, a certain

reason why every mouth even of the righteous should be shut in its own

praise, and only opened for the praise of God. But what this certain

reason is, who can search, who investigate, who know? So "unsearchable

are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known

the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath

first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of

Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for

ever. Amen." [1120]

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[1113] Rom. x. 6.

[1114] 1 Cor. xv. 53.

[1115] Rom. vii. 23.

[1116] Luke i. 37.

[1117] Rom. ix. 14.

[1118] Jas. iv. 6.

[1119] 2 Cor. xii. 7-9.

[1120] Rom. xi. 33-36.

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a treatise on nature and grace.

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Extract from Augustin's "Retractations,"

Book II. Chap. 42,

On the Following Treatise,

"De natura et gratia."

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"At that time also there came into my hands a certain book of

Pelagius', in which he defends, with all the argumentative skill he

could muster, the nature of man, in opposition to the grace of God

whereby the unrighteous is justified and we become Christians. The

treatise which contains my reply to him, and in which I defend grace,

not indeed as in opposition to nature, but as that which liberates and

controls nature, I have entitled On Nature and Grace. In this work

sundry short passages, which were quoted by Pelagius as the words of

the Roman bishop and martyr, Xystus, were vindicated by myself [1121]

as if they really were the words of this Sixtus. For this I thought

them at the time; but I afterwards discovered, that Sextus the heathen

philosopher, and not Xystus the Christian bishop, was their author.

This treatise of mine begins with the words: The book which you sent

me.'"

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[1121] In chap. 77.

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Note on the Following Work.

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In a letter (169th [1122] ) to Evodius, written in the course of the

year A.D. 415, Augustin assigned to this work, On Nature and Grace, the

last place of several treatises written in that year. "I have also

written," says he, "an extensive book in opposition to the heresy of

Pelagius, at the request of some brethren, whom he had persuaded to

accept a very pernicious opinion against the grace of Christ." The work

had been begun, but was not completed, when Orosius sailed from Africa

to Palestine, in the spring of this year of 415; for, shortly after his

arrival there, at a council in Jerusalem, where Pelagius was present,

he expressly affirmed, "that the blessed Augustin had prepared a very

complete answer to Pelagius' book, two of whose followers had presented

the work to him, and requested him to reply to it." Jerome, also, at

this time mentioned a certain production of Augustin's, which he had

not yet seen, wherein it was said that he had expressly opposed

Pelagius. His words, which occur in his third dialogue against the

heresy of Pelagius, are these: "It is said that he is preparing other

treatises likewise, especially against your name." Augustin, however,

did not actually employ in this work of his the name of Pelagius, whose

book he was refuting, in order that (as he says in his letter [186th]

to Paulinus) he might not by personal irritation drive him into a more

incurable degree of opposition; for he hoped to be of some service to

his opponent, if by still maintaining friendly terms with him he might

be able to spare his feelings, although he could not in duty show

leniency to his writings. Thus, at least, he expresses his mind, in his

book On the Proceedings of Pelagius, ch. xxiii. No. 47. In this latter

passage he subjoins a letter which he had received from Timasius and

Jacobus, containing the expression of great gratitude to Augustin on

receiving his volume On Nature and Grace, in which they expressed

"their agreeable surprise" at the answers he had furnished to them "on

every point" of the Pelagian controversy.

In the following year Augustin despatched this work, along with

Pelagius' own book, to John, bishop of Jerusalem, in order that that

prelate might at length become acquainted with the views of the new

heresiarch, accompanying the books with a letter to the bishop [179th].

In the course of this year 416, he had the same two treatises (his own

and Pelagius') forwarded to Pope Innocent, with a letter [177th] sent

in the name of five bishops, to which Innocent returned an answer

[183d]. It may be here stated, that in this last-mentioned letter [183,

n. 5], and in the foregoing epistle [177, n. 6], there is honourable

mention made of Timasius and Jacobus, as "conscientious and honourable

young men, servants of God, who had relinquished the hope which they

had in the world, and continued diligently to serve God." The same

persons are described in another epistle [179, n. 2] as "young men of

very honourable birth, and highly educated;" and in the work On the

Proceedings of Pelagius, ch. xxiii. No. 47, they are called "servants

of God, good, and honourable men."

Julianus [who espoused the side of Pelagius], in his work addressed to

Florus (book iv. n. 112, of the Imperfect Work), [1123] quotes this

treatise of Augustin's as addressed to Timasius, and calumniously

pronounces it to be written "against free will."

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[1122] See vol. i. p. 543.

[1123] [i.e., the work of Augustin against Julianus, which was left

incomplete at his death, and hence is called the Imperfect Work.--W.]

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A Treatise on nature and grace, against pelagius;

by aurelius augustin, bishop of hippo;

Contained in One Book, addressed to timasius and jacobus.

written in the year of our lord 415.

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He begins with a statement of what is to be investigated concerning

nature and grace; he shows that nature, as propagated from the flesh of

the sinful Adam, being no longer what God made it at first,--faultless

and sound,--requires the aid of grace, in order that it may be redeemed

from the wrath of God and regulated for the perfection of

righteousness: that the penal fault of nature leads to a most righteous

retribution: whilst grace itself is not rendered to any deserts of

ours, but is given gratuitously; and they who are not delivered by it

are justly condemned. He afterwards refutes, with answers on every

several point, a work by Pelagius, who supports this self-same nature

in opposition to grace; among other things especially, in his desire to

recommend the opinion that a man can live without sin, he contended

that nature had not been weakened and changed by sin; for, otherwise,

the matter of sin (which he thinks absurd) would be its punishment, if

the sinner were weakened to such a degree that he committed more sin.

He goes on to enumerate sundry righteous men both of the Old and of the

New Testaments: deeming these to have been free from sin, he alleged

the possibility of not sinning to be inherent in man; and this he

attributed to God's grace, on the ground that God is the author of that

nature in which is inseparably inherent this possibility of avoiding

sin. Towards the end of this treatise there is an examination of sundry

extracts from old writers, which Pelagius adduced in support of his

views, and expressly from Hilary, Ambrose, and even Augustin himself.

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Chapter 1 [I.]--The Occasion of Publishing This Work; What God's

Righteousness is.

The book which you sent to me, my beloved sons, Timasius and Jacobus, I

have read through hastily, but not indifferently, omitting only the few

points which are plain enough to everybody; and I saw in it a man

inflamed with most ardent zeal against those, who, when in their sins

they ought to censure human will, are more forward in accusing the

nature of men, and thereby endeavour to excuse themselves. He shows too

great a fire against this evil, which even authors of secular

literature have severely censured with the exclamation: "The human race

falsely complains of its own nature!" [1124] This same sentiment your

author also has strongly insisted upon, with all the powers of his

talent. I fear, however, that he will chiefly help those "who have a

zeal for God, but not according to knowledge," who, "being ignorant of

God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own

righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of

God." [1125] Now, what the righteousness of God is, which is spoken of

here, he immediately afterwards explains by adding: "For Christ is the

end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." [1126]

This righteousness of God, therefore, lies not in the commandment of

the law, which excites fear, but in the aid afforded by the grace of

Christ, to which alone the fear of the law, as of a schoolmaster,

[1127] usefully conducts. Now, the man who understands this understands

why he is a Christian. For "If righteousness came by the law, then

Christ is dead in vain." [1128] If, however He did not die in vain, in

Him only is the ungodly man justified, and to him, on believing in Him

who justifies the ungodly, faith is reckoned for righteousness. [1129]

For all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being

justified freely by His blood. [1130] But all those who do not think

themselves to belong to the "all who have sinned and fall short of the

glory of God," have of course no need to become Christians, because

"they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick;"

[1131] whence it is, that He came not to call the righteous, but

sinners to repentance. [1132]

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[1124] See Sallust's Prologue to his Jugurtha.

[1125] Rom. x. 2, 3.

[1126] Rom. x. 4.

[1127] Gal. iii. 24.

[1128] Gal. ii. 21.

[1129] Rom. iv. 5.

[1130] Rom. iii. 23, 24.

[1131] Matt. ix. 12.

[1132] Matt. ix. 13.

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Chapter 2 [II.]--Faith in Christ Not Necessary to Salvation, If a Man

Without It Can Lead a Righteous Life.

Therefore the nature of the human race, generated from the flesh of the

one transgressor, if it is self-sufficient for fulfilling the law and

for perfecting righteousness, ought to be sure of its reward, that is,

of everlasting life, even if in any nation or at any former time faith

in the blood of Christ was unknown to it. For God is not so unjust as

to defraud righteous persons of the reward of righteousness, because

there has not been announced to them the mystery of Christ's divinity

and humanity, which was manifested in the flesh. [1133] For how could

they believe what they had not heard of; or how could they hear without

a preacher? [1134] For "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the

word of Christ." But I say (adds he): Have they not heard? "Yea,

verily; their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto

the ends of the world." [1135] Before, however, all this had been

accomplished, before the actual preaching of the gospel reaches the

ends of all the earth--because there are some remote nations still

(although it is said they are very few) to whom the preached gospel has

not found its way,--what must human nature do, or what has it done--for

it had either not heard that all this was to take place, or has not yet

learnt that it was accomplished--but believe in God who made heaven and

earth, by whom also it perceived by nature that it had been itself

created, and lead a right life, and thus accomplish His will,

uninstructed with any faith in the death and resurrection of Christ?

Well, if this could have been done, or can still be done, then for my

part I have to say what the apostle said in regard to the law: "Then

Christ died in vain." [1136] For if he said this about the law, which

only the nation of the Jews received, how much more justly may it be

said of the law of nature, which the whole human race has received, "If

righteousness come by nature, then Christ died in vain." If, however,

Christ did not die in vain, then human nature cannot by any means be

justified and redeemed from God's most righteous wrath--in a word, from

punishment--except by faith and the sacrament of the blood of Christ.

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[1133] 1 Tim. iii. 16.

[1134] Rom. x. 14.

[1135] Rom. x. 17, 18.

[1136] Gal. ii. 21.

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Chapter 3 [III.]--Nature Was Created Sound and Whole; It Was Afterwards

Corrupted by Sin.

Man's nature, indeed, was created at first faultless and without any

sin; but that nature of man in which every one is born from Adam, now

wants the Physician, because it is not sound. All good qualities, no

doubt, which it still possesses in its make, life, senses, intellect,

it has of the Most High God, its Creator and Maker. But the flaw, which

darkens and weakens all those natural goods, so that it has need of

illumination and healing, it has not contracted from its blameless

Creator--but from that original sin, which it committed by free will.

Accordingly, criminal nature has its part in most righteous punishment.

For, if we are now newly created in Christ, [1137] we were, for all

that, children of wrath, even as others, [1138] "but God, who is rich

in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were

dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by whose grace we

were saved." [1139]

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[1137] 2 Cor. v. 17.

[1138] Eph. ii. 3.

[1139] Eph. ii. 4, 5.

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Chapter 4 [IV.]--Free Grace.

This grace, however, of Christ, without which neither infants nor

adults can be saved, is not rendered for any merits, but is given

gratis, on account of which it is also called grace. "Being justified,"

says the apostle, "freely through His blood." [1140] Whence they, who

are not liberated through grace, either because they are not yet able

to hear, or because they are unwilling to obey; or again because they

did not receive, at the time when they were unable on account of youth

to hear, that bath of regeneration, which they might have received and

through which they might have been saved, are indeed justly condemned;

because they are not without sin, either that which they have derived

from their birth, or that which they have added from their own

misconduct. "For all have sinned"--whether in Adam or in

themselves--"and come short of the glory of God." [1141]

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[1140] Rom. iii. 24.

[1141] Rom. iii. 23.

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Chapter 5 [V.]--It Was a Matter of Justice that All Should Be

Condemned.

The entire mass, therefore, incurs penalty and if the deserved

punishment of condemnation were rendered to all, it would without doubt

be righteously rendered. They, therefore, who are delivered therefrom

by grace are called, not vessels of their own merits, but "vessels of

mercy." [1142] But of whose mercy, if not His who sent Christ Jesus

into the world to save sinners, whom He foreknew, and foreordained, and

called, and justified, and glorified? [1143] Now, who could be so madly

insane as to fail to give ineffable thanks to the Mercy which liberates

whom it would? The man who correctly appreciated the whole subject

could not possibly blame the justice of God in wholly condemning all

men whatsoever.

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[1142] Rom. ix. 23.

[1143] Rom. viii. 29, 30.

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Chapter 6 [VI.]--The Pelagians Have Very Strong and Active Minds.

If we are simply wise according to the Scriptures, we are not compelled

to dispute against the grace of Christ, and to make statements

attempting to show that human nature both requires no Physician,--in

infants, because it is whole and sound; and in adults, because it is

able to suffice for itself in attaining righteousness, if it will. Men

no doubt seem to urge acute opinions on these points, but it is only

word-wisdom, [1144] by which the cross of Christ is made of none

effect. This, however, "is not the wisdom which descendeth from above."

[1145] The words which follow in the apostle's statement I am unwilling

to quote; for we would rather not be thought to do an injustice to our

friends, whose very strong and active minds we should be sorry to see

running in a perverse, instead of an upright, course.

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[1144] 1 Cor. i. 17.

[1145] Jas. iii. 15.

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Chapter 7 [VII.]--He Proceeds to Confute the Work of Pelagius; He

Refrains as Yet from Mentioning Pelagius' Name.

However ardent, then, is the zeal which the author of the book you have

forwarded to me entertains against those who find a defence for their

sins in the infirmity of human nature; not less, nay even much greater,

should be our eagerness in preventing all attempts to render the cross

of Christ of none effect. Of none effect, however, it is rendered, if

it be contended that by any other means than by Christ's own sacrament

it is possible to attain to righteousness and everlasting life. This is

actually done in the book to which I refer--I will not say by its

author wittingly, lest I should express the judgment that he ought not

to be accounted even a Christian, but, as I rather believe,

unconsciously. He has done it, no doubt, with much power; I only wish

that the ability he has displayed were sound and less like that which

insane persons are accustomed to exhibit.

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Chapter 8.--A Distinction Drawn by Pelagius Between the Possible and

Actual.

For he first of all makes a distinction: "It is one thing," says he,

"to inquire whether a thing can be, which has respect to its

possibility only; and another thing, whether or not it is." This

distinction, nobody doubts, is true enough; for it follows that

whatever is, was able to be; but it does not therefore follow that what

is able to be, also is. Our Lord, for instance, raised Lazarus; He

unquestionably was able to do so. But inasmuch as He did not raise up

Judas [1146] must we therefore contend that He was unable to do so? He

certainly was able, but He would not. For if He had been willing, He

could have effected this too. For the Son quickeneth whomsoever He

will. [1147] Observe, however, what he means by this distinction, true

and manifest enough in itself, and what he endeavours to make out of

it. "We are treating," says he, "of possibility only; and to pass from

this to something else, except in the case of some certain fact, we

deem to be a very serious and extraordinary process." This idea he

turns over again and again, in many ways and at great length, so that

no one would suppose that he was inquiring about any other point than

the possibility of not committing sin. Among the many passages in which

he treats of this subject, occurs the following: "I once more repeat my

position: I say that it is possible for a man to be without sin. What

do you say? That it is impossible for a man to be without sin? But I do

not say," he adds, "that there is a man without sin; nor do you say,

that there is not a man without sin. Our contention is about what is

possible, and not possible; not about what is, and is not." He then

enumerates certain passages of Scripture, [1148] which are usually

alleged in opposition to them, and insists that they have nothing to do

with the question, which is really in dispute, as to the possibility or

impossibility of a man's being without sin. This is what he says: "No

man indeed is clean from pollution; and, There is no man that sinneth

not; and, There is not a just man upon the earth; and, There is none

that doeth good. There are these and similar passages in Scripture,"

says he, "but they testify to the point of not being, not of not being

able; for by testimonies of this sort it is shown what kind of persons

certain men were at such and such a time, not that they were unable to

be something else. Whence they are justly found to be blameworthy. If,

however, they had been of such a character, simply because they were

unable to be anything else, they are free from blame."

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[1146] Peter Lombard refers to this passage of Augustin, to show that

God can do many things which He will not do. See his 1Sent. Dist. 43,

last chapter.

[1147] John v. 21.

[1148] Job xiv. 2; 1 Kings viii. 46; Eccles. vii. 21; Ps. xiv. 1.

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Chapter 9 [VIII.]--Even They Who Were Not Able to Be Justified are

Condemned.

See what he has said. I, however, affirm that an infant born in a place

where it was not possible for him to be admitted to the baptism of

Christ, and being overtaken by death, was placed in such circumstances,

that is to say, died without the bath of regeneration, because it was

not possible for him to be otherwise. He would therefore absolve him,

and, in spite of the Lord's sentence, open to him the kingdom of

heaven. The apostle, however, does not absolve him, when he says: "By

one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; by which death

passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." [1149] Rightly,

therefore, by virtue of that condemnation which runs throughout the

mass, is he not admitted into the kingdom of heaven, although he was

not only not a Christian, but was unable to become one.

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[1149] Rom. v. 12.

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Chapter 10 [IX.]--He Could Not Be Justified, Who Had Not Heard of the

Name of Christ; Rendering the Cross of Christ of None Effect.

But they say: "He is not condemned; because the statement that all

sinned in Adam, was not made because of the sin which is derived from

one's birth, but because of imitation of him." If, therefore, Adam is

said to be the author of all the sins which followed his own, because

he was the first sinner of the human race, then how is it that Abel,

rather than Christ, is not placed at the head of all the righteous,

because he was the first righteous man? But I am not speaking of the

case of an infant. I take the instance of a young man, or an old man,

who has died in a region where he could not hear of the name of Christ.

Well, could such a man have become righteous by nature and free will;

or could he not? If they contend that he could, then see what it is to

render the cross of Christ of none effect, [1150] to contend that any

man without it, can be justified by the law of nature and the power of

his will. We may here also say, then is Christ dead in vain [1151]

forasmuch as all might accomplish so much as this, even if He had never

died; and if they should be unrighteous, they would be so because they

wished to be, not because they were unable to be righteous. But even

though a man could not be justified at all without the grace of Christ,

he would absolve him, if he dared, in accordance with his words, to the

effect that, "if a man were of such a character, because he could not

possibly have been of any other, he would be free from all blame."

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[1150] 1 Cor. i. 1.

[1151] Gal. ii. 21.

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Chapter 11 [X.]--Grace Subtly Acknowledged by Pelagius.

He then starts an objection to his own position, as if, indeed, another

person had raised it, and says: "A man,' you will say, may possibly be

[without sin]; but it is by the grace of God.'" He then at once

subjoins the following, as if in answer to his own suggestion: "I thank

you for your kindness, because you are not merely content to withdraw

your opposition to my statement, which you just now opposed, or barely

to acknowledge it; but you actually go so far as to approve it. For to

say, A man may possibly, but by this or by that,' is in fact nothing

else than not only to assent to its possibility, but also to show the

mode and condition of its possibility. Nobody, therefore, gives a

better assent to the possibility of anything than the man who allows

the condition thereof; because, without the thing itself, it is not

possible for a condition to be." After this he raises another objection

against. himself: "But, you will say, you here seem to reject the grace

of God, inasmuch as you do not even mention it;'" and he then answers

the objection: "Now, is it I that reject grace, who by acknowledging

the thing must needs also confess the means by which it may be

effected, or you, who by denying the thing do undoubtedly also deny

whatever may be the means through which the thing is accomplished?" He

forgot that he was now answering one who does not deny the thing, and

whose objection he had just before set forth in these words: "A man may

possibly be [without sin]; but it is by the grace of God." How then

does that man deny the possibility, in defence of which his opponent

earnestly contends, when he makes the admission to that opponent that

"the thing is possible, but only by the grace of God?" That, however,

after he is dismissed who already acknowledges the essential thing, he

still has a question against those who maintain the impossibility of a

man's being without sin, what is it to us? Let him ply his questions

against any opponents he pleases, provided he only confesses this,

which cannot be denied without the most criminal impiety, that without

the grace of God a man cannot be without sin. He says, indeed: "Whether

he confesses it to be by grace, or by aid, or by mercy, whatever that

be by which a man can be without sin,--every one acknowledges the thing

itself."

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Chapter 12 [XI.]--In Our Discussions About Grace, We Do Not Speak of

that Which Relates to the Constitution of Our Nature, But to Its

Restoration.

I confess to your love, that when I read those words I was filled with

a sudden joy, because he did not deny the grace of God by which alone a

man can be justified; for it is this which I mainly detest and dread in

discussions of this kind. But when I went on to read the rest, I began

to have my suspicions, first of all, from the similes he employs. For

he says: "If I were to say, man is able to dispute; a bird is able to

fly; a hare is able to run; without mentioning at the same time the

instruments by which these acts can be accomplished--that is, the

tongue, the wings, and the legs; should I then have denied the

conditions of the various offices, when I acknowledged the very offices

themselves?" It is at once apparent that he has here instanced such

things as are by nature efficient; for the members of the bodily

structure which are here mentioned are created with natures of such a

kind--the tongue, the wings, the legs. He has not here posited any such

thing as we wish to have understood by grace, without which no man is

justified; for this is a topic which is concerned about the cure, not

the constitution, of natural functions. Entertaining, then, some

apprehensions, I proceeded to read all the rest, and I soon found that

my suspicions had not been unfounded.

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Chapter 13 [XII.]--The Scope and Purpose of the Law's Threatenings;

"Perfect Wayfarers."

But before I proceed further, see what he has said. When treating the

question about the difference of sins, and starting as an objection to

himself, what certain persons allege, "that some sins are light by

their very frequency, their constant irruption making it impossible

that they should be all of them avoided;" he thereupon denied that it

was "proper that they should be censured even as light offences, if

they cannot possibly be wholly avoided." He of course does not notice

the Scriptures of the New Testament, wherein we learn [1152] that the

intention of the law in its censure is this, that, by reason of the

transgressions which men commit, they may flee for refuge to the grace

of the Lord, who has pity upon them--"the schoolmaster" [1153]

"shutting them up unto the same faith which should afterwards be

revealed;" [1154] that by it their transgressions may be forgiven, and

then not again be committed, by God's assisting grace. The road indeed

belongs to all who are progressing in it; although it is they who make

a good advance that are called "perfect travellers." That, however, is

the height of perfection which admits of no addition, when the goal to

which men tend has begun to be possessed.

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[1152] We have read discimus, not dicimus.

[1153] Gal. iii. 24.

[1154] Gal. iii. 23.

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Chapter 14 [XIII.]--Refutation of Pelagius.

But the truth is, the question which is proposed to him--"Are you even

yourself without sin?"--does not really belong to the subject in

dispute. What, however, he says,--that "it is rather to be imputed to

his own negligence that he is not without sin," is no doubt well

spoken; but then he should deem it to be his duty even to pray to God

that this faulty negligence get not the dominion over him,--the prayer

that a certain man once put up, when he said: "Order my steps according

to Thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me," [1155]

--lest, whilst relying on his own diligence as on strength of his own,

he should fail to attain to the true righteousness either by this way,

or by that other method in which, no doubt, perfect righteousness is to

be desired and hoped for.

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[1155] Ps. cxix. 133.

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Chapter 15 [XIV.]--Not Everything [of Doctrinal Truth] is Written in

Scripture in So Many Words.

That, too, which is said to him, "that it is nowhere written in so many

words, A man can be without sin," he easily refutes thus: "That the

question here is not in what precise words each doctrinal statement is

made." It is perhaps not without reason that, while in several passages

of Scripture we may find it said that men are without excuse, it is

nowhere found that any man is described as being without sin, except

Him only, of whom it is plainly said, that "He knew no sin." [1156]

Similarly, we read in the passage where the subject is concerning

priests: "He was in all points tempted like as we are, only without

sin," [1157] --meaning, of course, in that flesh which bore the

likeness of sinful flesh, although it was not sinful flesh; a likeness,

indeed, which it would not have borne if it had not been in every other

respect the same as sinful flesh. How, however, we are to understand

this: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; neither can he

sin, for his seed remaineth in him;" [1158] while the Apostle John

himself, as if he had not been born of God, or else were addressing men

who had not been born of God, lays down this position: "If we say that

we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,"

[1159] --I have already explained, with such care as I was able, in

those books which I wrote to Marcellinus on this very subject. [1160]

It seems, moreover, to me to be an interpretation worthy of acceptance

to regard the clause of the above quoted passage: "Neither can he sin,"

as if it meant: He ought not to commit sin. For who could be so foolish

as to say that sin ought to be committed, when, in fact, sin is sin,

for no other reason than that it ought not to be committed?

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[1156] 2 Cor. v. 21.

[1157] Heb. iv. 15.

[1158] 1 John iii. 9.

[1159] 1 John i. 8.

[1160] See the De Peccat. Meritis et Remissione, ii. 8-10.

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Chapter 16 [XV.]--Pelagius Corrupts a Passage of the Apostle James by

Adding a Note of Interrogation.

Now that passage, in which the Apostle James says: "But the tongue can

no man tame," [1161] does not appear to me to be capable of the

interpretation which he would put upon it, when he expounds it, "as if

it were written by way of reproach; as much as to say: Can no man then,

tame the tongue? As if in a reproachful tone, which would say: You are

able to tame wild beasts; cannot you tame the tongue? As if it were an

easier thing to tame the tongue than to subjugate wild beasts." I do

not think that this is the meaning of the passage. For, if he had meant

such an opinion as this to be entertained of the facility of taming the

tongue, there would have followed in the sequel of the passage a

comparison of that member with the beasts. As it is, however, it simply

goes on to say: "The tongue is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison,"

[1162] --such, of course, as is more noxious than that of beasts and

creeping things. For while the one destroys the flesh, the other kills

the soul. For, "The mouth that belieth slayeth the soul." [1163] It is

not, therefore, as if this is an easier achievement than the taming of

beasts that St. James pronounced the statement before us, or would have

others utter it; but he rather aims at showing what a great evil in man

his tongue is--so great, indeed, that it cannot be tamed by any man,

although even beasts are tameable by human beings. And he said this,

not with a view to our permitting, through our neglect, the continuance

of so great an evil to ourselves, but in order that we might be induced

to request the help of divine grace for the taming of the tongue. For

he does not say: "None can tame the tongue;" but "No man;" in order

that, when it is tamed, we may acknowledge it to be effected by the

mercy of God, the help of God, the grace of God. The soul, therefore,

should endeavour to tame the tongue, and while endeavouring should pray

for assistance; the tongue, too, should beg for the taming of the

tongue,--He being the tamer who said to His disciples: "It is not ye

that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."

[1164] Thus, we are warned by the precept to do this,--namely, to make

the attempt, and, failing in our own strength, to pray for the help of

God.

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[1161] Jas. iii. 8.

[1162] Jas. iii. 8.

[1163] Wisd. i. 11.

[1164] Matt. x. 20.

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Chapter 17 [XVI.]--Explanation of This Text Continued.

Accordingly, after emphatically describing the evil of the

tongue--saying, among other things: "My brethren, these things ought

not so to be" [1165] --he at once, after finishing some remarks which

arose out of his subject, goes on to add this advice, showing by what

help those things would not happen, which (as he said) ought not: "Who

is a wise man and endowed with knowledge among you? Let him show out of

a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have

bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not and lie not against

the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly,

sensual, devilish. For where there is envying and strife, there is

confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is

first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of

mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

[1166] This is the wisdom which tames the tongue; it descends from

above, and springs from no human heart. Will any one, then, dare to

divorce it from the grace of God, and with most arrogant vanity place

it in the power of man? Why should I pray to God that it be accorded

me, if it may be had of man? Ought we not to object to this prayer lest

injury be done to free will which is self-sufficient in the possibility

of nature for discharging all the duties of righteousness? We ought,

then, to object also to the Apostle James himself, who admonishes us in

these words: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that

giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given

him; but let him ask in faith, nothing doubting." [1167] This is the

faith to which the commandments drive us, in order that the law may

prescribe our duty and faith accomplish it. [1168] For through the

tongue, which no man can tame, but only the wisdom which comes down

from above, "in many things we all of us offend." [1169] For this truth

also the same apostle pronounced in no other sense than that in which

he afterwards declares: "The tongue no man can tame." [1170]

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[1165] Jas. iii. 10.

[1166] Jas. iii. 13-17.

[1167] Jas. i. 5, 6.

[1168] Ut lex imperet et fides impetret.

[1169] Jas. iii. 2.

[1170] Jas. iii. 8.

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Chapter 18 [XVII.]--Who May Be Said to Be in the Flesh.

There is a passage which nobody could place against these texts with

the similar purpose of showing the impossibility of not sinning: "The

wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the

law of God, neither indeed can be; so then they that are in the flesh

cannot please God;" [1171] for he here mentions the wisdom of the

flesh, not the wisdom which cometh from above: moreover, it is

manifest, that in this passage, by the phrase, "being in the flesh,"

are signified, not those who have not yet quitted the body, but those

who live according to the flesh. The question, however, we are

discussing does not lie in this point. But what I want to hear from

him, if I can, is about those who live according to the Spirit, and who

on this account are not, in a certain sense, in the flesh, even while

they still live here,--whether they, by God's grace, live according to

the Spirit, or are sufficient for themselves, natural capability having

been bestowed on them when they were created, and their own proper will

besides. Whereas the fulfilling of the law is nothing else than love;

[1172] and God's love is shed abroad in our hearts, not by our own

selves, but by the Holy Ghost which is given to us. [1173]

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[1171] Rom. viii. 7, 8.

[1172] Rom. xiii. 10.

[1173] Rom. v. 5.

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Chapter 19.--Sins of Ignorance; To Whom Wisdom is Given by God on Their

Requesting It.

He further treats of sins of ignorance, and says that "a man ought to

be very careful to avoid ignorance; and that ignorance is blameworthy

for this reason, because it is through his own neglect that a man is

ignorant of that which he certainly must have known if he had only

applied diligence;" whereas he prefers disputing all things rather than

to pray, and say: "Give me understanding, that I may learn Thy

commandments." [1174] It is, indeed, one thing to have taken no pains

to know what sins of negligence were apparently expiated even through

divers sacrifices of the law; it is another thing to wish to

understand, to be unable, and then to act contrary to the law, through

not understanding what it would have done. We are accordingly enjoined

to ask of God wisdom, "who giveth to all men liberally;" [1175] that

is, of course, to all men who ask in such a manner, and to such an

extent, as so great a matter requires in earnestness of petition.

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[1174] Ps. cxix. 73.

[1175] Jas. i. 5.

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Chapter 20 [XVIII.]--What Prayer Pelagius Would Admit to Be Necessary.

He confesses that "sins which have been committed do notwithstanding

require to be divinely expiated, and that the Lord must be entreated

because of them,"--that is, for the purpose, of course, of obtaining

pardon; "because that which has been done cannot," it is his own

admission, "be undone," by that "power of nature and will of man" which

he talks about so much. From this necessity, therefore, it follows that

a man must pray to be forgiven. That a man, however, requires to be

helped not to sin, he has nowhere admitted; I read no such admission in

this passage; he keeps a strange silence on this subject altogether;

although the Lord's Prayer enjoins upon us the necessity of praying

both that our debts may be remitted to us, and that we may not be led

into temptation,--the one petition entreating that past offences may be

atoned for; the other, that future ones may be avoided. Now, although

this is never done unless our will be assistant, yet our will alone is

not enough to secure its being done; the prayer, therefore, which is

offered up to God for this result is neither superfluous nor offensive

to the Lord. For what is more foolish than to pray that you may do that

which you have it in your own power to do.

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Chapter 21 [XIX.]--Pelagius Denies that Human Nature Has Been Depraved

or Corrupted by Sin.

You may now see (what bears very closely on our subject) how he

endeavours to exhibit human nature, as if it were wholly without fault,

and how he struggles against the plainest of God's Scriptures with that

"wisdom of word" [1176] which renders the cross of Christ of none

effect. That cross, however, shall certainly never be made of none

effect; rather shall such wisdom be subverted. Now, after we shall have

demonstrated this, it may be that God's mercy may visit him, so that he

may be sorry that he ever said these things: "We have," he says, "first

of all to discuss the position which is maintained, that our nature has

been weakened and changed by sin. I think," continues he, "that before

all other things we have to inquire what sin is,--some substance, or

wholly a name without substance, whereby is expressed not a thing, not

an existence, not some sort of a body, but the doing of a wrongful

deed." He then adds: "I suppose that this is the case; and if so," he

asks, "how could that which lacks all substance have possibly weakened

or changed human nature?" Observe, I beg of you, how in his ignorance

he struggles to overthrow the most salutary words of the remedial

Scriptures: "I said, O Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my soul, for I

have sinned against Thee." [1177] Now, how can a thing be healed, if it

is not wounded nor hurt, nor weakened and corrupted? But, as there is

here something to be healed, whence did it receive its injury? You hear

[the Psalmist] confessing the fact; what need is there of discussion?

He says: "Heal my soul." Ask him how that which he wants to be healed

became injured, and then listen to his following words: "Because I have

sinned against Thee." Let him, however, put a question, and ask what he

deemed a suitable inquiry, and say: "O you who exclaim, Heal my soul,

for I have sinned against Thee! pray tell me what sin is? Some

substance, or wholly a name without substance, whereby is expressed,

not a thing, not an existence, not some sort of a body, but merely the

doing of a wrongful deed?" Then the other returns for answer: "It is

even as you say; sin is not some substance; but under its name there is

merely expressed the doing of a wrongful deed." But he rejoins: "Then

why cry out, Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee? How could

that have possibly corrupted your soul which lacks all substance?" Then

would the other, worn out with the anguish of his wound, in order to

avoid being diverted from prayer by the discussion, briefly answer and

say: "Go from me, I beseech you; rather discuss the point, if you can,

with Him who said: They that are whole need no physician, but they that

are sick; I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners,'" [1178]

--in which words, of course, He designated the righteous as the whole,

and sinners as the sick.

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[1176] 1 Cor. i. 17.

[1177] Ps. xli. 4.

[1178] Matt. ix. 12, 13.

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Chapter 22 [XX.]--How Our Nature Could Be Vitiated by Sin, Even Though

It Be Not a Substance.

Now, do you not perceive the tendency and direction of this

controversy? Even to render of none effect the Scripture where it is

said "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from

their sins." [1179] For how is He to save where there is no malady? For

the sins, from which this gospel says Christ's people have to be saved,

are not substances, and according to this writer are incapable of

corrupting. O brother, how good a thing it is to remember that you are

a Christian! To believe, might perhaps be enough; but still, since you

persist in discussion, there is no harm, nay there is even benefit, if

a firm faith precede it; let us not suppose, then, that human nature

cannot be corrupted by sin, but rather, believing, from the inspired

Scriptures, that it is corrupted by sin, let our inquiry be how this

could possibly have come about. Since, then, we have already learnt

that sin is not a substance, do we not consider, not to mention any

other example, that not to eat is also not a substance? Because such

abstinence is withdrawal from a substance, inasmuch as food is a

substance. To abstain, then, from food is not a substance; and yet the

substance of our body, if it does altogether abstain from food, so

languishes, is so impaired by broken health, is so exhausted of

strength, so weakened and broken with very weariness, that even if it

be in any way able to continue alive, it is hardly capable of being

restored to the use of that food, by abstaining from which it became so

corrupted and injured. In the same way sin is not a substance; but God

is a substance, yea the height of substance and only true sustenance of

the reasonable creature. The consequence of departing from Him by

disobedience, and of inability, through infirmity, to receive what one

ought really to rejoice in, you hear from the Psalmist, when he says:

"My heart is smitten and withered like grass, since I have forgotten to

eat my bread." [1180]

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[1179] Matt. i. 21.

[1180] Ps. cii. 4.

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Chapter 23 [XXI.]--Adam Delivered by the Mercy of Christ.

But observe how, by specious arguments, he continues to oppose the

truth of Holy Scripture. The Lord Jesus, who is called Jesus because He

saves His people from their sins, [1181] in accordance with this His

merciful character, says: "They that be whole need not a physician, but

they that are sick; I am come not to call the righteous, but sinners to

repentance." [1182] Accordingly, His apostle also says: "This is a

faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came

into the world to save sinners." [1183] This man, however, contrary to

the "faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation," declares that

"this sickness ought not to have been contracted by sins, lest the

punishment of sin should amount to this, that more sins should be

committed." Now even for infants the help of the Great Physician is

sought. This writer asks: "Why seek Him? They are whole for whom you

seek the Physician. Not even was the first man condemned to die for any

such reason, for he did not sin afterwards." As if he had ever heard

anything of his subsequent perfection in righteousness, except so far

as the Church commends to our faith that even Adam was delivered by the

mercy of the Lord Christ. "As to his posterity also," says he, "not

only are they not more infirm than he, but they actually fulfilled more

commandments than he ever did, since he neglected to fulfil one,"--this

posterity which he sees so born (as Adam certainly was not made), not

only incapable of commandment, which they do not at all understand, but

hardly capable of sucking the breast, when they are hungry! Yet even

these would He have to be saved in the bosom of Mother Church by His

grace who saves His people from their sins; but these men gainsay such

grace, and, as if they had a deeper insight into the creature than ever

He possesses who made the creature, they pronounce [these infants]

sound with an assertion which is anything but sound itself.

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[1181] Matt. i. 21.

[1182] Matt. ix. 12.

[1183] 1 Tim. i. 15.

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Chapter 24 [XXII.]--Sin and the Penalty of Sin the Same.

"The very matter," says he, "of sin is its punishment, if the sinner is

so much weakened that he commits more sins." He does not consider how

justly the light of truth forsakes the man who transgresses the law.

When thus deserted he of course becomes blinded, and necessarily

offends more; and by so falling is embarrassed and being embarrassed

fails to rise, so as to hear the voice of the law, which admonishes him

to beg for the Saviour's grace. Is no punishment due to them of whom

the apostle says: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him

not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their

imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened?" [1184] This

darkening was, of course, already their punishment and penalty; and yet

by this very penalty--that is, by their blindness of heart, which

supervenes on the withdrawal of the light of wisdom--they fell into

more grievous sins still. "For giving themselves out as wise, they

became fools." This is a grievous penalty, if one only understands it;

and from such a penalty only see to what lengths they ran: "And they

changed," he says, "the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image

made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and

creeping things." [1185] All this they did owing to that penalty of

their sin, whereby "their foolish heart was darkened." And yet, owing

to these deeds of theirs, which, although coming in the way of

punishment, were none the less sins (he goes on to say): "Wherefore God

also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own

hearts." [1186] See how severely God condemned them, giving them over

to uncleanness in the very desires of their heart. Observe also the

sins they commit owing to such condemnation: "To dishonour," says he,

"their own bodies among themselves." [1187] Here is the punishment of

iniquity, which is itself iniquity; a fact which sets forth in a

clearer light the words which follow: "Who changed the truth of God

into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the

Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen." "For this cause," says he,

"God gave them up unto vile affections." [1188] See how often God

inflicts punishment; and out of the self-same punishment sins, more

numerous and more severe, arise. "For even their women did change the

natural use into that which is against nature; and likewise the men

also, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one

toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly." [1189]

Then, to show that these things were so sins themselves, that they were

also the penalties of sins, he further says: "And receiving in

themselves that recompense of their error which was meet." [1190]

Observe how often it happens that the very punishment which God

inflicts begets other sins as its natural offspring. Attend still

further: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their

knowledge," says he, "God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do

those things which are not convenient; being filled with all

unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness;

full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

backbiters, odious to God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of

evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding,

covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful."

[1191] Here, now, let our opponent say: "Sin ought not so to have been

punished, that the sinner, through his punishment, should commit even

more sins."

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[1184] Rom. i. 21.

[1185] Rom. i. 23.

[1186] Rom. i. 24.

[1187] Rom. i. 24.

[1188] Rom. i. 25, 26.

[1189] Rom. i. 26, 27.

[1190] Rom. i. 27.

[1191] Rom. i. 28-31.

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Chapter 25 [XXIII.]--God Forsakes Only Those Who Deserve to Be

Forsaken. We are Sufficient of Ourselves to Commit Sin; But Not to

Return to the Way of Righteousness. Death is the Punishment, Not the

Cause of Sin.

Perhaps he may answer that God does not compel men to do these things,

but only forsakes those who deserve to be forsaken. If he does say

this, he says what is most true. For, as I have already remarked, those

who are forsaken by the light of righteousness, and are therefore

groping in darkness, produce nothing else than those works of darkness

which I have enumerated, until such time as it is said to them, and

they obey the command: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the

dead, and Christ shall give thee light." [1192] The truth designates

them as dead; whence the passage: "Let the dead bury their dead." The

truth, then, designates as dead those whom this man declares to have

been unable to be damaged or corrupted by sin, on the ground, forsooth,

that he has discovered sin to be no substance! Nobody tells him that

"man was so formed as to be able to pass from righteousness to sin, and

yet not able to return from sin to righteousness." But that free will,

whereby man corrupted his own self, was sufficient for his passing into

sin; but to return to righteousness, he has need of a Physician, since

he is out of health; he has need of a Vivifier, because he is dead. Now

about such grace as this he says not a word, as if he were able to cure

himself by his own will, since this alone was able to ruin him. We do

not tell him that the death of the body is of efficacy for sinning,

because it is only its punishment; for no one sins by undergoing the

death of his body; but the death of the soul is conducive to sin,

forsaken as it is by its life, that is, its God; and it must needs

produce dead works, until it revives by the grace of Christ. God forbid

that we should assert that hunger and thirst and other bodily

sufferings necessarily produce sin. When exercised by such vexations,

the life of the righteous only shines out with greater lustre, and

procures a greater glory by overcoming them through patience; but then

it is assisted by the grace, it is assisted by the Spirit, it is

assisted by the mercy of God; not exalting itself in an arrogant will,

but earning fortitude by a humble confession. For it had learnt to say

unto God: "Thou art my hope; Thou art my trust." [1193] Now, how it

happens that concerning this grace, and help and mercy, without which

we cannot live, this man has nothing to say, I am at a loss to know;

but he goes further, and in the most open manner gainsays the grace of

Christ whereby we are justified, by insisting on the sufficiency of

nature to work righteousness, provided only the will be present. The

reason, however, why, after sin has been released to the guilty one by

grace, for the exercise of faith, there should still remain the death

of the body, although it proceeds from sin, I have already explained,

according to my ability, in those books which I wrote to Marcellinus of

blessed memory. [1194]

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[1192] Eph. v. 14.

[1193] Ps. lxxi. 5.

[1194] The tribune Marcellinus had been put to death in the September

of 413, "having, though innocent, fallen a victim to the cruel hatred

of the tyrant Heraclius," as Jerome writes in his book iii. against the

Pelagians. Honorius mentions him as a "man of conspicuous renown," in a

law enacted August 30, in the year 414, contained in the Cod Theod.

xvi. 5 (de h�reticis), line 55. Compare the notes above, pp. 15 and 80.

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Chapter 26 [XXIV.]--Christ Died of His Own Power and Choice.

As to his statement, indeed, that "the Lord was able to die without

sin;" His being born also was of the ability of His mercy, not the

demand of His nature: so, likewise, did He undergo death of His own

power; and this is our price which He paid to redeem us from death.

Now, this truth their contention labours hard to make of none effect;

for human nature is maintained by them to be such, that with free will

it wants no such ransom in order to be translated from the power of

darkness and of him who has the power of death, [1195] into the kingdom

of Christ the Lord. [1196] And yet, when the Lord drew near His

passion, He said, "Behold, the prince of this world cometh and shall

find nothing in me," [1197] --and therefore no sin, of course, on

account of which he might exercise dominion over Him, so as to destroy

Him. "But," added He, "that the world may know that I do the will of my

Father, arise, let us go hence;" [1198] as much as to say, I am going

to die, not through the necessity of sin, but in voluntariness of

obedience.

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[1195] Heb. ii. 14.

[1196] Col. i. 13.

[1197] John xiv. 30.

[1198] John xiv. 31.

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Chapter 27.--Even Evils, Through God's Mercy, are of Use.

He asserts that "no evil is the cause of anything good;" as if

punishment, forsooth, were good, although thereby many have been

reformed. There are, then, evils which are of use by the wondrous mercy

of God. Did that man experience some good thing, when he said, "Thou

didst hide Thy face from me, and I was troubled?" [1199] Certainly not;

and yet this very trouble was to him in a certain manner a remedy

against his pride. For he had said in his prosperity, "I shall never be

moved;" [1200] and so was ascribing to himself what he was receiving

from the Lord. "For what had he that he did not receive?" [1201] It

had, therefore, become necessary to show him whence he had received,

that he might receive in humility what he had lost in pride.

Accordingly, he says, "In Thy good pleasure, O Lord, Thou didst add

strength to my beauty." [1202] In this abundance of mine I once used to

say, "I shall not be moved;" whereas it all came from Thee, not from

myself. Then at last Thou didst turn away Thy face from me, and I

became troubled.

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[1199] Ps. xxx. 7.

[1200] Ps. xxx. 8.

[1201] 1 Cor. iv. 7.

[1202] Ps. xxx. 7.

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Chapter 28 [XXV.]--The Disposition of Nearly All Who Go Astray. With

Some Heretics Our Business Ought Not to Be Disputation, But Prayer.

Man's proud mind has no relish at all for this; God, however, is great,

in persuading even it how to find it all out. We are, indeed, more

inclined to seek how best to reply to such arguments as oppose our

error, than to experience how salutary would be our condition if we

were free from error. We ought, therefore, to encounter all such, not

by discussions, but rather by prayers both for them and for ourselves.

For we never say to them, what this opponent has opposed to himself,

that "sin was necessary in order that there might be a cause for God's

mercy." Would there had never been misery to render that mercy

necessary! But the iniquity of sin,--which is so much the greater in

proportion to the ease wherewith man might have avoided sin, whilst no

infirmity did as yet beset him,--has been followed closely up by a most

righteous punishment; even that [offending man] should receive in

himself a reward in kind of his sin, losing that obedience of his body

which had been in some degree put under his own control, which he had

despised when it was the right of his Lord. And, inasmuch as we are now

born with the self-same law of sin, which in our members resists the

law of our mind, we ought never to murmur against God, nor to dispute

in opposition to the clearest fact, but to seek and pray for His mercy

instead of our punishment.

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Chapter 29 [XXVI.]--A Simile to Show that God's Grace is Necessary for

Doing Any Good Work Whatever. God Never Forsakes the Justified Man If

He Be Not Himself Forsaken. [1203]

Observe, indeed, how cautiously he expresses himself: "God, no doubt,

applies His mercy even to this office, whenever it is necessary because

man after sin requires help in this way, not because God wished there

should be a cause for such necessity." Do you not see how he does not

say that God's grace is necessary to prevent us from sinning, but

because we have sinned? Then he adds: "But just in the same way it is

the duty of a physician to be ready to cure a man who is already

wounded; although he ought not to wish for a man who is sound to be

wounded." Now, if this simile suits the subject of which we are

treating, human nature is certainly incapable of receiving a wound from

sin, inasmuch as sin is not a substance. As therefore, for example's

sake, a man who is lamed by a wound is cured in order that his step for

the future may be direct and strong, its past infirmity being healed,

so does the Heavenly Physician cure our maladies, not only that they

may cease any longer to exist, but in order that we may ever afterwards

be able to walk aright,--to which we should be unequal, even after our

healing, except by His continued help. For after a medical man has

administered a cure, in order that the patient may be afterwards duly

nourished with bodily elements and ailments, for the completion and

continuance of the said cure by suitable means and help, he commends

him to God's good care, who bestows these aids on all who live in the

flesh, and from whom proceeded even those means which [the physician]

applied during the process of the cure. For it is not out of any

resources which he has himself created that the medical man effects any

cure, but out of the resources of Him who creates all things which are

required by the whole and by the sick. God, however, whenever

He--through "the one mediator between God and men, the man Christ

Jesus"--spiritually heals the sick or raises the dead, that is,

justifies the ungodly, and when He has brought him to perfect health,

in other words, to the fulness of life and righteousness, does not

forsake, if He is not forsaken, in order that life may be passed in

constant piety and righteousness. For, just as the eye of the body,

even when completely sound, is unable to see unless aided by the

brightness of light, so also man, even when most fully justified, is

unable to lead a holy life, if he be not divinely assisted by the

eternal light of righteousness. God, therefore, heals us not only that

He may blot out the sin which we have committed, but, furthermore, that

He may enable us even to avoid sinning.

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[1203] See the treatise De Peccatorum Meritis, ii. 22.

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Chapter 30 [XXVII.]--Sin is Removed by Sin.

He no doubt shows some acuteness in handling, and turning over and

exposing, as he likes, and refuting a certain statement, which is made

to this effect, that "it was really necessary to man, in order to take

from him all occasion for pride and boasting, that he should be unable

to exist without sin." He supposes it to be "the height of absurdity

and folly, that there should have been sin in order that sin might not

be; inasmuch as pride is itself, of course, a sin." As if a sore were

not attended with pain, and an operation did not produce pain, that

pain might be taken away by pain. If we had not experienced any such

treatment, but were only to hear about it in some parts of the world

where these things had never happened, we might perhaps use this man's

words, and say, It is the height of absurdity that pain should have

been necessary in order that a sore should have no pain.

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Chapter 31.--The Order and Process of Healing Our Heavenly Physician

Does Not Adopt from the Sick Patient, But Derives from Himself. What

Cause the Righteous Have for Fearing.

"But God," they say, "is able to heal all things." Of course His

purpose in acting is to heal all things; but He acts on His own

judgment, and does not take His procedure in healing from the sick man.

For undoubtedly it was His wish to endow His apostle with very great

power and strength, and yet He said to him: "My strength is made

perfect in weakness;" [1204] nor did He remove from him, though he so

often entreated Him to do so, that mysterious "thorn in the flesh,"

which He told him had been given to him "lest he should be unduly

exalted through the abundance of the revelation." [1205] For all other

sins only prevail in evil deeds; pride only has to be guarded against

in things that are rightly done. Whence it happens that those persons

are admonished not to attribute to their own power the gifts of God,

nor to plume themselves thereon, lest by so doing they should perish

with a heavier perdition than if they had done no good at all, to whom

it is said: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for

it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good

pleasure." [1206] Why, then, must it be with fear and trembling, and

not rather with security, since God is working; except it be because

there so quickly steals over our human soul, by reason of our will

(without which we can do nothing well), the inclination to esteem

simply as our own accomplishment whatever good we do; and so each one

of us says in his prosperity: "I shall never be moved?" [1207]

Therefore, He who in His good pleasure had added strength to our

beauty, turns away His face, and the man who had made his boast becomes

troubled, because it is by actual sorrows that the swelling pride must

be remedied.

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[1204] 2 Cor. xii. 9.

[1205] 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8.

[1206] Phil. ii. 12, 13.

[1207] Ps. xxx. 6.

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Chapter 32 [XXVIII.]--God Forsakes Us to Some Extent that We May Not

Grow Proud.

Therefore it is not said to a man: "It necessary for you to sin that

you may not sin;" but it is said to a man: "God in some degree forsakes

you, in consequence of which you grow proud, that you may know that you

are not your own,' but are His, [1208] and learn not to be proud." Now

even that incident in the apostle's life, of this kind, is so

wonderful, that were it not for the fact that he himself is the voucher

for it whose truth it is impious to contradict, would it not be

incredible? For what believer is there who is ignorant that the first

incentive to sin came from Satan, and that he is the first author of

all sins? And yet, for all that, some are "delivered over unto Satan,

that they may learn not to blaspheme." [1209] How comes it to pass,

then, that Satan's work is prevented by the work of Satan? These and

such like questions let a man regard in such a light that they seem not

to him to be too acute; they have somewhat of the sound of acuteness,

and yet when discussed are found to be obtuse. What must we say also to

our author's use of similes whereby he rather suggests to us the answer

which we should give to him? "What" (asks he) "shall I say more than

this, that we may believe that fires are quenched by fires, if we may

believe that sins are cured by sins?" What if one cannot put out fires

by fires: but yet pains can, for all that, as I have shown, be cured by

pains? Poisons can also, if one only inquire and learn the fact, be

expelled by poisons. Now, if he observes that the heats of fevers are

sometimes subdued by certain medicinal warmths, he will perhaps also

allow that fires may be extinguished by fires.

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[1208] 1 Cor. vi. 19.

[1209] 1 Tim. i. 20.

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Chapter 33 [XXIX.]--Not Every Sin is Pride. How Pride is the

Commencement of Every Sin.

"But how," asks he, "shall we separate pride itself from sin?" Now, why

does he raise such a question, when it is manifest that even pride

itself is a sin? "To sin," says he, "is quite as much to be proud, as

to be proud is to sin; for only ask what every sin is, and see whether

you can find any sin without the designation of pride." Then he thus

pursues this opinion, and endeavours to prove it thus: "Every sin,"

says he, "if I mistake not, is a contempt of God, and every contempt of

God is pride. For what is so proud as to despise God? All sin, then, is

also pride, even as Scripture says, Pride is the beginning of all sin."

[1210] Let him seek diligently, and he will find in the law that the

sin of pride is quite distinguished from all other sins. For many sins

are committed through pride; but yet not all things which are wrongly

done are done proudly,--at any rate, not by the ignorant, not by the

infirm, and not, generally speaking, by the weeping and sorrowful. And

indeed pride, although it be in itself a great sin, is of such sort in

itself alone apart from others, that, as I have already remarked, it

for the most part follows after and steals with more rapid foot, not so

much upon sins as upon things which are actually well done. However,

that which he has understood in another sense, is after all most truly

said: "Pride is the commencement of all sin;" because it was this which

overthrew the devil, from whom arose the origin of sin; and afterwards,

when his malice and envy pursued man, who was yet standing in his

uprightness, it subverted him in the same way in which he himself fell.

For the serpent, in fact, only sought for the door of pride whereby to

enter when he said, "Ye shall be as gods." [1211] Truly then is it

said, "Pride is the commencement of all sin;" [1212] and, "The

beginning of pride is when a man departeth from God." [1213]

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[1210] Ecclus. x. 13.

[1211] Gen. iii. 5.

[1212] Ecclus. x. 13.

[1213] Ecclus. x. 12.

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Chapter 34 [XXX.]--A Man's Sin is His Own, But He Needs Grace for His

Cure.

Well, but what does he mean when he says: "Then again, how can one be

subjected to God for the guilt of that sin, which he knows is not his

own? For," says he, "his own it is not, if it is necessary. Or, if it

is his own, it is voluntary: and if it is voluntary, it can be

avoided." We reply: It is unquestionably his own. But the fault by

which sin is committed is not yet in every respect healed, and the fact

of its becoming permanently fixed in us arises from our not rightly

using the healing virtue; and so out of this faulty condition the man

who is now growing strong in depravity commits many sins, either

through infirmity or blindness. Prayer must therefore be made for him,

that he may be healed, and that he may thenceforward attain to a life

of uninterrupted soundness of health; nor must pride be indulged in, as

if any man were healed by the self-same power whereby he became

corrupted.

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Chapter 35 [XXXI.]--Why God Does Not Immediately Cure Pride Itself. The

Secret and Insidious Growth of Pride. Preventing and Subsequent Grace.

But I would indeed so treat these topics, as to confess myself ignorant

of God's deeper counsel, why He does not at once heal the very

principle of pride, which lies in wait for man's heart even in deeds

rightly done; and for the cure of which pious souls, with tears and

strong crying, beseech Him that He would stretch forth His right hand

and help their endeavours to overcome it, and somehow tread and crush

it under foot. Now when a man has felt glad that he has even by some

good work overcome pride, from the very joy he lifts up his head and

says: "Behold, I live; why do you triumph? Nay, I live because you

triumph." Premature, however, this forwardness of his to triumph over

pride may perhaps be, as if it were now vanquished, whereas its last

shadow is to be swallowed up, as I suppose, in that noontide which is

promised in the scripture which says, "He shall bring forth thy

righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday;" [1214]

provided that be done which was written in the preceding verse: "Commit

thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to

pass," [1215] --not, as some suppose, that they themselves bring it to

pass. Now, when he said, "And He shall bring it to pass," he evidently

had none other in mind but those who say, We ourselves bring it to

pass; that is to say, we ourselves justify our own selves. In this

matter, no doubt, we do ourselves, too, work; but we are fellow-workers

with Him who does the work, because His mercy anticipates us. He

anticipates us, however, that we may be healed; but then He will also

follow us, that being healed we may grow healthy and strong. He

anticipates us that we may be called; He will follow us that we may be

glorified. He anticipates us that we may lead godly lives; He will

follow us that we may always live with Him, because without Him we can

do nothing. [1216] Now the Scriptures refer to both these operations of

grace. There is both this: "The God of my mercy shall anticipate me,"

[1217] and again this: "Thy mercy shall follow me all the days of my

life." [1218] Let us therefore unveil to Him our life by confession,

not praise it with a vindication. For if it is not His way, but our

own, beyond doubt it is not the right one. Let us therefore reveal this

by making our confession to Him; for however much we may endeavour to

conceal it, it is not hid from Him. It is a good thing to confess unto

the Lord.

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[1214] Ps. xxxvii. 6.

[1215] Ps. xxxvii. 5.

[1216] John xv. 5.

[1217] Ps. lix. 10.

[1218] Ps. xxiii. 6.

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Chapter 36 [XXXII.]--Pride Even in Such Things as are Done Aright Must

Be Avoided. Free Will is Not Taken Away When Grace is Preached.

So will He bestow on us whatever pleases Him, that if there be anything

displeasing to Him in us, it will also be displeasing to us. "He will,"

as the Scripture has said, "turn aside our paths from His own way,"

[1219] and will make that which is His own to be our way; because it is

by Himself that the favour is bestowed on such as believe in Him and

hope in Him that we will do it. For there is a way of righteousness of

which they are ignorant "who have a zeal for God, but not according to

knowledge," [1220] and who, wishing to frame a righteousness of their

own, "have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God."

[1221] "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one

that believeth;" [1222] and He has said, "I am the way." [1223] Yet

God's voice has alarmed those who have already begun to walk in this

way, lest they should be lifted up, as if it were by their own energies

that they were walking therein. For the same persons to whom the

apostle, on account of this danger, says, "Work out your own salvation

with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you, both to

will and to do of His good pleasure," [1224] are likewise for the

self-same reason admonished in the psalm: "Serve the Lord with fear,

and rejoice in Him with trembling. Accept correction, lest at any time

the Lord be angry, and ye perish from the righteous way, when His wrath

shall be suddenly kindled upon you." [1225] He does not say, "Lest at

any time the Lord be angry and refuse to show you the righteous way,"

or, "refuse to lead you into the way of righteousness;" but even after

you are walking therein, he was able so to terrify as to say, "Lest ye

perish from the righteous way." Now, whence could this arise if not

from pride, which (as I have so often said, and must repeat again and

again) has to be guarded against even in things which are rightly done,

that is, in the very way of righteousness, lest a man, by regarding as

his own that which is really God's, lose what is God's and be reduced

merely to what is his own? Let us then carry out the concluding

injunction of this same psalm, "Blessed are all they that trust in

Him," [1226] so that He may Himself indeed effect and Himself show His

own way in us, to whom it is said, "Show us Thy mercy, O Lord;" [1227]

and Himself bestow on us the pathway of safety that we may walk

therein, to whom the prayer is offered, "And grant us Thy salvation;"

[1228] and Himself lead us in the self-same way, to whom again it is

said, "Guide me, O Lord, in Thy way, and in Thy truth will I walk;"

[1229] Himself, too, conduct us to those promises whither His way

leads, to whom it is said, "Even there shall Thy hand lead me and Thy

right hand shall hold me;" [1230] Himself pasture therein those who sit

down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of whom it is said, "He shall make

them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." [1231] Now

we do not, when we make mention of these things, take away freedom of

will, but we preach the grace of God. For to whom are those gracious

gifts of use, but to the man who uses, but humbly uses, his own will,

and makes no boast of the power and energy thereof, as if it alone were

sufficient for perfecting him in righteousness?

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[1219] See Ps. xliv. 18.

[1220] Rom. x. 2.

[1221] Rom. x. 3.

[1222] Rom. x. 4.

[1223] John xiv. 6.

[1224] Phil. ii. 12.

[1225] Ps. ii. 11, 12.

[1226] Ps. ii. 12.

[1227] Ps. lxxxv. 7.

[1228] Ps. lxxxv. 7.

[1229] Ps. lxxxvi. 11.

[1230] Ps. cxxxix. 10.

[1231] Luke xii. 37.

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Chapter 37 [XXXIII.]--Being Wholly Without Sin Does Not Put Man on an

Equality with God.

But God forbid that we should meet him with such an assertion as he

says certain persons advance against him: "That man is placed on an

equality with God, if he is described as being without sin;" as if

indeed an angel, because he is without sin, is put in such an equality.

For my own part, I am of this opinion that the creature will never

become equal with God, even when so perfect a holiness shall be

accomplished in us, that it shall be quite incapable of receiving any

addition. No; all who maintain that our progress is to be so complete

that we shall be changed into the substance of God, and that we shall

thus become what He is, should look well to it how they build up their

opinion; for myself I must confess that I am not persuaded of this.

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Chapter 38 [XXXIV.]--We Must Not Lie, Even for the Sake of Moderation.

The Praise of Humility Must Not Be Placed to the Account of Falsehood.

I am favourably disposed, indeed, to the view of our author, when he

resists those who say to him, "What you assert seems indeed to be

reasonable, but it is an arrogant thing to allege that any man can be

without sin," with this answer, that if it is at all true, it must not

on any account be called an arrogant statement; for with very great

truth and acuteness he asks, "On what side must humility be placed? No

doubt on the side of falsehood, if you prove arrogance to exist on the

side of truth." And so he decides, and rightly decides, that humility

should rather be ranged on the side of truth, not of falsehood. Whence

it follows that he who said, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive

ourselves, and the truth is not in us," [1232] must without hesitation

be held to have spoken the truth, and not be thought to have spoken

falsehood for the sake of humility. Therefore he added the words, "And

the truth is not in us;" whereas it might perhaps have been enough if

he merely said, "We deceive ourselves," if he had not observed that

some were capable of supposing that the clause "we deceive ourselves"

is here employed on the ground that the man who praises himself is even

extolled for a really good action. So that, by the addition of "the

truth is not in us," he clearly shows (even as our author most

correctly observes) that it is not at all true if we say that we have

no sin, lest humility, if placed on the side of falsehood, should lose

the reward of truth.

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[1232] 1 John i. 8.

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Chapter 39.--Pelagius Glorifies God as Creator at the Expense of God as

Saviour.

Beyond this, however, although he flatters himself that he vindicates

the cause of God by defending nature, he forgets that by predicating

soundness of the said nature, he rejects the Physician's mercy. He,

however, who created him is also his Saviour. We ought not, therefore,

so to magnify the Creator as to be compelled to say, nay, rather as to

be convicted of saying, that the Saviour is superfluous. Man's nature

indeed we may honour with worthy praise, and attribute the praise to

the Creator's glory; but at the same time, while we show our gratitude

to Him for having created us, let us not be ungrateful to Him for

healing us. Our sins which He heals we must undoubtedly attribute not

to God's operation, but to the wilfulness of man, and submit them to

His righteous punishment; as, however, we acknowledge that it was in

our power that they should not be committed, so let us confess that it

lies in His mercy rather than in our own power that they should be

healed. But this mercy and remedial help of the Saviour, according to

this writer, consists only in this, that He forgives the transgressions

that are past, not that He helps us to avoid such as are to come. Here

he is most fatally mistaken; here, however unwittingly--here he hinders

us from being watchful, and from praying that "we enter not into

temptation," since he maintains that it lies entirely in our own

control that this should not happen to us.

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Chapter 40 [XXXV.]--Why There is a Record in Scripture of Certain Men's

Sins, Recklessness in Sin Accounts It to Be So Much Loss Whenever It

Falls Short in Gratifying Lust.

He who has a sound judgment says soundly, "that the examples of certain

persons, of whose sinning we read in Scripture, are not recorded for

this purpose, that they may encourage despair of not sinning, and seem

somehow to afford security in committing sin,"--but that we may learn

the humility of repentance, or else discover that even in such falls

salvation ought not to be despaired of. For there are some who, when

they have fallen into sin, perish rather from the recklessness of

despair, and not only neglect the remedy of repentance, but become the

slaves of lusts and wicked desires, so far as to run all lengths in

gratifying these depraved and abandoned dispositions,--as if it were a

loss to them if they failed to accomplish what their lust impelled them

to, whereas all the while there awaits them a certain condemnation. To

oppose this morbid recklessness, which is only too full of danger and

ruin, there is great force in the record of those sins into which even

just and holy men have before now fallen.

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Chapter 41.--Whether Holy Men Have Died Without Sin.

But there is clearly much acuteness in the question put by our author,

"How must we suppose that those holy men quitted this life,--with sin,

or without sin?" For if we answer, "With sin," condemnation will be

supposed to have been their destiny, which it is shocking to imagine;

but if it be said that they departed this life "without sin," then it

would be a proof that man had been without sin in his present life, at

all events, when death was approaching. But, with all his acuteness, he

overlooks the circumstance that even righteous persons not without good

reason offer up this prayer: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our

debtors;" [1233] and that the Lord Christ, after explaining the prayer

in His teaching, most truly added: "For if ye forgive men their

trespasses, your Father will also forgive you your trespasses." [1234]

Here, indeed, we have the daily incense, so to speak, of the Spirit,

which is offered to God on the altar of the heart, which we are bidden

"to lift up,"--implying that, even if we cannot live here without sin,

we may yet die without sin, when in merciful forgiveness the sin is

blotted out which is committed in ignorance or infirmity.

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[1233] Matt. vi. 12.

[1234] Matt. vi. 14.

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Chapter 42 [XXXVI.]--The Blessed Virgin Mary May Have Lived Without

Sin. None of the Saints Besides Her Without Sin.

He then enumerates those "who not only lived without sin, but are

described as having led holy lives,--Abel, Enoch, Melchizedek, Abraham,

Isaac, Jacob, Joshua the son of Nun, Phinehas, Samuel, Nathan, Elijah,

Joseph, Elisha, Micaiah, Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael, Mordecai,

Simeon, Joseph to whom the Virgin Mary was espoused, John." And he adds

the names of some women,--"Deborah, Anna the mother of Samuel, Judith,

Esther, the other Anna, daughter of Phanuel, Elisabeth, and also the

mother of our Lord and Saviour, for of her," he says, "we must needs

allow that her piety had no sin in it." We must except the holy Virgin

Mary, concerning whom I wish to raise no question when it touches the

subject of sins, out of honour to the Lord; for from Him we know what

abundance of grace for overcoming sin in every particular was conferred

upon her who had the merit to conceive and bear Him who undoubtedly had

no sin. [1235] Well, then, if, with this exception of the Virgin, we

could only assemble together all the forementioned holy men and women,

and ask them whether they lived without sin whilst they were in this

life, what can we suppose would be their answer? Would it be in the

language of our author, or in the words of the Apostle John? I put it

to you, whether, on having such a question submitted to them, however

excellent might have been their sanctity in this body, they would not

have exclaimed with one voice: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive

ourselves, and the truth is not in us?" [1236] But perhaps this their

answer would have been more humble than true! Well, but our author has

already determined, and rightly determined, "not to place the praise of

humility on the side of falsehood." If, therefore, they spoke the truth

in giving such an answer, they would have sin, and since they humbly

acknowledged it, the truth would be in them; but if they lied in their

answer, they would still have sin, because the truth would not be in

them.

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[1235] 1 John iii. 5.

[1236] 1 John i. 8.

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Chapter 43 [XXXVII.]--Why Scripture Has Not Mentioned the Sins of All.

"But perhaps," says he, "they will ask me: Could not the Scripture have

mentioned sins of all of these?" And surely they would say the truth,

whoever should put such a question to him; and I do not discover that

he has anywhere given a sound reply to them, although I perceive that

he was unwilling to be silent. What he has said, I beg of you to

observe: "This," says he, "might be rightly asked of those whom

Scripture mentions neither as good nor as bad; but of those whose

holiness it commemorates, it would also without doubt have commemorated

the sins likewise, if it had perceived that they had sinned in

anything." Let him say, then, that their great faith did not attain to

righteousness in the case of those who comprised "the multitudes that

went before and that followed" the colt on which the Lord rode, when

"they shouted and said, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that

cometh in the name of the Lord," [1237] even amidst the malignant men

who with murmurs asked why they were doing all this! Let him then

boldly tell us, if he can, that there was not a man in all that vast

crowd who had any sin at all. Now, if it is most absurd to make such a

statement as this, why has not the Scripture mentioned any sins in the

persons to whom reference has been made, especially when it has

carefully recorded the eminent goodness of their faith?

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[1237] Matt. xxi. 9.

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Chapter 44.--Pelagius Argues that Abel Was Sinless.

This, however, even he probably observed, and therefore he went on to

say: "But, granted that it has sometimes abstained, in a numerous

crowd, from narrating the sins of all; still, in the very beginning of

the world, when there were only four persons in existence, what reason

(asks he) have we to give why it chose not to mention the sins of all?

Was it in consideration of the vast multitude, which had not yet come

into existence? or because, having mentioned only the sins of those who

had transgressed, it was unable to record any of him who had not yet

committed sin?" And then he proceeds to add some words, in which he

unfolds this idea with a fuller and more explicit illustration. "It is

certain," says he, "that in the earliest age Adam and Eve, and Cain and

Abel their sons, are mentioned as being the only four persons then in

being. Eve sinned,--the Scripture distinctly says so much; Adam also

transgressed, as the same Scripture does not fail to inform us; whilst

it affords us an equally clear testimony that Cain also sinned: and of

all these it not only mentions the sins, but also indicates the

character of their sins. Now if Abel had likewise sinned, Scripture

would without doubt have said so. But it has not said so, therefore he

committed no sin; nay, it even shows him to have been righteous. What

we read, therefore, let us believe; and what we do not read, let us

deem it wicked to add."

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Chapter 45 [XXXVIII.]--Why Cain Has Been by Some Thought to Have Had

Children by His Mother Eve. The Sins of Righteous Men. Who Can Be Both

Righteous, and Yet Not Without Sin.

When he says this, he forgets what he had himself said not long before:

"After the human race had multiplied, it was possible that in the crowd

the Scripture may have neglected to notice the sins of all men." If

indeed he had borne this well in mind, he would have seen that even in

one man there was such a crowd and so vast a number of slight sins,

that it would have been impossible (or, even if possible, not

desirable) to describe them. For only such are recorded as the due

bounds allowed, and as would, by few examples, serve for instructing

the reader in the many cases where he needed warning. Scripture has

indeed omitted to mention concerning the few persons who were then in

existence, either how many or who they were,--in other words, how many

sons and daughters Adam and Eve begat, and what names they gave them;

and from this circumstance some, not considering how many things are

quietly passed over in Scripture, have gone so far as to suppose that

Cain cohabited with his mother, and by her had the children which are

mentioned, thinking that Adam's sons had no sisters, because Scripture

failed to mention them in the particular place, although it afterwards,

in the way of recapitulation, implied what it had previously

omitted,--that "Adam begat sons and daughters," [1238] without,

however, dropping a syllable to intimate either their number or the

time when they were born. In like manner it was unnecessary to state

whether Abel, notwithstanding that he is rightly styled "righteous,"

ever indulged in immoderate laughter, or was ever jocose in moments of

relaxation, or ever looked at an object with a covetous eye, or ever

plucked fruit to extravagance, or ever suffered indigestion from too

much eating, or ever in the midst of his prayers permitted his thoughts

to wander and call him away from the purpose of his devotion; as well

as how frequently these and many other similar failings stealthily

crept over his mind. And are not these failings sins, about which the

apostle's precept gives us a general admonition that we should avoid

and restrain them, when he says: "Let not sin therefore reign in your

mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof?" [1239] To

escape from such an obedience, we have to struggle in a constant and

daily conflict against unlawful and unseemly inclinations. Only let the

eye be directed, or rather abandoned, to an object which it ought to

avoid, and let the mischief strengthen and get the mastery, and

adultery is consummated in the body, which is committed in the heart

only so much more quickly as thought is more rapid than action and

there is no impediment to retard and delay it. They who in a great

degree have curbed this sin, that is, this appetite of a corrupt

affection, so as not to obey its desires, nor to "yield their members

to it as instruments of unrighteousness," [1240] have fairly deserved

to be called righteous persons, and this by the help of the grace of

God. Since, however, sin often stole over them in very small matters,

and when they were off their guard, they were both righteous, and at

the same time not sinless. To conclude, if there was in righteous Abel

that love of God whereby alone he is truly righteous who is righteous,

to enable him, and to lay him under a moral obligation, to advance in

holiness, still in whatever degree he fell short therein was of sin.

And who indeed can help thus falling short, until he come to that

mighty power thereof, in which man's entire infirmity shall be

swallowed up?

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[1238] Gen. v. 4.

[1239] Rom. vi. 12.

[1240] Rom. vi. 13.

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Chapter 46 [XXXIX.]--Shall We Follow Scripture, or Add to Its

Declarations?

It is, to be sure, a grand sentence with which he concluded this

passage, when he says: "What we read, therefore, let us believe; and

what we do not read, let us deem it wicked to add; and let it suffice

to have said this of all cases." On the contrary, I for my part say

that we ought not to believe even everything that we read, on the

sanction of the apostle's advice: "Read all things; hold fast that

which is good." [1241] Nor is it wicked to add something which we have

not read; for it is in our power to add something which we have bona

fideexperienced as witnesses, even if it so happens that we have not

read about it. Perhaps he will say in reply: "When I said this, I was

treating of the Holy Scriptures." Oh how I wish that he were never

willing to add, I will not say anything but what he reads in the

Scriptures, but in opposition to what he reads in them; that he would

only faithfully and obediently hear that which is written there: "By

one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death

passed upon all men; in which all have sinned;" [1242] and that he

would not weaken the grace of the great Physician,--all by his

unwillingness to confess that human nature is corrupted! Oh how I wish

that he would, as a Christian, read the sentence, "There is none other

name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved;" [1243] and

that he would not so uphold the possibility of human nature, as to

believe that man can be saved by free will without that Name!

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[1241] 1 Thess. v. 21.

[1242] Rom. v. 12.

[1243] Acts iv. 12.

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Chapter 47 [XL.]--For What Pelagius Thought that Christ is Necessary to

Us.

Perhaps, however, he thinks the name of Christ to be necessary on this

account, that by His gospel we may learn how we ought to live; but not

that we may be also assisted by His grace, in order withal to lead good

lives. Well, even this consideration should lead him at least to

confess that there is a miserable darkness in the human mind, which

knows how it ought to tame a lion, but knows not how to live. To know

this, too, is it enough for us to have free will and natural law? This

is that wisdom of word, whereby "the cross of Christ is rendered of

none effect." [1244] He, however, who said, "I will destroy the wisdom

of the wise," [1245] since that cross cannot be made of none effect, in

very deed overthrows that wisdom by the foolishness of preaching

whereby believers are healed. For if natural capacity, by help of free

will, is in itself sufficient both for discovering how one ought to

live, and also for leading a holy life, then "Christ died in vain,"

[1246] and therefore also "the offence of the cross is ceased." [1247]

Why also may I not myself exclaim?--nay, I will exclaim, and chide them

with a Christian's sorrow,--"Christ is become of no effect unto you,

whosoever of you are justified by nature; ye are fallen from grace;"

[1248] for, "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and wishing to

establish your own righteousness, you have not submitted yourselves to

the righteousness of God." [1249] For even as "Christ is the end of the

law," so likewise is He the Saviour of man's corrupted nature, "for

righteousness to every one that believeth." [1250]

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[1244] 1 Cor. i. 17.

[1245] 1 Cor. i. 19.

[1246] Gal. ii. 21.

[1247] Gal. v. 11.

[1248] Gal. v. 4.

[1249] Rom. x. 3.

[1250] Rom. x. 4.

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Chapter 48 [XLI.]--How the Term "All" Is to Be Understood.

His opponents adduced the passage, "All have sinned," [1251] and he met

their statement founded on this with the remark that "the apostle was

manifestly speaking of the then existing generation, that is, the Jews

and the Gentiles;" but surely the passage which I have quoted, "By one

man sin entered the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon

all men; in which all have sinned," [1252] embraces in its terms the

generations both of old and of modern times, both ourselves and our

posterity. He adduces also this passage, whence he would prove that we

ought not to understand all without exception, when "all" is used:--"As

by the offence of one," he says, "upon all men to condemnation, even so

by the righteousness of One, upon all men unto justification of life."

[1253] "There can be no doubt," he says, "that not all men are

sanctified by the righteousness of Christ, but only those who are

willing to obey Him, and have been cleansed in the washing of His

baptism." Well, but he does not prove what he wants by this quotation.

For as the clause, "By the offence of one, upon all men to

condemnation," is so worded that not one is omitted in its sense, so in

the corresponding clause, "By the righteousness of One, upon all men

unto justification of life," no one is omitted in its sense,--not,

indeed, because all men have faith and are washed in His baptism, but

because no man is justified unless he believes in Christ and is

cleansed by His baptism. The term "all" is therefore used in a way

which shows that no one whatever can be supposed able to be saved by

any other means than through Christ Himself. For if in a city there be

appointed but one instructor, we are most correct in saying: That man

teaches all in that place; not meaning, indeed, that all who live in

the city take lessons of him, but that no one is instructed unless

taught by him. In like manner no one is justified unless Christ has

justified him. [1254]

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[1251] Rom. iii. 23.

[1252] Rom. v. 12.

[1253] Rom. v. 18.

[1254] Compare De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione, i. 55.

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Chapter 49 [XLII.]--A Man Can Be Sinless, But Only by the Help of

Grace. In the Saints This Possibility Advances and Keeps Pace with the

Realization.

"Well, be it so," says he, "I agree; he testifies to the fact that all

were sinners. He says, indeed, what they have been, not that they might

not have been something else. Wherefore," he adds, "if all then could

be proved to be sinners, it would not by any means prejudice our own

definite position, in insisting not so much on what men are, as on what

they are able to be." He is right for once to allow that no man living

is justified in God's sight. He contends, however, that this is not the

question, but that the point lies in the possibility of a man's not

sinning,--on which subject it is unnecessary for us to take ground

against him; for, in truth, I do not much care about expressing a

definite opinion on the question, whether in the present life there

ever have been, or now are, or ever can be, any persons who have had,

or are having, or are to have, the love of God so perfectly as to admit

of no addition to it (for nothing short of this amounts to a most true,

full, and perfect righteousness). For I ought not too sharply to

contend as to when, or where, or in whom is done that which I confess

and maintain can be done by the will of man, aided by the grace of God.

Nor do I indeed contend about the actual possibility, forasmuch as the

possibility under dispute advances with the realization in the saints,

their human will being healed and helped; whilst "the love of God," as

fully as our healed and cleansed nature can possibly receive it, "is

shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us."

[1255] In a better way, therefore, is God's cause promoted (and it is

to its promotion that our author professes to apply his warm defence of

nature) when He is acknowledged as our Saviour no less than as our

Creator, than when His succour to us as Saviour is impaired and dwarfed

to nothing by the defence of the creature, as if it were sound and its

resources entire.

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[1255] Rom. v. 5.

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Chapter 50 [XLIII.]--God Commands No Impossibilities.

What he says, however, is true enough, "that God is as good as just,

and made man such that he was quite able to live without the evil of

sin, if only he had been willing." For who does not know that man was

made whole and faultless, and endowed with a free will and a free

ability to lead a holy life? Our present inquiry, however, is about the

man whom "the thieves" [1256] left half dead on the road, and who,

being disabled and pierced through with heavy wounds, is not so able to

mount up to the heights of righteousness as he was able to descend

therefrom; who, moreover, if he is now in "the inn," [1257] is in

process of cure. God therefore does not command impossibilities; but in

His command He counsels you both to do what you can for yourself, and

to ask His aid in what you cannot do. Now, we should see whence comes

the possibility, and whence the impossibility. This man says: "That

proceeds not from a man's will which he can do by nature." I say: A man

is not righteous by his will if he can be by nature. He will, however,

be able to accomplish by remedial aid what he is rendered incapable of

doing by his flaw.

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[1256] Luke x. 30. Rather, "robbers;" latrones, lestai.

[1257] Luke x. 34.

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Chapter 51 [XLIV.]--State of the Question Between the Pelagians and the

Catholics. Holy Men of Old Saved by the Self-Same Faith in Christ Which

We Exercise.

But why need we tarry longer on general statements? Let us go into the

core of the question, which we have to discuss with our opponents

solely, or almost entirely, on one particular point. For inasmuch as he

says that "as far as the present question is concerned, it is not

pertinent to inquire whether there have been or now are any men in this

life without sin, but whether they had or have the ability to be such

persons;" so, were I even to allow that there have been or are any

such, I should not by any means therefore affirm that they had or have

the ability, unless justified by the grace of God through our Lord

"Jesus Christ and Him crucified." [1258] For the same faith which

healed the saints of old now heals us,--that is to say, faith "in the

one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," [1259] --faith

in His blood, faith in His cross, faith in His death and resurrection.

As we therefore have the same spirit of faith, we also believe, and on

that account also speak.

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[1258] 1 Cor. ii. 2.

[1259] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

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Chapter 52.--The Whole Discussion is About Grace.

Let us, however, observe what our author answers, after laying before

himself the question wherein he seems indeed so intolerable to

Christian hearts. He says: "But you will tell me this is what disturbs

a great many,--that you do not maintain that it is by the grace of God

that a man is able to be without sin." Certainly this is what causes us

disturbance; this is what we object to him. He touches the very point

of the case. This is what causes us such utter pain to endure it; this

is why we cannot bear to have such points debated by Christians, owing

to the love which we feel towards others and towards themselves. Well,

let us hear how he clears himself from the objectionable character of

the question he has raised. "What blindness of ignorance," he exclaims,

"what sluggishness of an uninstructed mind, which supposes that that is

maintained and held to be without God's grace which it only hears ought

to be attributed to God!" Now, if we knew nothing of what follows this

outburst of his, and formed our opinion on simply hearing these words,

we might suppose that we had been led to a wrong view of our opponents

by the spread of report and by the asseveration of some suitable

witnesses among the brethren. For how could it have been more pointedly

and truly stated that the possibility of not sinning, to whatever

extent it exists or shall exist in man, ought only to be attributed to

God? This too is our own affirmation. We may shake hands.

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Chapter 53 [XLV.]--Pelagius Distinguishes Between a Power and Its Use.

Well, are there other things to listen to? Yes, certainly; both to

listen to, and correct and guard against. "Now, when it is said," he

says, "that the very ability is not at all of man's will, but of the

Author of nature,--that is, God,--how can that possibly be understood

to be without the grace of God which is deemed especially to belong to

God?" Already we begin to see what he means; but that we may not lie

under any mistake, he explains himself with greater breadth and

clearness: "That this may become still plainer, we must," says he,

"enter on a somewhat fuller discussion of the point. Now we affirm that

the possibility of anything lies not so much in the ability of a man's

will as in the necessity of nature." He then proceeds to illustrate his

meaning by examples and similes. "Take," says he, "for instance, my

ability to speak. That I am able to speak is not my own; but that I do

speak is my own,--that is, of my own will. And because the act of my

speaking is my own, I have the power of alternative action,--that is to

say, both to speak and to refrain from speaking. But because my ability

to speak is not my own, that is, is not of my own determination and

will, it is of necessity [1260] that I am always able to speak; and

though I wished not to be able to speak, I am unable, nevertheless, to

be unable to speak, unless perhaps I were to deprive myself of that

member whereby the function of speaking is to be performed." Many

means, indeed, might be mentioned whereby, if he wish it, a man may

deprive himself of the possibility of speaking, without removing the

organ of speech. If, for instance, anything were to happen to a man to

destroy his voice, he would be unable to speak, although the members

remained; for a man's voice is of course no member. There may, in

short, be an injury done to the member internally, short of the actual

loss of it. I am, however, unwilling to press the argument for a word;

and it may be replied to me in the contest, Why, even to injure is to

lose. But yet we can so contrive matters, by closing and shutting the

mouth with bandages, as to be quite incapable of opening it, and to put

the opening of it out of our power, although it was quite in our own

power to shut it while the strength and healthy exercise of the limbs

remained.

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[1260] Necesse est me semper loqui posse. This obscure sentence seems

to point to Pelagius' former statement: Cujusque rei possibilitatem non

tam in arbitrii humani potestate qu�m in natur� necessitate consistere.

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Chapter 54 [XLVI.]--There is No Incompatibility Between Necessity and

Free Will.

Now how does all this apply to our subject? Let us see what he makes

out of it. "Whatever," says he, "is fettered by natural necessity is

deprived of determination of will and deliberation." Well, now, here

lies a question; for it is the height of absurdity for us to say that

it does not belong to our will that we wish to be happy, on the ground

that it is absolutely impossible for us to be unwilling to be happy, by

reason of some indescribable but amiable coercion of our nature; nor

dare we maintain that God has not the will but the necessity of

righteousness, because He cannot will to sin.

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Chapter 55 [XLVII.]--The Same Continued.

Mark also what follows. "We may perceive," says he, "the same thing to

be true of hearing, smelling, and seeing,--that to hear, and to smell,

and to see is of our own power, while the ability to hear, and to

smell, and to see is not of our own power, but lies in a natural

necessity." Either I do not understand what he means, or he does not

himself. For how is the possibility of seeing not in our own power, if

the necessity of not seeing is in our own power because blindness is in

our own power, by which we can deprive ourselves, if we will, of this

very ability to see? How, moreover, is it in our own power to see

whenever we will, when, without any loss whatever to our natural

structure of body in the organ of sight, we are unable, even though we

wish, to see,--either by the removal of all external lights during the

night, or by our being shut up in some dark place? Likewise, if our

ability or our inability to hear is not in our own power, but lies in

the necessity of nature, whereas our actual hearing or not hearing is

of our own will, how comes it that he is inattentive to the fact that

there are so many things which we hear against our will, which

penetrate our sense even when our ears are stopped, as the creaking of

a saw near to us, or the grunt of a pig? Although the said stopping of

our ears shows plainly enough that it does not lie within our own power

not to hear so long as our ears are open; perhaps, too, such a stopping

of our ears as shall deprive us of the entire sense in question proves

that even the ability not to hear lies within our own power. As to his

remarks, again, concerning our sense of smell, does he not display no

little carelessness when he says "that it is not in our own power to be

able or to be unable to smell, but that it is in our own power"--that

is to say, in our free will--"to smell or not to smell?" For let us

suppose some one to place us, with our hands firmly tied, but yet

without any injury to our olfactory members, among some bad and noxious

smells; in such a case we altogether lose the power, however strong may

be our wish, not to smell, because every time we are obliged to draw

breath we also inhale the smell which we do not wish.

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Chapter 56 [XLVIII.]--The Assistance of Grace in a Perfect Nature.

Not only, then, are these similes employed by our author false, but so

is the matter which he wishes them to illustrate. He goes on to say:

"In like manner, touching the possibility of our not sinning, we must

understand that it is of us not to sin, but yet that the ability to

avoid sin is not of us." If he were speaking of man's whole and perfect

nature, which we do not now possess ("for we are saved by hope: but

hope that is seen is not hope. But if we hope for that we see not, then

do we with patience wait for it" [1261] ), his language even in that

case would not be correct to the effect that to avoid sinning would be

of us alone, although to sin would be of us, for even then there must

be the help of God, which must shed itself on those who are willing to

receive it, just as the light is given to strong and healthy eyes to

assist them in their function of sight. Inasmuch, however, as it is

about this present life of ours that he raises the question, wherein

our corruptible body weighs down the soul, and our earthly tabernacle

depresses our sense with all its many thoughts, I am astonished that he

can with any heart suppose that, even without the help of our Saviour's

healing balm, it is in our own power to avoid sin, and the ability not

to sin is of nature, which gives only stronger evidence of its own

corruption by the very fact of its failing to see its taint.

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[1261] Rom. viii. 24, 25.

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Chapter 57 [XLIX.]--It Does Not Detract from God's Almighty Power, that

He is Incapable of Either Sinning, or Dying, or Destroying Himself.

"Inasmuch," says he, "as not to sin is ours, we are able to sin and to

avoid sin." What, then, if another should say: "Inasmuch as not to wish

for unhappiness is ours, we are able both to wish for it and not to

wish for it?" And yet we are positively unable to wish for it. For who

could possibly wish to be unhappy, even though he wishes for something

else from which unhappiness will ensue to him against his will? Then

again, inasmuch as, in an infinitely greater degree, it is God's not to

sin, shall we therefore venture to say that He is able both to sin and

to avoid sin? God forbid that we should ever say that He is able to

sin! For He cannot, as foolish persons suppose, therefore fail to be

almighty, because He is unable to die, or because He cannot deny

Himself. What, therefore, does he mean? by what method of speech does

he try to persuade us on a point which he is himself loth to consider?

For he advances a step further, and says: "Inasmuch as, however, it is

not of us to be able to avoid sin; even if we were to wish not to be

able to avoid sin, it is not in our power to be unable to avoid sin."

It is an involved sentence, and therefore a very obscure one. It might,

however, be more plainly expressed in some such way as this: "Inasmuch

as to be able to avoid sin is not of us, then, whether we wish it or do

not wish it, we are able to avoid sin!" He does not say, "Whether we

wish it or do not wish it, we do not sin,"--for we undoubtedly do sin,

if we wish;--but yet he asserts that, whether we will or not, we have

the capacity of not sinning,--a capacity which he declares to be

inherent in our nature. Of a man, indeed, who has his legs strong and

sound, it may be said admissibly enough, "whether he will or not he has

the capacity of walking;" but if his legs be broken, however much he

may wish, he has not the capacity. The nature of which our author

speaks is corrupted. "Why is dust and ashes proud?" [1262] It is

corrupted. It implores the Physician's help. "Save me, O Lord," [1263]

is its cry; "Heal my soul," [1264] it exclaims. Why does he check such

cries so as to hinder future health, by insisting, as it were, on its

present capacity?

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[1262] Ecclus. x. 9.

[1263] Ps. xii. 1.

[1264] Ps. xli. 4.

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Chapter 58 [L.]--Even Pious and God-Fearing Men Resist Grace.

Observe also what remark he adds, by which he thinks that his position

is confirmed: "No will," says he, "can take away that which is proved

to be inseparably implanted in nature." Whence then comes that

utterance: "So then ye cannot do the things that ye would?" [1265]

Whence also this: "For what good I would, that I do not; but what evil

I hate, that do I?" [1266] Where is that capacity which is proved to be

inseparably implanted in nature? See, it is human beings who do not

what they will; and it is about not sinning, certainly, that he was

treating,--not about not flying, because it was men not birds, that

formed his subject. Behold, it is man who does not the good which he

would, but does the evil which he would not: "to will is present with

him, but how to perform that which is good is not present." [1267]

Where is the capacity which is proved to be inseparably implanted in

nature? For whomsoever the apostle represents by himself, if he does

not speak these things of his own self, he certainly represents a man

by himself. By our author, however, it is maintained that our human

nature actually possesses an inseparable capacity of not at all

sinning. Such a statement, however, even when made by a man who knows

not the effect of his words (but this ignorance is hardly attributable

to the man who suggests these statements for unwary though God-fearing

men), causes the grace of Christ to be "made of none effect," [1268]

since it is pretended that human nature is sufficient for its own

holiness and justification.

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[1265] Gal. v. 17.

[1266] Rom. vii. 15.

[1267] Rom. vii. 18.

[1268] 1 Cor. i. 17. Another reading has crux Christi instead of

"Christi gratia," thus closely adopting the apostle's words.

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Chapter 59 [LI.]--In What Sense Pelagius Attributed to God's Grace the

Capacity of Not Sinning.

In order, however, to escape from the odium wherewith Christians guard

their salvation, he parries their question when they ask him, "Why do

you affirm that man without the help of God's grace is able to avoid

sin?" by saying, "The actual capacity of not sinning lies not so much

in the power of will as in the necessity of nature. Whatever is placed

in the necessity of nature undoubtedly appertains to the Author of

nature, that is, God. How then," says he, "can that be regarded as

spoken without the grace of God which is shown to belong in an especial

manner to God?" Here the opinion is expressed which all along was kept

in the background; there is, in fact, no way of permanently concealing

such a doctrine. The reason why he attributes to the grace of God the

capacity of not sinning is, that God is the Author of nature, in which,

he declares, this capacity of avoiding sin is inseparably implanted.

Whenever He wills a thing, no doubt He does it; and what He wills not,

that He does not. Now, wherever there is this inseparable capacity,

there cannot accrue any infirmity of the will; or rather, there cannot

be both a presence of will and a failure in "performance." [1269] This,

then, being the case, how comes it to pass that "to will is present,

but how to perform that which is good" is not present? Now, if the

author of the work we are discussing spoke of that nature of man, which

was in the beginning created faultless and perfect, in whatever sense

his dictum be taken, "that it has an inseparable capacity,"--that is,

so to say, one which cannot be lost,--then that nature ought not to

have been mentioned at all which could be corrupted, and which could

require a physician to cure the eyes of the blind, and restore that

capacity of seeing which had been lost through blindness. For I suppose

a blind man would like to see, but is unable; but, whenever a man

wishes to do a thing and cannot, there is present to him the will, but

he has lost the capacity.

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[1269] Rom. vii. 18.

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Chapter 60 [LII.]--Pelagius Admits "Contrary Flesh" In the Unbaptized.

See what obstacles he still attempts to break through, if possible, in

order to introduce his own opinion. He raises a question for himself in

these terms: "But you will tell me that, according to the apostle, the

flesh is contrary [1270] to us;" and then answers it in this wise: "How

can it be that in the case of any baptized person the flesh is contrary

to him, when according to the same apostle he is understood not to be

in the flesh? For he says, But ye are not in the flesh.'" [1271] Very

well; we shall soon see [1272] whether it be really true that this says

that in the baptized the flesh cannot be contrary to them; at present,

however, as it was impossible for him quite to forget that he was a

Christian (although his reminiscence on the point is but slight), he

has quitted his defence of nature. Where then is that inseparable

capacity of his? Are those who are not yet baptized not a part of human

nature? Well, now, here by all means, here at this point, he might find

his opportunity of awaking out of his sleep; and he still has it if he

is careful. "How can it be," he asks, "that in the case of a baptized

person the flesh is contrary to him?" Therefore to the unbaptized the

flesh can be contrary! Let him tell us how; for even in these there is

that nature which has been so stoutly defended by him. However, in

these he does certainly allow that nature is corrupted, inasmuch as it

was only among the baptized that the wounded traveller left his inn

sound and well, or rather remains sound in the inn whither the

compassionate Samaritan carried him that he might become cured. [1273]

Well, now, if he allows that the flesh is contrary even in these, let

him tell us what has happened to occasion this, since the flesh and the

spirit alike are the work of one and the same Creator, and are

therefore undoubtedly both of them good, because He is good,--unless

indeed it be that damage which has been inflicted by man's own will.

And that this may be repaired in our nature, there is need of that very

Saviour from whose creative hand nature itself proceeded. Now, if we

acknowledge that this Saviour, and that healing remedy of His by which

the Word was made flesh in order to dwell among us, are required by

small and great,--by the crying infant and the hoary-headed man

alike,--then, in fact, the whole controversy of the point between us is

settled.

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[1270] Gal. v. 17.

[1271] Rom. viii. 9.

[1272] In the next chapter.

[1273] Luke x. 34.

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Chapter 61 [LIII.]--Paul Asserts that the Flesh is Contrary Even in the

Baptized.

Now let us see whether we anywhere read about the flesh being contrary

in the baptized also. And here, I ask, to whom did the apostle say,

"The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the

flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye do not

the things that ye would?" [1274] He wrote this, I apprehend, to the

Galatians, to whom he also says, "He therefore that ministereth to you

the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of

the law or by the hearing of faith?" [1275] It appears, therefore, that

it is to Christians that he speaks, to whom, too, God had given His

Spirit: therefore, too, to the baptized. Observe, therefore, that even

in baptized persons the flesh is found to be contrary; so that they

have not that capacity which, our author says, is inseparably implanted

in nature. Where then is the ground for his assertion, "How can it be

that in the case of a baptized person the flesh is contrary to him?" in

whatever sense he understands the flesh? Because in very deed it is not

its nature that is good, but it is the carnal defects of the flesh

which are expressly named in the passage before us. [1276] Yet observe,

even in the baptized, how contrary is the flesh. And in what way

contrary? So that, "They do not the things which they would." Take

notice that the will is present in a man; but where is that "capacity

of nature?" Let us confess that grace is necessary to us; let us cry

out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of

this death?" And let our answer be, "The grace of God, through Jesus

Christ our Lord!" [1277]

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[1274] Gal. v. 17.

[1275] Gal. iii. 5.

[1276] See the context of Gal. v. 17, in verses 19-21.

[1277] Rom. vii. 24, 25.

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Chapter 62.--Concerning What Grace of God is Here Under Discussion. The

Ungodly Man, When Dying, is Not Delivered from Concupiscence.

Now, whereas it is most correctly asked in those words put to him, "Why

do you affirm that man without the help of God's grace is able to avoid

sin?" yet the inquiry did not concern that grace by which man was

created, but only that whereby he is saved through Jesus Christ our

Lord. Faithful men say in their prayer, "Lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil." [1278] But if they already have capacity,

why do they pray? Or, what is the evil which they pray to be delivered

from, but, above all else, "the body of this death?" And from this

nothing but God's grace alone delivers them, through our Lord Jesus

Christ. Not of course from the substance of the body, which is good;

but from its carnal offences, from which a man is not liberated except

by the grace of the Saviour,--not even when he quits the body by the

death of the body. If it was this that the apostle meant to declare,

why had he previously said, "I see another law in my members, warring

against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law

of sin which is in my members?" [1279] Behold what damage the

disobedience of the will has inflicted on man's nature! Let him be

permitted to pray that he may be healed! Why need he presume so much on

the capacity of his nature? It is wounded, hurt, damaged, destroyed. It

is a true confession of its weakness, not a false defence of its

capacity, that it stands in need of. It requires the grace of God, not

that it may be made, but that it may be re-made. And this is the only

grace which by our author is proclaimed to be unnecessary; because of

this he is silent! If, indeed, he had said nothing at all about God's

grace, and had not proposed to himself that question for solution, for

the purpose of removing from himself the odium of this matter, [1280]

it might have been thought that his view of the subject was consistent

with the truth, only that he had refrained from mentioning it, on the

ground that not on all occasions need we say all we think. He proposed

the question of grace, and answered it in the way that he had in his

heart; the question has been defined,--not in the way we wished, but

according to the doubt we entertained as to what was his meaning.

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[1278] Matt. vi. 13.

[1279] Rom. vii. 23.

[1280] See above, ch. 59, sub init.

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Chapter 63 [LIV.]--Does God Create Contraries?

He next endeavours, by much quotation from the apostle, about which

there is no controversy, to show "that the flesh is often mentioned by

him in such a manner as proves him to mean not the substance, but the

works of the flesh." What is this to the point? The defects of the

flesh are contrary to the will of man; his nature is not accused; but a

Physician is wanted for its defects. What signifies his question, "Who

made man's spirit?" and his own answer thereto, "God, without a doubt?"

Again he asks, "Who created the flesh?" and again answers, "The same

God, I suppose." And yet a third question, "Is the God good who created

both?" and the third answer, "Nobody doubts it." Once more a question,

"Are not both good, since the good Creator made them?" and its answer,

"It must be confessed that they are." And then follows his conclusion:

"If, therefore, both the spirit is good, and the flesh is good, as made

by the good Creator, how can it be that the two good things should be

contrary to one another?" I need not say that the whole of this

reasoning would be upset if one were to ask him, "Who made heat and

cold?" and he were to say in answer, "God, without a doubt." I do not

ask the string of questions. Let him determine himself whether these

conditions of climate may either be said to be not good, or else

whether they do not seem to be contrary to each other. Here he will

probably object, "These are not substances, but the qualities of

substances." Very true, it is so. But still they are natural qualities,

and undoubtedly belong to God's creation; and substances, indeed, are

not said to be contrary to each other in themselves, but in their

qualities, as water and fire. What if it be so too with flesh and

spirit? We do not affirm it to be so; but, in order to show that his

argument terminates in a conclusion which does not necessarily follow,

we have said so much as this. For it is quite possible for contraries

not to be reciprocally opposed to each other, but rather by mutual

action to temper health and render it good; just as, in our body,

dryness and moisture, cold and heat,--in the tempering of which

altogether consists our bodily health. The fact, however, that "the

flesh is contrary to the Spirit, so that we cannot do the things that

we would," [1281] is a defect, not nature. The Physician's grace must

be sought, and their controversy must end.

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[1281] Gal. v. 17.

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Chapter 64.--Pelagius' Admission as Regards the Unbaptized, Fatal.

Now, as touching these two good substances which the good God created,

how, against the reasoning of this man, in the case of unbaptized

persons, can they be contrary the one to the other? Will he be sorry to

have said this too, which he admitted out of some regard to the

Christians' faith? For when he asked, "How, in the case of any person

who is already baptized, can it be that his flesh is contrary to him?"

he intimated, of course, that in the case of unbaptized persons it is

possible for the flesh to be contrary. For why insert the clause, "who

is already baptized," when without such an addition he might have put

his question thus: "How in the case of any person can the flesh be

contrary?" and when, in order to prove this, he might have subjoined

that argument of his, that as both body and spirit are good (made as

they are by the good Creator), they therefore cannot be contrary to

each other? Now, suppose unbaptized persons (in whom, at any rate, he

confesses that the flesh is contrary) were to ply him with his own

arguments, and say to him, Who made man's spirit? he must answer, God.

Suppose they asked him again, Who created the flesh? and he answers,

The same God, I believe. Suppose their third question to be, Is the God

good who created both? and his reply to be, Nobody doubts it. Suppose

once more they put to him his yet remaining inquiry, Are not both good,

since the good Creator made them? and he confesses it. Then surely they

will cut his throat with his own sword, when they force home his

conclusion on him, and say: Since therefore the spirit of man is good,

and his flesh good, as made by the good Creator, how can it be that the

two being good should be contrary to one another? Here, perhaps, he

will reply: I beg your pardon, I ought not to have said that the flesh

cannot be contrary to the spirit in any baptized person, as if I meant

to imply that it is contrary in the unbaptized; but I ought to have

made my statement general, to the effect that the flesh in no man's

case is contrary. Now see into what a corner he drives himself. See

what a man will say, who is unwilling to cry out with the apostle, "Who

shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God, through

Jesus Christ our Lord." [1282] "But why," he asks, "should I so

exclaim, who am already baptized in Christ? It is for them to cry out

thus who have not yet received so great a benefit, whose words the

apostle in a figure transferred to himself,--if indeed even they say so

much." Well, this defence of nature does not permit even these to utter

this exclamation! For in the baptized, there is no nature; and in the

unbaptized, nature is not! Or if even in the one class it is allowed to

be corrupted, so that it is not without reason that men exclaim, "O

wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?"

to the other, too, help is brought in what follows: "The grace of God,

through Jesus Christ our Lord;" then let it at last be granted that

human nature stands in need of Christ for its Physician.

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[1282] Rom. vii. 24, 25.

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Chapter 65 [LV.]--"This Body of Death," So Called from Its Defect, Not

from Its Substance.

Now, I ask, when did our nature lose that liberty, which he craves to

be given to him when he says: "Who shall liberate me?" [1283] For even

he finds no fault with the substance of the flesh when he expresses his

desire to be liberated from the body of this death, since the nature of

the body, as well as of the soul, must be attributed to the good God as

the author thereof. But what he speaks of undoubtedly concerns the

offences of the body. Now from the body the death of the body separates

us; whereas the offences contracted from the body remain, and their

just punishment awaits them, as the rich man found in hell. [1284] From

these it was that he was unable to liberate himself, who said: "Who

shall liberate me from the body of this death?" [1285] But whensoever

it was that he lost this liberty, at least there remains that

"inseparable capacity" of nature,--he has the ability from natural

resources,--he has the volition from free will. Why does he seek the

sacrament of baptism? Is it because of past sins, in order that they

may be forgiven, since they cannot be undone? Well, suppose you acquit

and release a man on these terms, he must still utter the old cry; for

he not only wants to be mercifully let off from punishment for past

offences, but to be strengthened and fortified against sinning for the

time to come. For he "delights in the law of God, after the inward man;

but then he sees another law in his members, warring against the law of

his mind." [1286] Observe, he sees that there is, not recollects that

there was. It is a present pressure, not a past memory. And he sees the

other law not only "warring," but even "bringing him into captivity to

the law of sin, which is"(not which was) "in his members." [1287] Hence

comes that cry of his: "O wretched man that I am! who shall liberate me

from the body of this death?" [1288] Let him pray, let him entreat for

the help of the mighty Physician. Why gainsay that prayer? Why cry down

that entreaty? Why shall the unhappy suitor be hindered from begging

for the mercy of Christ,--and that too by Christians? For, it was even

they who were accompanying Christ that tried to prevent the blind man,

by clamouring him down, from begging for light; but even amidst the din

and throng of the gainsayers He hears the suppliant; [1289] whence the

response: "The grace of God, through Jesus Christ out Lord." [1290]

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[1283] Rom. vii. 24.

[1284] Luke xvi. 23.

[1285] Rom. vii. 24.

[1286] Rom. vii. 22, 23.

[1287] Rom. vii. 23.

[1288] Rom. vii. 24.

[1289] Mark x. 46-52.

[1290] Rom. vii. 25.

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Chapter 66.--The Works, Not the Substance, of the "Flesh" Opposed to

the "Spirit."

Now if we secure even this concession from them, that unbaptized

persons may implore the assistance of the Saviour's grace, this is

indeed no slight point against that fallacious assertion of the

self-sufficiency of nature and of the power of free will. For he is not

sufficient to himself who says, "O wretched man that I am! who shall

liberate me?" Nor can he be said to have full liberty who still asks

for liberation. [LVI.] But let us, moreover, see to this point also,

whether they who are baptized do the good which they would, without any

resistance from the lust of the flesh. That, however, which we have to

say on this subject, our author himself mentions, when concluding this

topic he says: "As we remarked, the passage in which occur the words,

The flesh lusteth against the Spirit,' [1291] must needs have reference

not to the substance, but to the works of the flesh." We too allege

that this is spoken not of the substance of the flesh, but of its

works, which proceed from carnal concupiscence,--in a word, from sin,

concerning which we have this precept: "Not to let it reign in our

mortal body, that we should obey it in the lusts thereof." [1292]

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[1291] Gal. v. 17.

[1292] Rom. vi. 12.

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Chapter 67 [LVII.]--Who May Be Said to Be Under the Law.

But even our author should observe that it is to persons who have been

already baptized that it was said: "The flesh lusteth against the

Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, so that ye cannot do the

things that ye would." [1293] And lest he should make them slothful for

the actual conflict, and should seem by this statement to have given

them laxity in sinning, he goes on to tell them: "If ye be led of the

Spirit, ye are no longer under the law." [1294] For that man is under

the law, who, from fear of the punishment which the law threatens, and

not from any love for righteousness, obliges himself to abstain from

the work of sin, without being as yet free and removed from the desire

of sinning. For it is in his very will that he is guilty, whereby he

would prefer, if it were possible, that what he dreads should not

exist, in order that he might freely do what he secretly desires.

Therefore he says, "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the

law,"--even the law which inspires fear, but gives not love. For this

"love is shed abroad in our hearts," not by the letter of the law, but

"by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." [1295] This is the law of

liberty, not of bondage; being the law of love, not of fear; and

concerning it the Apostle James says: "Whoso looketh into the perfect

law of liberty." [1296] Whence he, too, no longer indeed felt terrified

by God's law as a slave, but delighted in it in the inward man,

although still seeing another law in his members warring against the

law of his mind. Accordingly he here says: "If ye be led of the Spirit,

ye are not under the law." So far, indeed, as any man is led by the

Spirit, he is not under the law; because, so far as he rejoices in the

law of God, he lives not in fear of the law, since "fear has torment,"

[1297] not joy and delight.

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[1293] Gal. v. 17.

[1294] Gal. v. 18.

[1295] Rom. v. 5.

[1296] Jas. i. 25.

[1297] 1 John iv. 18.

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Chapter 68 [LVIII.]--Despite the Devil, Man May, by God's Help, Be

Perfected.

If, therefore, we feel rightly on this matter, it is our duty at once

to be thankful for what is already healed within us, and to pray for

such further healing as shall enable us to enjoy full liberty, in that

most absolute state of health which is incapable of addition, the

perfect pleasure of God. [1298] For we do not deny that human nature

can be without sin; nor ought we by any means to refuse to it the

ability to become perfect, since we admit its capacity for

progress,--by God's grace, however, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By

His assistance we aver that it becomes holy and happy, by whom it was

created in order to be so. There is accordingly an easy refutation of

the objection which our author says is alleged by some against him:

"The devil opposes us." This objection we also meet in entirely

identical language with that which he uses in reply: "We must resist

him, and he will flee. Resist the devil,' says the blessed apostle, and

he will flee from you.' [1299] From which it may be observed, what his

harming amounts to against those whom he flees; or what power he is to

be understood as possessing, when he prevails only against those who do

not resist him." Such language is my own also; for it is impossible to

employ truer words. There is, however, this difference between us and

them, that we, whenever the devil has to be resisted, not only do not

deny, but actually teach, that God's help must be sought; whereas they

attribute so much power to will as to take away prayer from religious

duty. Now it is certainly with a view to resisting the devil and his

fleeing from us that we say when we pray, "Lead us not into

temptation;" [1300] to the same end also are we warned by our Captain,

exhorting us as soldiers in the words: "Watch ye and pray, lest ye

enter into temptation." [1301]

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[1298] Ps. xvi. 11.

[1299] Jas. iv. 17.

[1300] Matt. vi. 13.

[1301] Mark xiv. 38.

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Chapter 69 [LIX.]--Pelagius Puts Nature in the Place of Grace.

In opposition, however, to those who ask, "And who would be unwilling

to be without sin, if it were put in the power of a man?" he rightly

contends, saying "that by this very question they acknowledge that the

thing is not impossible; because so much as this, many, if not all men,

certainly desire." Well then, let him only confess the means by which

this is possible, and then our controversy is ended. Now the means is

"the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" by which he nowhere

has been willing to allow that we are assisted when we pray, for the

avoidance of sin. If indeed he secretly allows this, he must forgive us

if we suspect otherwise. For he himself works this result, who, though

encountering so much obloquy on this subject, wishes to entertain the

secret opinion, and yet is unwilling to confess or profess it. It would

surely be no great matter were he to speak out, especially since he has

undertaken to handle and open this point, as if it had been objected

against him on the side of opponents. Why on such occasions did he

choose only to defend nature, and assert that man was so created as to

have it in his power not to sin if he wished not to sin; and, from the

fact that he was so created, definitely say that the power was owing to

God's grace which enabled him to avoid sin, if he was unwilling to

commit it; and yet refuse to say anything concerning the fact that even

nature itself is either, because disordered, healed by God's grace

through our Lord Jesus Christ or else assisted by it, because in itself

it is so insufficient?

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Chapter 70 [LX.]--Whether Any Man is Without Sin in This Life.

Now, whether there ever has been, or is, or ever can be, a man living

so righteous a life in this world as to have no sin at all, may be an

open question among true and pious Christians; [1302] but whoever

doubts the possibility of this sinless state after this present life;

is foolish. For my own part, indeed, I am unwilling to dispute the

point even as respects this life. For although that passage seems to me

to be incapable of bearing any doubtful sense, wherein it is written,

"In thy sight shall no man living be justified" [1303] (and so of

similar passages), yet I could wish it were possible to show either

that such quotations were capable of bearing a better signification, or

that a perfect and plenary righteousness, to which it were impossible

for any accession to be made, had been realized at some former time in

some one whilst passing through this life in the flesh, or was now

being realized, or would be hereafter. They, however, are in a great

majority, who, while not doubting that to the last day of their life it

will be needful to them to resort to the prayer which they can so

truthfully utter, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who

trespass against us," [1304] still trust that in Christ and His

promises they possess a true, certain, and unfailing hope. There is,

however, no method whereby any persons arrive at absolute perfection,

or whereby any man makes the slightest progress to true and godly

righteousness, but the assisting grace of our crucified Saviour Christ,

and the gift of His Spirit; and whosoever shall deny this cannot

rightly, I almost think, be reckoned in the number of any kind of

Christians at all.

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[1302] See next treatise--its preface, or Admonitio.

[1303] Ps. cxliii. 2.

[1304] Matt. vi. 12.

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Chapter 71 [LXI.]--Augustin Replies Against the Quotations Which

Pelagius Had Advanced Out of the Catholic Writers. Lactantius.

Accordingly, with respect also to the passages which he has

adduced,--not indeed from the canonical Scriptures, but out of certain

treatises of catholic writers,--I wish to meet the assertions of such

as say that the said quotations make for him. The fact is, these

passages are so entirely neutral, that they oppose neither our own

opinion nor his. Amongst them he wanted to class something out of my

own books, thus accounting me to be a person who seemed worthy of being

ranked with them. For this I must not be ungrateful, and I should be

sorry--so I say with unaffected friendliness--for him to be in error,

since he has conferred this honour upon me. As for his first quotation,

indeed, why need I examine it largely, since I do not see here the

author's name, either because he has not given it, or because from some

casual mistake the copy which you [1305] forwarded to me did not

contain it? Especially as in writings of such authors I feel myself

free to use my own judgment (owing unhesitating assent to nothing but

the canonical Scriptures), whilst in fact there is not a passage which

he has quoted from the works of this anonymous author [1306] that

disturbs me. "It behooved," says he, "for the Master and Teacher of

virtue to become most like to man, that by conquering sin He might show

that man is able to conquer sin." Now, however this passage may be

expressed, its author must see to it as to what explanation it is

capable of bearing. We, indeed, on our part, could not possibly doubt

that in Christ there was no sin to conquer,--born as He was in the

likeness of sinful flesh, not in sinful flesh itself. Another passage

is adduced from the same author to this effect: "And again, that by

subduing the desires of the flesh He might teach us that it is not of

necessity that one sins, but of set purpose and will." [1307] For my

own part, I understand these desires of the flesh (if it is not of its

unlawful lusts that the writer here speaks) to be such as hunger,

thirst, refreshment after fatigue, and the like. For it is through

these, however faultless they be in themselves, that some men fall into

sin,--a result which was far from our blessed Saviour, even though, as

we see from the evidence of the gospel, these affections were natural

to Him owing to His likeness to sinful flesh.

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[1305] Timasius and Jacobus, to whom the treatise is addressed. See ch.

1.

[1306] Lactantius is the writer from whom Pelagius takes his first

quotations here. See his Instit. Divin. iv. 24.

[1307] Lactantius, Instit. Divin. iv. 25.

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Chapter 72 [LXI.]--Hilary. The Pure in Heart Blessed. The Doing and

Perfecting of Righteousness.

He quotes the following words from the blessed Hilary: "It is only when

we shall be perfect in spirit and changed in our immortal state, which

blessedness has been appointed only for the pure in heart, [1308] that

we shall see that which is immortal in God." [1309] Now I am really not

aware what is here said contrary to our own statement, or in what

respect this passage is of any use to our opponent, unless it be that

it testifies to the possibility of a man's being "pure in heart." But

who denies such possibility? Only it must be by the grace of God,

through Jesus Christ our Lord, and not merely by our freedom of will.

He goes on to quote also this passage: "This Job had so effectually

read these Scriptures, that he kept himself from every wicked work,

because he worshipped God purely with a mind unmixed with offences: now

such worship of God is the proper work of righteousness." [1310] It is

what Job had done which the writer here spoke of, not what he had

brought to perfection in this world,--much less what he had done or

perfected without the grace of that Saviour whom he had actually

foretold. [1311] For that man, indeed, abstains from every wicked work,

who does not allow the sin which he has within him to have dominion

over him; and who, whenever an unworthy thought stole over him,

suffered it not to come to a head in actual deed. It is, however, one

thing not to have sin, and another to refuse obedience to its desires.

It is one thing to fulfil the command, "Thou shalt not covet;" [1312]

and another thing, by an endeavour at any rate after abstinence, to do

that which is also written, "Thou shalt not go after thy lusts." [1313]

And yet one is quite aware that he can do nothing of all this without

the Saviour's grace. It is to work righteousness, therefore, to fight

in an internal struggle with the internal evil of concupiscence in the

true worship of God; whilst to perfect it means to have no adversary at

all. Now he who has to fight is still in danger, and is sometimes

shaken, even if he is not overthrown; whereas he who has no enemy at

all rejoices in perfect peace. He, moreover, is in the highest truth

said to be without sin in whom no sin has an indwelling,--not he who,

abstaining from evil deeds, uses such language as "Now it is no longer

I that do it, but the sin that dwelleth in me." [1314]

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[1308] See Matt. v. 8.

[1309] Hilary in loco.

[1310] Hilary's Fragments.

[1311] Job xix. 25.

[1312] Ex. xx. 17.

[1313] Ecclus. xviii. 30.

[1314] Rom. vii. 20.

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Chapter 73.--He Meets Pelagius with Another Passage from Hilary.

Now even Job himself is not silent respecting his own sins; and your

friend, [1315] of course, is justly of opinion that humility must not

by any means "be put on the side of falsehood." Whatever confession,

therefore, Job makes, inasmuch as he is a true worshipper of God, he

undoubtedly makes it in truth. [1316] Hilary, likewise, while

expounding that passage of the psalm in which it is written, "Thou hast

despised all those who turn aside from Thy commandments," [1317] says:

"If God were to despise sinners, He would despise indeed all men,

because no man is without sin; but it is those who turn away from Him,

whom they call apostates, that He despises." You observe his statement:

it is not to the effect that no man was without sin, as if he spoke of

the past; but no man is without sin; and on this point, as I have

already remarked, I have no contention with him. But if one refuses to

submit to the Apostle John,--who does not himself declare, "If we were

to say we have had no sin," but "If we say we have no sin," [1318]

--how is he likely to show deference to Bishop Hilary? It is in defence

of the grace of Christ that I lift up my voice, without which grace no

man is justified,--just as if natural free will were sufficient. Nay,

He Himself lifts up His own voice in defence of the same. Let us submit

to Him when He says: "Without me ye can do nothing." [1319]

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[1315] Pelagius, the friend of Timasius and Jacobus.

[1316] Job xl. 4, and xlii. 6.

[1317] Ps. cxix. 21, or 118.

[1318] 1 John i. 8.

[1319] John xv. 5.

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Chapter 74 [LXIII.]--Ambrose.

St. Ambrose, however, really opposes those who say that man cannot

exist without sin in the present life. For, in order to support his

statement, he avails himself of the instance of Zacharias and

Elisabeth, because they are mentioned as "having walked in all the

commandments and ordinances" of the law "blameless." [1320] Well, but

does he for all that deny that it was by God's grace that they did this

through our Lord Jesus Christ? It was undoubtedly by such faith in Him

that holy men lived of old, even before His death. It is He who sends

the Holy Ghost that is given to us, through whom that love is shed

abroad in our hearts whereby alone whosoever are righteous are

righteous. This same Holy Ghost the bishop expressly mentioned when he

reminds us that He is to be obtained by prayer (so that the will is not

sufficient unless it be aided by Him); thus in his hymn he says:

"Votisque pr�stat sedulis,

Sanctum mereri Spiritum," [1321] --

"To those who sedulously seek He gives to gain the Holy Spirit."

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[1320] Luke i. 6. See Ambrose in loco (Exp. 61, s. 17).

[1321] Ambrose's Hymns, 3.

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Chapter 75.--Augustin Adduces in Reply Some Other Passages of Ambrose.

I, too, will quote a passage out of this very work of St. Ambrose, from

which our opponent has taken the statement which he deemed favourable

for citation: "It seemed good to me,'" he says; "but what he declares

seemed good to him cannot have seemed good to him alone. For it is not

simply to his human will that it seemed good, but also as it pleased

Him, even Christ, who, says he, speaketh in me, who it is that causes

that which is good in itself to seem good to ourselves also. For him on

whom He has mercy He also calls. He, therefore, who follows Christ,

when asked why he wished to be a Christian, can answer: It seemed good

to me.' In saying this he does not deny that it also pleased God; for

from God proceeds the preparation of man's will inasmuch as it is by

God's grace that God is honoured by His saint." [1322] See now what

your author must learn, if he takes pleasure in the words of Ambrose,

how that man's will is prepared by God, and that it is of no

importance, or, at any rate, does not much matter, by what means or at

what time the preparation is accomplished, provided no doubt is raised

as to whether the thing itself be capable of accomplishment without the

grace of Christ. Then, again, how important it was that he should

observe one line from the words of Ambrose which he quoted! For after

that holy man had said, "Inasmuch as the Church has been gathered out

of the world, that is, out of sinful men, how can it be unpolluted when

composed of such polluted material, except that, in the first place, it

be washed of sins by the grace of Christ, and then, in the next place,

abstain from sins through its nature of avoiding sin?"--he added the

following sentence, which your author has refused to quote for a

self-evident reason; for [Ambrose] says: "It was not from the first

unpolluted, for that was impossible for human nature: but it is through

God's grace and nature that because it no longer sins, it comes to pass

that it seems unpolluted." [1323] Now who does not understand the

reason why your author declined adding these words? It is, of course,

so contrived in the discipline of the present life, that the holy

Church shall arrive at last at that condition of most immaculate purity

which all holy men desire; and that it may in the world to come, and in

a state unmixed with anything of evil men, and undisturbed by any law

of sin resisting the law of the mind, lead the purest life in a divine

eternity. Still he should well observe what Bishop Ambrose says,--and

his statement exactly tallies with the Scriptures: "It was not from the

first unpolluted, for that condition was impossible for human nature."

By his phrase, "from the first," he means indeed from the time of our

being born of Adam. Adam no doubt was himself created immaculate; in

the case, however, of those who are by nature children of wrath,

deriving from him what in him was corrupted, he distinctly averred that

it was an impossibility in human nature that they should be immaculate

from the first.

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[1322] Ambrose on Luke i. 3.

[1323] Ambrose on Luke i. 6.

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Chapter 76 [LXIV.]--John of Constantinople.

He quotes also John, bishop of Constantinople, as saying "that sin is

not a substance, but a wicked act." Who denies this? "And because it is

not natural, therefore the law was given against it, and because it

proceeds from the liberty of our will." [1324] Who, too, denies this?

However, the present question concerns our human nature in its

corrupted state; it is a further question also concerning that grace of

God whereby our nature is healed by the great Physician, Christ, whose

remedy it would not need if it were only whole. And yet your author

defends it as capable of not sinning, as if it were sound, or as if its

freedom of will were self-sufficient.

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[1324] Compare Chrysostom's Homily on Eph. ii. 3.

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Chapter 77.--Xystus.

What Christian, again, is unaware of what he quotes the most blessed

Xystus, bishop of Rome and martyr of Christ, as having said, "God has

conferred upon men liberty of their own will, in order that by purity

and sinlessness of life they may become like unto God?" [1325] But the

man who appeals to free will ought to listen and believe, and ask Him

in whom he believes to give him His assistance not to sin. For when he

speaks of "becoming like unto God," it is indeed through God's love

that men are to be like unto God,--even the love which is "shed abroad

in our hearts," not by any ability of nature or the free will within

us, but "by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." [1326] Then, in

respect of what the same martyr further says, "A pure mind is a holy

temple for God, and a heart clean and without sin is His best altar,"

who knows not that the clean heart must be brought to this perfection,

whilst "the inward man is renewed day by day," [1327] but yet not

without the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord? Again, when he

says, "A man of chastity and without sin has received power from God to

be a son of God," he of course meant it as an admonition that on a

man's becoming so chaste and sinless (without raising any question as

to where and when this perfection was to be obtained by him,--although

in fact it is quite an interesting question among godly men, who are

notwithstanding agreed as to the possibility of such perfection on the

one hand, and on the other hand its impossibility except through "the

one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus"); [1328]

--nevertheless, as I began to say, Xystus designed his words to be an

admonition that, on any man's attaining such a high character, and

thereby being rightly reckoned to be among the sons of God, the

attainment must not be thought to have been the work of his own power.

This indeed he, through grace, received from God, since he did not have

it in a nature which had become corrupted and depraved,--even as we

read in the Gospel, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power

to become the sons of God;" [1329] which they were not by nature, nor

could at all become, unless by receiving Him they also received power

through His grace. This is the power which is claimed for itself by the

fortitude of that love which is only communicated to us by the Holy

Ghost bestowed upon us.

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[1325] This passage, which Pelagius had quoted as from Xystus the Roman

bishop and martyr, Augustin subsequently ascertained to have had for

its author Sextus, a Pythagorean philosopher. See the passage of the

Retractations, ii. 42, at the head of this treatise.

[1326] Rom. v. 5.

[1327] 2 Cor. iv. 16.

[1328] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

[1329] John i. 12.

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Chapter 78 [LXV.]--Jerome.

We have next a quotation of some words of the venerable presbyter

Jerome, from his exposition of the passage where it is written:

"Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.' [1330] These

are they whom no consciousness of sin reproves," he says, and adds:

"The pure man is seen by his purity of heart; the temple of God cannot

be defiled." [1331] This perfection is, to be sure, wrought in us by

endeavour, by labour, by prayer, by effectual importunity therein that

we may be brought to the perfection in which we may be able to look

upon God with a pure heart, by His grace through our Lord Jesus Christ.

As to his quotation, that the forementioned presbyter said, "God

created us with free will; we are drawn by necessity neither to virtue

nor to vice; otherwise, where there is necessity there is no crown;"

[1332] --who would not allow this? Who would not cordially accept it?

Who would deny that human nature was so created? The reason, however,

why in doing a right action there is no bondage of necessity, is that

liberty comes of love.

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[1330] Matt. v. 8.

[1331] Jerome on Matt. v. 8 (Comm. Book i. c. 5).

[1332] Jerome, Against Jovinianus, ii. 3.

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Chapter 79 [LXVI.]--A Certain Necessity of Sinning.

But let us revert to the apostle's assertion: "The love of God is shed

abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." [1333]

By whom given if not by Him who "ascended up on high, led captivity

captive, and gave gifts unto men?" [1334] Forasmuch, however, as there

is, owing to the defects that have entered our nature, not to the

constitution of our nature, a certain necessary tendency to sin, a man

should listen, and in order that the said necessity may cease to exist,

learn to say to God, "Bring Thou me out of my necessities;" [1335]

because in the very offering up of such a prayer there is a struggle

against the tempter, who fights against us concerning this very

necessity; and thus, by the assistance of grace through our Lord Jesus

Christ, both the evil necessity will be removed and full liberty be

bestowed.

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[1333] Rom. v. 5.

[1334] Eph. iv. 8.

[1335] Ps. xxv. 17.

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Chapter 80 [LXVII.]--Augustin Himself. Two Methods Whereby Sins, Like

Diseases, are Guarded Against.

Let us now turn to our own case. "Bishop Augustin also," says your

author, "in his books on Free Will has these words: Whatever the cause

itself of volition is, if it is impossible to resist it, submission to

it is not sinful; if, however, it may be resisted, let it not be

submitted to, and there will be no sin. Does it, perchance, deceive the

unwary man? Let him then beware that he be not deceived. Is the

deception, however, so potent that it is not possible to guard against

it? If such is the case, then there are no sins. For who sins in a case

where precaution is quite impossible? Sin, however, is committed;

precaution therefore is possible.'" [1336] I acknowledge it, these are

my words; but he, too, should condescend to acknowledge all that was

said previously, seeing that the discussion is about the grace of God,

which helps us as a medicine through the Mediator; not about the

impossibility of righteousness. Whatever, then, may be the cause, it

can be resisted. Most certainly it can. Now it is because of this that

we pray for help, saying, "Lead us not into temptation," [1337] and we

should not ask for help if we supposed that the resistance were quite

impossible. It is possible to guard against sin, but by the help of Him

who cannot be deceived. [1338] For this very circumstance has much to

do with guarding against sin that we can unfeignedly say, "Forgive us

our debt, as we forgive our debtors." [1339] Now there are two ways

whereby, even in bodily maladies, the evil is guarded against,--to

prevent its occurrence, and, if it happen, to secure a speedy cure. To

prevent its occurrence, we may find precaution in the prayer, "Lead us

not into temptation;" to secure the prompt remedy, we have the resource

in the prayer, "Forgive us our debts." Whether then the danger only

threaten or be inherent, it may be guarded against.

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[1336] Augustin, De Libero Arbitrio, iii. 18 (50).

[1337] Matt. vi. 13.

[1338] Augustin gives a similar reply to the objection in his

Retractations, i. 9.

[1339] Matt. vi. 12.

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Chapter 81.--Augustin Quotes Himself on Free Will.

In order, however, that my meaning on this subject may be clear not

merely to him, but also to such persons as have not read those

treatises of mine on Free Will, which your author has read, and who

have not only not read them, but perchance do read him; I must go on to

quote out of my books what he has omitted, but which, if he had

perceived and quoted in his book, no controversy would be left between

us on this subject. For immediately after those words of mine which he

has quoted, I expressly added, and (as fully as I could) worked out,

the train of thought which might occur to any one's mind, to the

following effect: "And yet some actions are disapproved of, even when

they are done in ignorance, and are judged deserving of chastisement,

as we read in the inspired authorities." After taking some examples out

of these, I went on to speak also of infirmity as follows: "Some

actions also deserve disapprobation, that are done from necessity; as

when a man wishes to act rightly and cannot. For whence arise those

utterances: For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I

would not, that I do'?" [1340] Then, after quoting some other passages

of the Holy Scriptures to the same effect, I say: "But all these are

the sayings of persons who are coming out of that condemnation of

death; for if this is not man's punishment, but his nature, then those

are no sins." Then, again, a little afterwards I add: "It remains,

therefore, that this just punishment come of man's condemnation. Nor

ought it to be wondered at, that either by ignorance man has not free

determination of will to choose what he will rightly do, or that by the

resistance of carnal habit (which by force of mortal transmission has,

in a certain sense, become engrafted into his nature), though seeing

what ought rightly to be done and wishing to do it, he yet is unable to

accomplish it. For this is the most just penalty of sin, that a man

should lose what he has been unwilling to make good use of, when he

might with ease have done so if he would; which, however, amounts to

this, that the man who knowingly does not do what is right loses the

ability to do it when he wishes. For, in truth, to every soul that sins

there accrue these two penal consequences--ignorance and difficulty.

Out of the ignorance springs the error which disgraces; out of the

difficulty arises the pain which afflicts. But to approve of falsehoods

as if they were true, so as to err involuntarily, and to be unable,

owing to the resistance and pain of carnal bondage, to refrain from

deeds of lust, is not the nature of man as he was created, but the

punishment of man as under condemnation. When, however, we speak of a

free will to do what is right, we of course mean that liberty in which

man was created." Some men at once deduce from this what seems to them

a just objection from the transfer and transmission of sins of

ignorance and difficulty from the first man to his posterity. My answer

to such objectors is this: "I tell them, by way of a brief reply, to be

silent and to cease from murmuring against God. Perhaps their complaint

might have been a proper one, if no one from among men had stood forth

a vanquisher of error and of lust; but when there is everywhere present

One who calls off from himself, through the creature by so many means,

the man who serves the Lord, teaches him when believing, consoles him

when hoping, encourages him when loving, helps him when endeavouring,

hears him when praying,--it is not reckoned to you as a fault that you

are involuntarily ignorant, but that you neglect to search out what you

are ignorant of; nor is it imputed to you in censure that you do not

bind up the limbs that are wounded, but that you despise him who wishes

to heal them." [1341] In such terms did I exhort them, as well as I

could, to live righteously; nor did I make the grace of God of none

effect, without which the now obscured and tarnished nature of man can

neither be enlightened nor purified. Our whole discussion with them on

this subject turns upon this, that we frustrate not the grace of God

which is in Jesus Christ our Lord by a perverted assertion of nature.

In a passage occurring shortly after the last quoted one, I said in

reference to nature: "Of nature itself we speak in one sense, when we

properly describe it as that human nature in which man was created

faultless after his kind; and in another sense as that nature in which

we are born ignorant and carnally minded, owing to the penalty of

condemnation, after the manner of the apostle, We ourselves likewise

were by nature children of wrath, even as others.'" [1342]

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[1340] Rom. vii. 19.

[1341] De Libero Arbitrio, iii. 19.

[1342] Eph. ii. 3.

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Chapter 82 [LXVIII.]--How to Exhort Men to Faith, Repentance, and

Advancement.

If, therefore, we wish "to rouse and kindle cold and sluggish souls by

Christian exhortations to lead righteous lives," [1343] we must first

of all exhort them to that faith whereby they may become Christians,

and be subjects of His name and authority, without whom they cannot be

saved. If, however, they are already Christians but neglect to lead

holy lives, they must be chastised with alarms and be aroused by the

praises of reward,--in such a manner, indeed, that we must not forget

to urge them to godly prayers as well as to virtuous actions, and

furthermore to instruct them in such wholesome doctrine that they be

induced thereby to return thanks for being able to accomplish any step

in that holy life which they have entered upon, without difficulty,

[1344] and whenever they do experience such "difficulty," that they

then wrestle with God in most faithful and persistent prayer and ready

works of mercy to obtain from Him facility. But provided they thus

progress, I am not over-anxious as to the where and the when of their

perfection in fulness of righteousness; only I solemnly assert, that

wheresoever and whensoever they become perfect, it cannot be but by the

grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. When, indeed, they have

attained to the clear knowledge that they have no sin, let them not say

they have sin, lest the truth be not in them; [1345] even as the truth

is not in those persons who, though they have sin, yet say that they

have it not.

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[1343] This passage, and others in this and the following chapters, are

marked as quotations, apparently cited from Pelagius by Augustin.

[1344] For the "difficulty," which is one of the penal consequences of

sin, see last chapter, about its middle.

[1345] 1 John i. 8.

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Chapter 83 [LXIX.]--God Enjoins No Impossibility, Because All Things

are Possible and Easy to Love.

But "the precepts of the law are very good," if we use them lawfully.

[1346] Indeed, by the very fact (of which we have the firmest

conviction) "that the just and good God could not possibly have

enjoined impossibilities," we are admonished both what to do in easy

paths and what to ask for when they are difficult. Now all things are

easy for love to effect, to which (and which alone) "Christ's burden is

light," [1347] --or rather, it is itself alone the burden which is

light. Accordingly it is said, "And His commandments are not grievous;"

[1348] so that whoever finds them grievous must regard the inspired

statement about their "not being grievous" as having been capable of

only this meaning, that there may be a state of heart to which they are

not burdensome, and he must pray for that disposition which he at

present wants, so as to be able to fulfil all that is commanded him.

And this is the purport of what is said to Israel in Deuteronomy, if

understood in a godly, sacred, and spiritual sense, since the apostle,

after quoting the passage, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth

and in thy heart" [1349] (and, as the verse also has it, in thine

hands, [1350] for in man's heart are his spiritual hands), adds in

explanation, "This is the word of faith which we preach." [1351] No

man, therefore, who "returns to the Lord his God," as he is there

commanded, "with all his heart and with all his soul," [1352] will find

God's commandment "grievous." How, indeed, can it be grievous, when it

is the precept of love? Either, therefore, a man has not love, and then

it is grievous; or he has love, and then it is not grievous. But he

possesses love if he does what is there enjoined on Israel, by

returning to the Lord his God with all his heart and with all his soul.

"A new commandment," says He, "do I give unto you, that ye love one

another;" [1353] and "He that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the

law;" [1354] and again, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." [1355] In

accordance with these sayings is that passage, "Had they trodden good

paths, they would have found, indeed, the ways of righteousness easy."

[1356] How then is it written, "Because of the words of Thy lips, I

have kept the paths of difficulty," [1357] except it be that both

statements are true: These paths are paths of difficulty to fear; but

to love they are easy?

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[1346] See 1 Tim. i. 8.

[1347] Matt. xi. 30.

[1348] 1 John v. 3.

[1349] Deut. xxx. 14, quoted Rom. x. 8.

[1350] According to the Septuagint, which adds after en te kardia sou

the words kai en tais chersi sou. This was probably Pelagius' reading.

Compare Qu�stion. in Deuteron. Book v. 54.

[1351] Rom. x. 8.

[1352] Deut. xxx. 2.

[1353] John xiii. 34.

[1354] Rom. xiii. 8.

[1355] Rom. xiii. 10.

[1356] Prov. ii. 20.

[1357] Ps. xvii. 4.

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Chapter 84 [LXX.]--The Degrees of Love are Also Degrees of Holiness.

Inchoate love, therefore, is inchoate holiness; advanced love is

advanced holiness; great love is great holiness; "perfect love is

perfect holiness,"--but this "love is out of a pure heart, and of a

good conscience, and of faith unfeigned," [1358] "which in this life is

then the greatest, when life itself is contemned in comparison with

it." [1359] I wonder, however, whether it has not a soil in which to

grow after it has quitted this mortal life! But in what place and at

what time soever it shall reach that state of absolute perfection,

which shall admit of no increase, it is certainly not "shed abroad in

our hearts" by any energies either of the nature or the volition that

are within us, but "by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us," [1360]

"and which both helps our infirmity and co-operates with our strength.

For it is itself indeed the grace of God, through our Lord Jesus

Christ, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, appertaineth

eternity, and all goodness, for ever and ever. Amen.

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[1358] 1 Tim. i. 5.

[1359] See note at beginning of ch. 82 for the meaning of this mark of

quotation.

[1360] Rom. v. 5.

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a treatise concerning man's perfection in righteousness.

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preface to the treatise on man's perfection in righteousness.

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Augustin has made no mention of this treatise in his book of

Retractations; for the reason, no doubt, that it belonged to the

collection of the Epistles, for which he designed a separate statement

of Retractations. In all the mss. this work begins with his usual

epistolary salutation: "Augustin, to his holy brethren and

fellow-bishops Eutropius and Paulus." And yet, by general consent, this

epistle has been received as a treatise, not only in those volumes of

his works which contain this work, but also in the writings of those

ancient authors who quote it. Amongst these, the most renowned and

acquainted with Augustin's writings, Possidius (In indiculo, 4) and

Fulgentius (Ad Monimum, i. 3) expressly call this work "A Treatise on

the Perfection of Man's Righteousness." So far nearly all the mss.

agree, but a few (including the Codd. Aud�enensis and Pratellensis) add

these words to the general title: "In opposition to those who assert

that it is possible for a man to become righteous by his own sole

strength." In a ms. belonging to the Church of Rheims there occurs this

inscription: "A Treatise on what are called the definitions of

Coelestius." Prosper, in his work against the Collator, ch. 43, advises

his reader to read, besides some other of Augustin's "books," that

which he wrote "to the priests Paulus and Eutropius in opposition to

the questions of Pelagius and Coelestius."

From this passage of Prosper, however, in which he mentions, but with

no regard to accurate order, some of the short treatises of Augustin

against the Pelagians, nobody could rightly show that this work On the

Perfection of Man's Righteousness was later in time than his work On

Marriage and Concupiscence, or than the six books against Julianus,

which are mentioned previously in the same passage by Prosper. For,

indeed, at the conclusion of the present treatise, Augustin hesitates

as yet to censure those persons who affirmed that men are living or

have lived in this life righteously without any sin at all: their

opinion Augustin, in the passage referred to (just as in his treatises

On Nature and Grace, n. 3, and On the Spirit and the Letter, nn. 49,

70), does not yet think it necessary stoutly to resist. Nothing had as

yet, therefore, been determined on this point; nor were there yet

enacted, in opposition to this opinion, the three well-known canons

(6-8) of the Council of Carthage, which was held in the year 418.

Afterwards, however, on the authority of these canons, he cautions

people against the opinion as a pernicious error, as one may see from

many passages in his books Against the two Epistles of the Pelagians,

especially Book iv. ch. x. (27), where he says: "Let us now consider

that third point of theirs, which each individual member of Christ as

well as His entire body regards with horror, where they contend that

there are in this life, or have been, righteous persons without any sin

whatever." Certainly, in the year 414, in an epistle (157) to Hilary,

when answering the questions which were then being agitated in Sicily,

he expresses himself in the same tone, and almost in the same language,

on sinlessness, as that which he employs at the end of this present

treatise. "But those persons," says he (in ch. ii. n. 4 of that

epistle), "however much one may tolerate them when they affirm that

there either are, or have been, men besides the one Saint of saints who

have been wholly free from sin; yet when they allege that man's own

free will is sufficient for fulfilling the Lord's commandments, even

when unassisted by God's grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit for the

performance of good works, the idea is altogether worthy of anathema

and of perfect detestation." On comparing these words with the

conclusion of this treatise before us, nothing will appear more

probable than that the work which supplies the refutation of

Coelestius' questions, which were also brought over from Sicily, was

written not long after the above-mentioned epistle. This work

Possidius, in his index, places immediately after the treatise On

Nature and Grace, and before the book On the Proceedings of Pelagius.

Augustin, however, does not mention this work in his epistle (169)

which he addressed to Evodius about the end of the year 415; but he

intimates in it that he had published an answer to the Commonitorium of

Orosius, wherein that author stated that "the bishops Eutropius and

Paulus had already given information to Augustin about certain

formidable heresies." Some suppose that this statement refers to the

letter which they despatched to Augustin along with Coelestius'

propositions. However that be, it is not unreasonable to believe that

they, not long after Orosius' arrival in Africa (that is, before the

midsummer of the year 415), had sent these propositions to him, and

that Augustin soon afterwards wrote back to Eutropius and Paulus a

refutation of them, his answer to Orosius having been previously given.

Furthermore, Coelestius, whose name is inscribed in the propositions,

"wrote to his parents from his monastery," as Gennadius informs us in

his work on Church writers (De Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis), "before he

fell in with the teaching of Pelagius, three letters in the shape of

short treatises, necessary for all seekers after God." Afterwards he

openly professed the Pelagian heresy, and published a short treatise,

in which, besides other topics, he acknowledged in the Church of

Carthage that even infants had redemption by being baptized into

Christ,--an episcopal decision on the question having been obtained in

that city about the commencement of the year 412, as we learn from an

epistle to Pope Innocent (amongst the Epistles of Augustin [175, n. 1

and 6]), as well as from the epistle [157, n. 22] which we have

referred to above; and from Augustin's work On the Merits of Sins, i.

62, and ii. 59; also from his treatise On Original Sin, 21; and his

work Against Julianus, iii. 9. Another work by an anonymous writer, but

which was commonly attributed to Coelestius, divided into chapters, is

mentioned in the treatise which follows the present one, On the

Proceedings of Pelagius; see chapters 29, 30, and 62. There were

extant, moreover, in the year 417, several small books or tracts of

Coelestius, which Augustin, in his work On the Grace of Christ, 31, 32,

and 36, says were produced by Coelestius himself in some ecclesiastical

proceedings at Rome under Zosimus. Augustin, at the commencement of the

present work On the Perfection of Man's Righteousness, mentions an

undoubted work of Coelestius as having been seen by him, from which he

discovered that the definitions or propositions therein examined by

Augustin were not unsuited to the tone and temper of Coelestius. This

was very probably the book which Jerome quotes in his Epistle to

Ctesiphon, written in the year 413 or 414. These are Jerome's words:

"One of his followers [that is, Pelagius'], who was already in fact

become the master and the leader of all that army, and a vessel of

wrath,' [1361] in opposition to the apostle, runs on through thickets,

not of syllogisms, as his admirers are apt to boast, but of solecisms,

and philosophizes and disputes to the following effect: If I do nothing

without God's help, and if everything which I shall achieve is owing to

His operations solely, then it follows that it is not I who work, but

only God's work is to be crowned in me. In vain, therefore, has He

conferred on me the power of will, if I am unable to exercise it fully

without His incessant help. That volition, indeed, is destroyed which

requires the assistance of another. But it is free will which God has

given to me; and free it can only remain, if I do whatever I wish. The

state of the case then is this: I either use once for all the power

which has been bestowed on me, so that free will is preserved; or else,

if I require the assistance of another, liberty of decision in me is

destroyed.'"

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[1361] Rom. ix. 22.

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A Treatise concerning man's perfection in righteousness,

by aurelius augustin, bishop of hippo;

In One Book,

addressed to eutropius and paulus, a.d. 415.

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A paper containing sundry definitions, [1362] said to have been drawn

up by Coelestius, was put into the hands of Augustin. In this document,

Coelestius, or some person who shared in his errors, had recklessly

asserted that a man had it in his power to live here without sin.

Augustin first refutes the several propositions in brief answers,

showing that the perfect and plenary state of righteousness, in which a

man exists absolutely without sin, is unattainable without grace by the

mere resources of our corrupt nature, and never occurs in this present

state of existence. He next proceeds to consider the authorities which

the paper contained as gathered out of the Scriptures; some of them

teaching man to be "unspotted" and "perfect;" others mentioning the

commandments of God as "not grievous;" while others again are quoted as

opposed to the authoritative passages which the Catholics were

accustomed to advance against the Pelagians.

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[1362] These breves definitiones, which Augustin also calls

ratiocinationes, are short argumentative statements, which may be

designated breviates.

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Augustin to his holy brethren and fellow-bishops Eutropius and Paulus.

[1363]

Chapter I.

Your love, which in both of you is so great and so holy that it is a

delight to obey its commands, has laid me under an obligation to reply

to some definitions which are said to be the work of Coelestius; for so

runs the title of the paper which you have given me, "The definitions,

so it is said, of Coelestius." As for this title, I take it that it is

not his, but theirs who have brought this work from Sicily, where

Coelestius is said not to be,--although many there [1364] make boastful

pretension of holding views like his, and, to use the apostle's word,

"being themselves deceived, lead others also astray." [1365] That these

views are, however, his, or those of some associates [1366] of his, we,

too, can well believe. For the above-mentioned brief definitions, or

rather propositions, are by no means at variance with his opinion, such

as I have seen it expressed in another work, of which he is the

undoubted author. There was therefore good reason, I think, for the

report which those brethren, who brought these tidings to us, heard in

Sicily, that Coelestius taught or wrote such opinions. I should like,

if it were possible, so to meet the obligation imposed on me by your

brotherly kindness, that I, too, in my own answer should be equally

brief. But unless I set forth also the propositions which I answer, who

will be able to form a judgment of the value of my answer? Still I will

try to the best of my ability, assisted, too, by God's mercy, by your

own prayers, so to conduct the discussion as to keep it from running to

an unnecessary length.

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[1363] [Probably Spanish refugees; they had recently presented to

Augustin a memorial against certain heresies. Oros. ad Aug. i.--W.]

[1364] In his epistle (157) to Hilary, written a little while before

this work, he mentions Coelestius and the condemnation of his errors in

a Council held at Carthage; he expresses also some apprehension of

Coelestius attempting to spread his opinions in Sicily: "Whether he be

himself there," says Augustin, "or only others who are partners in his

errors, there are too many of them; and, unless they be checked, they

lead astray others to join their sect; and so great is their increase,

that I cannot tell whither they will force their way," etc.

[1365] 2 Tim. iii. 13.

[1366] Sociorum ejus. It has been proposed to read sectatorum

ejus,--not unsuitably (although not justified by ms. evidence), because

Coelestius "had," to use Jerome's words, "by this time turned out a

master with a following,--the leader of a perfect army."--Jerome's

Epistle to Ctesiphon, written in the year 413 or 414.

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Chapter II.--(1.) The First Breviate of Coelestius.

I. "First of all," says he, "he must be asked who denies man's ability

to live without sin, what every sort of sin is,--is it such as can be

avoided? or is it unavoidable? If it is unavoidable, then it is not

sin; if it can be avoided, then a man can live without the sin which

can be avoided. No reason or justice permits us to designate as sin

what cannot in any way be avoided." Our answer to this is, that sin can

be avoided, if our corrupted nature be healed by God's grace, through

our Lord Jesus Christ. For, in so far as it is not sound, in so far

does it either through blindness fail to see, or through weakness fail

to accomplish, that which it ought to do; "for the flesh lusteth

against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh," [1367] so that a

man does not do the things which he would.

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[1367] Gal. v. 17.

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(2.) The Second Breviate.

II. "We must next ask," he says, "whether sin comes from will, or from

necessity? If from necessity, it is not sin; if from will, it can be

avoided." We answer as before; and in order that we may be healed, we

pray to Him to whom it is said in the psalm: "Lead Thou me out of my

necessities." [1368]

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[1368] Ps. xxv. 17.

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(3.) The Third Breviate.

III. "Again we must ask," he says, "what sin is,--natural? or

accidental? If natural, it is not sin; if accidental, it is separable;

[1369] and if it is separable, it can be avoided; and because it can be

avoided, man can be without that which can be avoided." The answer to

this is, that sin is not natural; but nature (especially in that

corrupt state from which we have become by nature "children of wrath"

[1370] ) has too little determination of will to avoid sin, unless

assisted and healed by God's grace through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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[1369] [An accident "is a modification or quality which does not

essentially belong to a thing, nor form one of its constituent or

invariable attributes: as motion in relation to matter, or heat to

iron."--Fleming: Vocabulary of Philosophy.--W.]

[1370] Eph. ii. 3.

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(4.) The Fourth Breviate.

IV. "We must ask, again," he says, "What is sin,--an act, or a thing?

If it is a thing, it must have an author; and if it be said to have an

author, then another besides God will seem to be introduced as the

author of a thing. But if it is impious to say this, we are driven to

confess that every sin is an act, not a thing. If therefore it is an

act, for this very reason, because it is an act, it can be avoided."

Our reply is, that sin no doubt is called an act, and is such, not a

thing. But likewise in the body, lameness for the same reason is an

act, not a thing, since it is the foot itself, or the body, or the man

who walks lame because of an injured foot, that is the thing; but still

the man cannot avoid the lameness, unless his foot be cured. The same

change may take place in the inward man, but it is by God's grace,

through our Lord Jesus Christ. The defect itself which causes the

lameness of the man is neither the foot, nor the body, nor the man, nor

indeed the lameness itself; for there is of course no lameness when

there is no walking, although there is nevertheless the defect which

causes the lameness whenever there is an attempt to walk. Let him

therefore ask, what name must be given to this defect,--would he have

it called a thing, or an act, or rather a bad property [1371] in the

thing, by which the deformed act comes into existence? So in the inward

man the soul is the thing, theft is an act, and avarice is the defect,

that is, the property by which the soul is evil, even when it does

nothing in gratification of its avarice, even when it hears the

prohibition, "Thou shalt not covet," [1372] and censures itself, and

yet remains avaricious. By faith, however, it receives renovation; in

other words, it is healed day by day, [1373] --yet only by God's grace

through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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[1371] [Coelestius had in the previous breviate confined sin to either

nature or accident: Augustin declares it to be a property. By this he

apparently means that it is a non-essential attribute, without which

man would remain man, but yet not what is called a "separable

accident."--W.]

[1372] Ex. xx. 17.

[1373] 2 Cor. iv. 16.

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Chapter III.--(5.) The Fifth Breviate.

V. "We must again," he says, "inquire whether a man ought to be without

sin. Beyond doubt he ought. If he ought, he is able; if he is not able,

then he ought not. Now if a man ought not to be without sin, it follows

that he ought to be with sin,--and then it ceases to be sin at all, if

it is determined that it is owed. Or if it is absurd to say this, we

are obliged to confess that man ought to be without sin; and it is

clear that his obligation is not more than his ability." We frame our

answer with the same illustration that we employed in our previous

reply. When we see a lame man who has the opportunity of being cured of

his lameness, we of course have a right to say: "That man ought not to

be lame; and if he ought, he is able." And yet whenever he wishes he is

not immediately able; but only after he has been cured by the

application of the remedy, and the medicine has assisted his will. The

same thing takes place in the inward man in relation to sin which is

its lameness, by the grace of Him who "came not to call the righteous,

but sinners;" [1374] since "the whole need not the physician, but only

they that be sick." [1375]

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[1374] Matt. ix. 13.

[1375] Matt. ix. 12.

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(6.) The Sixth Breviate.

VI. "Again," he says, "we have to inquire whether man is commanded to

be without sin; for either he is not able, and then he is not

commanded; or else because he is commanded, he is able. For why should

that be commanded which cannot at all be done?" The answer is, that man

is most wisely commanded to walk with right steps, on purpose that,

when he has discovered his own inability to do even this, he may seek

the remedy which is provided for the inward man to cure the lameness of

sin, even the grace of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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(7.) The Seventh Breviate.

VII. "The next question we shall have to propose," he says, "is,

whether God wishes that man be without sin. Beyond doubt God wishes it;

and no doubt he has the ability. For who is so foolhardy as to hesitate

to believe that to be possible, which he has no doubt about God's

wishing?" This is the answer. If God wished not that man should be

without sin, He would not have sent His Son without sin, to heal men of

their sins. This takes place in believers who are being renewed day by

day, [1376] until their righteousness becomes perfect, like fully

restored health.

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[1376] 2 Cor. iv. 16.

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(8.) The Eighth Breviate.

VIII. "Again, this question must be asked," he says, "how God wishes

man to be,--with sin, or without sin? Beyond doubt, He does not wish

him to be with sin. We must reflect how great would be the impious

blasphemy for it to be said that man has it in his power to be with

sin, which God does not wish; and for it to be denied that he has it in

his power to be without sin, which God wishes: just as if God had

created any man for such a result as this,--that he should be able to

be what He would not have him, and unable to be what He would have him;

and that he should lead an existence contrary to His will, rather than

one which should be in accordance therewith." This has been in fact

already answered; but I see that it is necessary for me to make here an

additional remark, that we are saved by hope. "But hope that is seen is

not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we

hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." [1377]

Full righteousness, therefore, will only then be reached, when fulness

of health is attained; and this fulness of health shall be when there

is fulness of love, for "love is the fulfilling of the law;" [1378] and

then shall come fulness of love, when "we shall see Him even as He is."

[1379] Nor will any addition to love be possible more, when faith shall

have reached the fruition of sight.

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[1377] Rom. viii. 24, 25.

[1378] Rom. xiii. 10.

[1379] 1 John iii. 2.

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Chapter IV.--(9.) The Ninth Breviate.

IX. "The next question we shall require to be solved," says he, "is

this: By what means is it brought about that man is with sin?--by the

necessity of nature, or by the freedom of choice? If it is by the

necessity of nature, he is blameless; if by the freedom of choice, then

the question arises, from whom he has received this freedom of choice.

No doubt, from God. Well, but that which God bestows is certainly good.

This cannot be gainsaid. On what principle, then, is a thing proved to

be good, if it is more prone to evil than to good? For it is more prone

to evil than to good if by means of it man can be with sin and cannot

be without sin." The answer is this: It came by the freedom of choice

that man was with sin; but a penal corruption closely followed thereon,

and out of the liberty produced necessity. Hence the cry of faith to

God, "Lead Thou me out of my necessities." [1380] With these

necessities upon us, we are either unable to understand what we want,

or else (while having the wish) we are not strong enough to accomplish

what we have come to understand. Now it is just liberty itself that is

promised to believers by the Liberator. "If the Son," says He, "shall

make you free, ye shall be free indeed." [1381] For, vanquished by the

sin into which it fell by its volition, nature has lost liberty. Hence

another scripture says, "For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is

he brought in bondage." [1382] Since therefore "the whole need not the

physician, but only they that be sick;" [1383] so likewise it is not

the free that need the Deliverer, but only the enslaved. Hence the cry

of joy to Him for deliverance, "Thou hast saved my soul from the

straits of necessity." [1384] For true liberty is also real health; and

this would never have been lost, if the will had remained good. But

because the will has sinned, the hard necessity of having sin has

pursued the sinner; until his infirmity be wholly healed, and such

freedom be regained, that there must needs be, on the one hand, a

permanent will to live happily, and, on the other hand, a voluntary and

happy necessity of living virtuously, and never sinning.

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[1380] Ps. xxv. 17.

[1381] John viii. 38.

[1382] 2 Pet. ii. 19.

[1383] Matt. ix. 12.

[1384] Ps. xxxi. 7.

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(10.) The Tenth Breviate.

X. "Since God made man good," he says, "and, besides making him good,

further commanded him to do good, how impious it is for us to hold that

man is evil, when he was neither made so, nor so commanded; and to deny

him the ability of being good, although he was both made so, and

commanded to act so!" Our answer here is: Since then it was not man

himself, but God, who made man good; so also is it God, and not man

himself, who remakes him to be good, while liberating him from the evil

which he himself did upon his wishing, believing, and invoking such a

deliverance. But all this is effected by the renewal day by day of the

inward man, [1385] by the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

with a view to the outward man's resurrection at the last day to an

eternity not of punishment, but of life.

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[1385] 2 Cor. iv. 16.

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Chapter V.--(11.) The Eleventh Breviate.

XI. "The next question which must be put," he says, "is, in how many

ways all sin is manifested? In two, if I mistake not: if either those

things are done which are forbidden, or those things are not done which

are commanded. Now, it is just as certain that all things which are

forbidden are able to be avoided, as it is that all things which are

commanded are able to be effected. For it is vain either to forbid or

to enjoin that which cannot either be guarded against or accomplished.

And how shall we deny the possibility of man's being without sin, when

we are compelled to admit that he can as well avoid all those things

which are forbidden, as do all those which are commanded?" My answer

is, that in the Holy Scriptures there are many divine precepts, to

mention the whole of which would be too laborious; but the Lord, who on

earth consummated and abridged [1386] His word, expressly declared that

the law and the prophets hung on two commandments, [1387] that we might

understand that whatever else has been enjoined on us by God ends in

these two commandments, and must be referred to them: "Thou shalt love

the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with

all thy mind;" [1388] and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

[1389] "On these two commandments," says He, "hang all the law and the

prophets." [1390] Whatever, therefore, we are by God's law forbidden,

and whatever we are bidden to do, we are forbidden and bidden with the

direct object of fulfilling these two commandments. And perhaps the

general prohibition is, "Thou shalt not covet;" [1391] and the general

precept, "Thou shalt love." [1392] Accordingly the Apostle Paul, in a

certain place, briefly embraced the two, expressing the prohibition in

these words, "Be not conformed to this world," [1393] and the command

in these, "But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." [1394]

The former falls under the negative precept, not to covet; the latter

under the positive one, to love. The one has reference to continence,

the other to righteousness. The one enjoins avoidance of evil; the

other, pursuit of good. By eschewing covetousness we put off the old

man, and by showing love we put on the new. But no man can be continent

unless God endow him with the gift; [1395] nor is God's love shed

abroad in our hearts by our own selves, but by the Holy Ghost that is

given to us. [1396] This, however, takes place day after day in those

who advance by willing, believing, and praying, and who, "forgetting

those things which are behind, reach forth unto those things which are

before." [1397] For the reason why the law inculcates all these

precepts is, that when a man has failed in fulfilling them, he may not

be swollen with pride, and so exalt himself, but may in very weariness

betake himself to grace. Thus the law fulfils its office as

"schoolmaster," so terrifying the man as "to lead him to Christ," to

give Him his love. [1398]

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[1386] An application of Rom. ix. 28.

[1387] Matt. xxii. 40.

[1388] Matt. xxii. 37.

[1389] Matt. xxii. 39.

[1390] Matt. xxii. 40.

[1391] Ex. xx. 27.

[1392] Deut. vi. 5.

[1393] Rom. xii. 2.

[1394] Rom. xii. 2.

[1395] Wisd. viii. 21.

[1396] Rom. v. 5.

[1397] Phil. iii. 13.

[1398] Gal. iii. 24.

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Chapter VI.--(12.) The Twelfth Breviate.

XII. "Again the question arises," he says, "how it is that man is

unable to be without sin,--by his will, or by nature? If by nature, it

is not sin; if by his will, then will can very easily be changed by

will." We answer by reminding him how he ought to reflect on the

extreme presumption of saying--not simply that it is possible (for this

no doubt is undeniable, when God's grace comes in aid), but--that it is

"very easy" for will to be changed by will; whereas the apostle says,

"The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the

flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye do not

the things that ye would." [1399] He does not say, "These are contrary

the one to the other, so that ye will not do the things that ye can,"

but, "so that ye do not the things that ye would." [1400] How happens

it, then, that the lust of the flesh which of course is culpable and

corrupt, and is nothing else than the desire for sin, as to which the

same apostle instructs us not to let it "reign in our mortal body;"

[1401] by which expression he shows us plainly enough that that must

have an existence in our mortal body which must not be permitted to

hold a dominion in it;--how happens it, I say, that such lust of the

flesh has not been changed by that will, which the apostle clearly

implied the existence of in his words, "So that ye do not the things

that ye would," if so be that the will can so easily be changed by

will? Not that we, indeed, by this argument throw the blame upon the

nature either of the soul or of the body, which God created, and which

is wholly good; but we say that it, having been corrupted by its own

will, cannot be made whole without the grace of God.

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[1399] Gal. v. 17.

[1400] Ina me ha an thelete, tauta poiete.

[1401] Rom. vi. 12.

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(13.) The Thirteenth Breviate.

XIII. "The next question we have to ask," says he, "is this: If man

cannot be without sin, whose fault is it,--man's own, or some one's

else? If man's own, in what way is it his fault if he is not that which

he is unable to be?" We reply, that it is man's fault that he is not

without sin on this account, because it has by man's sole will come to

pass that he has come into such a necessity as cannot be overcome by

man's sole will.

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(14.) The Fourteenth Breviate.

XIV. "Again the question must be asked," he says, "If man's nature is

good, as nobody but Marcion or Manich�us will venture to deny, in what

way is it good if it is impossible for it to be free from evil? For

that all sin is evil who can gainsay?" We answer, that man's nature is

both good, and is also able to be free from evil. Therefore do we

earnestly pray, "Deliver us from evil." [1402] This deliverance,

indeed, is not fully wrought, so long as the soul is oppressed by the

body, which is hastening to corruption. [1403] This process, however,

is being effected by grace through faith, so that it may be said by and

by, "O death, where is thy struggle? Where is thy sting, O death? The

sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law;" [1404]

because the law by prohibiting sin only increases the desire for it,

unless the Holy Ghost spreads abroad that love, which shall then be

full and perfect, when we shall see face to face.

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[1402] Matt. vi. 13.

[1403] Wisd. ix. 15.

[1404] 1 Cor. xv. 35, 36.

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(15.) The Fifteenth Breviate.

XV. "And this, moreover, has to be said," he says: "God is certainly

righteous; this cannot be denied. But God imputes every sin to man.

This too, I suppose, must be allowed, that whatever shall not be

imputed as sin is not sin. Now if there is any sin which is

unavoidable, how is God said to be righteous, when He is supposed to

impute to any man that which cannot be avoided?" We reply, that long

ago was it declared in opposition to the proud, "Blessed is the man to

whom the Lord imputeth not sin." [1405] Now He does not impute it to

those who say to Him in faith, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our

debtors." [1406] And justly does He withhold this imputation, because

that is just which He says: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be

measured to you again." [1407] That, however, is sin in which there is

either not the love which ought to be, or where the love is less than

it ought to be, [1408] --whether it can be avoided by the human will or

not; because when it can be avoided, the man's present will does it,

but if it cannot be avoided his past will did it; and yet it can be

avoided,--not, however, when the proud will is lauded, but when the

humble one is assisted.

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[1405] Ps. xxxii. 2.

[1406] Matt. vi. 12.

[1407] Matt. vii. 2.

[1408] See above, in his work De Spiritu et Litter�, 64; also De Natur�

et Grati�, 45.

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Chapter VII.--(16.) The Sixteenth Breviate.

XVI. After all these disputations, their author introduces himself in

person as arguing with another, and represents himself as under

examination, and as being addressed by his examiner: "Show me the man

who is without sin." He answers: "I show you one who is able to be

without sin." His examiner then says to him: "And who is he?" He

answers: "You are the man." "But if," he adds, "you were to say, I, at

any rate, cannot be without sin,' then you must answer me, Whose fault

is that?' If you then were to say, My own fault,' you must be further

asked, And how is it your fault, if you cannot be without sin?'" He

again represents himself as under examination, and thus accosted: "Are

you yourself without sin, who say that a man can be without sin?" And

he answers: "Whose fault is it that I am not without sin? But if,"

continues he, "he had said in reply, The fault is your own;' then the

answer would be, How my fault, when I am unable to be without sin?'"

Now our answer to all this running argument is, that no controversy

ought to have been raised between them about such words as these;

because he nowhere ventures to affirm that a man (either any one else,

or himself) is without sin, but he merely said in reply that he can

be,--a position which we do not ourselves deny. Only the question

arises, when can he, and through whom can he? If at the present time,

then by no faithful soul which is enclosed within the body of this

death must this prayer be offered, or such words as these be spoken,

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," [1409] since in holy

baptism all past debts have been already forgiven. But whoever tries to

persuade us that such a prayer is not proper for faithful members of

Christ, does in fact acknowledge nothing else than that he is not

himself a Christian. If, again, it is through himself that a man is

able to live without sin, then did Christ die in vain. But "Christ is

not dead in vain." No man, therefore, can be without sin, even if he

wish it, unless he be assisted by the grace of God through our Lord

Jesus Christ. And that this perfection may be attained, there is even

now a training carried on in growing [Christians,] and there will be by

all means a completion made, after the conflict with death is spent,

and love, which is now cherished by the operation of faith and hope,

shall be perfected in the fruition of sight and possession.

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[1409] Matt. vi. 12.

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Chapter VIII.--(17.) It is One Thing to Depart from the Body, Another

Thing to Be Liberated from the Body of This Death.

He next proposes to establish his point by the testimony of Holy

Scripture. Let us carefully observe what kind of defence he makes.

"There are passages," says he, "which prove that man is commanded to be

without sin." Now our answer to this is: Whether such commands are

given is not at all the point in question, for the fact is clear

enough; but whether the thing which is evidently commanded be itself at

all possible of accomplishment in the body of this death, wherein "the

flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, so

that we cannot do the things that we would." [1410] Now from this body

of death not every one is liberated who ends the present life, but only

he who in this life has received grace, and given proof of not

receiving it in vain by spending his days in good works. For it is

plainly one thing to depart from the body, which all men are obliged to

do in the last day of their present life, and another to be delivered

from the body of this death,--which God's grace alone, through our Lord

Jesus Christ, imparts to His faithful saints. It is after this life,

indeed, that the reward of perfection is bestowed, but only upon those

by whom in their present life has been acquired the merit of such a

recompense. For no one, after going hence, shall arrive at fulness of

righteousness, unless, whilst here, he shall have run his course by

hungering and thirsting after it. "Blessed are they which do hunger and

thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." [1411]

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[1410] Gal. v. 17.

[1411] Matt. v. 6.

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(18.) The Righteousness of This Life Comprehended in Three

Parts,--Fasting, Almsgiving, and Prayer.

As long, then, as we are "absent from the Lord, we walk by faith, not

by sight;" [1412] whence it is said, "The just shall live by faith."

[1413] Our righteousness in this pilgrimage is this--that we press

forward to that perfect and full righteousness in which there shall be

perfect and full love in the sight of His glory; and that now we hold

to the rectitude and perfection of our course, by "keeping under our

body and bringing it into subjection," [1414] by doing our alms

cheerfully and heartily, while bestowing kindnesses and forgiving the

trespasses which have been committed against us, and by "continuing

instant in prayer;" [1415] --and doing all this with sound doctrine,

whereon are built a right faith, a firm hope, and a pure charity. This

is now our righteousness, in which we pass through our course hungering

and thirsting after the perfect and full righteousness, in order that

we may hereafter be satisfied therewith. Therefore our Lord in the

Gospel (after saying, "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness

[1416] before men, to be seen of them," [1417] ) in order that we

should not measure our course of life by the limit of human glory,

declared in his exposition of righteousness itself that there is none

except there be these three,--fasting, alms, prayers. Now in the

fasting He indicates the entire subjugation of the body; in the alms,

all kindness of will and deed, either by giving or forgiving; and in

prayers He implies all the rules of a holy desire. So that, although by

the subjugation of the body a check is given to that concupiscence,

which ought not only to be bridled but to be put altogether out of

existence (and which will not be found at all in that state of perfect

righteousness, where sin shall be absolutely excluded),--yet it often

exerts its immoderate desire even in the use of things which are

allowable and right. In that real beneficence in which the just man

consults his neighbour's welfare, things are sometimes done which are

prejudicial, although it was thought that they would be advantageous.

Sometimes, too, through infirmity, when the amount of the kindness and

trouble which is expended either falls short of the necessities of the

objects, or is of little use under the circumstances, then there steals

over us a disappointment which tarnishes that "cheerfulness" which

secures to the "giver" the approbation of God. [1418] This trail of

sadness, however, is the greater or the less, as each man has made more

or less progress in his kindly purposes. If, then, these

considerations, and such as these, be duly weighed, we are only right

when we say in our prayers, "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive

our debtors." [1419] But what we say in our prayers we must carry into

act, even to loving our very enemies; or if any one who is still a babe

in Christ fails as yet to reach this point, he must at any rate,

whenever one who has trespassed against him repents and craves his

pardon, exercise forgiveness from the bottom of his heart, if he would

have his heavenly Father listen to his prayer.

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[1412] 2 Cor. v. 6.

[1413] Hab. ii. 4.

[1414] 1 Cor. ix. 27.

[1415] Rom. xii. 12.

[1416] For this reading of dikaiosunen instead of eleemosunen there is

high ms. authority. It is admitted also by Griesbach, Lachmann,

Tischendorf, Tregelles, Westcott and Hort, and Alford.

[1417] Matt. vi. 1.

[1418] 2 Cor. ix. 7.

[1419] Matt. vi. 12.

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(19.) The Commandment of Love Shall Be Perfectly Fulfilled in the Life

to Come.

And in this prayer, unless we choose to be contentious, there is placed

before our view a mirror of sufficient brightness in which to behold

the life of the righteous, who live by faith, and finish their course,

although they are not without sin. Therefore they say, "Forgive us,"

because they have not yet arrived at the end of their course. Hence the

apostle says, "Not as if I had already attained, either were already

perfect. . .Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this

one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching

forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for

the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore,

as many as be perfect, be thus minded." [1420] In other words, let us,

as many as are running perfectly, be thus resolved, that, being not yet

perfected, we pursue our course to perfection along the way by which we

have thus far run perfectly, in order that "when that which is perfect

is come, then that which is in part may be done away;" [1421] that is,

may cease to be but in part any longer, but become whole and complete.

For to faith and hope shall succeed at once the very substance itself,

no longer to be believed in and hoped for, but to be seen and grasped.

Love, however, which is the greatest among the three, is not to be

superseded, but increased and fulfilled,--contemplating in full vision

what it used to see by faith, and acquiring in actual fruition what it

once only embraced in hope. Then in all this plenitude of charity will

be fulfilled the commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with

all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." [1422]

For while there remains any remnant of the lust of the flesh, to be

kept in check by the rein of continence, God is by no means loved with

all one's soul. For the flesh does not lust without the soul; although

it is the flesh which is said to lust, because the soul lusts carnally.

In that perfect state the just man shall live absolutely without any

sin, since there will be in his members no law warring against the law

of his mind, [1423] but wholly will he love God, with all his heart,

with all his soul, and with all his mind [1424] which is the first and

chief commandment. For why should not such perfection be enjoined on

man, although in this life nobody may attain to it? For we do not

rightly run if we do not know whither we are to run. But how could it

be known, unless it were pointed out in precepts? [1425] Let us

therefore "so run that we may obtain." [1426] For all who run rightly

will obtain,--not as in the contest of the theatre, where all indeed

run, but only one wins the prize. [1427] Let us run, believing, hoping,

longing; let us run, subjugating the body, cheerfully and heartily

doing alms,--in giving kindnesses and forgiving injuries, praying that

our strength may be helped as we run; and let us so listen to the

commandments which urge us to perfection, as not to neglect running

towards the fulness of love.

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[1420] Phil. iii. 12-15.

[1421] 1 Cor. xiii. 10.

[1422] Mente. The Septuagint, however, like the Hebrew, has dunameos.

A.V. "thy might." Comp Deut. vi. 5 with Matt. xxii. 37.

[1423] Rom. vii. 23.

[1424] Matt. xxii. 37.

[1425] See above in Augustin's De Spiritu et Littera, 64.

[1426] 1 Cor. ix. 23.

[1427] 1 Cor. ix. 24.

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Chapter IX.--(20.) Who May Be Said to Walk Without Spot; Damnable and

Venial Sins.

Having premised these remarks, let us carefully attend to the passages

which he whom we are answering has produced, as if we ourselves had

quoted them. "In Deuteronomy, Thou shalt be perfect before the Lord thy

God.' [1428] Again, in the same book, There shall be not an imperfect

man [1429] among the sons of Israel.' [1430] In like manner the Saviour

says in the Gospel, Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in

heaven is perfect.' [1431] So the apostle, in his second Epistle to the

Corinthians, says: Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect.' [1432]

Again, to the Colossians he writes: Warning every man, and teaching

every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in

Christ.' [1433] And so to the Philippians: Do all things without

murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless, and harmless, as

the immaculate sons of God.' [1434] In like manner to the Ephesians he

writes: Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who

hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in

Christ; according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of

the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.' [1435]

Then again to the Colossians he says in another passage: And you, that

were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet

now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death; present

yourselves holy and unblameable and unreprovable in His sight.' [1436]

In the same strain, he says to the Ephesians: That He might present to

Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such

thing but that it should be holy and without blemish.' [1437] So in his

first Epistle to the Corinthians he says Be ye sober, and righteous,

and sin not.' [1438] So again in the Epistle of St. Peter it is

written: Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope

to the end, for the grace that is offered to you: . . . as obedient

children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in

your ignorance: but as He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in

all manner of conversation; because it is written, [1439] Be ye holy;

for I am holy.' [1440] Whence blessed David likewise says: O Lord, who

shall sojourn in Thy tabernacle, or who shall rest on Thy holy

mountain? He that walketh without blame, and worketh righteousness.'

[1441] And in another passage: I shall be blameless with Him.' [1442]

And yet again: Blessed are the blameless in the way, who walk in the

law of the Lord.' [1443] To the same effect it is written in Solomon:

The Lord loveth holy hearts, and all they that are blameless are

acceptable unto Him.'" [1444] Now some of these passages exhort men who

are running their course that they run perfectly; others refer to the

end thereof, that men may reach forward to it as they run. He, however,

is not unreasonably said to walk blamelessly, not who has already

reached the end of his journey, but who is pressing on towards the end

in a blameless manner, free from damnable sins, and at the same time

not neglecting to cleanse by almsgiving such sins as are venial. For

the way in which we walk, that is, the road by which we reach

perfection, is cleansed by clean prayer. That, however, is a clean

prayer in which we say in truth, "Forgive us, as we ourselves forgive."

[1445] So that, as there is nothing censured when blame is not imputed,

we may hold on our course to perfection without censure, in a word,

blamelessly; and in this perfect state, when we arrive at it at last,

we shall find that there is absolutely nothing which requires cleansing

by forgiveness.

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[1428] Deut. xviii. 13.

[1429] Augustin's word is inconsummatus. The Septuagint term

teliskomenos (which properly signifies complete, perfect) comes to mean

one initiated into the mysteries of idolatrous worship.

[1430] Deut. xxiii. 17.

[1431] Matt. v. 48.

[1432] 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

[1433] Col. i. 28.

[1434] Phil. ii. 14, 15.

[1435] Eph. i. 3, 4.

[1436] Col. i. 21, 22.

[1437] Eph. v. 26, 27.

[1438] 1 Cor. xv. 34.

[1439] Lev. xix. 2.

[1440] 1 Pet. i. 13-16.

[1441] Ps. xv. 1, 2.

[1442] Ps. xviii. 23.

[1443] Ps. cxix. 1.

[1444] Prov. xi. 20.

[1445] Matt. vi. 12.

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Chapter X.--(21.) To Whom God's Commandments are Grievous; And to Whom,

Not. Why Scripture Says that God's Commandments are Not Grievous; A

Commandment is a Proof of the Freedom Of Man's Will; Prayer is a Proof

of Grace.

He next quotes passages to show that God's commandments are not

grievous. But who can be ignorant of the fact that, since the generic

commandment is love (for "the end of the commandment is love," [1446]

and "love is the fulfilling of the law" [1447] ), whatever is

accomplished by the operation of love, and not of fear, is not

grievous? They, however, are oppressed by the commandments of God, who

try to fulfil them by fearing. "But perfect love casteth out fear;"

[1448] and, in respect of the burden of the commandment, it not only

takes off the pressure of its heavy weight, but it actually lifts it up

as if on wings. In order, however, that this love may be possessed,

even as far as it can possibly be possessed in the body of this death,

the determination of will avails but little, unless it be helped by

God's grace through our Lord Jesus Christ. For as it must again and

again be stated, it is "shed abroad in our hearts," not by our own

selves, but "by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." [1449] And for

no other reason does Holy Scripture insist on the truth that God's

commandments are not grievous, than this, that the soul which finds

them grievous may understand that it has not yet received those

resources which make the Lord's commandments to be such as they are

commended to us as being, even gentle and pleasant; and that it may

pray with groaning of the will to obtain the gift of facility. For the

man who says, "Let my heart be blameless;" [1450] and, "Order Thou my

steps according to Thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion

over me;" [1451] and, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven;"

[1452] and, "Lead us not into temptation;" [1453] and other prayers of

a like purport, which it would be too long to particularize, does in

effect offer up a prayer for ability to keep God's commandments.

Neither, indeed, on the one hand, would any injunctions be laid upon us

to keep them, if our own will had nothing to do in the matter; nor, on

the other hand, would there be any room for prayer, if our will were

alone sufficient. God's commandments, therefore, are commended to us as

being not grievous, in order that he to whom they are grievous may

understand that he has not as yet received the gift which removes their

grievousness; and that he may not think that he is really performing

them, when he so keeps them that they are grievous to him. For it is a

cheerful giver whom God loves. [1454] Nevertheless, when a man finds

God's commandments grievous, let him not be broken down by despair; let

him rather oblige himself to seek, to ask, and to knock.

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[1446] 1 Tim. i. 8.

[1447] Rom. xiii. 10.

[1448] 1 John iv. 18.

[1449] Rom. v. 5.

[1450] Ps. cxix. 80.

[1451] Ps. cxix. 133.

[1452] Matt. vi. 10.

[1453] Matt. vi. 13.

[1454] 2 Cor. ix. 7.

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(22.) Passages to Show that God's Commandments are Not Grievous.

He afterwards adduces those passages which represent God as

recommending His own commandments as not grievous: let us now attend to

their testimony. "Because," says he, "God's commandments are not only

not impossible, but they are not even grievous. In Deuteronomy: The

Lord thy God will again turn and rejoice over thee for good, as He

rejoiced over thy fathers, if ye shall hearken to the voice of the Lord

your God, to keep His commandments, and His ordinances, and His

judgments, written in the book of this law; if thou turn to the Lord

thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. For this command,

which I give thee this day, is not grievous, neither is it far from

thee: it is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who will ascend

into heaven, and obtain it for us, that we may hear and do it? neither

is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who will cross over the

sea, and obtain it for us, that we may hear and do it? The word is nigh

thee, in thy mouth, and in thine heart, and in thine hands to do it.'

[1455] In the Gospel likewise the Lord says: Come unto me, all ye that

labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon

you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall

find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is

light.' [1456] So also in the Epistle of Saint John it is written: This

is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments

are not grievous.'" [1457] On hearing these testimonies out of the law,

and the gospel, and the epistles, let us be built up unto that grace

which those persons do not understand, who, "being ignorant of God's

righteousness, and wishing to establish their own righteousness, have

not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." [1458] For, if

they understand not the passage of Deuteronomy in the sense that the

Apostle Paul quoted it,--that "with the heart men believe unto

righteousness, and with their mouth make confession unto salvation;"

[1459] since "they that be whole need not a physician, but they that

are sick," [1460] --they certainly ought (by that very passage of the

Apostle John which he quoted last to this effect: "This is the love of

God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not

grievous" [1461] ) to be admonished that God's commandment is not

grievous to the love of God, which is shed abroad in our hearts only by

the Holy Ghost, not by the determination of man's will by attributing

to which more than they ought, they are ignorant of God's

righteousness. This love, however, shall then be made perfect, when all

fear of punishment shall be cut off.

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[1455] Deut. xxx. 9-14.

[1456] Matt. xi. 28-30.

[1457] 1 John v. 3.

[1458] Rom. x. 3.

[1459] Rom. x. 10.

[1460] Matt. ix. 12.

[1461] 1 John v. 3.

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Chapter XI.--(23.) Passages of Scripture Which, When Objected Against

Him by the Catholics, Coelestius Endeavours to Elude by Other Passages:

the First Passage.

After this he adduced the passages which are usually quoted against

them. He does not attempt to explain these passages, but, by quoting

what seem to be contrary ones, he has entangled the questions more

tightly. "For," says he, "there are passages of Scripture which are in

opposition to those who ignorantly suppose that they are able to

destroy the liberty of the will, or the possibility of not sinning, by

the authority of Scripture. For," he adds, "they are in the habit of

quoting against us what holy Job said: Who is pure from uncleanness?

Not one; even if he be an infant of only one day upon the earth.'"

[1462] Then he proceeds to give a sort of answer to this passage by

help of other quotations; as when Job himself said: "For although I am

a righteous and blameless man, I have become a subject for mockery,"

[1463] --not understanding that a man may be called righteous, who has

gone so far towards perfection in righteousness as to be very near it;

and this we do not deny to have been in the power of many even in this

life, when they walk in it by faith.

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[1462] Job xiv. 4, 5.

[1463] Job xii. 4.

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(24.) To Be Without Sin, and to Be Without Blame--How Differing.

The same thing is affirmed in another passage, which he has quoted

immediately afterwards, as spoken by the same Job: "Behold, I am very

near my judgment, and I know that I shall be found righteous." [1464]

Now this is the judgment of which it is said in another scripture: "And

He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment

as the noonday." But he does not say, I am already there; but, "I am

very near." If, indeed, the judgment of his which he meant was not that

which he would himself exercise, but that whereby he was to be judged

at the last day, then in such judgment all will be found righteous who

with sincerity pray: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

[1465] For it is through this forgiveness that they will be found

righteous; on this account that whatever sins they have here incurred,

they have blotted out by their deeds of charity. Whence the Lord says:

"Give alms; and, behold, all things are clean unto you." [1466] For in

the end, it shall be said to the righteous, when about to enter into

the promised kingdom: "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat," [1467]

and so forth. However, it is one thing to be without sin, which in this

life can only be predicated of the Only-begotten, and another thing to

be without accusation, which might be said of many just persons even in

the present life; for there is a certain measure of a good life,

according to which even in this human intercourse there could no just

accusation be possibly laid against him. For who can justly accuse the

man who wishes evil to no one, and who faithfully does good to all he

can, and never cherishes a wish to avenge himself on any man who does

him wrong, so that he can truly say, "As we forgive our debtors?" And

yet by the very fact that he truly says, "Forgive, as we also forgive,"

he plainly admits that he is not without sin.

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[1464] Job xiii. 18.

[1465] Matt. vi. 12.

[1466] Luke xi. 41.

[1467] Matt. xxv. 35.

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(25.) Hence the force of the statement: "There was no injustice in my

hands, but my prayer was pure." [1468] For the purity of his prayer

arose from this circumstance, that it was not improper for him to ask

forgiveness in prayer, when he really bestowed forgiveness himself.

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[1468] Job xvi. 18.

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(26.) Why Job Was So Great a Sufferer.

And when he says concerning the Lord, "For many bruises hath He

inflicted upon me without a cause," [1469] observe that his words are

not, He hath inflicted none with a cause; but, "many without a cause."

For it was not because of his manifold sins that these many bruises

were inflicted on him, but in order to make trial of his patience. For

on account of his sins, indeed, without which, as he acknowledges in

another passage, he was certainly not, he yet judges that he ought to

have suffered less. [1470]

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[1469] Job ix. 17.

[1470] Job vi. 2, 3.

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(27.) Who May Be Said to Keep the Ways of the Lord; What It is to

Decline and Depart from the Ways of the Lord.

Then again, as for what he says, "For I have kept His ways, and have

not turned aside from His commandments, nor will I depart from them;"

[1471] he has kept God's ways who does not so turn aside as to forsake

them, but makes progress by running his course therein; although, weak

as he is, he sometimes stumbles or falls, onward, however, he still

goes, sinning less and less until he reaches the perfect state in which

he will sin no more. For in no other way could he make progress, except

by keeping His ways. The man, indeed, who declines from these and

becomes an apostate at last, is certainly not he who, although he has

sin, yet never ceases to persevere in fighting against it until he

arrives at the home where there shall remain no more conflict with

death. Well now, it is in our present struggle therewith that we are

clothed with the righteousness in which we here live by faith,--clothed

with it as it were with a breastplate. [1472] Judgment also we take on

ourselves; and even when it is against us, we turn it round to our own

behalf; for we become our own accusers and condemn our sins: whence

that scripture which says, "The righteous man accuses himself at the

beginning of his speech." [1473] Hence also he says: "I put on

righteousness, and clothed myself with judgment like a mantle." [1474]

Our vesture at present no doubt is wont to be armour for war rather

than garments of peace, while concupiscence has still to be subdued; it

will be different by and by, when our last enemy death shall be

destroyed, [1475] and our righteousness shall be full and complete,

without an enemy to molest us more.

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[1471] Job xxiii. 11, 12.

[1472] Eph. vi. 14.

[1473] Prov. xviii. 17.

[1474] Job. xxix. 14.

[1475] 1 Cor. xv. 26.

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(28.) When Our Heart May Be Said Not to Reproach Us; When Good is to Be

Perfected.

Furthermore, concerning these words of Job, "My heart shall not

reproach me in all my life," [1476] we remark, that it is in this

present life of ours, in which we live by faith, that our heart does

not reproach us, if the same faith whereby we believe unto

righteousness does not neglect to rebuke our sin. On this principle the

apostle says: "The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I

would not, that I do." [1477] Now it is a good thing to avoid

concupiscence, and this good the just man would, who lives by faith;

[1478] and still he does what he hates, because he has concupiscence,

although "he goes not after his lusts;" [1479] if he has done this, he

has himself at that time really done it, so as to yield to, and

acquiesce in, and obey the desire of sin. His heart then reproaches

him, because it reproaches himself, and not his sin which dwelleth in

him. But whensoever he suffers not sin to reign in his mortal body to

obey it in the lusts thereof, [1480] and yields not his members as

instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, [1481] sin no doubt is present

in his members, but it does not reign, because its desires are not

obeyed. Therefore, while he does that which he would not,--in other

words, while he wishes not to lust, but still lusts,--he consents to

the law that it is good: [1482] for what the law would, that he also

wishes; because it is his desire not to indulge concupiscence, and the

law expressly says, "Thou shalt not covet." [1483] Now in that he

wishes what the law also would have done, he no doubt consents to the

law: but still he lusts, because he is not without sin; it is, however,

no longer himself that does the thing, but the sin which dwells within

him. Hence it is that "his heart does not reproach him in all his

life;" that is, in his faith, because the just man lives by faith, so

that his faith is his very life. He knows, to be sure, that in himself

dwells nothing good,--even in his flesh, which is the dwelling-place of

sin. By not consenting, however, to it, he lives by faith, wherewith he

also calls upon God to help him in his contest against sin. Moreover,

there is present to him to will that no sin at all should be in him,

but then how to perfect this good is not present. It is not the mere

"doing" of a good thing that is not present to him, but the

"perfecting" of it. For in this, that he yields no consent, he does

good; he does good again, in this, that he hates his own lust; he does

good also, in this, that he does not cease to give alms; and in this,

that he forgives the man who sins against him, he does good; and in

this, that he asks forgiveness for his own trespasses,--sincerely

avowing in his petition that he also forgives those who trespass

against himself, and praying that he may not be led into temptation,

but be delivered from evil,--he does good. But how to perfect the good

is not present to him; it will be, however, in that final state, when

the concupiscence which dwells in his members shall exist no more. His

heart, therefore, does not reproach him, when it reproaches the sin

which dwells in his members; nor can it reproach unbelief in him. Thus

"in all his life,"--that is, in his faith,--he is neither reproached by

his own heart, nor convinced of not being without sin. And Job himself

acknowledges this concerning himself, when he says, "Not one of my sins

hath escaped Thee; Thou hast sealed up my transgressions in a bag, and

marked if I have done iniquity unawares." [1484] With regard, then, to

the passages which he has adduced from the book of holy Job, we have

shown to the best of our ability in what sense they ought to be taken.

He, however, has failed to explain the meaning of the words which he

has himself quoted from the same Job: "Who then is pure from

uncleanness? Not one; even if he be an infant of only one day upon the

earth." [1485]

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[1476] Job xxvii. 6.

[1477] Rom. vii. 15.

[1478] Hab. ii. 4.

[1479] Ecclus. xviii. 30.

[1480] Rom. vi. 12.

[1481] Rom. vi. 13.

[1482] Rom. vii. 16.

[1483] Ex. xx. 17.

[1484] Job xiv. 16, 17.

[1485] Job xiv. 4, 5.

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Chapter XII.--(29.) The Second Passage. Who May Be Said to Abstain from

Every Evil Thing.

"They are in the habit of next quoting," says he, "the passage: Every

man is a liar.'" [1486] But here again he offers no solution of words

which are quoted against himself even by himself; all he does is to

mention other apparently opposite passages before persons who are

unacquainted with the sacred Scriptures, and thus to cast the word of

God into conflict. This is what he says: "We tell them in answer, how

in the book of Numbers it is said, Man is true.' [1487] While of holy

Job this eulogy is read: There was a certain man in the land of Ausis,

whose name was Job; that man was true, blameless, righteous, and godly,

abstaining from every evil thing.'" [1488] I am surprised that he has

brought forward this passage, which says that Job "abstained from every

evil thing," wishing it to mean "abstained from every sin;" because he

has argued already [1489] that sin is not a thing, but an act. Let him

recollect that, even if it is an act, it may still be called a thing.

That man, however, abstains from every evil thing, who either never

consents to the sin, which is always with him, or, if sometimes hard

pressed by it, is never oppressed by it; just as the wrestling

champion, who, although he is sometimes caught in a fierce grapple,

does not for all that lose the prowess which constitutes him the better

man. We read, indeed, of a man without blame, of one without

accusation; but we never read of one without sin, except the Son of

man, who is also the only-begotten Son of God.

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[1486] Ps. cxv. 2.

[1487] If this refer to Num. xxiv. 3, 15 (as the editions mark it), the

quotation is most inexact. The Septuagint words o anthropos o alethinos

oron is not a proposition equal to "homo verax," as an antithesis to

the proposition "omnis homo mendax."

[1488] Job i. 1.

[1489] See above, ii.(4).

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(30.) "Every Man is a Liar," Owing to Himself Alone; But "Every Man is

True," By Help Only of the Grace of God.

"Moreover," says he, "in Job himself it is said: And he maintained the

miracle of a true man.' [1490] Again we read in Solomon, touching

wisdom: Men that are liars cannot remember her, but men of truth shall

be found in her.' [1491] Again in the Apocalypse: And in their mouth

was found no guile, for they are without fault.'" [1492] To all these

statements we reply with a reminder to our opponents, of how a man may

be called true, through the grace and truth of God, who is in himself

without doubt a liar. Whence it is said: "Every man is a liar." [1493]

As for the passage also which he has quoted in reference to Wisdom,

when it is said, "Men of truth shall be found in her," we must observe

that it is undoubtedly not "in her," but in themselves that men shall

be found liars. Just as in another passage: "Ye were sometimes

darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord," [1494] --when he said, "Ye

were darkness," he did not add, "in the Lord;" but after saying, "Ye

are now light," he expressly added the phrase, "in the Lord," for they

could not possibly be "light" in themselves; in order that "he who

glorieth may glory in the Lord." [1495] The "faultless" ones, indeed,

in the Apocalypse, are so called because "no guile was found in their

mouth." [1496] They did not say they had no sin: if they had said this,

they would deceive themselves, and the truth would not be in them;

[1497] and if the truth were not in them, guile and untruth would be

found in their mouth. If, however, to avoid envy, they said they were

not without sin, although they were sinless, then this very insincerity

would be a lie, and the character given of them would be untrue: "In

their mouth was found no guile." Hence indeed "they are without fault;"

for as they have forgiven those who have done them wrong, so are they

purified by God's forgiveness of themselves. Observe now how we have to

the best of our power explained in what sense the quotations he has in

his own behalf advanced ought to be understood. But how the passage,

"Every man is a liar," is to be interpreted, he on his part has

altogether omitted to explain; nor is an explanation within his power,

without a correction of the error which makes him believe that man can

be true without the help of God's grace, and merely by virtue of his

own free will.

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[1490] Job xvii. 8.

[1491] Ecclus. xv. 8.

[1492] Rev. xiv. 5.

[1493] Ps. cxv. 2.

[1494] Eph. v. 8.

[1495] 1 Cor. i. 31.

[1496] Rev. xiv. 5.

[1497] 1 John i. 8.

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Chapter XIII.--(31.) The Third Passage. It is One Thing to Depart, and

Another Thing to Have Departed, from All Sin. "There is None that Doeth

Good,"--Of Whom This is to Be Understood.

He has likewise propounded another question, as we shall proceed to

show, but has failed to solve it; nay, he has rather rendered it more

difficult, by first stating the testimony that had been quoted against

him: "There is none that doeth good, no, not one;" [1498] and then

resorting to seemingly contrary passages to show that there are persons

who do good. This he succeeded, no doubt, in doing. It is, however, one

thing for a man not to do good, and another thing not to be without

sin, although he at the same time may do many good things. The

passages, therefore, which he adduces are not really contrary to the

statement that no person is without sin in this life. He does not, for

his own part, explain in what sense it is declared that "there is none

that doeth good, no, not one." These are his words: "Holy David indeed

says, Hope thou in the Lord and be doing good.'" [1499] But this is a

precept, and not an accomplished fact; and such a precept as is never

kept by those of whom it is said, "There is none that doeth good, no,

not one." He adds: "Holy Tobit also said, Fear not, my son, that we

have to endure poverty; we shall have many blessings if we fear God,

and depart from all sin, and do that which is good.'" [1500] Most true

indeed it is, that man shall have many blessings when he shall have

departed from all sin. Then no evil shall betide him; nor shall he have

need of the prayer, "Deliver us from evil." [1501] Although even now

every man who progresses, advancing ever with an upright purpose,

departs from all sin, and becomes further removed from it as he

approaches nearer to the fulness and perfection of the righteous state;

because even concupiscence itself, which is sin dwelling in our flesh,

never ceases to diminish in those who are making progress, although it

still remains in their mortal members. It is one thing, therefore, to

depart from all sin,--a process which is even now in operation,--and

another thing to have departed from all sin, which shall happen in the

state of future perfection. But still, even he who has departed already

from evil, and is continuing to do so, must be allowed to be a doer of

good. How then is it said, in the passage which he has quoted and left

unsolved, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one," unless that the

Psalmist there censures some one nation, amongst whom there was not a

man that did good, wishing to remain "children of men," and not sons of

God, by whose grace man becomes good, in order to do good? For we must

suppose the Psalmist here to mean that "good" which he describes in the

context, saying, "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men,

to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God." [1502]

Such good then as this, seeking after God, there was not a man found

who pursued it, no, not one; but this was in that class of men which is

predestinated to destruction. [1503] It was upon such that God looked

down in His foreknowledge, and passed sentence.

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[1498] Ps. xiv. 3.

[1499] Ps. xxxvii. 3.

[1500] Tobit iv. 21.

[1501] Matt. vi. 13.

[1502] Ps. xiv. 2.

[1503] On this passage Fulgentius remarks (Ad Monimum, i. 5): "In no

other sense do I suppose that passage of St. Augustin should be taken,

in which he affirms that there are certain persons predestinated to

destruction than in regard to their punishment, not their sin: not to

the evil which they unrighteously commit, but to the punishment which

they shall righteously suffer; not to the sin on account of which they

either do not receive, or else lose, the benefit of the first

resurrection, but to the retribution which their own personal iniquity

evilly incurs, and the divine justice righteously inflicts."

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Chapter XIV.--(32.) The Fourth Passage. In What Sense God Only is Good.

With God to Be Good and to Be Himself are the Same Thing.

"They likewise," says he, "quote what the Saviour says: Why callest

thou me good? There is none good save one, that is, God?'" [1504] This

statement, however, he makes no attempt whatever to explain; all he

does is to oppose to it sundry other passages which seem to contradict

it, which he adduces to show that man, too, is good. Here are his

remarks: "We must answer this text with another, in which the same Lord

says, A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth

good things.' [1505] And again: He maketh His sun to rise on the good

and on the evil.' [1506] Then in another passage it is written, For the

good things are created from the beginning;' [1507] and yet again, They

that are good shall dwell in the land.'" [1508] Now to all this we must

say in answer, that the passages in question must be understood in the

same sense as the former one, "There is none good, save one, that is,

God." Either because all created things, although God made them very

good, are yet, when compared with their Creator, not good, being in

fact incapable of any comparison with Him. For in a transcendent, and

yet very proper sense, He said of Himself, "I Am that I Am." [1509] The

statement therefore before us, "None is good save one, that is, God,"

is used in some such way as that which is said of John, "He was not

that light;" [1510] although the Lord calls him "a lamp," [1511] just

as He says to His disciples: "Ye are the light of the world: . .

.neither do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel." [1512] Still,

in comparison with that light which is "the true light which lighteth

every man that cometh into the world," [1513] he was not light. Or

else, because the very sons of God even, when compared with themselves

as they shall hereafter become in their eternal perfection, are good in

such a way that they still remain also evil. Although I should not have

dared to say this of them (for who would be so bold as to call them

evil who have God for their Father?) unless the Lord had Himself said:

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children,

how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to

them that ask Him?" [1514] Of course, by applying to them the words,

"your Father," He proved that they were already sons of God; and yet at

the same time He did not hesitate to say that they were "evil." Your

author, however, does not explain to us how they are good, whilst yet

"there is none good save one, that is, God." Accordingly the man who

asked "what good thing he was to do," [1515] was admonished to seek Him

[1516] by whose grace he might be good; to whom also to be good is

nothing else than to be Himself, because He is unchangeably good, and

cannot be evil at all.

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[1504] Luke xviii. 19.

[1505] Matt. xii. 35.

[1506] Matt. v. 45.

[1507] Ecclus. xxxix. 25.

[1508] Prov. ii. 21.

[1509] Ex. iii. 14.

[1510] John i. 8.

[1511] John v. 35: ["lucernam," not "lux:" as also in the Dies Ir� it

is said of John, "non lux iste, sed lucernam," in allusion to these

passages.--W.]

[1512] Matt. v. 14, 15.

[1513] John i. 9.

[1514] Matt. vii. 11.

[1515] Matt. xix. 16.

[1516] Luke x. 27, 28.

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(33.) The Fifth Passage. [1517]

"This," says he, "is another text of theirs: Who will boast that he has

a pure heart?'" [1518] And then he answered this with several passages,

wishing to show that there can be in man a pure heart. But he omits to

inform us how the passage which he reported as quoted against himself

must be taken, so as to prevent Holy Scripture seeming to be opposed to

itself in this text, and in the passages by which he makes his answer.

We for our part indeed tell him, in answer, that the clause, "Who will

boast that he has a pure heart?" is a suitable sequel to the preceding

sentence, "whenever a righteous king sits upon the throne." [1519] For

how great soever ever a man's righteousness may be, he ought to reflect

and think, lest there should be found something blameworthy, which has

escaped indeed his own notice, when that righteous King shall sit upon

His throne, whose cognizance no sins can possibly escape, not even

those of which it is said, "Who understandeth his transgressions?"

[1520] "When, therefore, the righteous King shall sit upon His throne,

. . . who will boast that he has a pure heart? or who will boldly say

that he is pure from sin?" [1521] Except perhaps those who wish to

boast of their own righteousness, and not glory in the mercy of the

Judge Himself.

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[1517] See also his work Contra Julianum. ii. 8.

[1518] Prov. xx. 9.

[1519] Prov. xx. 8.

[1520] Ps. xix. 12.

[1521] Prov. xx. 8, 9.

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Chapter XV.--(34.) The Opposing Passages.

And yet the passages are true which he goes on to adduce by way of

answer, saying: "The Saviour in the gospel declares, Blessed are the

pure in heart; for they shall see God.' [1522] David also says, Who

shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy

place? He that is innocent in his hands, and pure in his heart;' [1523]

and again in another passage, Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good

and upright in heart.' [1524] So also in Solomon: Riches are good unto

him that hath no sin on his conscience;' [1525] and again in the same

book, Leave off from sin, and order thine hands aright, and cleanse thy

heart from wickedness.' [1526] So in the Epistle of John, If our heart

condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God; and whatsoever we

ask, we shall receive of Him.'" [1527] For all this is accomplished by

the will, by the exercise of faith, hope, and love; by keeping under

the body; by doing alms; by forgiving injuries; by earnest prayer; by

supplicating for strength to advance in our course; by sincerely

saying, "Forgive us, as we also forgive others," and "Lead us not into

temptation, but deliver us from evil." [1528] By this process, it is

certainly brought about that our heart is cleansed, and all our sin

taken away; and what the righteous King, when sitting on His throne,

shall find concealed in the heart and uncleansed as yet, shall be

remitted by His mercy, so that the whole shall be rendered sound and

cleansed for seeing God. For "he shall have judgment without mercy,

that hath showed no mercy: yet mercy triumpheth against judgment."

[1529] If it were not so, what hope could any of us have? "When,

indeed, the righteous King shall sit upon His throne, who shall boast

that he hath a pure heart, or who shall boldly say that he is pure from

sin?" Then, however, through His mercy shall the righteous, being by

that time fully and perfectly cleansed, shine forth like the glorious

sun in the kingdom of their Father. [1530]

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[1522] Matt. v. 8.

[1523] Ps. xxiv. 3, 4.

[1524] Ps. cxxv. 4.

[1525] Ecclus. xiii. 24.

[1526] Ecclus. xxxviii. 10.

[1527] 1 John iii. 21, 22.

[1528] Matt. vi. 12, 13.

[1529] Jas. ii. 13.

[1530] Matt. xiii. 43.

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(35.) The Church Will Be Without Spot and Wrinkle After the

Resurrection.

Then shall the Church realize, fully and perfectly, the condition of

"not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," [1531] because then

also will it in a real sense be glorious. For inasmuch as he added the

epithet "glorious," when he said, "That He might present the Church to

Himself, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," he signified

sufficiently when the Church will be without spot, or wrinkle, or

anything of this kind,--then of course when it shall be glorious.

Because it is not so much when the Church is involved in so many evils,

or amidst such offences, and in so great a mixture of very evil men,

and amidst the heavy reproaches of the ungodly, that we ought to say

that it is glorious, because kings serve it,--a fact which only

produces a more perilous and a sorer temptation;--but then shall it

rather be glorious, when that event shall come to pass of which the

apostle also speaks in the words, "When Christ, who is your life, shall

appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." [1532] For since

the Lord Himself, in that form of a servant by which He united Himself

as Mediator to the Church, was not glorified except by the glory of His

resurrection (whence it is said, "The Spirit was not yet given, because

Christ was not yet glorified" [1533] ), how shall His Church be

described as glorious, before its resurrection? He cleanses it,

therefore, now "by the laver of the water in the word," [1534] washing

away its past sins, and driving off from it the dominion of wicked

angels; but then by bringing all its healthy powers to perfection, He

makes it meet for that glorious state, where it shall shine without a

spot or wrinkle. For "whom He did predestinate, them He also called;

and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them

He also glorified." [1535] It was under this mystery, as I suppose,

that that was spoken, "Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day

and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be consummated," or perfected.

[1536] For He said this in the person of His body, which is His Church,

putting days for distinct and appointed periods, which He also

signified in "the third day" in His resurrection.

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[1531] Eph. v. 27.

[1532] Col. iii. 4.

[1533] John vii. 39.

[1534] Eph. v. 26.

[1535] Rom. viii. 30.

[1536] Luke xiii. 32.

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(36.) The Difference Between the Upright in Heart and the Clean in

Heart.

I suppose, too, that there is a difference between one who is upright

in heart and one who is clean in heart. A man is upright in heart when

he "reaches forward to those things which are before, forgetting those

things which are behind" [1537] so as to arrive in a right course, that

is, with right faith and purpose, at the perfection where he may dwell

clean and pure in heart. Thus, in the psalm, the conditions ought to be

severally bestowed on each separate character, where it is said, "Who

shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy

place? He that is innocent in his hands, and clean in his heart."

[1538] He shall ascend, innocent in his hands, and stand, clean in his

heart,--the one state in present operation, the other in its

consummation. And of them should rather be understood that which is

written: "Riches are good unto him that hath no sin on his conscience."

[1539] Then indeed shall accrue the good, or true riches, when all

poverty shall have passed away; in other words, when all infirmity

shall have been removed. A man may now indeed "leave off from sin,"

when in his onward course he departs from it, and is renewed day by

day; and he may "order his hands," and direct them to works of mercy,

and "cleanse his heart from all wickedness," [1540] --he may be so

merciful that what remains may be forgiven him by free pardon. This

indeed is the sound and suitable meaning, without any vain and empty

boasting, of that which St. John said: "If our heart condemn us not,

then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we shall

receive of Him." [1541] The warning which he clearly has addressed to

us in this passage, is to beware lest our heart should reproach us in

our very prayers and petitions; that is to say, lest, when we happen to

resort to this prayer, and say, "Forgive us, even as we ourselves

forgive, we should have to feel compunction for not doing what we say,

or should even lose boldness to utter what we fail to do, and thereby

forfeit the confidence of faithful and earnest prayer.

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[1537] Phil. iii. 13.

[1538] Ps. xxiv. 3, 4.

[1539] Ecclus. xiii. 24.

[1540] Ecclus. xxxviii. 10.

[1541] 1 John iii. 21, 22.

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Chapter XVI.--(37.) The Sixth Passage.

He has also adduced this passage of Scripture, which is very commonly

quoted against his party: "For there is not a just man upon earth, that

doeth good, and sinneth not." [1542] And he makes a pretence of

answering it by other passages,--how, "the Lord says concerning holy

Job, Hast thou considered my servant Job? For there is none like him

upon earth, a man who is blameless, true, a worshipper of God, and

abstaining from every evil thing.'" [1543] On this passage we have

already made some remarks. [1544] But he has not even attempted to show

us how, on the one hand, Job was absolutely sinless upon earth,--if the

words are to bear such a sense; and, on the other hand, how that can be

true which he has admitted to be in the Scripture, "There is not a just

man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." [1545]

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[1542] Eccles. vii. 20.

[1543] Job i. 8.

[1544] See above, ch. xii. (29).

[1545] Eccles. vii. 20.

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Chapter XVII.--(38.) The Seventh Passage. Who May Be Called Immaculate.

How It is that in God's Sight No Man is Justified.

"They also, says he, "quote the text: For in thy sight shall no man

living be justified.'" [1546] And his affected answer to this passage

amounts to nothing else than the showing how texts of Holy Scripture

seem to clash with one another, whereas it is our duty rather to

demonstrate their agreement. These are his words: "We must confront

them with this answer, from the testimony of the evangelist concerning

holy Zacharias and Elisabeth, when he says, And they were both

righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of

the Lord blameless.'" [1547] Now both these righteous persons had, of

course, read amongst these very commandments the method of cleansing

their own sins. For, according to what is said in the Epistle to the

Hebrews of "every high priest taken from among men," [1548] Zacharias

used no doubt to offer sacrifices even for his own sins. The meaning,

however, of the phrase "blameless," which is applied to him, we have

already, as I suppose, sufficiently explained. [1549] "And," he adds,

"the blessed apostle says, That we should be holy, and without blame

before Him.'" [1550] This, according to him, is said that we should be

so, if those persons are to be understood by "blameless" who are

altogether without sin. If, however, they are "blameless" who are

without blame or censure, then it is impossible for us to deny that

there have been, and still are, such persons even in this present life;

for it does not follow that a man is without sin because he has not a

blot of accusation. Accordingly the apostle, when selecting ministers

for ordination, does not say, "If any be sinless," for he would be

unable to find any such; but he says, "If any be without accusation,"

[1551] for such, of course, he would be able to find. But our opponent

does not tell us how, in accordance with his views, we ought to

understand the scripture, "For in Thy sight shall no man living be

justified." [1552] The meaning of these words is plain enough,

receiving as it does additional light from the preceding clause: "Enter

not," says the Psalmist, "into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy

sight shall no man living be justified." It is judgment which he fears,

therefore he desires that mercy which triumphs over judgment. [1553]

For the meaning of the prayer, "Enter not into judgment with Thy

servant," is this: "Judge me not according to Thyself," who art without

sin; "for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." This without

doubt is understood as spoken of the present life, whilst the predicate

"shall not be justified" has reference to that perfect state of

righteousness which belongs not to this life.

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[1546] Ps. cxliii. 2.

[1547] Luke i. 6.

[1548] Heb. v. 1.

[1549] See above, ch. xi. (23).

[1550] Eph. i. 4.

[1551] Tit. i. 6.

[1552] Ps. cxliii. 2.

[1553] Jas. ii. 13.

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Chapter XVIII.--(39.) The Eighth Passage. In What Sense He is Said Not

to Sin Who is Born of God. In What Way He Who Sins Shall Not See Nor

Know God.

"They also quote," says he, "this passage, "If we say that we have no

sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." [1554] And this

very clear testimony he has endeavoured to meet with apparently

contradictory texts, saying thus: "The same St. John in this very

epistle says, This, however, brethren, I say, that ye sin not.

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in

him: and he cannot sin.' [1555] Also elsewhere: Whosoever is born of

God sinneth not; because his being born of God preserveth him, and the

evil one toucheth him not.' [1556] And again in another passage, when

speaking of the Saviour, he says: Since He was manifested to take away

sins, whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not

seen Him, neither known Him.' [1557] And yet again: Beloved, now are we

the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we

know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see

Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope towards Him purifieth

himself, even as He is pure.'" [1558] And yet, notwithstanding the

truth of all these passages, that also is true which he has adduced,

without, however, offering any explanation of it: "If we say that we

have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." [1559]

Now it follows from the whole of this, that in so far as we are born of

God we abide in Him who appeared to take away sins, that is, in Christ,

and sin not,--which is simply that "the inward man is renewed day by

day;" [1560] but in so far as we are born of that man "through whom sin

entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all

men," [1561] we are not without sin, because we are not as yet free

from his infirmity, until, by that renewal which takes place from day

to day (for it is in accordance with this that we were born of God),

that infirmity shall be wholly repaired, wherein we were born from the

first than, and in which we are not without sin. While the remains of

this infirmity abide in our inward man, however much they may be daily

lessened in those who are advancing, "we deceive ourselves, and the

truth is not in us, if we say that we have no sin." Now, however true

it is that "whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, nor known Him," [1562]

since with that vision and knowledge, which shall be realized in actual

sight, no one can in this life see and know Him; yet with that vision

and knowledge which come of faith, there may be many who commit

sin,--even apostates themselves,--who still have believed in Him some

time or other; so that of none of these could it be said, according to

the vision and knowledge which as yet come of faith, that he has

neither seen Him nor known Him. But I suppose it ought to be understood

that it is the renewal which awaits perfection that sees and knows Him;

whereas the infirmity which is destined to waste and ruin neither sees

nor knows Him. And it is owing to the remains of this infirmity, of

whatever amount, which remain firm in our inward man, that "we deceive

ourselves, and have not the truth in us, when we say that we have no

sin." Although, then, by the grace of renovation "we are the sons of

God," yet by reason of the remains of infirmity within us "it doth not

appear what we shall be; only we know that, when He shall appear, we

shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Then there shall be

no more sin, because no infirmity shall any longer remain within us or

without us. "And every man that hath this hope towards Him purifieth

himself, even as He is pure,"--purifieth himself, not indeed by himself

alone, but by believing in Him, and calling on Him who sanctifieth His

saints; which sanctification, when perfected at last (for it is at

present only advancing and growing day by day), shall take away from us

for ever all the remains of our infirmity.

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[1554] 1 John i. 8.

[1555] 1 John iii. 9.

[1556] 1 John v. 18.

[1557] 1 John iii. 5, 6.

[1558] 1 John iii. 2, 3.

[1559] 1 John i. 8.

[1560] 2 Cor. iv. 16.

[1561] Rom. v. 12.

[1562] 1 John iii. 6.

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Chapter XIX--(40.) The Ninth Passage.

"This passage, too," says he, "is quoted by them: It is not of him that

willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.'"

[1563] And he observes that the answer to be given to them is derived

from the same apostle's words in another passage: "Let him do what he

will." [1564] And he adds another passage from the Epistle to Philemon,

where, speaking of Onesimus, [St. Paul says]: "Whom I would have

retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in

the bonds of the gospel. But without thy mind would I do nothing; that

thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.'

[1565] Likewise, in Deuteronomy: Life and death hath He set before

thee, and good and evil: . . .choose thou life, that thou mayest live.'

[1566] So in the book of Solomon: God from the beginning made man, and

left him in the hand of His counsel; and He added for him commandments

and precepts: if thou wilt--to perform acceptable faithfulness for the

time to come, they shall save thee. He hath set fire and water before

thee: stretch forth thine hand unto whether thou wilt. Before man are

good and evil, and life and death; poverty and honour are from the Lord

God.' [1567] So again in Isaiah we read: If ye be willing, and hearken

unto me, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye be not willing,

and hearken not to me, the sword shall devour you: for the mouth of the

Lord hath spoken this.'" [1568] Now with all their efforts of disguise

they here betray their purpose; for they plainly attempt to controvert

the grace and mercy of God, which we desire to obtain whenever we offer

the prayer, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven;" [1569] or

again this, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

[1570] For indeed why do we present such petitions in earnest

supplication, if the result is of him that willeth, and him that

runneth, but not of God that showeth mercy? Not that the result is

without our will, but that our will does not accomplish the result,

unless it receive the divine assistance. Now the wholesomeness of faith

is this, that it makes us "seek, that we may find; ask, that we may

receive; and knock, that it may be opened to us." [1571] Whereas the

man who gainsays it, does really shut the door of God's mercy against

himself. I am unwilling to say more touching so important a matter,

because I do better in committing it to the groans of the faithful,

than to words of my own.

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[1563] Rom. ix. 16.

[1564] 1 Cor. vii. 36.

[1565] Philem. 13, 14.

[1566] Deut. xxx. 15, 19.

[1567] Ecclus. xv. 14-17.

[1568] Isa. i. 19, 20.

[1569] Matt. vi. 10.

[1570] Matt. vi. 13.

[1571] Luke xi. 9.

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(41.) Specimens of Pelagian Exegesis.

But I beg of you to see what kind of objection, after all, he makes,

that to him who "willeth and runneth" there is no necessity for God's

mercy, which actually anticipates him in order that he may

run,--because, forsooth, the apostle says concerning a certain person,

"Let him do what he will," [1572] --in the matter, as I suppose, which

he goes on to treat, when he says, "He sinneth not, let him marry!"

[1573] As if indeed it should be regarded as a great matter to be

willing to marry, when the subject is a laboured discussion concerning

the assistance of God's grace, or that it is of any great advantage to

will it, unless God's providence, which governs all things, joins

together the man and the woman. Or, in the case of the apostle's

writing to Philemon, that "his kindness should not be as it were of

necessity, but voluntary,"--as if any good act could indeed be

voluntary otherwise than by God's "working in us both to will and to do

of His own good pleasure." [1574] Or, when the Scripture says in

Deuteronomy, "Life and death hath He set before man and good and evil,"

and admonishes him "to choose life;" as if, forsooth, this very

admonition did not come from God's mercy, or as if there were any

advantage in choosing life, unless God inspired love to make such a

choice, and gave the possession of it when chosen, concerning which it

is said: "For anger is in His indignation, and in His pleasure is

life." [1575]

Or again, because it is said, "The commandments, if thou wilt, shall

save thee," [1576] --as if a man ought not to thank God, because he has

a will to keep the commandments, since, if he wholly lacked the light

of truth, it would not be possible for him to possess such a will.

"Fire and water being set before him, a man stretches forth his hand

towards which he pleases;" [1577] and yet higher is He who calls man to

his higher vocation than any thought on man's own part, inasmuch as the

beginning of correction of the heart lies in faith, even as it is

written, "Thou shalt come, and pass on from the beginning of faith."

[1578] Every one makes his choice of good, "according as God hath dealt

to every man the measure of faith;" [1579] and as the Prince of faith

says, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw

him." [1580] And that He spake this in reference to the faith which

believes in Him, He subsequently explains with sufficient clearness,

when He says: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and

they are life; yet there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus

knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should

betray Him. And He said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can

come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." [1581]

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[1572] 1 Cor. vii. 36.

[1573] 1 Cor. vii. 36.

[1574] Phil. ii. 13.

[1575] Ps. xxx. 5.

[1576] Ecclus. xv. 15.

[1577] Ecclus. xv. 16.

[1578] Cant. iv. 8.

[1579] Rom. xii. 3.

[1580] John vi. 44.

[1581] John vi. 62-65.

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(42.) God's Promises Conditional. Saints of the Old Testament Were

Saved by the Grace of Christ.

He, however, thought he had discovered a great support for his cause in

the prophet Isaiah; because by him God said: "If ye be willing, and

hearken unto me, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye be not

willing, and hearken not to me, the sword shall devour you: for the

mouth of the Lord hath spoken this." [1582] As if the entire law were

not full of conditions of this sort; or as if its commandments had been

given to proud men for any other reason than that "the law was added

because of transgression, until the seed should come to whom the

promise was made." [1583] "It entered, therefore, that the offence

might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

[1584] In other words, That man might receive commandments, trusting as

he did in his own resources, and that, failing in these and becoming a

transgressor, he might ask for a deliverer and a saviour; and that the

fear of the law might humble him, and bring him, as a schoolmaster, to

faith and grace. Thus "their weaknesses being multiplied, they hastened

after;" [1585] and in order to heal them, Christ in due season came. In

His grace even righteous men of old believed, and by the same grace

were they holpen; so that with joy did they receive a foreknowledge of

Him, and some of them even foretold His coming,--whether they were

found among the people of Israel themselves, as Moses, and Joshua the

son of Nun, and Samuel, and David, and other such; or outside that

people, as Job; or previous to that people, as Abraham, and Noah, and

all others who are either mentioned or not in Holy Scripture. "For

there is but one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man

Christ Jesus," [1586] without whose grace nobody is delivered from

condemnation, whether he has derived that condemnation from him in whom

all men sinned, or has afterwards aggravated it by his own iniquities.

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[1582] Isa. i. 19, 20.

[1583] Gal. iii. 19.

[1584] Rom. v. 20.

[1585] Ps. xvi. 4.

[1586] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

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Chapter XX.--(43.) No Man is Assisted Unless He Does Himself Also Work.

Our Course is a Constant Progress.

But what is the import of the last statement which he has made: "If any

one say, May it possibly be that a man sin not even in word?' then the

answer," says he, "which must be given is, Quite possible, if God so

will; and God does so will, therefore it is possible.'" See how

unwilling he was to say, "If God give His help, then it would be

possible;" and yet the Psalmist thus addresses God: "Be Thou my helper,

forsake me not;" [1587] where of course help is not sought for

procuring bodily advantages and avoiding bodily evils, but for

practising and fulfilling righteousness. Hence it is that we say: "Lead

us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." [1588] Now no man is

assisted unless he also himself does something; assisted, however, he

is, if he prays, if he believes, if he is "called according to God's

purpose;" [1589] for "whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to

be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born

among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also

called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He

justified, them He also glorified." [1590] We run, therefore, whenever

we make advance; and our wholeness runs with us in our advance (just as

a sore is said to run [1591] when the wound is in process of a sound

and careful treatment), in order that we may be in every respect

perfect, without any infirmity of sin whatever,--a result which God not

only wishes, but even causes and helps us to accomplish. And this God's

grace does, in co-operation with ourselves, through Jesus Christ our

Lord, as well by commandments, sacraments, and examples, as by His Holy

Spirit also; through whom there is hiddenly shed abroad in our hearts

[1592] that love, "which maketh intercession for us with groanings

which cannot be uttered," [1593] until wholeness and salvation be

perfected in us, and God be manifested to us as He will be seen in His

eternal truth.

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[1587] Ps. xxvii. 9.

[1588] Matt. vi. 13.

[1589] Rom. viii. 28.

[1590] Rom. viii. 29, 30.

[1591] Ps. lxxvii. 2.

[1592] Rom. v. 5.

[1593] Rom. viii. 26.

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Chapter XXI.--(44.) Conclusion of the Work. In the Regenerate It is Not

Concupiscence, But Consent, Which is Sin.

Whosoever, then, supposes that any man or any men (except the one

Mediator between God and man [1594] ) have ever lived, or are yet

living in this present state, who have not needed, and do not need,

forgiveness of sins, he opposes Holy Scripture, wherein it is said by

the apostle: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin;

and so death passed upon all men, in which all have sinned." [1595] And

he must needs go on to assert, with an impious contention, that there

may possibly be men who are freed and saved from sin without the

liberation and salvation of the one Mediator Christ. Whereas He it is

who has said: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that

are sick;" [1596] "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to

repentance." [1597] He, moreover, who says that any man, after he has

received remission of sins, has ever lived in this body, or still is

living, so righteously as to have no sin at all, he contradicts the

Apostle John, who declares that "If we say we have no sin, we deceive

ourselves, and the truth is not in us." [1598] Observe, the expression

is not we had, but "we have." If, however, anybody contend that the

apostle's statement concerns the sin which dwells in our mortal flesh

according to the defect which was caused by the will of the first man

when he sinned, and concerning which the Apostle Paul enjoins us "not"

to "obey it in the lusts thereof, [1599] --so that he does not sin who

altogether withholds his consent from this same indwelling sin, and so

brings it to no evil work,--either in deed, or word, or

thought,--although the lusting after it may be excited (which in

another sense has received the name of sin, inasmuch as consenting to

it would amount to sinning), but excited against our will,--he

certainly is drawing subtle distinctions, and should consider what

relation all this bears to the Lord's Prayer, wherein we say, "Forgive

us our debts." [1600] Now, if I judge aright, it would be unnecessary

to put up such a prayer as this, if we never in the least degree

consented to the lusts of the before-mentioned sin, either in a slip of

the tongue, or in a wanton thought; all that it would be needful to say

would be, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

[1601] Nor could the Apostle James say: "In many things we all offend."

[1602] For in truth only that man offends whom an evil concupiscence

persuades, either by deception or by force, to do or say or think

something which he ought to avoid, by directing his appetites or his

aversions contrary to the rule of righteousness. Finally, if it be

asserted that there either have been, or are in this present life, any

persons, with the sole exception of our Great Head, "the Saviour of His

body," [1603] who are righteous, without any sin,--and this, either by

not consenting to the lusts thereof, or because that must not be

accounted as any sin which is such that God does not impute it to them

by reason of their godly lives (although the blessedness of being

without sin is a different thing from the blessedness of not having

one's sin imputed to him), [1604] --I do not deem it necessary to

contest the point over much. I am quite aware that some hold this

opinion, [1605] whose views on the subject I have not the courage to

censure, although, at the same time, I cannot defend them. But if any

man says that we ought not to use the prayer, "Lead us not into

temptation" (and he says as much who maintains that God's help is

unnecessary to a person for the avoidance of sin, and that human will,

after accepting only the law, is sufficient for the purpose), then I do

not hesitate at once to affirm that such a man ought to be removed from

the public ear, and to be anathematized by every mouth.

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[1594] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

[1595] Rom. v. 12.

[1596] Matt. ix. 12.

[1597] Matt. ix. 13.

[1598] 1 John i. 8.

[1599] Rom. vi. 12.

[1600] Matt. vi. 12.

[1601] Matt. vi. 13.

[1602] Jas. iii. 2.

[1603] Eph. i. 22, 23, and v. 23.

[1604] Ps. xxxii. 2.

[1605] See Augustin's treatise, De Natura et Gratia, 74, 75.

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a work on the proceedings of pelagius.

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Extract from Augustin's "Retractations,"

Book II. Chap. 45,

On the Following Treatise,

"De gestis pelagii."

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"About the same time, in the East (that is to say, in Palestinian

Syria), Pelagius was summoned by certain catholic brethren [1606]

before a tribunal of bishops, and was heard on his trial by fourteen

prelates, in the absence of his accusers, who were unable to be present

on the day of the synod. On his condemning the very dogmas which were

read from the indictment against him, as assailing the grace of Christ,

they pronounced him to be a catholic. But when the Acts of this synod

found their way into our hands, I wrote a treatise on them, to prevent

the idea gaining ground that, because he had been in a manner

acquitted, his opinions also were approved by the bishops; or that the

accused could by any chance have escaped condemnation at their hands,

unless he had condemned the opinions charged against him. This treatise

of mine begins with these words: After there came into my hands.'"

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[1606] Their names were Heros and Lazarus.

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preface to the book on the proceedings of pelagius.

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In the year of Christ 415, Pelagius was accused of heresy in Palestine,

and brought to trial on one or two occasions. At the first trial, which

was held on or about the 30th of July, at a congress of his presbyters,

by John, bishop of Jerusalem, no regular record was kept of the

proceedings, as we are informed by Augustin in the following work (sec.

39 and 55). The hour and the day of this assembly we may learn from

Orosius, a presbyter of Spain, who was present at the congress, and has

in his Apology committed to writing some of its most memorable acts. We

are informed by him that "after a great deal of earnest proceeding on

both sides, the bishop John proposed the last resolution, that certain

brethren should be sent with a letter to blessed Innocent, Pope of

Rome, to the intent that he might decide on all the points which were

to follow."

The second trial took place afterwards at Diospolis, [1607] a city in

Palestine, before fourteen bishops, at which was kept an accurate

record of the proceedings. The bishops are severally mentioned by

Augustin in his work against Julianus, Book i. chs. v. and vii. (19,

32), in the following order: "Eulogius, John, Ammonianus, Porphyry,

Eutonius, another Porphyry, Fidus, Zoninus, Zoboennus, Nymphidius,

Chromatius, Jovinus, Eleutherius, and Clematius." There can be no doubt

that Eulogius, bishop of C�sarea, was also primate of the province of

Palestine, because he is constantly mentioned by Augustin as occupying

the first place before the other thirteen bishops, and even before John

himself, bishop of Jerusalem.

We find from the epistle of Lucian, [1608] De revelatione corporis

Stephani martyris, that this synod was held at the approach of

Christmas. In this epistle he tells us of three visions which God had

shown him in the year 415,--the first on December 3d, and the other two

on the 10th and 17th of the same month; that he then reported the

matter to John, bishop of Jerusalem, who sent him in quest of the

martyr's sepulchre. He further informs us that he discovered the

sepulchre, and at once returned to John, "who (says he) was attending a

synod at Lydda, which is Diospolis." This must have happened about the

21st of the month, since Lucian goes on to say that John came, in the

company of two more bishops, Eutonius of Sebaste and Eleutherius of

Jericho, and that in their presence the relics of the martyr were

removed on the 26th day of the same month of December.

A certain deacon, called Annianus, is supposed to have pleaded the

cause of Pelagius at the synod; some learned men finding it easier to

interpret of this deacon than of Pelagius what Jerome writes in a

letter addressed to Alypius and Augustin (Epist. Augustinian. 202, 2):

"For every thing which he denies having ever uttered in that miserable

synod of Diospolis he professes to hold in this work." Jerome bestowed

the epithet of "miserable" on this synod of Diospolis, for no other

reason (as we suppose) than because he discovered from its Acts how

miserably the synod had been duped by Pelagius. Pope Innocent, after a

sight of these Acts, expressly owned (see Epist. Augustinian. 183, 4)

that "he could not bring himself to refuse either blame or praise of

those bishops." Augustin, however, in the following treatise (see chs.

4 and 8), does not hesitate to call them "pious judges," and (in his

first book against Julianus, i. ch. v. 19) "catholic judges," who, when

Pelagius abjured the errors attributed to him, pronounced him a

catholic, and acquitted him; indeed, he frequently cites these fourteen

bishops as witnesses of the catholic faith in opposition to Julianus.

In his letters addressed to Pope Innocent in the year 416 (see Epist.

Augustinian. 175, 4, and 177, 2), Augustin intimated that he knew

nothing of the Proceedings of the synod except from hearsay; and in a

letter to John, bishop of Jerusalem (Epist. 179, 4), he earnestly

requested him to forward them to him. But the report was in his hands

about midsummer in 417, when he wrote his Epistle to Paulinus (Epist.

186, 31); so that the date of the following treatise is thus traced to

the commencement of the year 417, supposing it to have been published

immediately after he had received the Proceedings.

The title given to this work by Augustin, in his book On Original Sin

(15), stands De Gestis Pal�stinis [On the Proceedings which took place

in Palestine]; by this title Prosper likewise refers to the work (in

his book Adv. Collatorem, 43); but yet we ought to retain the

inscription De Gestis Pelagii which is prefixed both to the ancient

editions and to the particular Retractation in which Augustin reviewed

this work. The treatise had this title given to it, no doubt, either

because it had been already commonly accepted as a description of these

proceedings of Pelagius and his vindication, which led to his boast

that he had been acquitted; or else from the fact that an examination

had become necessary of those proceedings, which the accused party had

himself published in an abridged and garbled form. Hence Possidonius

named the treatise by the title, Contra Gesta Pelagii [A Protest, or

Vindication, against the Proceedings of Pelagius].

Out of this book Photius copied a very accurate account of the Synod of

Diospolis and inserted it in his Bibliotheca (cod. 54). One may

therefore conclude that this work of Augustin's is one of those which

Possidonius, in his Life, ch. xi. or xxi., No. 59, mentions as having

been "translated into the Greek tongue." The Aurelius to whom the work

is dedicated is mentioned by Photius in the passage just cited, and by

Prosper before him (in the 43d chapter of the above-quoted Adversus

Collatorem), as "the bishop of Carthage." If the title-page of old did

not give them this information, they could both of them discover it

from reading this book, especially ch. 23 [XI.].

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[1607] That is, Lydda.

[1608] To be found in Migne's Patrologia Latina, vol. vii., Appendix.

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A work on the proceedings of pelagius, [1609]

In One Book,

addressed to bishop aurelius [of carthage], by

aurelius augustin;

written about the commencement of the year, a.d. 417.

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The several heads of error which were alleged against Pelagius at the

Synod in Palestine, with his answers to each charge, are minutely

discussed. Augustin shows that, although Pelagius was acquitted by the

synod, there still clave to him the suspicion of heresy; and that the

acquittal of the accused by the synod was so contrived, that the heresy

itself with which he was charged was unhesitatingly condemned.

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Chapter 1.--Introduction.

After there came into my hands, holy father Aurelius, the

ecclesiastical proceedings, by which fourteen bishops of the province

of Palestine pronounced Pelagius a catholic, my hesitation, in which I

was previously reluctant to make any lengthy or confident statement

about the defence which he had made, came to an end. This defence,

indeed, I had already read in a paper which he himself forwarded to me.

Forasmuch, however, as I received no letter therewith from him, I was

afraid that some discrepancy might be detected between my statement and

the record of the ecclesiastical proceedings; and that, should Pelagius

perhaps deny that he had sent me any paper (and it would have been

difficult for me to prove that he had, when there was only one

witness), I should rather seem guilty in the eyes of those who would

readily credit his denial, either of an underhanded falsification, or

else (to say the least) of a reckless credulity. Now, however, when I

am to treat of matters which are shown to have actually transpired, and

when, as it appears to me, all doubt is removed whether he really acted

in the way described, your holiness, and everybody who reads these

pages, will no doubt be able to judge, with greater readiness and

certainty, both of his defence and of this my treatment of it.

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Chapter 2 [I.]--The First Item in the Accusation, and Pelagius' Answer.

First of all, then, I offer to the Lord my God, who is also my defence

and guide, unspeakable thanks, because I was not misled in my views

respecting our holy brethren and fellow-bishops who sat as judges in

that case. His answers, indeed, they not without reason approved;

because they had not to consider how he had in his writings stated the

points which were objected against him, but what he had to say about

them in his reply at the pending examination. A case of unsoundness in

the faith is one thing, one of incautious statement is another thing.

Now sundry objections were urged against Pelagius out of a written

complaint, which our holy brethren and fellow-bishops in Gaul, Heros

and Lazarus, presented, being themselves unable to be present, owing

(as we afterwards learned from credible information) to the severe

indisposition of one of them. The first of these was, that he writes,

in a certain book of his, this: "No man can be without sin unless he

has acquired a knowledge of the law." After this had been read out, the

synod inquired: "Did you, Pelagius, express yourself thus?" Then in

answer he said: "I certainly used the words, but not in the sense in

which they understand them. I did not say that a man is unable to sin

who has acquired a knowledge of the law; but that he is by the

knowledge of the law assisted towards not sinning, even as it is

written, He hath given them a law for help'" [1609] Upon hearing this,

the synod declared: "The words which have been spoken by Pelagius are

not different from the Church." Assuredly they are not different, as he

expressed them in his answer; the statement, however, which was

produced from his book has a different meaning. But this the bishops,

who were Greek-speaking men, and who heard the words through an

interpreter, were not concerned with discussing. All they had to

consider at the moment was, what the man who was under examination said

was his meaning,--not in what words his opinion was alleged to have

been expressed in his book.

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[1609] Isa. viii. 20.

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Chapter 3.--Discussion of Pelagius' First Answer.

Now to say that "a man is by the knowledge of the law assisted towards

not sinning," is a different assertion from saying that "a man cannot

be without sin unless he has acquired a knowledge of the law." We see,

for example, that corn-floors may be threshed without

threshing-sledges,--however much these may assist the operation if we

have them; and that boys can find their way to school without the

pedagogue,--however valuable for this may be the office of pedagogues;

and that many persons recover from sickness without

physicians,--although the doctor's skill is clearly of greatest use;

and that men sometimes live on other aliments besides bread,--however

valuable the use of bread must needs be allowed to be; and many other

illustrations may occur to the thoughtful reader, without our

prompting. From which examples we are undoubtedly reminded that there

are two sorts of aids. Some are indispensable, and without their help

the desired result could not be attained. Without a ship, for instance,

no man could take a voyage; no man could speak without a voice; without

legs no man could walk; without light nobody could see; and so on in

numberless instances. Amongst them this also may be reckoned, that

without God's grace no man can live rightly. But then, again, there are

other helps, which render us assistance in such a way that we might in

some other way effect the object to which they are ordinarily auxiliary

in their absence. Such are those which I have already mentioned,--the

threshing-sledges for threshing corn, the pedagogue for conducting the

child, medical art applied to the recovery of health, and other like

instances. We have therefore to inquire to which of these two classes

belongs the knowledge of the law,--in other words, to consider in what

way it helps us towards the avoidance of sin. If it be in the sense of

indispensable aid without which the end cannot be attained; not only

was Pelagius' answer before the judges true, but what he wrote in his

book was true also. If, however, it be of such a character that it

helps indeed if it is present, but even if it be absent, then the

result is still possible to be attained by some other means,--his

answer to the judges was still true, and not unreasonably did it find

favour with the bishops that "man is assisted not to sin by the

knowledge of the law;" but what he wrote in his book is not true, that

"there is no man without sin except him who has acquired a knowledge of

the law,"--a statement which the judges left undiscussed, as they were

ignorant of the Latin language, and were content with the confession of

the man who was pleading his cause before them, especially as no one

was present on the other side who could oblige the interpreter to

expose his meaning by an explanation of the words of his book, and to

show why it was that the brethren were not groundlessly disturbed. For

but very few persons are thoroughly acquainted with the law. The mass

of the members of Christ, who are scattered abroad everywhere, being

ignorant of the very profound and complicated contents of the law, are

commended by the piety of simple faith and unfailing hope in God, and

sincere love. Endowed with such gifts, they trust that by the grace of

God they may be purged from their sins through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Chapter 4 [II.]--The Same Continued.

If Pelagius, as he possibly might, were to say in reply to this, that

that very thing was what he meant by "the knowledge of the law, without

which a man is unable to be free from sins," which is communicated by

the teaching of faith to converts and to babes in Christ, and in which

candidates for baptism are catechetically instructed with a view to

their knowing the creed, certainly this is not what is usually meant

when any one is said to have a knowledge of the law. This phrase is

only applied to such persons as are skilled in the law. But if he

persists in describing the knowledge of the law by the words in

question, which, however few in number, are great in weight, and are

used to designate all who are faithfully baptized according to the

prescribed rule of the Churches; and if he maintains that it was of

this that he said, "No one is without sin, but the man who has acquired

the knowledge of the law,"--a knowledge which must needs be conveyed to

believers before they attain to the actual remission of sins,--even in

such case there would crowd around him a countless multitude, not

indeed of angry disputants, but of crying baptized infants, who would

exclaim,--not, to be sure, in words, but in the very truthfulness of

innocence,--"What is it, O what is it that you have written: He only

can be without sin who has acquired a knowledge of the law?' See here

are we, a large flock of lambs, without sin, and yet we have no

knowledge of the law." Now surely they with their silent tongue would

compel him to silence, or, perhaps, even to confess that he was

corrected of his great perverseness; or else (if you will), that he had

already for some time entertained the opinion which he acknowledged

before his ecclesiastical examiners, but that he had failed before to

express his opinion in words of sufficient care,--that his faith,

therefore, should be approved, but this book revised and amended. For,

as the Scripture says: "There is that slippeth in his speech, but not

in his heart." [1610] Now if he would only admit this, or were already

saying it, who would not most readily forgive those words which he had

committed to writing with too great heedlessness and neglect,

especially on his declining to defend the opinion which the said words

contain, and affirming that to be his proper view which the truth

approves? This we must suppose would have been in the minds of the

pious judges themselves, if they could only have duly understood the

contents of his Latin book, thoroughly interpreted to them, as they

understood his reply to the synod, which was spoken in Greek, and

therefore quite intelligible to them, and adjudged it as not alien from

the Church. Let us go on to consider the other cases.

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[1610] Ecclus. xix. 16.

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Chapter 5 [III.]--The Second Item in the Accusation; And Pelagius'

Answer.

The synod of bishops then proceeded to say: "Let another section be

read." Accordingly there was read the passage in the same book wherein

Pelagius had laid down the position that "all men are ruled by their

own will." On this being read, Pelagius said in answer: "This I stated

in the interest of free will. God is its helper whenever it chooses

good; man, however, when sinning is himself in fault, as under the

direction of a free will." Upon hearing this, the bishops exclaimed:

"Nor again is this opposed to the doctrine of the Church." For who

indeed could condemn or deny the freedom of the will, when God's help

is associated with it? His opinion, therefore, as thus explained in his

answer, was, with good reason, deemed satisfactory by the bishops. And

yet, after all, the statement made in his book, "All men are ruled by

their own will," ought without doubt to have deeply disturbed the

brethren, who had discovered what these men are accustomed to dispute

against the grace of God. For it is said, "All men are ruled by their

own will," as if God rules no man, and the Scripture says in vain,

"Save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance; rule them, and lift them

up for ever." [1611] They would not, of course, stay, if they are ruled

only by their own will without God, even as sheep which have no

shepherd: which, God forbid for us. For, unquestionably to be led is

something more compulsory than to be ruled. He who is ruled at the same

time does something himself,--indeed, when ruled by God, it is with the

express view that he should also act rightly; whereas the man who is

led can hardly be understood to do any thing himself at all. And yet

the Saviour's helpful grace is so much better than our own wills and

desires, that the apostle does not hesitate to say: "As many as are led

by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." [1612] And our free

will can do nothing better for us than to submit itself to be led by

Him who can do nothing amiss; and after doing this, not to doubt that

it was helped to do it by Him of whom it is said in the psalm, "He is

my God, His mercy shall go before me." [1613]

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[1611] Ps. xxviii. 9.

[1612] Rom. viii. 14.

[1613] Ps. lix. 10.

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Chapter 6.--Pelagius' Answer Examined.

Indeed, in this very book which contains these statements, after laying

down the position, "All men are governed by their own will, and every

one is submitted to his own desire," Pelagius goes on to adduce the

testimony of Scripture, from which it is evident enough that no man

ought to trust to himself for direction. For on this very subject the

Wisdom of Solomon declares: "I myself also am a mortal man like unto

all; and the offspring of him that was first made of the earth," [1614]

--with other similar words to the conclusion of the paragraph, where we

read: "For all men have one entrance into life, and the like going out

therefrom: wherefore I prayed and understanding was given to me; I

called, and the Spirit of Wisdom came into me." [1615] Now is it not

clearer than light itself, how that this man, on duly considering the

wretchedness of human frailty, did not dare to commit himself to his

own direction, but prayed, and understanding was given to him,

concerning which the apostle says: "But we have the understanding of

the Lord;" [1616] and called, and the Spirit of Wisdom entered into

him? Now it is by this Spirit, and not by the strength of their own

will, that they who are God's children are governed and led.

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[1614] Wisd. vii. 1.

[1615] Wisd. vii. 6, 7.

[1616] 1 Cor. ii. 16.

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Chapter 7.--The Same Continued.

As for the passage from the psalm, "He loved cursing, and it shall come

upon him; and he willed not blessing, so it shall be far removed from

him," [1617] which he quoted in the same book of Chapters, as if to

prove that "all men are ruled by their own will," who can be ignorant

that this is a fault not of nature as God created it, but of human will

which departed from God? The fact indeed is, that even if he had not

loved cursing, and had willed blessing, he would in this very case,

too, deny that his will had received any assistance from God; in his

ingratitude and impiety, moreover, he would submit himself to be ruled

by himself, until he found out by his penalties that, sunk as he was

into ruin, without God to govern him he was utterly unable to direct

his own self. In like manner, from the passage which he quoted in the

same book under the same head, "He hath set fire and water before thee;

stretch forth thy hand unto whether thou wilt; before man are good and

evil, life and death, and whichever he liketh shall be given to him,"

[1618] it is manifest that, if he applies his hand to fire, and if evil

and death please him, his human will effects all this; but if, on the

contrary, he loves goodness and life, not alone does his will

accomplish the happy choice, but it is assisted by divine grace. The

eye indeed is sufficient for itself, for not seeing, that is, for

darkness; but for seeing, it is in its own light not sufficient for

itself unless the assistance of a clear external light is rendered to

it. God forbid, however, that they who are "the called according to His

purpose, whom He also foreknew, and predestinated to be conformed to

the likeness of His Son," [1619] should be given up to their own desire

to perish. This is suffered only by "the vessels of wrath," [1620] who

are perfected for perdition; in whose very destruction, indeed, God

"makes known the riches of His glory on the vessels of His mercy."

[1621] Now it is on this account that, after saying, "He is my God, His

mercy shall go before me," [1622] he immediately adds, "My God will

show me vengeance upon my enemies." [1623] That therefore happens to

them which is mentioned in Scripture, "God gave them up to the lusts of

their own heart." [1624] This, however, does not happen to the

predestinated, who are ruled by the Spirit of God, for not in vain is

their cry: "Deliver me not, O Lord, to the sinner, according to my

desire." [1625] With regard, indeed, to the evil lusts which assail

them, their prayer has ever assumed some such shape as this: "Take away

from me the concupiscence of the belly; and let not the desire of lust

take hold of me." [1626] Upon those whom He governs as His subjects

does God bestow this gift; but not upon those who think themselves

capable of governing themselves, and who, in the stiff-necked

confidence of their own will, disdain to have Him as their ruler.

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[1617] Ps. cix. 18.

[1618] Ecclus. xv. 16, 17.

[1619] Rom. viii. 29.

[1620] Rom. ix. 22.

[1621] Rom. ix. 23.

[1622] Ps. lix. 10.

[1623] Ps. lix. 10.

[1624] Rom. i. 24.

[1625] Ps. cxl. 8.

[1626] Ecclus. xxiii. 5, 6.

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Chapter 8.--The Same Continued.

This being the case, how must God's children, who have learned the

truth of all this and rejoice at being ruled and led by the Spirit of

God, have been affected when they heard or read that Pelagius had

declared in writing that "all men are governed by their own will, and

that every one is submitted to his own desire?" And yet, when

questioned by the bishops, he fully perceived what an evil impression

these words of his might produce, and told them in answer that "he had

made such an assertion in the interest of free will,"--adding at once,

"God is its helper whenever it chooses good; whilst man is himself in

fault when he sins, as being under the influence of a free will."

Although the pious judges approved of this sentiment also, they were

unwilling to consider or examine how incautiously he had written, or

indeed in what sense he had employed the words found in his book. They

thought it was enough that he had made such a confession concerning

free will, as to admit that God helped the man who chose the good,

whereas the man who sinned was himself to blame, his own will sufficing

for him in this direction. According to this, God rules those whom He

assists in their choice of the good. So far, then, as they rule

anything themselves, they rule it rightly, since they themselves are

ruled by Him who is right and good.

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Chapter 9.--The Third Item in the Accusation; And Pelagius' Answer.

Another statement was read which Pelagius had placed in his book, to

this effect: "In the day of judgment no forbearance will be shown to

the ungodly and the sinners, but they will be consumed in eternal

fires." This induced the brethren to regard the statement as open to

the objection, that it seemed so worded as to imply that all sinners

whatever were to be punished with an eternal punishment, without

excepting even those who hold Christ as their foundation, although

"they build thereupon wood, hay, stubble," [1627] concerning whom the

apostle writes: "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer

loss; but he shall himself be saved, yet so as by fire." [1628] When,

however, Pelagius responded that "he had made his assertion in

accordance with the Gospel, in which it is written concerning sinners,

These shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into

life eternal,'" [1629] it was impossible for Christian judges to be

dissatisfied with a sentence which is written in the Gospel, and was

spoken by the Lord; especially as they knew not what there was in the

words taken from Pelagius' book which could so disturb the brethren,

who were accustomed to hear his discussions and those of his followers.

Since also they were absent [1630] who presented the indictment against

Pelagius to the holy bishop Eulogius, there was no one to urge him that

he ought to distinguish, by some exception, between those sinners who

are to be saved by fire, and those who are to be punished with

everlasting perdition. If, indeed, the judges had come to understand by

these means the reason why the objection had been made to his

statement, had he then refused to allow the distinction, he would have

been justly open to blame.

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[1627] 1 Cor. iii. 12.

[1628] 1 Cor. iii. 15.

[1629] Matt. xxv. 46.

[1630] The bishops Heros and Lazarus; see above, I [II.].

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Chapter 10.--Pelagius' Answer Examined. On Origen's Error Concerning

the Non-Eternity of the Punishment of the Devil and the Damned.

But what Pelagius added, "Who believes differently is an Origenist,"

was approved by the judges, because in very deed the Church most justly

abominates the opinion of Origen, that even they whom the Lord says are

to be punished with everlasting punishment, and the devil himself and

his angels, after a time, however protracted, will be purged, and

released from their penalties, and shall then cleave to the saints who

reign with God in the association of blessedness. This additional

sentence, therefore, the synod pronounced to be "not opposed to the

Church,"--not in accordance with Pelagius, but rather in accordance

with the Gospel, that such ungodly and sinful men shall be consumed by

eternal fires as the Gospel determines to be worthy of such a

punishment; and that he is a sharer in Origen's abominable opinion, who

affirms that their punishment can possibly ever come to an end, when

the Lord has said it is to be eternal. Concerning those sinners,

however, of whom the apostle declares that "they shall be saved, yet so

as by fire, after their work has been burnt up," [1631] inasmuch as no

objectionable opinion in reference to them was manifestly charged

against Pelagius, the synod determined nothing. Wherefore he who says

that the ungodly and sinner, whom the truth consigns to eternal

punishment, can ever be liberated therefrom, is not unfitly designated

by Pelagius as an "Origenist." But, on the other hand, he who supposes

that no sinner whatever deserves mercy in the judgment of God, may be

designated by whatever name Pelagius is disposed to give to him, only

it must at the same time be quite understood that this error is not

received as truth by the Church. "For he shall have judgment without

mercy that hath showed no mercy." [1632]

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[1631] 1 Cor. iii. 12, 15.

[1632] Jas. ii. 13.

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Chapter 11.--The Same Continued.

But how this judgment is to be accomplished, it is not easy to

understand from Holy Scripture; for there are many modes therein of

describing that which is to come to pass only in one mode. In one place

the Lord declares that He will "shut the door" against those whom He

does not admit into His kingdom; and that, on their clamorously

demanding admission, "Open unto us, . . . we have eaten and drunk in

Thy presence," and so forth, as the Scripture describes, "He will say

unto them in answer, I know you not, . . . all ye workers of iniquity."

[1633] In another passage He reminds us that He will command "all which

would not that He should reign over them to be brought to Him, and be

slain in His presence." [1634] In another place, again, He tells us

that He will come with His angels in His majesty; and before Him shall

be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another;

some He will set on His right hand, and after enumerating their good

works, will award to them eternal life; and others on His left hand,

whose barrenness in all good works He will expose, will He condemn to

everlasting fire. [1635] In two other passages He deals with that

wicked and slothful servant, who neglected to trade with His money,

[1636] and with the man who was found at the feast without the wedding

garment,--and He orders them to be bound hand and foot, and to be cast

into outer darkness. [1637] And in yet another scripture, after

admitting the five virgins who were wise, He shuts the door against the

other five foolish ones. [1638] Now these descriptions,--and there are

others which at the instant do not occur to me,--are all intended to

represent to us the future judgment, which of course will be held not

over one, or over five, but over multitudes. For if it were a solitary

case only of the man who was cast into outer darkness for not having on

the wedding garment, He would not have gone on at once to give it a

plural turn, by saying: "For many are called, but few are chosen;"

[1639] whereas it is plain that, after the one was cast out and

condemned, many still remained behind in the house. However, it would

occupy us too long to discuss all these questions to the full. This

brief remark, however, I may make, without prejudice (as they say in

pecuniary affairs) to some better discussion, that by the many

descriptions which are scattered throughout the Holy Scriptures there

is signified to us but one mode of final judgment, which is inscrutable

to us,--with only the variety of deservings preserved in the rewards

and punishments. Touching the particular point, indeed, which we have

before us at present, it is sufficient to remark that, if Pelagius had

actually said that all sinners whatever without exception would be

punished in an eternity of punishment by everlasting fire, then

whosoever had approved of this judgment would, to begin with, have

brought the sentence down on his own head. "For who will boast that he

is pure from sins?" [1640] Forasmuch, however, as he did not say all,

nor certain, but made an indefinite statement only,--and afterwards, in

explanation, declared that his meaning was according to the words of

the Gospel,--his opinion was affirmed by the judgment of the bishops to

be true; but it does not even now appear what Pelagius really thinks on

the subject, and in consequence there is no indecency in inquiring

further into the decision of the episcopal judges.

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[1633] Luke xiii. 25-27.

[1634] Luke xix. 27.

[1635] Matt. xxv. 33.

[1636] Luke xix. 20-24.

[1637] Matt. xxii. 11-13.

[1638] Matt. xxv. 1-10.

[1639] Matt. xxii. 14.

[1640] Prov. xx. 9.

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Chapter 12 [IV.]--The Fourth Item in the Accusation; And Pelagius'

Answer.

It was further objected against Pelagius, as if he had written in his

book, that "evil does not enter our thoughts." In reply, however, to

this charge, he said: "We made no such statement. What we did say was,

that the Christian ought to be careful not to have evil thoughts." Of

this, as it became them, the bishops approved. For who can doubt that

evil ought not to be thought of? And, indeed, if what he said in his

book about "evil not being thought" runs in this form, "neither is evil

to be thought of," the ordinary meaning of such words is "that evil

ought not even to be thought of." Now if any person denies this, what

else does he in fact say, than that evil ought to be thought of? And if

this were true, it could not be said in praise of love that "it

thinketh no evil!" [1641] But after all, the phrase about "not entering

into the thoughts" of righteous and holy men is not quite a commendable

one, for this reason, that what enters the mind is commonly called a

thought, even when assent to it does not follow. The thought, however,

which contracts blame, and is justly forbidden, is never unaccompanied

with assent. Possibly those men had an incorrect copy of Pelagius'

writings, who thought it proper to object to him that he had used the

words: "Evil does not enter into our thoughts;" that is, that whatever

is evil never enters into the thoughts of righteous and holy men. Which

is, of course, a very absurd statement. For whenever we censure evil

things, we cannot enunciate them in words, unless they have been

thought. But, as we said before, that is termed a culpable thought of

evil which carries with it assent.

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[1641] 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

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Chapter 13 [V.]--The Fifth Item of the Accusation; And Pelagius'

Answer.

After the judges had accorded their approbation to this answer of

Pelagius, another passage which he had written in his book was read

aloud: "The kingdom of heaven was promised even in the Old Testament."

Upon this, Pelagius remarked in vindication: "This can be proved by the

Scriptures: but heretics, in order to disparage the Old Testament, deny

this. I, however, simply followed the authority of the Scriptures when

I said this; for in the prophet Daniel it is written: The saints shall

receive the kingdom of the Most. High.'" [1642] After they had heard

this answer, the synod said: "Neither is this opposed to the Church's

faith."

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[1642] Dan. vii. 18.

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Chapter 14.--Examination of This Point. The Phrase "Old Testament" Used

in Two Senses. The Heir of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament

There Were Heirs of the New Testament.

Was it therefore without reason that our brethren were moved by his

words to include this charge among the others against him? Certainly

not. The fact is, that the phrase Old Testament is constantly employed

in two different ways,--in one, following the authority of the Holy

Scriptures; in the other, following the most common custom of speech.

For the Apostle Paul says, in his Epistle to the Galatians: "Tell me,

ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is

written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by

a free woman. . . .Which things are an allegory: for these are the two

testaments; the one which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this

is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and is conjoined with the Jerusalem which now

is, and is in bondage with her children; whereas the Jerusalem which is

above is free, and is the mother of us all." [1643] Now, inasmuch as

the Old Testament belongs to bondage, whence it is written, "Cast out

the bond-woman and her son, for the son of the bond-woman shall not be

heir with my son Isaac," [1644] but the kingdom of heaven to liberty;

what has the kingdom of heaven to do with the Old Testament? Since,

however, as I have already remarked, we are accustomed, in our ordinary

use of words, to designate all those Scriptures of the law and the

prophets which were given previous to the Lord's incarnation, and are

embraced together by canonical authority, under the name and title of

the Old Testament, what man who is ever so moderately informed in

ecclesiastical lore can be ignorant that the kingdom of heaven could be

quite as well promised in those early Scriptures as even the New

Testament itself, to which the kingdom of heaven belongs? At all

events, in those ancient Scriptures it is most distinctly written:

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will consummate a new

testament with the house of Israel and with the house of Jacob; not

according to the testament that I made with their fathers, in the day

that I took them by the hand, to lead them out of the land of Egypt."

[1645] This was done on Mount Sinai. But then there had not yet risen

the prophet Daniel to say: "The saints shall receive the kingdom of the

Most High." [1646] For by these words he foretold the merit not of the

Old, but of the New Testament. In the same manner did the same prophets

foretell that Christ Himself would come, in whose blood the New

Testament was consecrated. Of this Testament also the apostles became

the ministers, as the most blessed Paul declares: "He hath made us able

ministers of the New Testament; not in its letter, but in spirit: for

the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." [1647] In that

testament, however, which is properly called the Old, and was given on

Mount Sinai, only earthly happiness is expressly promised. Accordingly

that land, into which the nation, after being led through the

wilderness, was conducted, is called the land of promise, wherein peace

and royal power, and the gaining of victories over enemies, and an

abundance of children and of fruits of the ground, and gifts of a

similar kind are the promises of the Old Testament. And these, indeed,

are figures of the spiritual blessings which appertain to the New

Testament; but yet the man who lives under God's law with those earthly

blessings for his sanction, is precisely the heir of the Old Testament,

for just such rewards are promised and given to him, according to the

terms of the Old Testament, as are the objects of his desire according

to the condition of the old man. But whatever blessings are there

figuratively set forth as appertaining to the New Testament require the

new man to give them effect. And no doubt the great apostle understood

perfectly well what he was saying, when he described the two testaments

as capable of the allegorical distinction of the bond-woman and the

free,--attributing the children of the flesh to the Old, and to the New

the children of the promise: "They," says he, "which are the children

of the flesh, are not the children of God; but the children of the

promise are counted for the seed." [1648] The children of the flesh,

then, belong to the earthly Jerusalem, which is in bondage with her

children; whereas the children of the promise belong to the Jerusalem

above, the free, the mother of us all, eternal in the heavens. [1649]

Whence we can easily see who they are that appertain to the earthly,

and who to the heavenly kingdom. But then the happy persons, who even

in that early age were by the grace of God taught to understand the

distinction now set forth, were thereby made the children of promise,

and were accounted in the secret purpose of God as heirs of the New

Testament; although they continued with perfect fitness to administer

the Old Testament to the ancient people of God, because it was divinely

appropriated to that people in God's distribution of the times and

seasons.

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[1643] Gal. iv. 21-26.

[1644] Gal. iv. 30.

[1645] Jer. xxxi. 31, 32.

[1646] Dan. vii. 18.

[1647] 2 Cor. iii. 6.

[1648] Rom. ix. 8.

[1649] Gal. iv. 25, 26.

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Chapter 15.--The Same Continued.

How then should there not be a feeling of just disquietude entertained

by the children of promise, children of the free Jerusalem, which is

eternal in the heavens, when they see that by the words of Pelagius the

distinction which has been drawn by Apostolic and catholic authority is

abolished, and Agar is supposed to be by some means on a par with

Sarah? He therefore does injury to the scripture of the Old Testament

with heretical impiety, who with an impious and sacrilegious face

denies that it was inspired by the good, supreme, and very God,--as

Marcion does, as Manich�us does, and other pests of similar opinions.

On this account (that I may put into as brief a space as I can what my

own views are on the subject), as much injury is done to the New

Testament, when it is put on the same level with the Old Testament, as

is inflicted on the Old itself when men deny it to be the work of the

supreme God of goodness. Now, when Pelagius in his answer gave as his

reason for saying that even in the Old Testament there was a promise of

the kingdom of heaven, the testimony of the prophet Daniel, who most

plainly foretold that the saints should receive the kingdom of the Most

High, it was fairly decided that the statement of Pelagius was not

opposed to the catholic faith, although not according to the

distinction which shows that the earthly promises of Mount Sinai are

the proper characteristics of the Old Testament; nor indeed was the

decision an improper one, considering that mode of speech which

designates all the canonical Scriptures which were given to men before

the Lord's coming in the flesh by the title of the "Old Testament." The

kingdom of the Most High is of course none other than the kingdom of

God; otherwise, anybody might boldly contend that the kingdom of God is

one thing, and the kingdom of heaven another.

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Chapter 16 [VI.]--The Sixth Item of the Accusation, and Pelagius'

Reply.

The next objection was to the effect that Pelagius in that same book of

his wrote thus: "A man is able, if he likes, to be without sin;" and

that writing to a certain widow he said, flatteringly: "In thee piety

may find a dwelling-place, such as she finds nowhere else; in thee

righteousness, though a stranger, can find a home; truth, which no one

any longer recognises, can discover an abode and a friend in thee; and

the law of God, which almost everybody despises, may be honoured by

thee alone." And in another sentence he writes to her: "O how happy and

blessed art thou, when that righteousness which we must believe to

flourish only in heaven has found a shelter on earth only in thy

heart!" In another work addressed to her, after reciting the prayer of

our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and teaching her in what manner

saints ought to pray, he says: "He worthily raises his hands to God,

and with a good conscience does he pour out his prayer, who is able to

say, Thou, O Lord, knowest how holy, and harmless, and pure from all

injury and iniquity and violence, are the hands which I stretch out to

Thee; how righteous, and pure, and free from all deceit, are the lips

with which I offer to Thee my supplication, that Thou wouldst have

mercy upon me.'" To all this Pelagius said in answer: "We asserted that

a man could be without sin, and could keep God's commandments if he

wished; for this capacity has been given to him by God. But we never

said that any man could be found who at no time whatever, from infancy

to old age, had committed sin: but that if any person were converted

from his sins, he could by his own labour and God's grace be without

sin; and yet not even thus would he be incapable of change ever

afterwards. As for the other statements which they have made against

us, they are not to be found in our books, nor have we at any time said

such things." Upon hearing this vindication, the synod put this

question to him: "You have denied having ever written such words; are

you therefore ready to anathematize those who do hold these opinions?"

Pelagius answered: "I anathematize them as fools, not as heretics, for

there is no dogma." The bishops then pronounced their judgment in these

words: "Since now Pelagius has with his own mouth anathematized this

vague statement as foolish verbiage, justly declaring in his reply,

That a man is able with God's assistance and grace to be without sin,'

let him now proceed to answer the other heads of accusation against

him."

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Chapter 17.--Examination of the Sixth Charge and Answers.

Well, now, had the judges either the power or the right to condemn

these unrecognised and vague words, when no person on the other side

was present to assert that Pelagius had written the very culpable

sentences which were alleged to have been addressed by him to the

widow? In such a matter, it surely could not be enough to produce a

manuscript, and to read out of it words as his, if there were not also

witnesses forthcoming in case he denied, on the words being read out,

that they ever dropped from his pen. But even here the judges did all

that lay in their power to do, when they asked Pelagius whether he

would anathematize the persons who held such sentiments as he declared

he had never himself propounded either in speech or in writing. And

when he answered that he did anathematize them as fools, what right had

the judges to push the inquiry any further on the matter, in the

absence of Pelagius' opponents?

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Chapter 18.--The Same Continued.

But perhaps the point requires some consideration, whether he was right

in saying that "such as held the opinions in question deserved

anathema, not as heretics, but as fools, since it was no dogma." The

question, when fairly confronted, is no doubt far from being an

unimportant one,--how far a man deserves to be described as a heretic;

on this occasion, however, the judges acted rightly in abstaining from

it altogether. If any one, for example, were to allege that eaglets are

suspended in the talons of the parent bird, and so exposed to the rays

of the sun, and such as wink are flung to the ground as spurious, the

light being in some mysterious way the gauge of their genuine nature,

he is not to be accounted a heretic, if the story happens to be untrue.

[1650] And, since it occurs in the writings of the learned and is very

commonly received as fact, ought it to be considered a foolish thing to

mention it, even though it be not true? much less ought our credit,

which gains for us the name of being trustworthy, to be affected, on

the one hand injuriously if the story be believed by us, or

beneficially if disbelieved. [1651] If, to go a step further in

illustration, any one were from this opinion to contend that there

existed in birds reasonable souls, from the notion that human souls at

intervals passed into them, then indeed we should have to reject from

our mind and ears alike an idea like this as the rankest heresy; and

even if the story about the eagles were true (as there are many curious

facts about bees before our eyes, that are true), we should still have

to consider, and demonstrate, the great difference that exists between

the condition of creatures like these, which are quite irrational,

however surprising in their powers of sensation, and the nature which

is common (not to men and beasts, but) to men and angels. There are, to

be sure, a great many foolish things said by foolish and ignorant

persons, which yet fail to prove them heretics. One might instance the

silly talk so commonly heard about the pursuits of other people, from

persons who have never learned these pursuits,--equally hasty and

untenable whether in the shape of excessive and indiscriminate praise

of those they love, or of blame in the case of those they happen to

dislike. The same remark might be made concerning the usual curent of

human conversation: whenever it does touch on a subject which requires

dogmatic acuracy of statement, but is thrown out at random or suggested

by the passing moment, it is too often pervaded by foolish levity,

whether uttered by the mouth or expressed in writing. Many persons,

indeed, when gently reminded of their reckless gossip, have afterwards

much regretted their conduct; they scarcely recollected what they had

never uttered with a fixed purpose, but had poured forth in a sheer

volley of casual and unconsidered words. It is, unhappily, almost

impossible to be quite clear of such faults. Who is he "that slippeth

not in his tongue," [1652] and "offendeth not in word?" [1653] It,

however, makes all the difference in the world, to what extent, and

from what motive, and whether in fact at all, a man when warned of his

fault corrects it, or obstinately clings to it so as to make a dogma

and settled opinion of that which he had not at first uttered on

purpose, but only in levity. Although, then, it turns out eventually

that every heretic is a fool, it does not follow that every fool must

immediately be named a heretic. The judges were quite right in saying

that Pelagius had anathematized the vague folly under consideration by

its fitting designation for even if it were heresy, there could be no

doubt of its being foolish prattle. Whatever, therefore, it was, they

designated the offence under a general name. But whether the quoted

words had been used with any definitely dogmatic purpose, or only in a

vague and indeterminate sense, and with an unmeaningness which should

be capable of an easy correction, they did not deem it necessary to

discuss on the present occasion, since the man who was on his trial

before them denied that the words were his at all, in whatever sense

they had been employed.

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[1650] It is told by Pliny, Hist. Nat. x. 3 (3), and Lucan, Pharsalia,

ix. 902, etc.

[1651] Creditum, however, is read in both clauses; we should expect non

creditum in one, as one reading has it. [?--W.]

[1652] See Ecclus. xix. 16.

[1653] See Jas. iii. 2.

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Chapter 19.--The Same Continued.

Now it so happened that, while we were reading this defence of Pelagius

in the small paper which we received at first, [1654] there were

present certain holy brethren, who said that they had in their

possession some hortatory or consolatory works which Pelagius had

addressed to a widow lady whose name did not appear, and they advised

us to examine whether the words which he had abjured for his own

occurred anywhere in these books. They were not themselves aware

whether they did or not. The said books were accordingly read through,

and the words in question were actually discovered in them. Moreover,

they who had produced the copy of the book, affirmed that for now

almost four years they had had these books as Pelagius', nor had they

once heard a doubt expressed about his authorship. Considering, then,

from the integrity of these servants of God, which was very well known

to us, how impossible it was for them to use deceit in the matter, the

conclusion seemed inevitable, that Pelagius must be supposed by us to

have rather been the deceiver at his trial before the bishops; unless

we should think it possible that something may have been published,

even for so many years, in his name, although not actually composed by

him; for our informants did not tell us that they had received the

books from Pelagius himself, nor had they ever heard him admit his own

authorship. Now, in my own case, certain of our brethren have told me

that sundry writings have found their way into Spain under my name.

Such persons, indeed, as had read my genuine writings could not

recognise those others as mine; although by other persons my authorship

of them was quite believed.

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[1654] See below, in chap. 57 [xxxi.].

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Chapter 20.--The Same Continued. Pelagius Acknowledges the Doctrine of

Grace in Deceptive Terms.

There can be no doubt that what Pelagius has acknowledged as his own is

as yet very obscure. I suppose, however, that it will become apparent

in the subsequent details of these proceedings. Now he says: "We have

affirmed that a man is able to be without sin, and to keep the

commandments of God if he wishes, inasmuch as God has given him this

ability. But we have not said that any man can be found, who from

infancy to old age has never committed sin; but that if any person were

converted from his sins, he could by his own exertion and God's grace

be without sin; and yet not even thus would he be incapable of change

afterwards." Now it is quite uncertain what he means in these words by

the grace of God; and the judges, catholic as they were, could not

possibly understand by the phrase anything else than the grace which is

so very strongly recommended to us in the apostle's teaching. Now this

is the grace whereby we hope that we can be delivered from the body of

this death through our Lord Jesus Christ, [1655] [VII.] and for the

obtaining of which we pray that we may not be led into temptation.

[1656] This grace is not nature, but that which renders assistance to

frail and corrupted nature. This grace is not the knowledge of the law,

but is that of which the apostle says: "I will not make void the grace

of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in

vain." [1657] Therefore it is not "the letter that killeth, but the

life-giving spirit." [1658] For the knowledge of the law, without the

grace of the Spirit, produces all kinds of concupiscence in man; for,

as the apostle says, "I had not known sin but by the law: I had not

known lust, unless the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin,

taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of

concupiscence." [1659] By saying this, however, he blames not the law;

he rather praises it, for he says afterwards: "The law indeed is holy,

and the commandment holy, and just, and good." [1660] And he goes on to

ask: "Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But

sin, that it might appear sin, wrought death in me by that which is

good." [1661] And, again, he praises the law by saying: "We know that

the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I

do I know not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that

do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that

it is good." [1662] Observe, then, he knows the law, praises it, and

consents to it; for what it commands, that he also wishes; and what it

forbids, and condemns, that he also hates: but for all that, what he

hates, that he actually does. There is in his mind, therefore, a

knowledge of the holy law of God, but still his evil concupiscence is

not cured. He has a good will within him, but still what he does is

evil. Hence it comes to pass that, amidst the mutual struggles of the

two laws within him,--"the law in his members warring against the law

of his mind, and making him captive to the law of sin," [1663] --he

confesses his misery; and exclaims in such words as these: "O wretched

man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death? The grace

of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." [1664]

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[1655] Rom. vii. 24, 25.

[1656] Matt. vi. 13.

[1657] Gal. ii. 21.

[1658] 2 Cor. iii. 6.

[1659] Rom. vii. 7, 8.

[1660] Rom. vii. 12.

[1661] Rom. vii. 13.

[1662] Rom. vii. 14-16.

[1663] Rom. vii. 23.

[1664] Rom. vii. 24, 25.

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Chapter 21 [VIII.]--The Same Continued.

It is not nature, therefore, which, sold as it is under sin and wounded

by the offence, longs for a Redeemer and Saviour; nor is it the

knowledge of the law--through which comes the discovery, not the

expulsion, of sin--which delivers us from the body of this death; but

it is the Lord's good grace through our Lord Jesus Christ. [1665]

Chapter 21 [IX.]--The Same Continued.

This grace is not dying nature, nor the slaying letter, but the

vivifying spirit; for already did he possess nature with freedom of

will, because he said: "To will is present with me." [1666] Nature,

however, in a healthy condition and without a flaw, he did not possess,

for he said: "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth nothing

good." [1667] Already had he the knowledge of God's holy law, for he

said: "I had not known sin but through the law;" [1668] yet for all

that, he did not possess strength and power to practise and fulfil

righteousness, for he complained: "What I would, that do I not; but

what I hate, that do I." [1669] And again, "How to accomplish that

which is good I find not." [1670] Therefore it is not from the liberty

of the human will, nor from the precepts of the law, that there comes

deliverance from the body of this death; for both of these he had

already,--the one in his nature, the other in his learning; but all he

wanted was the help of the grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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[1665] Rom. vii. 25.

[1666] Rom. vii. 18.

[1667] Rom. vii. 18.

[1668] Rom. vii. 7.

[1669] Rom. vii. 15.

[1670] Rom. vii. 18.

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Chapter 22 [X.]--The Same Continued. The Synod Supposed that the Grace

Acknowledged by Pelagius Was that Which Was So Thoroughly Known to the

Church.

This grace, then, which was most completely known in the catholic

Church (as the bishops were well aware), they supposed Pelagius made

confession of, when they heard him say that "a man, when converted from

his sins, is able by his own exertion and the grace of God to be

without sin." For my own part, however, I remembered the treatise which

had been given to me, that I might refute it, by those servants of God,

who had been Pelagius' followers. [1671] They, notwithstanding their

great affection for him, plainly acknowledged that the passage was his;

when, on this question being proposed, because he had already given

offence to very many persons from advancing views against the grace of

God, he most expressly admitted that "what he meant by God's grace was

that, when our nature was created, it received the capacity of not

sinning, because it was created with free will." On account, therefore,

of this treatise, I cannot help feeling still anxious, whilst many of

the brethren who are well acquainted with his discussions, share in my

anxiety, lest under the ambiguity which notoriously characterizes his

words there lies some latent reserve, and lest he should afterwards

tell his followers that it was without prejudice to his own doctrine

that he made any admissions,--discoursing thus: "I no doubt asserted

that a man was able by his own exertion and the grace of God to live

without sin; but you know very well what I mean by grace; and you may

recollect reading that grace is that in which we are created by God

with a free will." Accordingly, while the bishops understood him to

mean the grace by which we have by adoption been made new creatures,

not that by which we were created (for most plainly does Holy Scripture

instruct us in the former sense of grace as the true one), ignorant of

his being a heretic, they acquitted him as a catholic. [1672] I must

say that my suspicion is excited also by this, that in the work which I

answered, he most openly said that "righteous Abel never sinned at

all." [1673] Now, however, he thus expresses himself: "But we did not

say that any man could be found who at no time whatever, from infancy

to old age, has committed sin; but that, if any man were converted from

his sins, he could by his own labour and God's grace be without sin."

[1674] When speaking of righteous Abel, he did not say that after being

converted from his sins he became sinless in a new life, but that he

never committed sin at all. If, then, that book be his, it must of

course be corrected and amended from his answer. For I should be sorry

to say that he was insincere in his more recent statement; lest perhaps

he should say that he had forgotten what he had previously written in

the book we have quoted. Let us therefore direct our view to what

afterwards occurred. Now, from the sequel of these ecclesiastical

proceedings, we can by God's help show that, although Pelagius, as some

suppose, cleared himself in his examination, and was at all events

acquitted by his judges (who were, however, but human beings after

all), that this great heresy, [1675] which we should be most unwilling

to see making further progress or becoming aggravated in guilt, was

undoubtedly itself condemned.

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[1671] Timasius and Jacobus, at whose instance Augustin wrote, and to

whom he addressed his book De Natur� et Grati�.

[1672] The reader may consult the treatise De Natur� et Grati�, chs. 53

and 54, on this opinion of Pelagius.

[1673] See De Natur� et Grati�, xxxvii. (44).

[1674] See above, ch. 16 (vi).

[1675] Hanc talem h�resim.

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Chapter 23 [XI.]--The Seventh Item of the Accusation: the Breviates of

Coelestius Objected to Pelagius.

Then follow sundry statements charged against Pelagius, which are said

to be found among the opinions of his disciple Coelestius: how that

"Adam was created mortal, and would have died whether he had sinned or

not sinned; that Adam's sin injured only himself and not the human

race; that the law no less than the gospel leads us to the kingdom;

that there were sinless men previous to the coming of Christ; that

new-born infants are in the same condition as Adam was before the fall;

that the whole human race does not, on the one hand, die through Adam's

death or transgression, nor, on the other hand, does the whole human

race rise again through the resurrection of Christ." These have been so

objected to, that they are even said to have been, after a full

hearing, condemned at Carthage by your holiness and other bishops

associated with you. [1676] I was not present on that occasion, as you

will recollect; but afterwards, on my arrival at Carthage, I read over

the Acts of the synod, some of which I perfectly well remember, but I

do not know whether all the tenets now mentioned occur among them. But

what matters it if some of them were possibly not mentioned, and so not

included in the condemnation of the synod when it is quite clear that

they deserve condemnation? Sundry other points of error were next

alleged against him, connected with the mention of my own name. [1677]

They had been transmitted to me from Sicily, some of our Catholic

brethren there being perplexed by questions of this kind; and I drew up

a reply to them in a little work addressed to Hilary, [1678] who had

consulted me respecting them in a letter. My answer, in my opinion, was

a sufficient one. These are the errors referred to: "That a man is able

to be without sin if he wishes. That infants, even if they die

unbaptized, have eternal life. That rich men, even if they are

baptized, unless they renounce all, have, whatever good they may seem

to have done, nothing of it reckoned to them; neither can they possess

the kingdom of God."

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[1676] Compare Augustin's work De Peccato Originali, ch. xi. (12).

[1677] See same treatise as before, and same chapter.

[1678] See Augustin's letter to Hilary, in Epist 157.

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Chapter 24.--Pelagius' Answer to the Charges Brought Together Under the

Seventh Item.

The following, as the proceedings testify, was Pelagius' own answer to

these charges against him: "Concerning a man's being able indeed to be

without sin, we have spoken," says he, "already; concerning the fact,

however, that before the Lord's coming there were persons without sin,

we say now that, previous to Christ's advent, some men lived holy and

righteous lives, according to the teaching of the sacred Scriptures.

The rest were not said by me, as even their testimony goes to show, and

for them, I do not feel that I am responsible. But for the satisfaction

of the holy synod, I anathematize those who either now hold, or have

ever held, these opinions." After hearing this answer of his, the synod

said: "With regard to these charges aforesaid, Pelagius has in our

presence given us sufficient and proper satisfaction, by anathematizing

the opinions which were not his." We see, therefore, and maintain that

the most pernicious evils of this heresy have been condemned, not only

by Pelagius, but also by the holy bishops who presided over that

inquiry:--that "Adam was made mortal;" (and, that the meaning of this

statement might be more clearly understood, it was added, "and he would

have died whether he had sinned or not sinned;") that his sin injured

only himself and not the human race; that the law, no less than the

gospel, leads us to the kingdom of heaven; that new born infants are in

the same condition that Adam was before the fall; that the entire human

race does not, on the one hand, die through Adam's death and

transgression, nor, on the other hand, does the whole human race rise

again through the resurrection of Christ; that infants, even if they

die unbaptized, have eternal life; that rich men even if baptized,

unless they renounce and give up all, have, whatever good they may seem

to have done, nothing of it reckoned to them, neither can they possess

the kingdom of God;"--all these opinions, at any rate, were clearly

condemned in that ecclesiastical court,--Pelagius pronouncing the

anathema, and the bishops the interlocutory sentence.

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Chapter 25.--The Pelagians Falsely Pretended that the Eastern Churches

Were on Their Side.

Now, by reason of these questions, and the very contentious assertions

of these tenets, which are everywhere accompanied with heated feelings,

many weak brethren were disturbed. We have accordingly, in the anxiety

of that love which it becomes us to feel towards the Church of Christ

through His grace, and out of regard to Marcellinus of blessed memory

(who was extremely vexed day by day by these disputers, and who asked

my advice by letter), been obliged to write on some of these questions,

and especially on the baptism of infants. On this same subject also I

afterwards, at your request, and assisted by your prayers, delivered an

earnest address, to the best of my ability, in the church of the

Majores, [1679] holding in my hands an epistle of the most glorious

martyr Cyprian, and reading therefrom and applying his words on the

very matter, in order to remove this dangerous error out of the hearts

of sundry persons, who had been persuaded to take up with the opinions

which, as we see, were condemned in these proceedings. These opinions

it has been attempted by their promoters to force upon the minds of

some of the brethren, by threatening, as if from the Eastern Churches,

that unless they adopted the said opinions, they would be formally

condemned by those Churches. Observe, however, that no less than

fourteen bishops of the Eastern Church, [1680] assembled in synod in

the land where the Lord manifested His presence in the days of His

flesh, refused to acquit Pelagius unless he condemned these opinions as

opposed to the Catholic faith. Since, therefore, he was then acquitted

because he anathematized such views, it follows beyond a doubt that the

said opinions were condemned. This, indeed, will appear more clearly

still, and on still stronger evidence, in the sequel.

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[1679] "In the Basilica Majorum." According to another reading, "the

church of Majorinus."

[1680] Augustin mentions their names in his work Contra Julianum, Book

i. ch. v. (19).

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Chapter 26.--The Accusations in the Seventh Item, Which Pelagius

Confessed.

Let us now see what were the two points out of all that were alleged

which Pelagius was unwilling to anathematize, and admitted to be his

own opinions, but to remove their offensive aspect explained in what

sense he held them. "That a man," says he, "is able to be without sin

has been asserted already." Asserted no doubt, and we remember the

assertion quite well; but still it was mitigated, and approved by the

judges, in that God's grace was added, concerning which nothing was

said in the original draft of his doctrine. Touching the second,

however, of these points, we ought to pay careful attention to what he

said in answer to the charge against him. "Concerning the fact,

indeed," says he, "that before the Lord's coming there were persons

without sin, we now again assert that previous to Christ's advent some

men lived holy and righteous lives, according to the teaching of the

sacred Scriptures." He did not dare to say: "We now again assert that

previous to Christ's advent there were persons without sin," although

this had been laid to his charge after the very words of Coelestius.

For he perceived how dangerous such a statement was, and into what

trouble it would bring him. So he reduced the sentence to these

harmless dimensions: "We again assert that before the coming of Christ

there were persons who led holy and righteous lives." Of course there

were: who would deny it? But to say this is a very different thing from

saying that they lived "without sin." Because, indeed, those ancient

worthies lived holy and righteous lives, they could for that very

reason better confess: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive

ourselves, and the truth is not in us." [1681] In the present day,

also, many men live holy and righteous lives; but yet it is no untruth

they utter when in their prayer they say: "Forgive us our debts, even

as we forgive our debtors." [1682] This avowal was accordingly

acceptable to the judges, in the sense in which Pelagius solemnly

declared his belief; but certainly not in the sense which Coelestius,

according to the original charge against him, was said to hold. We must

now treat in detail of the topics which still remain, to the best of

our ability.

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[1681] 1 John i. 8.

[1682] Matt. vi. 12.

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Chapter 27 [XII.]--The Eighth Item in the Accusation.

Pelagius was charged with having said: "That the Church here is without

spot or wrinkle." It was on this point that the Donatists also were

constantly at conflict with us in our conference. We used, in their

case, to lay especial stress on the mixture of bad men with good, like

that of the chaff with the wheat; and we were led to this idea by the

similitude of the threshing-floor. We might apply the same illustration

in answer to our present opponents, unless indeed they would have the

Church consist only of good men, whom they assert to be without any sin

whatever, that so the Church might be without spot or wrinkle. If this

be their meaning, then I repeat the same words as I quoted just now;

for how can they be members of the Church, of whom the voice of a

truthful humility declares, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive

ourselves, and the truth is not in us?" [1683] or how could the Church

offer up that prayer which the Lord taught her to use, "Forgive us our

debts," [1684] if in this world the Church is without a spot or

blemish? In short, they must themselves submit to be strictly

catechised respecting themselves: do they really allow that they have

any sins of their own? If their answer is in the negative, then they

must be plainly told that they are deceiving themselves, and the truth

is not in them. If, however, they shall acknowledge that they do commit

sin, what is this but a confession of their own wrinkle and spot? They

therefore are not members of the Church; because the Church is without

spot and wrinkle, while they have both spot and wrinkle.

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[1683] 1 John i. 8.

[1684] Matt. vi. 12.

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Chapter 28.--Pelagius' Reply to the Eighth Item of Accusation.

But to this objection he replied with a watchful caution such as the

catholic judges no doubt approved. "It has," says he, "been asserted by

me,--but in such a sense that the Church is by the laver cleansed from

every spot and wrinkle, and in this purity the Lord wishes her to

continue." Whereupon the synod said: "Of this also we approve." And who

amongst us denies that in baptism the sins of all men are remitted, and

that all believers come up spotless and pure from the laver of

regeneration? Or what catholic Christian is there who wishes not, as

his Lord also wishes, and as it is meant to be, that the Church should

remain always without spot or wrinkle? For in very deed God is now in

His mercy and truth bringing it about, that His holy Church should be

conducted to that perfect state in which she is to remain without spot

or wrinkle for evermore. But between the laver, where all past stains

and deformities are removed, and the kingdom, where the Church will

remain for ever without any spot or wrinkle, there is this present

intermediate time of prayer, during which her cry must of necessity be:

"Forgive us our debts." Hence arose the objection against them for

saying that "the Church here on earth is without spot or wrinkle;" from

the doubt whether by this opinion they did not boldly prohibit that

prayer whereby the Church in her present baptized state entreats day

and night for herself the forgiveness of her sins. On the subject of

this intervening period between the remission of sins which takes place

in baptism, and the perpetuity of sinlessness which is to be in the

kingdom of heaven, no proceedings ensued with Pelagius, and no decision

was pronounced by the bishops. Only he thought that some brief

indication ought to be given that he had not expressed himself in the

way which the accusation against him seemed to state. As to his saying,

"This has been asserted by me,--but in such a sense," what else did he

mean to convey than the idea that he had not in fact expressed himself

in the same manner as he was supposed to have done by his accusers?

That, however, which induced the judges to say that they were satisfied

with his answer was baptism as the means of being washed from our sins;

and the kingdom of heaven, in which the holy Church, which is now in

process of cleansing, shall continue in a sinless state for ever: this

is clear from the evidence, so far as I can form an opinion.

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Chapter 29 [XIII.]--The Ninth Item of the Accusation; And Pelagius'

Reply.

The next objections were urged out of the book of Coelestius, following

the contents of each several chapter, but rather according to the sense

than the words. These indeed he expatiates on rather fully; they,

however, who presented the indictment against Pelagius said that they

had been unable at the moment to adduce all the words. In the first

chapter, then, of Coelestius' book they alleged that the following was

written: "That we do more than is commanded us in the law and the

gospel." To this Pelagius replied: "This they have set down as my

statement. What we said, however, was in keeping with the apostle's

assertion concerning virginity, of which Paul writes: I have no

commandment of the Lord.'" [1685] Upon this the synod said: "This also

the Church receives." I have read for myself the meaning which

Coelestius gives to this in his book,--for he does not deny that the

book is his. Now he made this statement obviously with the view of

persuading us that we possess through the nature of free will so great

an ability for avoiding sin, that we are able to do more than is

commanded us; for a perpetual virginity is maintained by very many

persons, and this is not commanded; whereas, in order to avoid sin, it

is sufficient to fulfil what is commanded. When the judges, however,

accepted Pelagius' answer, they did not take it to convey the idea that

those persons keep all the commandments of the law and the gospel who

over and above maintain the state of virginity, which is not

commanded,--but only this, that virginity, which is not commanded, is

something more than conjugal chastity, which is commanded; so that to

observe the one is of course more than to keep the other; whereas, at

the same time, neither can be maintained without the grace of God,

inasmuch as the apostle, in speaking of this very subject, says: "But I

would that all men were even as I myself. Every man, however, hath his

proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that."

[1686] And even the Lord Himself, upon the disciples remarking, "If the

case of the man be so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry" (or,

as it may be better expressed in Latin, "it is not expedient to take a

wife"), [1687] said to them: "All men cannot receive this saying, save

they to whom it is given." [1688] This, therefore, is the doctrine

which the bishops of the synod declared to be received by the Church,

that the state of virginity, persevered in to the last, which is not

commanded, is more than the chastity of married life, which is

commanded. In what view Pelagius or Coelestius regarded this subject,

the judges were not aware.

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[1685] 1 Cor. vii. 25.

[1686] 1 Cor. vii. 7.

[1687] This "better expression," "non expedit ducere," Augustin

substitutes for the reading "non expedit nubere," as applied to a

woman's taking a husband. The original, gamesai [not gameisthai],

justifies Augustin's preference.

[1688] Matt. xix. 10, 11.

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Chapter 30 [XIV.]--The Tenth Item in the Accusation. The More Prominent

Points of Coelestius' Work Continued.

After this we find objected against Pelagius some other points of

Coelestius' teaching,--prominent ones, and undoubtedly worthy of

condemnation; such, indeed, as would certainly have involved Pelagius

in condemnation, if he had not anathematized them in the synod. Under

his third head Coelestius was alleged to have written: "That God's

grace and assistance is not given for single actions, but is imparted

in the freedom of the will, or in the law and in doctrine." And again:

"That God's grace is given in proportion to our deserts; because, were

He to give it to sinful persons, He would seem to be unrighteous." And

from these words he inferred that "therefore grace itself has been

placed in my will, according as I have been either worthy or unworthy

of it. For if we do all things by grace, then whenever we are overcome

by sin, it is not we who are overcome, but God's grace, which wanted by

all means to help us, but was not able." And once more he says: "If,

when we conquer sin, it is by the grace of God; then it is He who is in

fault whenever we are conquered by sin, because He was either

altogether unable or unwilling to keep us safe." To these charges

Pelagius replied: "Whether these are really the opinions of Coelestius

or not, is the concern of those who say that they are. For my own part,

indeed, I never entertained such views; on the contrary, I anathematize

every one who does entertain them." Then the synod said: "This holy

synod accepts you for your condemnation of these impious words." Now

certainly there can be no mistake, in regard to these opinions, either

as to the clear way in which Pelagius pronounced on them his anathema,

or as to the absolute terms in which the bishops condemned them.

Whether Pelagius or Coelestius, or both of them, or neither of them, or

other persons with them or in their name, have ever held or still hold

these sentiments,--may be doubtful or obscure; but nevertheless by this

judgment of the bishops it has been declared plainly enough that they

have been condemned, and that Pelagius would have been condemned along

with them, unless he had himself condemned them too. Now, after this

trial, it is certain that whenever we enter on a controversy touching

opinions of this kind, we only discuss an already condemned heresy.

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Chapter 31.--Remarks on the Tenth Item.

I shall make my next remark with greater satisfaction. In a former

section I expressed a fear [1689] that, when Pelagius said that "a man

was able by the help of God's grace to live without sin," he perhaps

meant by the term "grace" the capability possessed by nature as created

by God with a free will, as it is understood in that book which I

received as his and to which I replied; [1690] and that by these means

he was deceiving the judges, who were ignorant of the circumstances.

Now, however, since he anathematizes those persons who hold that "God's

grace and assistance is not given for single actions, but is imparted

in the freedom of the will, or in the law and in doctrine," it is quite

evident that he really means the grace which is preached in the Church

of Christ, and is conferred by the ministration of the Holy Ghost for

the purpose of helping us in our single actions, whence it is that we

pray for needful and suitable grace that we enter not into any

temptation. Nor, again, have I any longer a fear that, when he said,

"No man can be without sin unless he has acquired a knowledge of the

law," and added this explanation of his words, that "he posited in the

knowledge of the law, help towards the avoidance of sin," [1691] he at

all meant the said knowledge to be considered as tantamount to the

grace of God; for, observe, he anathematizes such as hold this opinion.

See, too, how he refuses to hold our natural free will, or the law and

doctrine, as equivalent to that grace of God which helps us through our

single actions. What else then is left to him but to understand that

grace which the apostle tells us is given by "the supply of the

Spirit?" [1692] and concerning which the Lord said: "Take no thought

how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour

what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of

your Father which speaketh in you." [1693] Nor, again, need I be under

any apprehension that, when he asserted, "All men are ruled by their

own will," and afterwards explained that he had made that statement "in

the interest of the freedom of our will, of which God is the helper

whenever it makes choice of good," [1694] that he perhaps here also

held God's helping grace as synonymous with our natural free will and

the teaching of the law. For inasmuch as he rightly anathematized the

persons who hold that God's grace or assistance is not given for single

actions, but lies in the gift of free will, or in the law and doctrine,

it follows, of course, that God's grace or assistance is given us for

single actions,--free will, or the law and the doctrine, being left out

of consideration; and thus through all the single actions of our life,

when we act rightly, we are ruled and directed by God; nor is our

prayer a useless one, wherein we say: "Order my steps according to Thy

word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me." [1695]

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[1689] See above, (20).

[1690] He refers to Pelagius' work which Augustin received from Jacobus

and Timasius, aud against which he wrote his treatise De Natur� et

Grati�.

[1691] See above, (2).

[1692] Phil. i. 19.

[1693] Matt. x. 19, 20.

[1694] See above, (5).

[1695] Ps. cxix. 133.

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Chapter 32.--The Eleventh Item of the Accusation.

But what comes afterwards again fills me with anxiety. On its being

objected to him, from the fifth chapter of Coelestius' book, that "they

say that every individual has the ability to possess all powers and

graces, thus taking away that diversity of graces,' which the apostle

teaches," Pelagius replied: "We have certainly said so much; but yet

they have laid against us a malignant and blundering charge. We do not

take away the diversity of graces; but we declare that God gives to the

person, who has proved himself worthy to receive them, all graces, even

as He conferred them on the Apostle Paul." Hereupon the Synod said:

"You accordingly do yourself hold the doctrine of the Church touching

the gift of the graces, which are collectively possessed by the

apostle." Here some one may say, "Why then is he anxious? Do you on

your side deny that all the powers and graces were combined in the

apostle?" For my own part, indeed, if all those are to be understood

which the apostle has himself mentioned together in one passage,--as, I

suppose, the bishops understood Pelagius to mean when they approved of

his answer, and pronounced it to be in keeping with the sense of the

Church,--then I do not doubt that the apostle had them all; for he

says: "And God hath set some in the Church, first, apostles;

secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles; then

gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." [1696]

What then? shall we say that the Apostle Paul did not possess all these

gifts himself? Who would be bold enough to assert this? The very fact

that he was an apostle showed, of course, that he possessed the grace

of the apostolate. He possessed also that of prophecy; for was not that

a prophecy of his in which he says: "In the last times some shall

depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines

of devils?" [1697] He was, moreover, "the teacher of the Gentiles in

faith and verity." [1698] He performed miracles also and cures; for he

shook off from his hand, unhurt, the biting viper; [1699] and the

cripple stood upright on his feet at the apostle's word, and his

strength was at once restored. [1700] It is not clear what he means by

helps, for the term is of very wide application; but who can say that

he was wanting even in this grace, when through his labours such helps

were manifestly afforded towards the salvation of mankind? Then as to

his possessing the grace of "government," what could be more excellent

than his administration, when the Lord at that time governed so many

churches by his personal agency, and governs them still in our day

through his epistles? And in respect of the "diversities of tongues,"

what tongues could have been wanting to him, when he says himself: "I

thank my God that I speak with tongues more than you all?" [1701] It

being thus inevitable to suppose that not one of these was wanting to

the Apostle Paul, the judges approved of Pelagius' answer, wherein he

said "that all graces were conferred upon him." But there are other

graces in addition to these which are not mentioned here. For it is not

to be supposed, however greatly the Apostle Paul excelled others as a

member of Christ's body, that the very Head itself of the entire body

did not receive more and ampler graces still, whether in His flesh or

His soul as man; for such a created nature did the Word of God assume

as His own into the unity of His Person, that He might be our Head, and

we His body. And in very deed, if all gifts could be in each member, it

would be evident that the similitude, which is used to illustrate this

subject, of the several members of our body is inapplicable; for some

things are common to the members in general, such as life and health,

whilst other things are peculiar to the separate members, since the ear

has no perception of colours, nor the eye of voices. Hence it is

written: "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? if the

whole were hearing, where were the smelling?" [1702] Now this of course

is not said as if it were impossible for God to impart to the ear the

sense of seeing, or to the eye the function of hearing. However, what

He does in Christ's body, which is the Church, and what the apostle

meant by diversity of graces [1703] as if through the different

members, there might be gifts proper even to every one separately, is

clearly known. Why, too, and on what ground they who raised the

objection were so unwilling to have taken away all difference in

graces, why, moreover, the bishops of the synod were able to approve of

the answer given by Pelagius in deference to the Apostle Paul, in whom

we admit the combination of all those graces which he mentioned in the

one particular passage, is by this time clear also.

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[1696] 1 Cor. xii. 28.

[1697] 1 Tim. iv. 1.

[1698] 1 Tim. ii. 7.

[1699] Acts xxviii. 5.

[1700] Acts xiv. 8, 9.

[1701] 1 Cor. xiv. 18.

[1702] 1 Cor. xii. 17.

[1703] Another reading has Ecclesiarum, instead of gratiarum; q.d.

"difference in churches."

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Chapter 33.--Discussion of the Eleventh Item Continued.

What, then, is the reason why, as I said just now, I felt anxious on

the subject of this head of his doctrine? It is occasioned by what

Pelagius says in these words: "That God gives to the man who has proved

himself worthy to receive them, all graces, even as He conferred them

on the Apostle Paul." Now, I should not have felt any anxiety about

this answer of Pelagius, if it were not closely connected with the

cause which we are bound to guard with the utmost care--even that God's

grace may never be attacked, while we are silent or dissembling in

respect of so great an evil. As, therefore, he does not say, that God

gives to whom He will, but that "God gives to the man who has proved

himself worthy to receive them, all these graces," I could not help

being suspicious, when I read such words. For the very name of grace,

and the thing that is meant by it, is taken away, if it is not bestowed

gratuitously, but he only receives it who is worthy of it. Will anybody

say that I do the apostle wrong, because I do not admit him to have

been worthy of grace? Nay, I should indeed rather do him wrong, and

bring on myself a punishment, if I refused to believe what he himself

says. Well, now, has he not pointedly so defined grace as to show that

it is so called because it is bestowed gratuitously? These are his own

very words: "And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise

grace is no more grace." [1704] In accordance with this, he says again:

"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of

debt." [1705] Whosoever, therefore, is worthy, to him it is due; and if

it is thus due to him, it ceases to be grace; for grace is given, but a

debt is paid. Grace, therefore, is given to those who are unworthy,

that a debt may be paid to them when they become worthy. He, however,

who has bestowed on the unworthy the gifts which they possessed not

before, does Himself take care that they shall have whatever things He

means to recompense to them when they become worthy.

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[1704] Rom. xi. 6.

[1705] Rom. iv. 4.

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Chapter 34.--The Same Continued. On the Works of Unbelievers; Faith is

the Initial Principle from Which Good Works Have Their Beginning; Faith

is the Gift of God's Grace.

He will perhaps say to this: "It was not because of his works, but in

consequence of his faith, that I said the apostle was worthy of having

all those great graces bestowed upon him. His faith deserved this

distinction, but not his works, which were not previously good." Well,

then, are we to suppose that faith does not work? Surely faith does

work in a very real way, for it "worketh by love." [1706] Preach up,

however, as much as you like, the works of unbelieving men, we still

know how true and invincible is the statement of this same apostle:

"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." [1707] The very reason, indeed,

why he so often declares that righteousness is imputed to us, not out

of our works, but our faith, whereas faith rather works through love,

is that no man should think that he arrives at faith itself through the

merit of his works; for it is faith which is the beginning whence good

works first proceed; since (as has already been stated) whatsoever

comes not from faith is sin. Accordingly, it is said to the Church, in

the Song of Songs: "Thou shalt come and pass by from the beginning of

faith." [1708] Although, therefore, faith procures the grace of

producing good works, we certainly do not deserve by any faith that we

should have faith itself; but, in its bestowal upon us, in order that

we may follow the Lord by its help, "His mercy has prevented us."

[1709] Was it we ourselves that gave it to us? Did we ourselves make

ourselves faithful? I must by all means say here, emphatically: "It is

He that hath made us, and not we ourselves." [1710] And indeed nothing

else than this is pressed upon us in the apostle's teaching, when he

says: "For I declare, through the grace that is given unto me, to every

man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he

ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to

every man the measure of faith." [1711] Whence, too, arises the

well-known challenge: "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

[1712] inasmuch as we have received even that which is the spring from

which everything we have of good in our actions takes its beginning.

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[1706] Gal. v. 6.

[1707] Rom. xiv. 23.

[1708] Cant. iv. 8.

[1709] Ps. lix. 10.

[1710] Ps. c. 3.

[1711] Rom. xii. 3.

[1712] 1 Cor. iv. 7.

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Chapter 35.--The Same Continued.

"What, then, is the meaning of that which the same apostle says: I have

fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the

Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day;' [1713] if these

are not recompenses paid to the worthy, but gifts, bestowed on the

unworthy?" He who says this, does not consider that the crown could not

have been given to the man who is worthy of it, unless grace had been

first bestowed on him whilst unworthy of it. He says indeed: "I have

fought a good fight;" [1714] but then he also says: "Thanks be to God,

who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord." [1715] He

says too: "I have finished my course;" but he says again: "It is not of

him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth

mercy." [1716] He says, moreover: "I have kept the faith;" but then it

is he too who says again: "I know whom I have believed, and am

persuaded that He is able to keep my deposit against that day"--that

is, "my commendation;" for some copies have not the word depositum, but

commendatum, which yields a plainer sense. [1717] Now, what do we

commend to God's keeping, except the things which we pray Him to

preserve for us, and amongst these our very faith? For what else did

the Lord procure for the Apostle Peter by His prayer for him, [1718] of

which He said, "I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith fail

not," [1719] than that God would preserve his faith, that it should not

fail by giving way to temptation? Therefore, blessed Paul, thou great

preacher of grace, I will say it without fear of any man (for who will

be less angry with me for so saying than thyself, who hast told us what

to say, and taught us what to teach?)--I will, I repeat, say it, and

fear no man for the assertion: Their own crown is recompensed to their

merits; but thy merits are the gifts of God!

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[1713] 2 Tim. iv. 7.

[1714] 2 Tim. iv. 7.

[1715] 1 Cor. xv. 57.

[1716] Rom. ix. 16.

[1717] 2 Tim. i. 12. St. Paul's phrase, ten paratheken mou, has been

taken in two senses, as (1) what God had entrusted to him; and (2) what

the apostle had entrusted to God's keeping. St. Augustin, it will be

seen, here takes the latter sense.

[1718] There seems to be a corruption in the text here: "Quid aliud

apostolo Petro Dominus commendavit orando." Another reading inserts de

before the word apostolo. Our version is rather of the apparent sense

than of the words of the passage.

[1719] Luke xxii. 32.

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Chapter 36.--The Same Continued. The Monk Pelagius. Grace is Conferred

on the Unworthy.

His due reward, therefore, is recompensed to the apostle as worthy of

it; but still it was grace which bestowed on him the apostleship

itself, which was not his due, and of which he was not worthy. Shall I

be sorry for having said this? God forbid! For under his own testimony

shall I find a ready protection from such reproach; nor will any man

charge me with audacity, unless he be himself audacious enough to

charge the apostle with mendacity. He frankly says, nay he protests,

that he commends the gifts of God within himself, so that he glories

not in himself at all, but in the Lord; [1720] he not only declares

that he possessed no good deserts in himself why he should be made an

apostle, but he even mentions his own demerits, in order to manifest

and preach the grace of God. "I am not meet," says he, "to be called an

apostle;" [1721] and what else does this mean than "I am not

worthy"--as indeed several Latin copies read the phrase. Now this, to

be sure, is the very gist of our question; for undoubtedly in this

grace of apostleship all those graces are contained. For it was neither

convenient nor right that an apostle should not possess the gift of

prophecy, nor be a teacher, nor be illustrious for miracles and the

gifts of healings, nor furnish needful helps, nor provide governments

over the churches, nor excel in diversities of tongues. All these

functions the one name of apostleship embraces. Let us, therefore,

consult the man himself, nay listen wholly to him. Let us say to him:

"Holy Apostle Paul, the monk Pelagius declares that thou wast worthy to

receive all the graces of thine apostleship. What dost thou say

thyself?" He answers: "I am not worthy to be called an apostle." Shall

I then, under pretence of honouring Paul, in a matter concerning Paul,

dare to believe Pelagius in preference to Paul? I will not do so; for

if I did, I should only prove to be more onerous to myself than

honouring to him. [1722] Let us hear also why he is not worthy to be

called an apostle: "Because," says he, "I persecuted the Church of

God." [1723] Now, were we to follow up the idea here expressed, who

would not judge that he rather deserved from Christ condemnation,

instead of an apostolic call? Who could so love the preacher as not to

loathe the persecutor? Well, therefore, and truly does he say of

himself: "I am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted

the Church of God." As thou wroughtest then such evil, how camest thou

to earn such good? Let all men hear his answer: "But by the grace of

God, I am what I am." Is there, then, no other way in which grace is

commended, than because it is conferred on an unworthy recipient? "And

His grace," he adds, "which was bestowed on me was not in vain." [1724]

He says this as a lesson to others also, to show the freedom of the

will, when he says: "We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you

also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." [1725] Whence

however does he derive his proof, that "His grace bestowed on himself

was not in vain," except from the fact which he goes on to mention:

"But I laboured more abundantly than they all?" [1726] So it seems he

did not labour in order to receive grace, but he received grace in

order that he might labour. And thus, when unworthy, he gratuitously

received grace, whereby he might become worthy to receive the due

reward. Not that he ventured to claim even his labour for himself; for,

after saying: "I laboured more abundantly than they all," he at once

subjoined: "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." [1727]

O mighty teacher, confessor, and preacher of grace! What meaneth this:

"I laboured more, yet not I?" Where the will exalted itself ever so

little, there piety was instantly on the watch, and humility trembled,

because weakness recognised itself.

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[1720] 1 Cor. i. 31.

[1721] 1 Cor. xv. 9.

[1722] This is a poor imitation of Augustin's playful words: "Me potius

onerabo quam illum honorabo."

[1723] 1 Cor. xv. 9.

[1724] 1 Cor. xv. 10.

[1725] 2 Cor. vi. 1.

[1726] 1 Cor. xv. 10.

[1727] 1 Cor. xv. 10.

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Chapter 37--The Same Continued. John, Bishop of Jerusalem, and His

Examination.

With great propriety, as the proceedings show, did John, the holy

overseer of the Church of Jerusalem, employ the authority of this same

passage of the apostle, as he himself told our brethren the bishops who

were his assessors at that trial, on their asking him what proceedings

had taken place before him previous to the trial. [1728] He told them

that "on the occasion in question, whilst some were whispering, and

remarking on Pelagius' statement, that without God's grace man was able

to attain perfection' (that is, as he had previously expressed it, man

was able to be without sin'), he censured the statement, and reminded

them besides, that even the Apostle Paul, after so many labours--not

indeed in his own strength, but by the grace of God--said: I laboured

more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God that was

with me;' [1729] and again: It is not of him that willeth, nor of him

that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy;' [1730] and again: Except

the Lord build the house, they labour but in vain who build it.' [1731]

And," he added, "we quoted several other like passages out of the Holy

Scriptures. When, however, they did not receive the quotations which we

made out of the Holy Scriptures, but continued their murmuring noise,

Pelagius said: This is what I also believe; let him be anathema, who

declares that a man is able, without God's help, to arrive at the

perfection of all virtues.'"

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[1728] In a conference held at Jerusalem at the end of July in the year

415, as described by Orosius in his Apology.

[1729] 1 Cor. xv. 10.

[1730] Rom. ix. 16.

[1731] Ps. cxxvii. 1.

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Chapter 38 [XV.]--The Same Continued.

Bishop John narrated all this in the hearing of Pelagius; but he, of

course, might respectfully say: "Your holiness is in error; you do not

accurately remember the facts. It was not in reference to the passages

of Scripture which you have quoted that I uttered the words: This is

what I also believe.' Because this is not my opinion of them. I do not

understand them to say, that God's grace so co-operates with man, that

his abstinence from sin is due, not to him that willeth, nor to him

that runneth, but to God that showeth mercy.'" [1732]

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[1732] Rom. ix. 16.

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Chapter 39 [XVI.]--The Same Continued. Heros and Lazarus; Orosius.

Now there are some expositions of Paul's Epistle to the Romans which

are said to have been written by Pelagius himself, [1733] --in which he

asserts, that the passage: "Not of him that willeth, nor of him that

runneth, but of God that showeth mercy," was "not said in Paul's own

person; but that he therein employed the language of questioning and

refutation, as if such a statement ought not to be made." No safe

conclusion, therefore, can be drawn, although the bishop John plainly

acknowledged the passage in question as conveying the mind of the

apostle, and mentioned it for the very purpose of hindering Pelagius

from thinking that any man can avoid sin without God's grace, and

declared that Pelagius said in answer: "This is what I also believe,"

and did not, upon hearing all this, repudiate his admission by

replying: "This is not my belief." He ought, indeed, either to deny

altogether, or unhesitatingly to correct and amend this perverse

exposition, in which he would have it, that the apostle must not be

regarded as entertaining the sentiment, [1734] but rather as refuting

it. Now, whatever Bishop John said of our brethren who were

absent--whether our brother bishops Heros and Lazarus, or the presbyter

Orosius, or any others whose names are not there registered, [1735] --I

am sure that he did not mean it to operate to their prejudice. For, had

they been present, they might possibly (I am far from saying it

absolutely) have convicted him of untruth; at any rate they might

perhaps have reminded him of something he had forgotten, or something

in which he might have been deceived by the Latin interpreter--not, to

be sure, for the purpose of misleading him by untruth, but at least,

owing to some difficulty occasioned by a foreign language, only

imperfectly understood; especially as the question was not treated in

the Proceedings, [1736] which were drawn up for the useful purpose of

preventing deceit on the part of evil men, and of preserving a record

to assist the memory of good men. If, however, any man shall be

disposed by this mention of our brethren to introduce any question or

doubt on the subject, and summon them before the Episcopal judgment,

they will not be wanting to themselves, as occasion shall serve. Why

need we here pursue the point, when not even the judges themselves,

after the narrative of our brother bishop, were inclined to pronounce

any definite sentence in consequence of it?

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[1733] See the treatise De Peccatorum Meritis, iii. 1.

[1734] Rom. ix. 16.

[1735] Avitus, perhaps, Passerius, and Dominus ex duce, whose names do

not occur in the Acts of the Synod of Diospolis, but are mentioned by

Orosius Apol. 3.

[1736] Augustin here refers to the Proceedings of the conference at

Jerusalem before its bishop John, which sat previous to the Council of

Diospolis. See above, 37 (xiv.).

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Chapter 40 [XVII.]--The Same Continued.

Since, then, Pelagius was present when these passages of the Scriptures

were discussed, and by his silence acknowledged having said that he

entertained the same view of their meaning, how happens it, that, after

reconsidering the apostle's testimony, as he had just done, and finding

that he said: "I am not meet to be called an apostle, because I

persecuted the Church of God; but by the grace of God I am what I am,"

[1737] he did not perceive that it was improper for him to say,

respecting the question of the abundance of the graces which the said

apostle received, that he had shown himself "worthy to receive them,"

when the apostle himself not only confessed, but added a reason to

prove, that he was unworthy of them--and by this very fact set forth

grace as grace indeed? If he could not for some reason or other

consider or recollect the narrative of his holiness the bishop John,

which he had heard some time before, he might surely have respected his

own very recent answer at the synod, and remembered how he

anathematized, but a short while before, the opinions which had been

alleged against him out of Coelestius. Now among these it was objected

to him that Coelestius had said: "That the grace of God is bestowed

according to our merits." If, then, Pelagius truthfully anathematized

this, why does he say that all those graces were conferred on the

apostle because he deserved them? Is the phrase "worthy to receive" of

different meaning from the expression "to receive according to merit"?

Can he by any disputatious subtlety show that a man is worthy who has

no merit? But neither Coelestius, nor any other, all of whose opinions

he anathematized, has any intention to allow him to throw clouds over

the phrase, and to conceal himself behind them. He presses home the

matter, and plainly says: "And this grace has been placed in my will,

according as I have been either worthy or unworthy of it." If, then, a

statement, wherein it is declared that "God's grace is given in

proportion to our deserts, to such as are worthy," [1738] was rightly

and truly condemned by Pelagius, how could his heart permit him to

think, or his mouth to utter, such a sentence as this: "We say that God

gives to the person who has proved himself worthy to receive them, all

graces?" [1739] Who that carefully considers all this can help feeling

some anxiety about his answer or defence?

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[1737] 1 Cor. xv. 9, 10.

[1738] See above, 30 (xiv.).

[1739] See above, 32.

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Chapter 41.--Augustin Indulgently Shows that the Judges Acted

Incautiously in Their Official Conduct of the Case of Pelagius.

Why, then (some one will say), did the judges approve of this? I

confess that I hardly even now understand why they did. It is, however,

not to be wondered at, if some brief word or phrase too easily escaped

their attention and ear; or if, because they thought it capable of

being somehow interpreted in a correct sense, from seeming to have from

the accused himself such clear confessions of truth on the subject,

they decided it to be hardly worth while to excite a discussion about a

word. The same feeling might have occurred to ourselves also, if we had

sat with them at the trial. For if, instead of the term worthy, the

word predestinated had been used, or some such word, my mind would

certainly not have entertained any doubt, much less have been

disquieted by it; and yet if it were asserted, that he who is justified

by the election of grace is called worthy, through no antecedent merits

of good indeed, but by destination, just as he is called "elect," it

would be really difficult to determine whether he might be so

designated at all, or at least without some offence to an intelligent

view of the subject.

As for myself, indeed, I might readily pass on from the discussion on

this word, were it not that the treatise which called forth my reply,

and in which he says that there is no God's grace at all except our own

nature gratuitously created [1740] with free will, made me suspicious

and anxious about the actual meaning of Pelagius--whether he had

procured the introduction of the term into the argument without any

accurate intention as to its sense, or else as a carefully drawn

dogmatic expression. The last remaining statements had such an effect

on the judges, that they deemed them worthy of condemnation, without

waiting for Pelagius' answer.

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[1740] We have preferred the reading gratis creatam to the obscure

gratiam creaturam.

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Chapter 42 [XVIII.]--The Twelfth Item in the Accusation. Other Heads of

Coelestius' Doctrine Abjured by Pelagius.

For it was objected that in the sixth chapter of Coelestius' work there

was laid down this position: "Men cannot be called sons of God, unless

they have become entirely free from all sin." It follows from this

statement, that not even the Apostle Paul is a child of God, since he

said: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already

perfect." [1741] In the seventh chapter he makes this statement:

"Forgetfulness and ignorance have no connection with sin, as they do

not happen through the will, but through necessity;" although David

says: "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my sins of ignorance;"

[1742] although too, in the law, sacrifices are offered for ignorance,

as if for sin. [1743] In his tenth chapter he says: "Our will is free,

if it needs the help of God; inasmuch as every one in the possession of

his proper will has either something to do or to abstain from doing."

In the twelfth he says: "Our victory comes not from God's help, but

from our own free will." And this is a conclusion which he was said to

draw in the following terms: "The victory is ours, seeing that we took

up arms of our own will; just as, on the other hand, being conquered is

our own, since it was of our own will that we neglected to arm

ourselves." And, after quoting the phrase of the Apostle Peter,

"partakers of the divine nature," [1744] he is said to have made out of

it this argument: "Now if our spirit or soul is unable to be without

sin, then even God is subject to sin, since this part of Him, that is

to say, the soul, is exposed to sin." In his thirteenth chapter he

says: "That pardon is not given to penitents according to the grace and

mercy of God, but according to their own merits and effort, since

through repentance they have been worthy of mercy."

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[1741] Phil. iii. 12.

[1742] Ps. xxv. 7.

[1743] See Lev. iv.

[1744] 2 Pet. i. 4.

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Chapter 43 [XIX.]--The Answer of the Monk Pelagius and His Profession

of Faith.

After all these sentences were read out, the synod said: "What says the

monk Pelagius to all these heads of opinion which have been read in his

presence? For this holy synod condemns the whole, as does also God's

Holy Catholic Church." Pelagius answered: "I say again, that these

opinions, even according to their own testimony, are not mine; nor for

them, as I have already said, ought I to be held responsible. The

opinions which I have confessed to be my own, I maintain are sound;

those, however, which I have said are not my own, I reject according to

the judgment of this holy synod, pronouncing anathema on every man who

opposes and gainsays the doctrines of the Holy Catholic Church. For I

believe in the Trinity of the one substance, and I hold all things in

accordance with the teaching of the Holy Catholic Church. If indeed any

man entertains opinions different from her, let him be anathema."

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Chapter 44 [XX.]--The Acquittal of Pelagius.

The synod said: "Now since we have received satisfaction on the points

which have come before us touching the monk Pelagius, who has been

present; since, too, he gives his consent to the pious doctrines, and

even anathematizes everything that is contrary to the Church's faith,

we confess him to belong to the communion of the Catholic Church."

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Chapter 45 [XXI.]--Pelagius' Acquittal Becomes Suspected.

If these are the proceedings by which Pelagius' friends rejoice that he

was exculpated, we, on our part,--since he certainly took much pains to

prove that we were well affected towards him, by going so far as to

produce even our private letters to him, and reading them at the

trial,--undoubtedly wish and desire his salvation in Christ; but as

regards his exculpation, which is rather believed than clearly shown,

we ought not to be in a hurry to exult. When I say this, indeed, I do

not charge the judges either with negligence or connivance, or with

consciously holding unsound doctrine--which they most certainly would

be the very last to entertain. But although by their sentence Pelagius

is held by those who are on terms of fullest and closest intimacy with

him to have been deservedly acquitted, with the approval and

commendation of his judges, he certainly does not appear to me to have

been cleared of the charges brought against him. They conducted his

trial as of one whom they knew nothing of, especially in the absence of

those who had prepared the indictment against him, and were quite

unable to examine him with diligence and care; but, in spite of this

inability, they completely destroyed the heresy itself, as even the

defenders of his perverseness must allow, if they only follow the

judgment through its particulars. As for those persons, however, who

well know what Pelagius has been in the habit of teaching, or who have

had to oppose his contentious efforts, or those who, to their joy, have

escaped from his erroneous doctrine, how can they possibly help

suspecting him, when they read the affected confession, wherein he

acknowledges past errors, but so expresses himself as if he had never

entertained any other opinion than those which he stated in his replies

to the satisfaction of the judges?

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Chapter 46 [XXII.]--How Pelagius Became Known to Augustin; Coelestius

Condemned at Carthage.

Now, that I may especially refer to my own relation to him, I first

became acquainted with Pelagius' name, along with great praise of him,

at a distance, and when he was living at Rome. Afterwards reports began

to reach us, that he disputed against the grace of God. This caused me

much pain, for I could not refuse to believe the statements of my

informants; but yet I was desirous of ascertaining information on the

matter either from himself or from some treatise of his, that, in case

I should have to discuss the question with him, it should be on grounds

which he could not disown. On his arrival, however, in Africa, he was

in my absence kindly received on our coast of Hippo, where, as I found

from our brethren, nothing whatever of this kind was heard from him;

because he left earlier than was expected. On a subsequent occasion,

indeed, I caught a glimpse of him, once or twice, to the best of my

recollection, when I was very much occupied in preparing for the

conference which we were to hold with the heretical Donatists; but he

hastened away across the sea. Meanwhile the doctrines connected with

his name were warmly maintained, and passed from mouth to mouth, among

his reputed followers--to such an extent that Coelestius found his way

before an ecclesiastical tribunal, and reported opinions well suited to

his perverse character. We thought it would be a better way of

proceeding against them, if, without mentioning any names of

individuals, the errors themselves were met and refuted; and the men

might thus be brought to a right mind by the fear of a condemnation

from the Church rather than be punished by the actual condemnation. And

so both by books and by popular discussions we ceased not to oppose the

evil doctrines in question.

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Chapter 47 [XXIII.]--Pelagius' Book, Which Was Sent by Timasius and

Jacobus to Augustin, Was Answered by the Latter in His Work "On Nature

and Grace."

But when there was actually placed in my hands, by those faithful

servants of God and honourable men, Timasius and Jacobus, the treatise

in which Pelagius dealt with the question of God's grace, it became

very evident to me--too evident, indeed, to admit of any further

doubt--how hostile to salvation by Christ was his poisonous perversion

of the truth. He treated the subject in the shape of an objection

started, as if by an opponent, in his own terms against himself; for he

was already suffering a good deal of obloquy from his opinions on the

question, which he now appeared to solve for himself in no other way

than by simply describing the grace of God as nature created with a

free will, occasionally combining therewith either the help of the law,

or even the remission of sins; although these additional admissions

were not plainly made, but only sparingly suggested by him. And yet,

even under these circumstances, I refrained from inserting Pelagius'

name in my work, wherein I refuted this book of his; for I still

thought that I should render a prompter assistance to the truth if I

continued to preserve a friendly relation to him, and so to spare his

personal feelings, while at the same time I showed no mercy, as I was

bound not to show it, to the productions of his pen. Hence, I must say,

I now feel some annoyance, that in this trial he somewhere said: "I

anathematize those who hold these opinions, or have at any time held

them." He might have been contented with saying, "Those who hold these

opinions," which we should have regarded in the light of a

self-censure; but when he went on to say, "Or have at any time held

them," in the first place, how could he dare to condemn so unjustly

those harmless persons who no longer hold the errors, which they had

learnt either from others, or actually from himself? And, in the second

place, who among all those persons that were aware of the fact of his

not only having held the opinions in question, but of his having taught

them, could help suspecting, and not unreasonably, that he must have

acted insincerely in condemning those who now hold those opinions,

seeing that he did not hesitate to condemn in the same strain and at

the same moment those also who had at any time previously held them,

when they would be sure to remember that they had no less a person than

himself as their instructor in these errors? There are, for instance,

such persons as Timasius and Jacobus, to say nothing of any others. How

can he with unblushing face look at them, his dear friends (who have

never relinquished their love of him) and his former disciples? These

are the persons to whom I addressed the work in which I replied to the

statements of his book. I think I ought not to pass over in silence the

style and tone which they observed towards me in their correspondence,

and I have here added a letter of theirs as a sample.

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Chapter 48 [XXIV.]--A Letter Written by Timasius and Jacobus to

Augustin on Receiving His Treatise "On Nature and Grace."

"To his lordship, the truly blessed and deservedly venerable father,

Bishop Augustin, Timasius and Jacobus send greeting in the Lord. We

have been so greatly refreshed and strengthened by the grace of God,

which your word has ministered to us, my lord, our truly blessed and

justly venerated father, that we may with the utmost sincerity and

propriety say, He sent His word and healed them.' [1745] We have found,

indeed, that your holiness has so thoroughly sifted the contents of his

little book as to astonish us with the answers with which even the

slightest points of his error have been confronted, whether it be on

matters which every Christian ought to rebut, loathe, and avoid, or on

those in which he is not with sufficient certainty found to have

erred,--although even in these he has, with incredible subtlety,

suggested his belief that God's grace should be kept out of sight.

[1746] There is, however, one consideration which affects us under so

great a benefit,--that this most illustrious gift of the grace of God

has, however slowly, so fully shone out upon us. If, indeed, it has

happened that some are removed from the influence of this clearest

light of truth, whose blindness required its illumination, yet even to

them, we doubt not, the same grace will find its steady way, however

late, by the merciful favour of that God who will have all men to be

saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.' [1747] As for

ourselves, indeed, thanks to that loving spirit which is in you, we

have, in consequence of your instruction, some time since thrown off

our subjection to his errors; but we still have even now cause for

continued gratitude in the fact that, as we have been informed, the

false opinions which we formerly believed are now becoming apparent to

others--a way of escape opening out to them in the extremely precious

discourse of your holiness." Then, in another hand: "May the mercy of

our God keep your blessedness in safety, and mindful of us, for His

eternal glory." [1748]

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[1745] Ps. cvii. 20.

[1746] Supprimendam.

[1747] 1 Tim. ii. 4.

[1748] See Augustin's Epist. 168.

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Chapter 49 [XXV.]--Pelagius' Behaviour Contrasted with that of the

Writers of the Letter.

If now that man, [1749] too, were to confess that he had once been

implicated in this error as a person possessed, but that he now

anathematized all that hold these opinions, whoever should withhold his

congratulation from him, now that he was in possession of the way of

truth, would surely surrender all the bowels of love. As the case,

however, now stands, he has not only not acknowledged his liberation

from his pestilential error; but, as if that were a small thing, he has

gone on to anathematize men who have reached that freedom, who love him

so well that they would fain desire his own emancipation. Amongst these

are those very men who have expressed their good-will towards him in

the letter, which they forwarded to me. For he it was whom they had

chiefly in view when they said how much they were affected at the fact

of my having at last written that work. "If, indeed, it has happened,"

they say, "that some are removed from the influence of this clearest

light of truth, whose blindness required its illumination, yet even to

them," they go on to remark, "we doubt not, the self-same grace will

find its way, by the merciful favour of God." Any name, or names, even

they, too, thought it desirable as yet to suppress, in order that, if

friendship still lived on, the error of the friends might the more

surely die.

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[1749] Pelagius.

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Chapter 50.--Pelagius Has No Good Reason to Be Annoyed If His Name Be

at Last Used in the Controversy, and He Be Expressly Refuted.

But now if Pelagius thinks of God, if he is not ungrateful for His

mercy in having brought him before this tribunal of the bishops, that

thus he might be saved from the hardihood of afterwards defending these

anathematized opinions, and be at once led to acknowledge them as

deserving of abhorrence and rejection, he will be more thankful to us

for our book, in which, by mentioning his name, we shall open the wound

in order to cure it, than for one in which we were afraid to cause him

pain, and, in fact, only produced irritation,--a result which causes us

regret. Should he, however, feel angry with us, let him reflect how

unfair such anger is; and, in order to subdue it, let him ask God to

give him that grace which, in this trial, he has confessed to be

necessary for each one of our actions, that so by His assistance he may

gain a real victory. For of what use to him are all those great

laudations contained in the letters of the bishops, which he thought

fit to be mentioned, and even to be read and quoted in his favour,--as

if all those persons who heard his strong and, to some extent, earnest

exhortations to goodness of life could not have easily discovered how

perverse were the opinions which he was entertaining?

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Chapter 51 [XXVI.]--The Nature of Augustin's Letter to Pelagius.

For my own part, indeed, in my letter which he produced, I not only

abstained from all praises of him, but I even exhorted him, with as

much earnestness as I could, short of actually mooting the question, to

cultivate right views about the grace of God. In my salutation I called

him "lord" [1750] --a title which, in our epistolary style, we usually

apply even to some persons who are not Christians,--and this without

untruth, inasmuch as we do, in a certain sense, owe to all such persons

a service, which is yet freedom, to help them in obtaining the

salvation which is in Christ. I added the epithet "most beloved;" and

as I now call him by this term, so shall I continue to do so, even if

he be angry with me; because, if I ceased to retain my love towards

him, because of his feeling the anger, I should only injure myself

rather than him. I, moreover, styled him "most longed for," because I

greatly longed to have a conversation with him in person; for I had

already heard that he was endeavouring publicly to oppose grace,

whereby we are justified, whenever any mention was made of it. The

brief contents of the letter itself indeed show all this; for, after

thanking him for the pleasure he gave me by the information of his own

health and that of his friends (whose bodily health we are bound of

course to wish for, however much we may desire their amendment in other

respects), I at once expressed the hope that the Lord would recompense

him with such blessings as do not appertain to physical welfare, but

which he used to think, and probably still thinks, consist solely in

the freedom of the will and his own power,--at the same time, and for

this reason, wishing him "eternal life." Then again, remembering the

many good and kind wishes he had expressed for me in his letter, which

I was answering, I went on to beg of him, too, that he would pray for

me, that the Lord would indeed make me such a man as he believed me to

be already; that so I might gently remind him, against the opinion he

was himself entertaining, that the very righteousness which he had

thought worthy to be praised in me was "not of him that willeth, nor of

him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." [1751] This is the

substance of that short letter of mine, and such was my purpose when I

dictated it. This is a copy of it:

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[1750] This term corresponds somewhat to our Sir; but Augustin here

refers to its more expressive meaning of Master, or Lord.

[1751] Rom. ix. 16.

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Chapter 52 [XXVII. And XXVIII.]--The Text of the Letter.

"To my most beloved lord, and most longed-for brother Pelagius,

Augustin sends greeting in the Lord. I thank you very much for the

pleasure you have kindly afforded me by your letter, and for informing

me of your good health. May the Lord requite you with blessings, and

may you ever enjoy them, and live with Him for evermore in all

eternity, my most beloved lord, and most longed-for brother. For my own

part, indeed, although I do not admit your high encomiums of me, which

the letter of your Benignity [1752] conveys, I yet cannot be insensible

of the benevolent view you entertain towards my poor deserts; at the

same time requesting you to pray for me, that the Lord would make me

such a man as you suppose me to be already." Then, in another hand, it

follows: "Be mindful of us; may you be safe, and find favour with the

Lord, my most beloved lord, and most longed-for brother."

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[1752] Tu� Benignitatis Epistola is more than "your kind letter."

"Benignitas" is a complimentary abstract title addressed to the

correspondent.

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Chapter 53 [XXIX.]--Pelagius' Use of Recommendations.

As to that which I placed in the postscript,--that he might "find

favour with the Lord,"--I intimated that this lay rather in His grace

than in man's sole will; for I did not make it the subject either of

exhortation, or of precept, or of instruction, but simply of my wish.

But just in the same way as I should, if I had exhorted or enjoined, or

even instructed him, simply have shown that all this appertained to

free will, without, however, derogating from the grace of God; so in

like manner, when I expressed the matter in the way of a wish, I

asserted no doubt the grace of God, but at the same time I did not

quench the liberty of the will. Wherefore, then, did he produce this

letter at the trial? If he had only from the beginning entertained

views in accordance with it, very likely he would not have been at all

summoned before the bishops by the brethren, who, with all their

kindness of disposition, could yet not help being offended with his

perverse contentiousness. Now, however, as I have given on my part an

account of this letter of mine, so would they, whose epistles he

quoted, explain theirs also, if it were necessary;--they would tell us

either what they thought, or what they were ignorant of, or with what

purpose they wrote to him. Pelagius, therefore, may boast to his

heart's content of the friendship of holy men, he may read their

letters recounting his praises, he may produce whatever synodal acts he

pleases to attest his own acquittal,--there still stands against him

the fact, proved by the testimony of competent witnesses, that he has

inserted in his books statements which are opposed to that grace of God

whereby we are called and justified; and unless he shall, after true

confession, anathematize these statements, and then go on to contradict

them both in his writings and discussions, he will certainly seem to

all those who have a fuller knowledge of him to have laboured in vain

in his attempt to set himself right.

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Chapter 54 [XXX.]--On the Letter of Pelagius, in Which He Boasts that

His Errors Had Been Approved by Fourteen Bishops.

For I will not be silent as to the transactions which took place after

this trial, and which rather augment the suspicion against him. A

certain epistle found its way into our hands, which was ascribed to

Pelagius himself, writing to a friend of his, a presbyter, who had

kindly admonished him (as appears from the same epistle) not to allow

any one to separate himself from the body of the Church on his account.

Among the other contents of this document, which it would be both

tedious and unnecessary to quote here, Pelagius says: "By the sentence

of fourteen bishops our statement was received with approbation, in

which we affirmed that a man is able to be without sin, and easily to

keep the commandments of God, if he wishes.' This sentence," says he,

"has filled the mouths of the gainsayers with confusion, and has

separated asunder the entire set which was conspiring together for

evil." Whether, indeed, this epistle was really written by Pelagius, or

was composed by somebody in his name, who can fail to see, after what

manner this error claims to have achieved a victory, even in the

judicial proceedings where it was refuted and condemned? Now, he has

adduced the words we have just quoted according to the form in which

they occur in his book of "Chapters," as it is called, not in the shape

in which they were objected to him at his trial, and even repeated by

him in his answer. For even his accusers, through some unaccountable

inaccuracy, left out a word in their indictment, concerning which there

is no small controversy. They made him say, that "a man is able to be

without sin, if he wishes; and, if he wishes, to keep the commandments

of God." There is nothing said here about this being "easily" done.

Afterwards, when he gave his answer, he spake thus: "We said, that a

man is able to be without sin, and to keep the commandments of God, if

he wishes;" he did not then say, "easily keep," but only "keep." So in

another place, amongst the statements about which Hilary consulted me,

and I gave him my views, it was objected to Pelagius that he had said,

"A man is able, if he wishes, to live without sin." To this he himself

responded, "That a man is able to be without sin has been said above."

Now, on this occasion, we do not find on the part either of those who

brought the objection or of him who rebutted it, that the word "easily"

was used at all. Then, again, in the narrative of the holy Bishop John,

which we have partly quoted above, [1753] he says, "When they were

importunate and exclaimed, He is a heretic, because he says, It is true

that a man is able, if he only will, to live without sin;' and then,

when we questioned him on this point, he answered, I did not say that

man's nature has received the power of being impeccable,--but I said,

whosoever is willing, in the pursuit of his own salvation, to labour

and struggle to abstain from sinning and to walk in the commandments of

God, receives the ability to do so from God.' Then, whilst some were

whispering, and remarking on the statement of Pelagius, that without

God's grace man was able to attain perfection,' I censured the

statement, and reminded them, besides, that even the Apostle Paul,

after so many labours,--not, indeed, in his own strength, but by the

grace of God,--said, I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not

I, but the grace of God that was with me.'" [1754] And so on, as I have

already mentioned.

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[1753] In 37 [XIV.]

[1754] 1 Cor. xv. 10.

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Chapter 55.--Pelagius' Letter Discussed.

What, then, is the meaning of those vaunting words of theirs in this

epistle, wherein they boast of having induced the fourteen bishops who

sat in that trial to believe not merely that a man has ability but that

he has "facility" to abstain from sinning, according to the position

laid down in the "Chapters" of this same Pelagius,--when, in the draft

of the proceedings, notwithstanding the frequent repetition of the

general charge and full consideration bestowed on it, this is nowhere

found? How, indeed, can this word fail to contradict the very defence

and answer which Pelagius made; since the Bishop John asserted that

Pelagius put in this answer in his presence, that "he wished it to be

understood that the man who was willing to labour and agonize for his

salvation was able to avoid sin," while Pelagius himself, at this time

engaged in a formal inquiry and conducting his defence, [1755] said,

that "it was by his own labour and the grace of God that a man is able

to be without sin?" Now, is a thing easy when labour is required to

effect it? For I suppose that every man would agree with us in the

opinion, that wherever there is labour there cannot be facility. And

yet a carnal epistle of windiness and inflation flies forth, and,

outrunning in speed the tardy record of the proceedings, gets first

into men's hands; so as to assert that fourteen bishops in the East

have determined, not only "that a man is able to be without sin, and to

keep God's commandments," but "easily to keep." Nor is God's assistance

once named: it is merely said, "If he wishes;" so that, of course, as

nothing is affirmed of the divine grace, for which the earnest fight

was made, it remains that the only thing one reads of in this epistle

is the unhappy and self-deceiving--because represented as

victorious--human pride. As if the Bishop John, indeed, had not

expressly declared that he censured this statement, and that, by the

help of three inspired texts of Scripture, [1756] he had, as if by

thunderbolts, struck to the ground the gigantic mountains of such

presumption which they had piled up against the still over-towering

heights of heavenly grace; or as if again those other bishops who were

John's assessors could have borne with Pelagius, either in mind or even

in ear, when he pronounced these words: "We said that a man is able to

be without sin and to keep the commandments of God, if he wishes,"

unless he had gone on at once to say: "For the ability to do this God

has given to him" (for they were unaware that he was speaking of

nature, and not of that grace which they had learnt from the teaching

of the apostle); and had afterwards added this qualification: "We never

said, however, that any man could be found, who at no time whatever

from his infancy to his old age had committed sin, but that if any

person were converted from his sins, he could by his own exertion and

the grace of God be without sin." Now, by the very fact that in their

sentence they used these words, "he has answered correctly, that a man

can, when he has the assistance and grace of God, be without sin;'"

what else did they fear than that, if he denied this, he would be doing

a manifest wrong not to man's ability, but to God's grace? It has

indeed not been defined when a man may become without sin; it has only

been judicially settled, that this result can only be reached by the

assisting grace of God; it has not, I say, been defined whether a man,

whilst he is in this flesh which lusts against the Spirit, ever has

been, or now is, or ever can be, by his present use of reason and free

will, either in the full society of man or in monastic solitude, in

such a state as to be beyond the necessity of offering up the prayer,

not in behalf of others, but for himself personally: "Forgive us our

debts;" [1757] or whether this gift shall be consummated at the time

when "we shall be like Him, when we shall see Him as He is," [1758]

--when it shall be said, not by those that are fighting: "I see another

law in my members, warring against the law of my mind," [1759] but by

those that are triumphing: "O death, where is thy victory? O death,

where is thy sting?" [1760] Now, this is perhaps hardly a question

which ought to be discussed between catholics and heretics, but only

among catholics with a view to a peaceful settlement. [1761]

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[1755] Ch. 16. At the synod of Diospolis. The proceedings before John,

bishop of Jerusalem, were not duly registered. See above, 39.

[1756] See above, 37.

[1757] Matt. vi. 12.

[1758] 1 John iii. 2.

[1759] Rom. vii. 23.

[1760] 1 Cor. xv. 55.

[1761] This point, however, was definitely settled a year or two

afterwards, at a council held in Carthage. (See its Canons 6-8.) See

also above, the Preface to the treatise On the Perfection of Man's

Righteousness.

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Chapter 56 [XXXI.]--Is Pelagius Sincere?

How, then, can it be believed that Pelagius (if indeed this epistle is

his) could have been sincere, when he acknowledged the grace of God,

which is not nature with its free will, nor the knowledge of the law,

nor simply the forgiveness of sins, but a something which is necessary

to each of our actions; or could have sincerely anathematized everybody

who entertained the contrary opinion:--seeing that in his epistle he

set forth even the ease wherewith a man can avoid sinning (concerning

which no question had arisen at this trial) just as if the judges had

come to an agreement to receive even this word, and said nothing about

the grace of God, by the confession and subsequent addition of which he

escaped the penalty of condemnation by the Church?

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Chapter 57 [XXXII.]--Fraudulent Practices Pursued by Pelagius in His

Report of the Proceedings in Palestine, in the Paper Wherein He

Defended Himself to Augustin.

There is yet another point which I must not pass over in silence. In

the paper containing his defence which he sent to me by a friend of

ours, one Charus, a citizen of Hippo, but a deacon in the Eastern

Church, he has made a statement which is different from what is

contained in the Proceedings of the Bishops. Now, these Proceedings, as

regards their contents, are of a higher and firmer tone, and more

straightforward in defending the catholic verity in opposition to this

heretical pestilence. For, when I read this paper of his, previous to

receiving a copy of the Proceedings, I was not aware that he had made

use of those words which he had used at the trial, when he was present

for himself; they are few, and there is not much discrepancy, and they

do not occasion me much anxiety. [XXXIII.] But I could not help feeling

annoyance that he can appear to have defended sundry sentences of

Coelestius, which, from the Proceedings, it is clear enough that he

anathematized. Now, some of these he disavowed for himself, simply

remarking, that "he was not in any way responsible for them." In his

paper, however, he refused to anathematize these same opinions, which

are to this effect: "That Adam was created mortal, and that he would

have died whether he had sinned or not sinned. That Adam's sin injured

only himself, and not the human race. That the law, no less than the

gospel, leads us to the kingdom. That new-born infants are in the same

condition that Adam was before he fell. That, on the one hand, the

entire human race does not die owing to Adam's death and transgression;

nor, on the other hand, does the whole human race rise again through

the resurrection of Christ. That infants, even if they die unbaptized,

have eternal life. That rich men, even if they are baptized, unless

they renounce and give up all, have, whatever good they may seem to

have done, nothing of it reckoned to them; neither shall they possess

the kingdom of heaven." Now, in his paper, the answer which he gives to

all this is: "All these statements have not been made by me, even on

their own testimony, nor do I hold myself responsible for them." In the

Proceedings, however, he expressed himself as follows on these points:

"They have not been made by me, as even their testimony shows, and for

them I do not feel that I am at all responsible. But yet, for the

satisfaction of the holy synod, I anathematize those who either now

hold, or have ever held, them." Now, why did he not express himself

thus in his paper also? It would not, I suppose, have cost much ink, or

writing, or delay; nor have occupied much of the paper itself, if he

had done this. Who, however, can help believing that there is a purpose

in all this, to pass off this paper in all directions as an abridgment

of the Episcopal Proceedings. In consequence of which, men might think

that his right still to maintain any of these opinions which he pleased

had not been taken away,--on the ground that they had been simply laid

to his charge but had not received his approbation, nor yet had been

anathematized and condemned by him.

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Chapter 58.--The Same Continued.

He has, moreover, in this same paper, huddled together afterwards many

of the points which were objected against him out of the "Chapters," of

Coelestius' book; nor has he kept distinct, at the intervals which

separate them in the Proceedings, the two answers in which he

anathematized these very heads; but has substituted one general reply

for them all. This, I should have supposed, had been done for the sake

of brevity, had I not perceived that he had a very special object in

the arrangement which disturbs us. For thus has he closed this answer:

"I say again, that these opinions, even according to their own

testimony, are not mine; nor, as I have already said, am I to be held

responsible for them. The opinions which I have confessed to be my own,

I maintain are sound and correct; those, however, which I have said are

not my own, I reject according to the judgment of the holy Church,

pronouncing anathema on every man that opposes and gainsays the

doctrines of the holy and catholic Church; and likewise on those who by

inventing false opinions have excited odium against us." This last

paragraph the Proceedings do not contain; it has, however, no bearing

on the matter which causes us anxiety. By all means let them have his

anathema who have excited odium against him by their invention of false

opinions. But, when first I read, "Those opinions, however, which I

have said are not my own, I reject in accordance with the judgment of

the holy Church," being ignorant that any judgment had been arrived at

on the point by the Church, since there is here nothing said about it,

and I had not then read the Proceedings, I really thought that nothing

else was meant than that he promised that he would entertain the same

view about the "Chapters" as the Church, which had not yet determined

the question, might some day decide respecting them; and that he was

ready to reject the opinions which the Church had not yet indeed

rejected, but might one day have occasion to reject; and that this,

too, was the purport of what he further said: "Pronouncing anathema on

every man that opposes and gainsays the doctrines of the holy catholic

Church." But in fact, as the Proceedings testify, a judgment of the

Church had already been pronounced on these subjects by the fourteen

bishops; and it was in accordance with this judgment that he professed

to reject all these opinions, and to pronounce his anathema against

those persons who, by reason of the said opinions, were contravening

the judgment which had already, as the Proceedings show, been actually

settled. For already had the judges asked: "What says the monk Pelagius

to all these heads of opinion which have been read in his presence? For

this holy synod condemns them, as does also God's holy catholic

Church." Now, they who know nothing of all this, and only read this

paper of his, are led to suppose that some one or other of these

opinions may lawfully be maintained, as if they had not been determined

to be contrary to catholic doctrine, and as if Pelagius had declared

himself to be ready to hold the same sentiments concerning them which

the Church had not as yet determined, but might have to determine. He

has not, therefore, expressed himself in this paper, to which we have

so often referred, straightforwardly enough for us to discover the

fact, of which we find a voucher in the Proceedings, that all those

dogmas by means of which this heresy has been stealing along and

growing strong with contentious audacity, have been condemned by

fourteen bishops presiding in an ecclesiastical synod! Now, if he was

afraid that this fact would become known, as is the case, he has more

reason for self-correction than for resentment at the vigilance with

which we are watching the controversy to the best of our ability,

however late. If, however, it is untrue that he had any such fears, and

we are only indulging in a suspicion which is natural to man, let him

forgive us; but, at the same time, let him continue to oppose and

resist the opinions which were rejected by him with anathemas in the

proceedings before the bishops, when he was on his defence; for if he

now shows any leniency to them, he would seem not only to have believed

these opinions formerly, but to be cherishing them still.

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Chapter 59 [XXXIV.]--Although Pelagius Was Acquitted, His Heresy Was

Condemned.

Now, with respect to this treatise of mine, which perhaps is not

unreasonably lengthy, considering the importance and extent of its

subject, I have wished to inscribe it to your Reverence, in order that,

if it be not displeasing to your mind, it may become known to such

persons as I have thought may stand in need of it under the

recommendation of your authority, which carries so much more weight

than our own poor industry. Thus it may avail to crush the vain and

contentious thoughts of those persons who suppose that, because

Pelagius was acquited, those Eastern bishops who pronounced the

judgment approved of those dogmas which are beginning to shed very

pernicious influences against the Christian faith, and that grace of

God whereby we are called and justified. These the Christian verity

never ceases to condemn, as indeed it condemned them even by the

authoritative sentence of the fourteen bishops; nor would it, on the

occasion in question, have hesitated to condemn Pelagius too, unless he

had anathematized the heretical opinions with which he was charged. But

now, while we render to this man the respect of brotherly affection

(and we have all along expressed with all sincerity our anxiety for him

and interest in him), let us observe, with as much brevity as is

consistent with accuracy of observation, that, notwithstanding the

undoubted fact of his having been acquitted by a human verdict, the

heresy itself has ever been held worthy of condemnation by divine

judgment, and has actually been condemned by the sentence of these

fourteen bishops of the Eastern Church.

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Chapter 60 [XXXV.]--The Synod's Condemnation of His Doctrines.

This is the concluding clause of their judgment. The synod said: "Now

forasmuch as we have received satisfaction in these inquiries from the

monk Pelagius, who has been present, who yields assent to godly

doctrines, and rejects and anathematizes those which are contrary to

the Church, we confess him still to belong to the communion of the

catholic Church." Now, there are two facts concerning the monk Pelagius

here contained with entire perspicuity in this brief statement of the

holy bishops who judged him: one, that "he yields assent to godly

doctrines;" the other, that "he rejects and anathematizes those which

are contrary to the Church." On account of these two concessions,

Pelagius was pronounced to be "in the communion of the catholic

Church." Let us, in pursuit of our inquiry, briefly recapitulate the

entire facts, in order to discover what were the words he used which

made those two points so clear, as far as men were able at the moment

to form a judgment as to what were manifest points. For among the

allegations which were made against him, he is said to have rejected

and anathematized, as "contrary," all the statements which in his

answer he denied were his. Let us, then, summarize the whole case as

far as we can.

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Chapter 61.--History of the Pelagian Heresy. The Pelagian Heresy Was

Raised by Sundry Persons Who Affected the Monastic State.

Since it was necessary that the Apostle Paul's prediction should be

accomplished,--"There must be also heresies among you, that they which

are approved may be made manifest among you," [1762] --after the older

heresies, there has been just now introduced, not by bishops or

presbyters or any rank of the clergy, but by certain would-be monks, a

heresy which disputes, under colour of defending free will, against the

grace of God which we have through our Lord Jesus Christ; and

endeavours to overthrow the foundation of the Christian faith of which

it is written, "By one man, death, and by one man the resurrection of

the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made

alive;" [1763] and denies God's help in our actions, by affirming that,

"in order to avoid sin and to fulfil righteousness, human nature can be

sufficient, seeing that it has been created with free will; and that

God's grace lies in the fact that we have been so created as to be able

to do this by the will, and in the further fact that God has given to

us the assistance of His law and commandments, and also in that He

forgives their past sins when men turn to Him;" that "in these things

alone is God's grace to be regarded as consisting, not in the help He

gives to us for each of our actions,"--"seeing that a man can be

without sin, and keep God's commandments easily if he wishes."

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[1762] 1 Cor. xi. 19.

[1763] 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.

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Chapter 62.--The History Continued. Coelestius Condemned at Carthage by

Episcopal Judgment. Pelagius Acquitted by Bishops in Palestine, in

Consequence of His Deceptive Answers; But Yet His Heresy Was Condemned

by Them.

After this heresy had deceived a great many persons, and was disturbing

the brethren whom it had failed to deceive, one Coelestius, who

entertained these sentiments, was brought up for trial before the

Church of Carthage, and was condemned by a sentence of the bishops.

[1764] Then, a few years afterwards, Pelagius, who was said to have

been this man's instructor, having been accused of holding his heresy,

found also his way before an episcopal tribunal. [1765] The indictment

was prepared against him by the Gallican bishops, Heros and Lazarus,

who were, however, not present at the proceedings, and were excused

from attendance owing to the illness of one of them. After all the

charges were duly recited, and Pelagius had met them by his answers,

the fourteen bishops of the province of Palestine pronounced him, in

accordance with his answers, free from the perversity of this heresy;

while yet without hesitation condemning the heresy itself. They

approved indeed of his answer to the objections, that "a man is

assisted by a knowledge of the law, towards not sinning; even as it is

written, He hath given them a law for a help;'" [1766] but yet they

disapproved of this knowledge of the law being that grace of God

concerning which the Scripture says: "Who shall deliver me from the

body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

[1767] Nor did Pelagius say absolutely: "All men are ruled by their own

will," as if God did not rule them; for he said, when questioned on

this point: "This I stated in the interest of the freedom of our will;

God is its helper, whenever it makes choice of good. Man, however, when

sinning, is himself in fault, as being under the direction of his free

will." [1768] They approved, moreover, of his statement, that "in the

day of judgment no forbearance will be shown to the ungodly and

sinners, but they will be punished in everlasting fires;" because in

his defence he said, "that he had made such an assertion in accordance

with the gospel, in which it is written concerning sinners, These shall

go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.'"

[1769] But he did not say, all sinners are reserved for eternal

punishment, for then he would evidently have run counter to the

apostle, who distinctly states that some of them will be saved, "yet so

as by fire." [1770] When also Pelagius said that "the kingdom of heaven

was promised even in the Old Testament," they approved of the

statement, on the ground that he supported himself by the testimony of

the prophet Daniel, who thus wrote: "The saints shall take the kingdom

of the Most High." [1771] They understood him, in this statement of

his, to mean by the term "Old Testament," not simply the Testament

which was made on Mount Sinai, but the entire body of the canonical

Scriptures which had been given previous to the coming of the Lord. His

allegation, however, that "a man is able to be without sin, if he

wishes," was not approved by the bishops in the sense which he had

evidently meant it to bear in his book [1772] --as if this was solely

in a man's power by free will (for it was contended that he must have

meant no less than this by his saying: "if he wishes"),--but only in

the sense which he actually gave to the passage on the present occasion

in his answer; in the very sense, indeed, in which the episcopal judges

mentioned the subject in their own interlocution with especial brevity

and clearness, that a man is able to be without sin with the help and

grace of God. But still it was left undetermined when the saints were

to attain to this state of perfection,--whether in the body of this

death, or when death shall be swallowed up in victory.

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[1764] This trial was held at Carthage, before the Bishop Aurelius (to

whom Augustin dedicated the present treatise), at the beginning of the

year 412, as appears from the letter to Innocentius among Augustin's

Epistles, 175, Nos. 1 and 6.

[1765] This happened in the year 415, in the month of December, at

Diospolis.

[1766] Isa. viii. 20. See above, 2.

[1767] Rom. vii. 24, 25.

[1768] See above, 5.

[1769] Matt. xxv. 46. See above, 9.

[1770] 1 Cor. iii. 15.

[1771] Dan. vii. 18. See above, 13.

[1772] See above, 16.

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Chapter 63.--The Same Continued. The Dogmas of Coelestius Laid to the

Charge of Pelagius, as His Master, and Condemned.

Of the opinions which Coelestius has said or written, and which were

objected against Pelagius, on the ground that they were the dogmas of

his disciple, he acknowledged some as entertained also by himself; but,

in his vindication, he said that he held them in a different sense from

that which was alleged in the indictment. One of these opinions was

thus stated: "Before the advent of Christ some men lived holy and

righteous lives." [1773] Coelestius, however, was stated to have said

that "they lived sinless lives." Again, it was objected that Coelestius

declared "the Church to be without spot and wrinkle." [1774] Pelagius,

however, said in his reply, "that he had made such an assertion, but as

meaning that the Church is by the laver cleansed from every spot and

wrinkle, and that in this purity the Lord would have her continue."

Respecting that statement of Coelestius: "That we do more than is

commanded us in the law and the gospel," Pelagius urged in his own

vindication, [1775] that "he spoke concerning virginity," of which Paul

says: "I have no commandment of the Lord." [1776] Another objection

alleged that Coelestius had maintained that "every individual has the

ability to possess all powers and graces," thus annulling that

"diversity of gifts" which, the apostle sets forth. [1777] Pelagius,

however, answered, that "he did not annul the diversity of gifts, but

declared that God gives to the man who has proved himself worthy to

receive them, all graces, even as He gave the Apostle Paul."

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[1773] See above, 26.

[1774] See above, 27.

[1775] See above, 29.

[1776] 1 Cor. vii. 25.

[1777] See above, 32.

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Chapter 64.--How the Bishops Cleared Pelagius of Those Charges.

These four dogmas, thus connected with the name of Coelestius, were

therefore not approved by the bishops in their judgment, in the sense

in which Coelestius was said to have set them forth but in the sense

which Pelagius gave to them in his reply. For they saw clearly enough,

that it is one thing to be without sin, and another thing to live

holily and righteously, as Scripture testifies that some lived even

before the coming of Christ. And that although the Church here on earth

is not without spot or wrinkle, she is yet both cleansed from every

spot and wrinkle by the laver of regeneration, and in this state the

Lord would have her continue. And continue she certainly will, for

without doubt she shall reign without spot or wrinkle in an everlasting

felicity. And that the perpetual virginity, which is not commanded, is

unquestionably more than the purity of wedded life, which is

commanded--although virginity is persevered in by many persons, who,

notwithstanding, are not without sin. And that all those graces which

he enumerates in a certain passage were possessed by the Apostle Paul;

and yet, for all that, either they could quite understand, in regard to

his having been worthy to receive them, that the merit was not

according to his works, but rather, in some way, according to

predestination (for the apostle says himself: "I am not meet to be

called an apostle;") [1778] or else their attention was not arrested by

the sense which Pelagius gave to the word, as he himself viewed it.

Such are the points on which the bishops pronounced the agreement of

Pelagius with the doctrines of godly truth.

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[1778] 1 Cor. xv. 9.

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Chapter 65.--Recapitulation of What Pelagius Condemned.

Let us now, by a like recapitulation, bestow a little more attention on

those subjects which the bishops said he rejected and condemned as

"contrary;" for herein especially lies the whole of that heresy. We

will entirely pass over the strange terms of adulation which he is

reported to have put into writing in praise of a certain widow; these

he denied having ever inserted in any of his writings, or ever given

utterance to, and he anathematized all who held the opinions in

question not indeed as heretics, but as fools. [1779] The following are

the wild thickets of this heresy, which we are sorry to see shooting

out buds, nay growing into trees, day by day:--"That [1780] Adam was

made mortal, and would have died whether he had sinned or not; that

Adam's sin injured only himself, and not the human race; that the law

no less than the gospel leads to the kingdom; that new-born infants are

in the same condition that Adam was before the transgression; that the

whole human race does not, on the one hand, die in consequence of

Adam's death and transgression, nor, on the other hand, does the whole

human race rise again through the resurrection of Christ; that infants,

even if they die unbaptized, have eternal life; that rich men, even if

baptized, unless they renounce and surrender everything, have, whatever

good they may seem to have done, nothing of it reckoned to them,

neither can they possess the kingdom of God; that [1781] God's grace

and assistance are not given for single actions, but reside in free

will, and in the law and teaching; that the grace of God is bestowed

according to our merits, so that grace really lies in the will of man,

as he makes himself worthy or unworthy of it; that men cannot be called

children of God, unless they have become entirely free from sin; that

forgetfulness and ignorance do not come under sin, as they do not

happen through the will, but of necessity; that there is no free will,

if it needs the help of God, inasmuch as every one has his proper will

either to do something, or to abstain from doing it; that our victory

comes not from God's help, but from free will; that from what Peter

says, that we are partakers of the divine nature,' [1782] it must

follow that the soul has the power of being without sin, just in the

way that God Himself has." For this have I read in the eleventh chapter

of the book, which bears no title of its author, but is commonly

reported to be the work of Coelestius,--expressed in these words: "Now

how can anybody," asks the author, "become a partaker of the thing from

the condition and power of which he is distinctly declared to be a

stranger?" Accordingly, the brethren who prepared these objections

understood him to have said that man's soul and God are of the same

nature, and to have asserted that the soul is part of God; for thus

they understood that he meant that the soul partakes of the same

condition and power as God. Moreover in the last of the objections laid

to his charge there occurs this position: "That pardon is not given to

penitents according to the grace and mercy of God, but according to

their own merits and effort, since through repentance they have been

worthy of mercy." Now all these dogmas, and the arguments which were

advanced in support of them, were repudiated and anathematized by

Pelagius, and his conduct herein was approved of by the judges, who

accordingly pronounced that he had, by his rejection and anathema,

condemned the opinions in question as contrary to the faith. Let us

therefore rejoice--whatever may be the circumstances of the case,

whether Coelestius laid down these theses or not, or whether Pelagius

believed them or not--that the injurious principles of this new heresy

were condemned before that ecclesiastical tribunal; and let us thank

God for such a result, and proclaim His praises.

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[1779] See above, 16.

[1780] See above, 24.

[1781] See above, 30.

[1782] 2 Pet. i. 4.

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Chapter 66.--The Harsh Measures of the Pelagians Against the Holy Monks

and Nuns Who Belonged to Jerome's Charge.

Certain followers of Pelagius are said to have carried their support of

his cause after these judicial proceedings to an incredible extent of

perverseness and audacity. They are said [1783] to have most cruelly

beaten and maltreated the servants and handmaidens of the Lord who

lived under the care of the holy presbyter Jerome, slain his deacon,

and burnt his monastic houses; whilst he himself, by God's mercy,

narrowly escaped the violent attacks of these impious assailants in the

shelter of a well-defended fortress. However, I think it better becomes

me to say nothing of these matters, but to wait and see what measures

our brethren the bishops may deem it their duty to adopt concerning

such scandalous enormities; for nobody can suppose that it is possible

for them to pass them over without notice. Impious doctrines put forth

by persons of this character it is no doubt the duty of all catholics,

however remote their residence, to oppose and refute, and so to hinder

all injury from such opinions wheresoever they may happen to find their

way; but impious actions it belongs to the discipline of the episcopal

authority on the spot to control, and they must be left for punishment

to the bishops of the very place or immediate neighbourhood, to be

dealt with as pastoral diligence and godly severity may suggest. We,

therefore, who live at so great a distance, are bound to hope that such

a stop may there be put to proceedings of this kind, that there may be

no necessity elsewhere of further invoking judicial remedies. But what

rather befits our personal activity is so to set forth the truth, that

the minds of all those who have been severely wounded by the report, so

widely spread everywhere, may be healed by the mercy of God following

our efforts. With this desire, I must now at last terminate this work,

which, should it succeed, as I hope, in commending itself to your mind,

will, I trust, with the Lord's blessing, become serviceable to its

readers--recommended to them rather by your name than by my own, and

through your care and diligence receiving a wider circulation.

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[1783] He here refers to a letter (32) of Pope Innocent to John, Bishop

of Jerusalem. It thus commences: "Plunder, slaughter, incendiary fire,

every atrocity of the maddest kind have been deplored by the noble and

holy virgins Eustochium and Paula, as having been perpetrated, at the

devil's instigation, in several places of your diocese," etc. An

epistle by the same writer (33) addressed to Jerome, begins with these

words: "The apostle testifies that contention never did any good to the

Church."

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a treatise on the grace of christ, and on original sin.

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Extract from Augustin's "Retractations,"

Book II. Chap. 50,

On the Following Treatise,

"De gratia christi, et de peccato originali."

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"After the conviction and condemnation [1784] of the Pelagian heresy

with its authors by the bishops of the Church of Rome,--first Innocent,

and then Zosimus,--with the co-operation of letters of African

councils, I wrote two books against them: one On the Grace of Christ,

and the other On Original Sin. The work began with the following words:

How greatly we rejoice on account of your bodily, and, above all,

because of your Spiritual welfare.'"

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[1784] From this it follows that we must refer his books On the Grace

of Christ and On Original Sin to the year 418; for it was in this year

that the Pelagian heresy was condemned by the pope Zosimus. Somewhat

earlier there was held a general council of the bishops of Africa at

Carthage, to take measures against the heresy,--the precise date of

which council is May 1st of this year 418. Augustin, on account of this

council, was detained at Carthage, and his stay in that city was longer

than usual, as one may learn from the 94th canon of the council, or

from the Codex Canonum of the Church of Africa, canon 127, as well as

from his epistle (193, sec. 1) to Mercator. And it was in this interval

of time, before he started for Mauritania C�sariensis, that he wrote

these two books for Albina, Pinianus, and Melania; accordingly, in his

Retractations, he places them just previous to the time of his

proceedings with Emeritus, which were concluded at C�sarea on the 20th

of September in this very year 418. Julianus, in his work addressed to

Turbantius, calumniously attacked a passage in the book On the Grace of

Christ; the passage is defended by Augustin in his work against

Julianus, iv. 8. 47, where he mentions this first book, addressed to

the holy Pinianus, as he calls him, and gives its title as "Concerning

Grace, in opposition to Pelagius." [Albina, with her son-in-law

Pinianus, and her daughter Melania, by whose questions Augustin was led

to write this work, constituted an interesting family of ascetics,

which had formerly lived in Africa, but at this time were in Palestine;

Pinianus at the head of a monastery, and his wife an inmate of a

convent.--W.]

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A Treatise on the grace of christ, and on original sin,

by aurelius augustin, bishop of hippo;

In Two Books,

written against pelagius and coelestius in the year a.d. 418.

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Book I.

On the Grace of Christ.

Wherein he shows that Pelagius is disingenuous in his confession of

grace, inasmuch as he places grace either in nature and free will, or

in law and teaching; and, moreover, asserts that it is merely the

"possibility" (as he calls it) of will and action, and not the will and

action itself, which is assisted by divine grace; and that this

assisting grace, too, is given by God according to men's merits; whilst

he further thinks that they are so assisted for the sole purpose of

being able the more easily to fulfil the commandments. Augustin

examines those passages of his writings in which he boasted that he had

bestowed express commendation on the grace of God, and points out how

they can be interpreted as referring to law and teaching,--in other

words, to the divine revelation and the example of Christ which are

alike included in "the teaching,"--or else to the remission of sins;

nor do they afford any evidence whatever that Pelagius really

acknowledged Christian grace, in the sense of help rendered for the

performance of right action to natural faculty and instruction, by the

inspiration of a most glowing and luminous love; and he concludes with

a request that Pelagius would seriously listen to Ambrose, whom he is

so very fond of quoting, in his excellent eulogy in commendation of the

grace of God.

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Chapter 1 [I.]--Introductory.

How greatly we rejoice on account of your bodily, and, above all, your

spiritual welfare, my most sincerely attached brethren and beloved of

God, Albina, Pinianus, and Melania, [1785] we cannot express in words;

we therefore leave all this to your own thoughts and belief, in order

that we may now rather speak of the matters on which you consulted us.

We have, indeed, had to compose these words to the best of the ability

which God has vouchsafed to us, while our messenger was in a hurry to

be gone, and amidst many occupations, which are much more absorbing to

me at Carthage than in any other place whatever.

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[1785] [See note to the passage from the Retractations above; and for

full accounts see Smith and Wace's Dictionary of Christian Biography,

under these names.--W.]

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Chapter 2 [II.]--Suspicious Character of Pelagius' Confession as to the

Necessity of Grace for Every Single Act of Ours.

You informed me in your letter, that you had entreated Pelagius to

express in writing his condemnation of all that had been alleged

against him; and that he had said, in the audience of you all: "I

anathematize the man who either thinks or says that the grace of God,

whereby Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,' [1786] is

not necessary not only for every hour and for every moment, but also

for every act of our lives: and those who endeavour to disannul it

deserve everlasting punishment." Now, whoever hears these words, and is

ignorant of the opinion which he has clearly enough expressed in his

books,--not those, indeed, which he declares to have been stolen from

him in an incorrect form, nor those which he repudiates, but those even

which he mentions in his own letter which he forwarded to Rome,--would

certainly suppose that the views he holds are in strict accordance with

the truth. But whoever notices what he openly declares in them, cannot

fail to regard these statements with suspicion. Because, although he

makes that grace of God whereby Christ came into the world to save

sinners to consist simply in the remission of sins, he can still

accommodate his words to this meaning, by alleging that the necessity

of such grace for every hour and for every moment and for every action

of our life, comes to this, that while we recollect and keep in mind

the forgiveness of our past sins, we sin no more, aided not by any

supply of power from without, but by the powers of our own will as it

recalls to our mind, in every action we do, what advantage has been

conferred upon us by the remission of sins. Then, again, whereas they

are accustomed to say that Christ has given us assistance for avoiding

sin, in that He has left us an example by living righteously and

teaching what is right Himself, they have it in their power here also

to accommodate their words, by affirming that this is the necessity of

grace to us for every moment and for every action, namely, that we

should in all our conversation regard the example of the Lord's

conversation. Your own fidelity, however, enables you clearly to

perceive how such a profession of opinion as this differs from that

true confession of grace which is now the question before us. And yet

how easily can it be obscured and disguised by their ambiguous

statements!

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[1786] 1 Tim i. 15.

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Chapter 3 [III.]--Grace According to the Pelagians.

But why should we wonder at this? For the same Pelagius, who in the

Proceedings of the episcopal synod unhesitatingly condemned those who

say "that God's grace and assistance are not given for single acts, but

consist in free will, or in law and teaching," [1787] upon which points

we were apt to think that he had expended all his subterfuges; and who

also condemned such as affirm that the grace of God is bestowed in

proportion to our merits:--is proved, notwithstanding, to hold, in the

books which he has published on the freedom of the will, and which he

mentions in the letter he sent to Rome, no other sentiments than those

which he seemingly condemned. For that grace and help of God, by which

we are assisted in avoiding sin, he places either in nature and free

will, or else in the gift of the law and teaching; the result of which

of course is this, that whenever God helps a man, He must be supposed

to help him to turn away from evil and do good, by revealing to him and

teaching him what he ought to do, [1788] but not with the additional

assistance of His co-operation and inspiration of love, that he may

accomplish that which he had discovered it to be his duty to do.

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[1787] See De Gestis Pelagii, c. 30.

[1788] We have in these two clauses an explanation of the terms "law"

and "teaching," which Pelagius uses almost technically.

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Chapter 4.--Pelagius' System of Faculties.

In his system, he posits and distinguishes three faculties, by which he

says God's commandments are fulfilled,--capacity, volition, and action:

[1789] meaning by "capacity," that by which a man is able to be

righteous; by "volition" that by which he wills to be righteous; by

"action," that by which he actually is righteous. The first of these,

the capacity, he allows to have been bestowed on us by the Creator of

our nature; it is not in our power, and we possess it even against our

will. The other two, however, the volition and the action, he asserts

to be our own; and he assigns them to us so strictly as to contend that

they proceed simply from ourselves. In short, according to his view,

God's grace has nothing to do with assisting those two faculties which

he will have to be altogether our own, the volition and the action, but

that only which is not in our own power and comes to us from God,

namely the capacity; as if the faculties which are our own, that is,

the volition and the action, have such avail for declining evil and

doing good, that they require no divine help, whereas that faculty

which we have of God, that is to say, the capacity, is so weak, that it

is always assisted by the aid of grace.

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[1789] [These three technical terms are, possibilitas, voluntas,

actio.--W.]

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Chapter 5 [IV.]--Pelagius' Own Account of the Faculties, Quoted.

Lest, however, it should chance to be said that we either do not

correctly understand what he advances, or malevolently pervert to

another meaning what he never meant to bear such a sense, I beg of you

to consider his own actual words: "We distinguish," says he, "three

things, arranging them in a certain graduated order. We put in the

first place ability;' in the second, volition;' and in the third,

actuality.' [1790] The ability' we place in our nature, the volition'

in our will, and the actuality' in the effect. The first, that is, the

ability,' properly belongs to God, who has bestowed it on His creature;

the other two, that is, the volition' and the actuality,' must be

referred to man, because they flow forth from the fountain of the will.

For his willing, therefore, and doing a good work, the praise belongs

to man; or rather both to man, and to God who has bestowed on him the

capacity' for his will and work, and who evermore by the help of His

grace assists even this capacity. That a man is able to will and effect

any good work, comes from God alone. So that this one faculty can

exist, even when the other two have no being; but these latter cannot

exist without that former one. I am therefore free not to have either a

good volition or action; but I am by no means able not to have the

capacity of good. This capacity is inherent in me, whether I will or

no; nor does nature at any time receive in this point freedom for

itself. Now the meaning of all this will be rendered clearer by an

example or two. That we are able to see with our eyes is not of us; but

it is our own that we make a good or a bad use of our eyes. So again

(that I may, by applying a general case in illustration, embrace all),

that we are able to do, say, think, any good thing, comes from Him who

has endowed us with this ability,' and who also assists this ability;'

but that we really do a good thing, or speak a good word, or think a

good thought, proceeds from our own selves, because we are also able to

turn all these into evil. Accordingly,--and this is a point which needs

frequent repetition, because of your calumniation of us,--whenever we

say that a man can live without sin, we also give praise to God by our

acknowledgment of the capacity which we have received from Him, who has

bestowed such ability' upon us; and there is here no occasion for

praising the human agent, since it is God's matter alone that is for

the moment treated of; for the question is not about willing,' or

effecting,' but simply and solely about that which may possibly be."

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[1790] [The three terms here are, posse, velle, esse.--W.]

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Chapter 6 [V.]--Pelagius and Paul of Different Opinions.

The whole of this dogma of Pelagius, observe, is carefully expressed in

these words, and none other, in the third book of his treatise in

defence of the liberty of the will, in which he has taken care to

distinguish with so great subtlety these three things,--the "capacity,"

the "volition," and the "action," that is, the "ability," the

"volition," and the "actuality,"--that, whenever we read or hear of his

acknowledging the assistance of divine grace in order to our avoidance

of evil and accomplishment of good,--whatever he may mean by the said

assistance of grace, whether law and the teaching or any other

thing,--we are sure of what he says; nor can we run into any mistake by

understanding him otherwise than he means. For we cannot help knowing

that, according to his belief, it is not our "volition" nor our

"action" which is assisted by the divine help, but solely our

"capacity" to will and act, which alone of the three, as he affirms, we

have of God. As if that faculty were infirm which God Himself placed in

our nature; while the other two, which, as he would have it, are our

own, are so strong and firm and self-sufficient as to require none of

His help! so that He does not help us to will, nor help us to act, but

simply helps us to the possibility of willing and acting. The apostle,

however, holds the contrary, when he says, "Work out your own salvation

with fear and trembling." [1791] And that they might be sure that it

was not simply in their being able to work (for this they had already

received in nature and in teaching), but in their actual working, that

they were divinely assisted, the apostle does not say to them, "For it

is God that worketh in you to be able," as if they already possessed

volition and operation among their own resources, without requiring His

assistance in respect of these two; but he says, "For it is God which

worketh in you both to will and to perform of His own good pleasure;"

[1792] or, as the reading runs in other copies, especially the Greek,

"both to will and to operate." Consider, now, whether the apostle did

not thus long before foresee by the Holy Ghost that there would arise

adversaries of the grace of God; and did not therefore declare that God

works within us those two very things, even "willing" and "operating,"

which this man so determined to be our own, as if they were in no wise

assisted by the help of divine grace.

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[1791] Phil. ii. 12.

[1792] Phil. ii. 13.

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Chapter 7 [VI.]--Pelagius Posits God's Aid Only for Our "Capacity."

Let not Pelagius, however, in this way deceive incautious and simple

persons, or even himself; for after saying, "Man is therefore to be

praised for his willing and doing a good work," he added, as if by way

of correcting himself, these words: "Or rather, this praise belongs to

man and to God." It was not, however, that he wished to be understood

as showing any deference to the sound doctrine, that it is "God which

worketh in us both to will and to do," that he thus expressed himself;

but it is clear enough, on his own showing, why he added the latter

clause, for he immediately subjoins: "Who has bestowed on him the

capacity' for this very will and work." From his preceding words it is

manifest that he places this capacity in our nature. Lest he should

seem, however, to have said nothing about grace, he added these words:

"And who evermore, by the help of His grace, assists this very

capacity,"--"this very capacity," observe; not "very will," or "very

action;" for if he had said so much as this, he would clearly not be at

variance with the teaching of the apostle. But there are his words:

"this very capacity;" meaning that very one of the three faculties

which he had placed in our nature. This God "evermore assists by the

help of His grace." The result, indeed, is, that "the praise does not

belong to man and to God," because man so wills that yet God also

inspires his volition with the ardour of love, or that man so works

that God nevertheless also cooperates with him,--and without His help,

what is man? But he has associated God in this praise in this wise,

that were it not for the nature which God gave us in our creation

wherewith we might be able to exercise volition and action, we should

neither will nor act.

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Chapter 8.--Grace, According to the Pelagians, Consists in the Internal

and Manifold Illumination of the Mind.

As to this natural capacity which, he allows, is assisted by the grace

of God, it is by no means clear from the passage either what grace he

means, or to what extent he supposes our nature to be assisted by it.

But, as is the case in other passages in which he expresses himself

with more clearness and decision, we may here also perceive that no

other grace is intended by him as helping natural capacity than the law

and the teaching. [VII.] For in one passage he says: "We are supposed

by very ignorant persons to do wrong in this matter to divine grace,

because we say that it by no means perfects sanctity in us without our

will,--as if God could have imposed any command on His grace, without

also supplying the help of His grace to those on whom he imposed His

commands, so that men might more easily accomplish through grace what

they are required to do by their free will." Then, as if he meant to

explain what grace he meant, he immediately went on to add these words:

"And this grace we for our part do not, as you suppose, allow to

consist merely in the law, but also in the help of God." Now who can

help wishing that he would show us what grace it is that he would have

us understand? Indeed, we have the strongest reason for desiring him to

tell us what he means by saying that he does not allow grace merely to

consist in the law. Whilst, however, we are in the suspense of our

expectation, observe, I pray you, what he has further to tell us: "God

helps us," says he, "by His teaching and revelation, whilst He opens

the eyes of our heart; whilst He points out to us the future, that we

may not be absorbed in the present; whilst He discovers to us the

snares of the devil; whilst He enlightens us with the manifold and

ineffable gift of heavenly grace." He then concludes his statement with

a kind of absolution: "Does the man," he asks, "who says all this

appear to you to be a denier of grace? Does he not acknowledge both

man's free will and God's grace?" But, after all, he has not got beyond

his commendation of the law and of teaching; assiduously inculcating

this as the grace that helps us, and so following up the idea with

which he had started, when he said, "We, however, allow it to consist

in the help of God." God's help, indeed, he supposed must be

recommended to us by manifold lures; by setting forth teaching and

revelation, the opening of the eyes of the heart, the demonstration of

the future, the discovery of the devil's wiles, and the illumination of

our minds by the varied and indescribable gift of heavenly grace,--all

this, of course, with a view to our learning the commandments and

promises of God. And what else is this than placing God's grace in "the

law and the teaching"?

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Chapter 9 [VIII.]--The Law One Thing, Grace Another. The Utility of the

Law.

Hence, then, it is clear that he acknowledges that grace whereby God

points out and reveals to us what we are bound to do; but not that

whereby He endows and assists us to act, since the knowledge of the

law, unless it be accompanied by the assistance of grace, rather avails

for producing the transgression of the commandment. "Where there is no

law," says the apostle, "there is no transgression;" [1793] and again:

"I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."

[1794] Therefore so far are the law and grace from being the same

thing, that the law is not only unprofitable, but it is absolutely

prejudicial, unless grace assists it; and the utility of the law may be

shown by this, that it obliges all whom it proves guilty of

transgression to betake themselves to grace for deliverance and help to

overcome their evil lusts. For it rather commands than assists; it

discovers disease, but does not heal it; nay, the malady that is not

healed is rather aggravated by it, so that the cure of grace is more

earnestly and anxiously sought for, inasmuch as "The letter killeth,

but the spirit giveth life." [1795] "For if there had been a law given

which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by

the law." [1796] To what extent, however, the law gives assistance, the

apostle informs us when he says immediately afterwards: "The Scripture

hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ

might be given to them that believe." [1797] Wherefore, says the

apostle, "the law was our schoolmaster in Christ Jesus." [1798] Now

this very thing is serviceable to proud men, to be more firmly and

manifestly "concluded under sin," so that none may pre-sumptuously

endeavour to accomplish their justification by means of free will as if

by their own resources; but rather "that every mouth may be stopped,

and all the world may become guilty before God. Because by the deeds of

the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law

is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the

law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." [1799]

How then manifested without the law, if witnessed by the law? For this

very reason the phrase is not, "manifested without the law," but "the

righteousness without the law," because it is "the righteousness of

God;" that is, the righteousness which we have not from the law, but

from God,--not the righteousness, indeed, which by reason of His

commanding it, causes us fear through our knowledge of it; but rather

the righteousness which by reason of His bestowing it, is held fast and

maintained by us through our loving it,--"so that he that glorieth, let

him glory in the Lord." [1800]

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[1793] Rom. iv. 15.

[1794] Rom. vii. 7.

[1795] 2 Cor. iii. 6.

[1796] Gal. iii. 21.

[1797] Gal. iii. 22.

[1798] Gal. iii. 24.

[1799] Rom. iii. 19-21.

[1800] 1 Cor. i. 31.

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Chapter 10 [IX.]--What Purpose the Law Subserves.

What object, then, can this man gain by accounting the law and the

teaching to be the grace whereby we are helped to work righteousness?

For, in order that it may help much, it must help us to feel our need

of grace. No man, indeed, is able to fulfil the law through the law.

"Love is the fulfilling of the law." [1801] And the love of God is not

shed abroad in our hearts by the law, but by the Holy Ghost, which is

given unto us. [1802] Grace, therefore, is pointed at by the law, in

order that the law may be fulfilled by grace. Now what does it avail

for Pelagius, that he declares the self-same thing under different

phrases, that he may not be understood to place in law and teaching

that grace which, as he avers, assists the "capacity" of our nature? So

far, indeed, as I can conjecture, the reason why he fears being so

understood is, because he condemned all those who maintain that God's

grace and help are not given for a man's single actions, but exist

rather in his freedom, or in the law and teaching. And yet he supposes

that he escapes detection by the shifts he so constantly employs for

disguising what he means by his formula of "law and teaching" under so

many various phrases.

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[1801] Rom. xiii. 10.

[1802] Rom. v. 5.

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Chapter 11 [X.]--Pelagius' Definition of How God Helps Us: "He Promises

Us Future Glory."

For in another passage, after asserting at length that it is not by the

help of God, but out of our own selves, that a good will is formed

within us, he confronted himself with a question out of the apostle's

epistle; and he asked this question: "How will this stand consistently

with the apostle's words, [1803] It is God that worketh in you both to

will and to perfect'?" Then, in order to obviate this opposing

authority, which he plainly saw to be most thoroughly contrasted with

his own dogma, he went on at once to add: "He works in us to will what

is good, to will what is holy, when He rouses us from our devotion to

earthly desires, and from our love of the present only, after the

manner of brute animals, by the magnitude of the future glory and the

promise of its rewards; when by revealing wisdom to us He stirs up our

sluggish will to a longing after God; when (what you are not afraid to

deny in another passage) he persuades us to everything which is good."

Now what can be plainer, than that by the grace whereby God works

within us to will what is good, he means nothing else than the law and

the teaching? For in the law and the teaching of the holy Scriptures

are promised future glory and its great rewards. To the teaching also

appertains the revelation of wisdom, whilst it is its further function

to direct our thoughts to everything that is good. And if between

teaching and persuading (or rather exhorting) there seems to be a

difference, yet even this is provided for in the general term

"teaching," which is contained in the several discourses or letters;

for the holy Scriptures both teach and exhort, and in the processes of

teaching and exhorting there is room likewise for man's operation. We,

however, on our side would fain have him sometime confess that grace,

by which not only future glory in all its magnitude is promised, but

also is believed in and hoped for; by which wisdom is not only

revealed, but also loved; by which everything that is good is not only

recommended, but pressed upon us until we accept it. For all men do not

possess faith, [1804] who hear the Lord in the Scriptures promising the

kingdom of heaven; nor are all men persuaded, who are counselled to

come to Him, who says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour." [1805] They,

however, who have faith are the same who are also persuaded to come to

Him. This He Himself set forth most plainly, when He said, "No man can

come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." [1806]

And some verses afterwards, when speaking of such as believe not, He

says, "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me except

it were given unto him of my Father." [1807] This is the grace which

Pelagius ought to acknowledge, if he wishes not only to be called a

Christian, but to be one.

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[1803] Phil. ii. 13.

[1804] 2 Thess. iii. 2.

[1805] Matt. xi. 28.

[1806] John vi. 44.

[1807] John vi. 65.

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Chapter 12 [XI.]--The Same Continued: "He Reveals Wisdom."

But what shall I say about the revelation of wisdom? For there is no

man who can in the present life very well hope to attain to the great

revelations which were given to the Apostle Paul; and of course it is

impossible to suppose that anything was accustomed in these revelations

to be made known to him but what appertained to wisdom. Yet for all

this he says: "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the

abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the

flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me. For this thing I besought

the Lord thrice, that He would take it away from me. And He said unto

me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in

weakness." [1808] Now, undoubtedly, if there were already in the

apostle that perfection of love which admitted of no further addition,

and which could be puffed up no more, there could have been no further

need of the messenger of Satan to buffet him, and thereby to repress

the excessive elation which might arise from abundance of revelations.

What means this elation, however, but a being puffed up? And of love it

has been indeed most truly said, "Love vaunteth not itself, is not

puffed up." [1809] This love, therefore, was still in process of

constant increase in the great apostle, day by day, as long as his

"inward man was renewed day by day," [1810] and would then be

perfected, no doubt, when he was got beyond the reach of all further

vaunting and elation. But at that time his mind was still in a

condition to be inflated by an abundance of revelations before it was

perfected in the solid edifice of love; for he had not arrived at the

goal and apprehended the prize, to which he was reaching forward in his

course.

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[1808] 2 Cor. xii. 7-9.

[1809] 1 Cor. xiii. 4.

[1810] 2 Cor. iv. 6.

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Chapter 13 [XII.]--Grace Causes Us to Do.

To him, therefore, who is reluctant to endure the troublesome process,

whereby this vaunting disposition is restrained, before he attains to

the ultimate and highest perfection of charity, it is most properly

said, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect

in weakness," [1811] --in weakness, that is, not of the flesh only, as

this man supposes, but both of the flesh and of the mind; because the

mind, too, was, in comparison of that last stage of complete

perfection, weak, and to it also was assigned, in order to check its

elation, that messenger of Satan, the thorn in the flesh; although it

was very strong, in contrast with the carnal or animal faculties, which

as yet understand not the things of the Spirit of God. [1812] Inasmuch,

then, as strength is made perfect in weakness, whoever does not own

himself to be weak, is not in the way to be perfected. This grace,

however, by which strength is perfected in weakness, conducts all who

are predestinated and called according to the divine purpose [1813] to

the state of the highest perfection and glory. By such grace it is

effected, not only that we discover what ought to be done, but also

that we do what we have discovered,--not only that we believe what

ought to be loved, but also that we love what we have believed.

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[1811] 2 Cor. xii. 9.

[1812] 1 Cor. ii. 14.

[1813] Rom. viii. 28, 30.

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Chapter 14 [XII.]--The Righteousness Which is of God, and the

Righteousness Which is of the Law.

If this grace is to be called "teaching," let it at any rate be so

called in such wise that God may be believed to infuse it, along with

an ineffable sweetness, more deeply and more internally, not only by

their agency who plant and water from without, but likewise by His own

too who ministers in secret His own increase,--in such a way, that He

not only exhibits truth, but likewise imparts love. For it is thus that

God teaches those who have been called according to His purpose, giving

them simultaneously both to know what they ought to do, and to do what

they know. Accordingly, the apostle thus speaks to the Thessalonians:

"As touching love of the brethren, ye need not that I write unto you;

for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." [1814] And

then, by way of proving that they had been taught of God, he subjoined:

"And indeed ye do it towards all the brethren which are in all

Macedonia." [1815] As if the surest sign that you have been taught of

God, is that you put into practice what you have been taught. Of that

character are all who are called according to God's purpose, as it is

written in the prophets: "They shall be all taught of God." [1816] The

man, however, who has learned what ought to be done, but does it not,

has not as yet been "taught of God" according to grace, but only

according to the law,--not according to the spirit, but only according

to the letter. Although there are many who appear to do what the law

commands, through fear of punishment, not through love of

righteousness; and such righteousness as this the apostle calls "his

own which is after the law,"--a thing as it were commanded, not given.

When, indeed, it has been given, it is not called our own

righteousness, but God's; because it becomes our own only so that we

have it from God. These are the apostle's words: "That I may be found

in Him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that

which is through the faith of Christ the righteousness which is of God

by faith." [1817] So great, then, is the difference between the law and

grace, that although the law is undoubtedly of God, yet the

righteousness which is "of the law" is not "of God," but the

righteousness which is consummated by grace is "of God." The one is

designated "the righteousness of the law," because it is done through

fear of the curse of the law; while the other is called "the

righteousness of God," because it is bestowed through the beneficence

of His grace, so that it is not a terrible but a pleasant commandment,

according to the prayer in the psalm: "Good art Thou, O Lord, therefore

in Thy goodness teach me Thy righteousness;" [1818] that is, that I may

not be compelled like a slave to live under the law with fear of

punishment; but rather in the freedom of love may be delighted to live

with law as my companion. When the freeman keeps a commandment, he does

it readily. And whosoever learns his duty in this spirit, does

everything that he has learned ought to be done.

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[1814] 1 Thess. iv. 9.

[1815] 1 Thess. iv. 10.

[1816] Isa. liv. 13; Jer. xxxi. 34; John vi. 45.

[1817] Phil. iii. 9.

[1818] Ps. cxix. 68.

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Chapter 15 [XIV.]--He Who Has Been Taught by Grace Actually Comes to

Christ.

Now as touching this kind of teaching, the Lord also says: "Every man

that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."

[1819] Of the man, therefore, who has not come, it cannot be correctly

said: "Has heard and has learned that it is his duty to come to Him,

but he is not willing to do what he has learned." It is indeed

absolutely improper to apply such a statement to that method of

teaching, whereby God teaches by grace. For if, as the Truth says,

"Every man that hath learned cometh," it follows, of course, that

whoever does not come has not learned. But who can fail to see that a

man's coming or not coming is by the determination of his will? This

determination, however, may stand alone, if the man does not come; but

if he does come, it cannot be without assistance; and such assistance,

that he not only knows what it is he ought to do, but also actually

does what he thus knows. And thus, when God teaches, it is not by the

letter of the law, but by the grace of the Spirit. Moreover, He so

teaches, that whatever a man learns, he not only sees with his

perception, but also desires with his choice, and accomplishes in

action. By this mode, therefore, of divine instruction, volition

itself, and performance itself, are assisted, and not merely the

natural "capacity" of willing and performing. For if nothing but this

"capacity" of ours were assisted by this grace, the Lord would rather

have said, "Every man that hath heard and hath learned of the Father

may possibly come unto me." This, however, is not what He said; but His

words are these: "Every man that hath heard and hath learned of the

Father cometh unto me." Now the possibility of coming Pelagius places

in nature, or even--as we found him attempting to say some time ago

[1820] --in grace (whatever that may mean according to him),--when he

says, "whereby this very capacity is assisted;" whereas the actual

coming lies in the will and act. It does not, however, follow that he

who may come actually comes, unless he has also willed and acted for

the coming. But every one who has learned of the Father not only has

the possibility of coming, but comes; and in this result are already

included the motion of the capacity, the affection of the will, and the

effect of the action. [1821]

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[1819] John vi. 45.

[1820] See above, ch. 7 [vi.].

[1821] The technical gradation is here neatly expressed by profectus,

affectus, and effectus.

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Chapter 16 [XV.]--We Need Divine Aid in the Use of Our Powers.

Illustration from Sight.

Now what is the use of his examples, if they do not really accomplish

his own promise of making his meaning clearer to us; [1822] not,

indeed, that we are bound to admit their sense, but that we may

discover more plainly and openly what is his drift and purpose in using

them? "That we are able," says he, "to see with our eyes is not of us;

but it is of us that we make a good or a bad use of our sight." Well,

there is an answer for him in the psalm, in which the psalmist says to

God, "Turn Thou away mine eyes, that they behold not iniquity." [1823]

Now although this was said of the eyes of the mind, it still follows

from it, that in respect of our bodily eyes there is either a good use

or a bad use that may be made of them: not in the literal sense merely

of a good sight when the eyes are sound, and a bad sight when they are

bleared, but in the moral sense of a right sight when it is directed

towards succouring the helpless, or a bad sight when its object is the

indulgence of lust. For although both the pauper who is succoured, and

the woman who is lusted after, are seen by these external eyes; it is

after all from the inner eyes that either compassion in the one case or

lust in the other proceeds. How then is it that the prayer is offered

to God, "Turn Thou away mine eyes, that they behold not iniquity"? Or

why is that asked for which lies within our own power, if it be true

that God does not assist the will?

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[1822] See above, ch. 5 [iv.].

[1823] Ps. cxix. 37.

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Chapter 17 [XVI.]--Does Pelagius Designedly Refrain from Openly Saying

that All Good Action is from God?

"That we are able to speak," says he, "is of God; but that we make a

good or a bad use of speech is of ourselves." He, however, who has made

the most excellent use of speech does not teach us so. "For," says He,

"it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh

in you." [1824] "So, again," adds Pelagius, "that I may, by applying a

general case in illustration, embrace all,--that we are able to do,

say, think, any good thing, comes from Him who has endowed us with this

ability, and who also assists it." Observe how even here he repeats his

former meaning --that of these three, capacity, volition, action, it is

only the capacity which receives help. Then, by way of completely

stating what he intends to say, he adds: "But that we really do a good

thing, or speak a good word, or think a good thought, proceeds from our

own selves." He forgot what he had before [1825] said by way of

correcting, as it were, his own words; for after saying, "Man is to be

praised therefore for his willing and doing a good work," he at once

goes on to modify his statement thus: "Or rather, this praise belongs

both to man, and to God who has given him the capacity of this very

will and work." Now what is the reason why he did not remember this

admission when giving his examples, so as to say this much at least

after quoting them: "That we are able to do, say, think any good thing,

comes from Him who has given us this ability, and who also assists it.

That, however, we really do a good thing, or speak a good word, or

think a good thought, proceeds both from ourselves and from Him!" This,

however, he has not said. But, if I am not mistaken, I think I see why

he was afraid to do so.

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[1824] Matt. x. 20.

[1825] See ch. 5.

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Chapter 18 [XVII.]--He Discovers the Reason of Pelagius' Hesitation So

to Say.

For, when wishing to point out why this lies within our own competency,

he says: "Because we are able to turn all these actions into evil."

This, then, was the reason why he was afraid to admit that such an

action proceeds "both from ourselves and from God," lest it should be

objected to him in reply: "If the fact of our doing, speaking, thinking

anything good, is owing both to ourselves and to God, because He has

endowed us with this ability, then it follows that our doing, thinking,

speaking evil things, is due to ourselves and to God, because He has

here also endowed us with ability of indifferency; the conclusion from

this being--and God forbid that we should admit any such--that just as

God is associated with ourselves in the praise of good actions, so must

He share with us the blame of evil actions." For that "capacity" with

which He has endowed us makes us capable alike of good actions and of

evil ones.

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Chapter 19 [XVIII.]--The Two Roots of Action, Love and Cupidity; And

Each Brings Forth Its Own Fruit.

Concerning this "capacity," Pelagius thus writes in the first book of

his Defence of Free Will: "Now," says he, "we have implanted in us by

God a capacity for either part. [1826] It resembles, as I may say, a

fruitful and fecund root which yields and produces diversely according

to the will of man, and which is capable, at the planter's own choice,

of either shedding a beautiful bloom of virtues, or of bristling with

the thorny thickets of vices." Scarcely heeding what he says, he here

makes one and the same root productive both of good and evil fruits, in

opposition to gospel truth and apostolic teaching. For the Lord

declares that "a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a

corrupt tree bring forth good fruit;" [1827] and when the Apostle Paul

says that covetousness is "the root of all evils," [1828] he intimates

to us, of course, that love may be regarded as the root of all good

things. On the supposition, therefore, that two trees, one good and the

other corrupt, represent two human beings, a good one and a bad, what

else is the good man except one with a good will, that is, a tree with

a good root? And what is the bad man except one with a bad will, that

is, a tree with a bad root? The fruits which spring from such roots and

trees are deeds, are words, are thoughts, which proceed, when good,

from a good will, and when evil, from an evil one.

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[1826] [The technical phrase is possibilitas utriusque partis.--W.]

[1827] Matt. vii. 18.

[1828] 1 Tim. vi. 10.

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Chapter 20 [XIX.]--How a Man Makes a Good or a Bad Tree.

Now a man makes a good tree when he receives the grace of God. For it

is not by himself that he makes himself good instead of evil; but it is

of Him, and through Him, and in Him who is always good. And in order

that he may not only be a good tree, but also bear good fruit, it is

necessary for him to be assisted by the self-same grace, without which

he can do nothing good. For God Himself cooperates in the production of

fruit in good trees, when He both externally waters and tends them by

the agency of His servants, and internally by Himself also gives the

increase. [1829] A man, however, makes a corrupt tree when he makes

himself corrupt, when he falls away from Him who is the unchanging

good; for such a declension from Him is the origin of an evil will. Now

this decline does not initiate some other corrupt nature, but it

corrupts that which has been already created good. When this

corruption, however, has been healed, no evil remains; for although

nature no doubt had received an injury, yet nature was not itself a

blemish. [1830]

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[1829] 1 Cor. iii. 7.

[1830] [Here the phraseology contrasts vitium natur�, with vitium

natura.--W.]

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Chapter 21 [XX.]--Love the Root of All Good Things; Cupidity, of All

Evil Ones.

The "capacity," then, of which we speak is not (as he supposes) the one

identical root both of good things and evil. For the love which is the

root of good things is quite different from the cupidity which is the

root of evil things--as different, indeed, as virtue is from vice. But

without doubt this "capacity" is capable of either root: because a man

is not only able to possess love, whereby the tree becomes a good one;

but he is likewise able to have cupidity, which makes the tree evil.

This human cupidity, however, which is a vice, has for its author man,

or man's deceiver, but not man's Creator. It is indeed that "lust of

the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is

not of the Father, but is of the world." [1831] And who can be ignorant

of the usage of the Scripture, which under the designation of "the

world" is accustomed to describe those who inhabit the world?

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[1831] 1 John ii. 16.

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Chapter 22 [XXI.]--Love is a Good Will.

That love, however, which is a virtue, comes to us from God, not from

ourselves, according to the testimony of Scripture, which says: "Love

is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God:

for God is love." [1832] It is on the principle of this love that one

can best understand the passage, "Whosoever is born of God doth not

commit sin;" [1833] as well as the sentence, "And he cannot sin."

[1834] Because the love according to which we are born of God "doth not

behave itself unseemly," and "thinketh no evil." [1835] Therefore,

whenever a man sins, it is not according to love: but it is according

to cupidity that he commits sin; and following such a disposition, he

is not born of God. Because, as it has been already stated, "the

capacity" of which we speak is capable of either root. When, therefore,

the Scripture says, "Love is of God," or still more pointedly, "God is

love;" when the Apostle John so very emphatically exclaims, "Behold

what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be

called, and be, the sons of God!" [1836] with what face can this

writer, on hearing that "God is love," persist in maintaining his

opinion, that we bare of God one only of those three, [1837] namely,

"the capacity;" whereas it is of ourselves that we have "the good will"

and "the good action?" As if, indeed, this good will were a different

thing from that love which the Scripture so loudly proclaims to have

come to us from God, and to have been given to us by the Father, that

we might become His children.

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[1832] 1 John iv. 7, 8.

[1833] 1 John iii. 9.

[1834] Same verse.

[1835] 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

[1836] 1 John iii. 1.

[1837] See above, ch. 4.

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Chapter 23 [XXII.]--Pelagius' Double Dealing Concerning the Ground of

the Conferrence of Grace.

Perhaps, however, our own antecedent merits caused this gift to be

bestowed upon us; as this writer has already suggested in reference to

God's grace, in that work which he addressed to a holy virgin, [1838]

whom he mentions in the letter sent by him to Rome. For, after adducing

the testimony of the Apostle James, in which he says, "Submit

yourselves unto God; but resist the devil, and he will flee from you,"

[1839] he goes on to say: "He shows us how we ought to resist the

devil, if we submit ourselves indeed to God and by doing His will merit

His divine grace, and by the help of the Holy Ghost more easily

withstand the evil spirit." Judge, then, how sincere was his

condemnation in the Palestine Synod of those persons who say that God's

grace is conferred on us according to our merits! Have we any doubt as

to his still holding this opinion, and most openly proclaiming it?

Well, how could that confession of his before the bishops have been

true and real? Had he already written the book in which he most

explicitly alleges that grace is bestowed on us according to our

deserts--the very position which he without any reservation condemned

at that Synod in the East? Let him frankly acknowledge that he once

held the opinion, but that he holds it no longer; so should we most

frankly rejoice in his improvement. As it is, however, when, besides

other objections, this one was laid to his charge which we are now

discussing, he said in reply: "Whether these are the opinions of

Coelestius or not, is the concern of those who affirm that they are.

For my own part, indeed, I never entertained such views; on the

contrary, I anathematize every one who does entertain them." [1840] But

how could he "never have entertained such views," when he had already

composed this work? Or how does he still "anathematize everybody who

entertains these views," if he afterwards composed this work?

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[1838] Epistola ad Demetriadem, c. 25.

[1839] Jas. iv. 7.

[1840] See the De Gestis Pelagii, ch. 30 [xiv.].

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Chapter 24.--Pelagius Places Free Will at the Basis of All Turning to

God for Grace.

But perhaps he may meet us with this rejoinder, that in the sentence

before us he spoke of our "meriting the divine grace by doing the will

of God," in the sense that grace is added to those who believe and lead

godly lives, whereby they may boldly withstand the tempter; whereas

their very first reception of grace was, that they might do the will of

God. Lest, then, he make such a rejoinder, consider some other words of

his on this subject: "The man," says he, "who hastens to the Lord, and

desires to be directed by Him, that is, who makes his own will depend

upon God's, who moreover cleaves so closely to the Lord as to become

(as the apostle says) one spirit' with Him, [1841] does all this by

nothing else than by his freedom of will." Observe how great a result

he has here stated to be accomplished only by our freedom of will; and

how, in fact, he supposes us to cleave to God without the help of God:

for such is the force of his words, "by nothing else than by his own

freedom of will." So that, after we have cleaved to the Lord without

His help, we even then, because of such adhesion of our own, deserve to

be assisted. [XXIII.] For he goes on to say: "Whosoever makes a right

use of this" (that is, rightly uses his freedom of will), "does so

entirely surrender himself to God, and does so completely mortify his

own will, that he is able to say with the apostle, Nevertheless it is

already not I that live, but Christ liveth in me;' [1842] and He

placeth his heart in the hand of God, so that He turneth it

whithersoever He willeth.'" [1843] Great indeed is the help of the

grace of God, so that He turns our heart in whatever direction He

pleases. But according to this writer's foolish opinion, however great

the help may be, we deserve it all at the moment when, without any

assistance beyond the liberty of our will, we hasten to the Lord,

desire His guidance and direction, suspend our own will entirely on

His, and by close adherence to Him become one spirit with Him. Now all

these vast courses of goodness we (according to him) accomplish,

forsooth, simply by the freedom of our own free will; and by reason of

such antecedent merits we so secure His grace, that He turns our heart

which way soever He pleases. Well, now, how is that grace which is not

gratuitously conferred? How can it be grace, if it is given in payment

of a debt? How can that be true which the apostle says, "It is not of

yourselves, but it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man

should boast;" [1844] and again, "If it is of grace, then is it no more

of works, otherwise grace is no more grace:" [1845] how, I repeat, can

this be true, if such meritorious works precede as to procure for us

the bestowal of grace? Surely, under the circumstances, there can be no

gratuitous gift, but only the recompense of a due reward. Is it the

case, then, that in order to find their way to the help of God, men run

to God without God's help? And in order that we may receive God's help

while cleaving to Him, do we without His help cleave to God? What

greater gift, or even what similar gift, could grace itself bestow upon

any man, if he has already without grace been able to make himself one

spirit with the Lord by no other power than that of his own free will?

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[1841] 1 Cor. vi. 17.

[1842] Gal. ii. 20.

[1843] Prov. xxi. 1.

[1844] Eph. ii. 8, 9.

[1845] Rom. xi. 6.

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Chapter 25 [XXIV.]--God by His Wonderful Power Works in Our Hearts Good

Dispositions of Our Will.

Now I want him to tell us whether that king of Assyria, [1846] whose

holy wife Esther "abhorred his bed," [1847] whilst sitting upon the

throne of his kingdom, and clothed in all his glorious apparel, adorned

all over with gold and precious stones, and dreadful in his majesty

when he raised his face, which was inflamed with anger, in the midst of

his splendour, and beheld her, with the glare of a wild bull in the

fierceness of his indignation; and the queen was afraid, and her colour

changed as she fainted, and she bowed herself upon the head of the maid

that went before her; [1848] --I want him to tell us whether this king

had yet "hastened to the Lord, and had desired to be directed by Him,

and had subordinated his own will to His, and had, by cleaving fast to

God, become one spirit with Him, simply by the force of his own free

will." Had he surrendered himself wholly to God, and entirely mortified

his own will, and placed his heart in the hand of God? I suppose that

anybody who should think this of the king, in the state he was then in,

would be not foolish only, but even mad. And yet God converted him, and

turned his indignation into gentleness. Who, however, can fail to see

how much greater a task it is to change and turn wrath completely into

gentleness, than to bend the heart to something, when it is not

preoccupied with either affection, but is indifferently poised between

the two? Let them therefore read and understand, observe and

acknowledge, that it is not by law and teaching uttering their lessons

from without, but by a secret, wonderful, and ineffable power operating

within, that God works in men's hearts not only revelations of the

truth, but also good dispositions of the will.

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[1846] The reading "Assyrius" is replaced in some editions by the more

suitable word "Assuerus."

[1847] This "exsecrabatur cubile" seems to refer to Esther's words in

her prayer, bdelussomai koiten aperitmeton, "I abhor the couch of the

uncircumcised" (Esth. iv., Septuagint).

[1848] Esth. v. 1.

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Chapter 26 [XXV.]--The Pelagian Grace of "Capacity" Exploded. The

Scripture Teaches the Need of God's Help in Doing, Speaking, and

Thinking, Alike.

Let Pelagius, therefore, cease at last to deceive both himself and

others by his disputations against the grace of God. It is not on

account of only one of these three [1849] --that is to say, of the

"capacity" of a good will and work--that the grace of God towards us

ought to be proclaimed; but also on account of the good "will" and

"work" themselves. This "capacity," indeed, according to his

definition, avails for both directions; and yet our sins must not also

be attributed to God in consequence, as our good actions, according to

his view, are attributed to Him owing to the same capacity. It is not

only, therefore, on this account that the help of God's grace is

maintained, because it assists our natural capacity. He must cease to

say, "That we are able to do, say, think any good, is from Him who has

given us this ability, and who also assists this ability; whereas that

we really do a good thing, or speak a good word, or think a good

thought, proceeds from our own selves." He must, I repeat, cease to say

this. For God has not only given us the ability and aids it, but He

further works in us "to will and to do." [1850] It is not because we do

not will, or do not do, that we will and do nothing good, but because

we are without His help. How can he say, "That we are able to do good

is of God, but that we actually do it is of ourselves," when the

apostle tells us that he "prays to God" in behalf of those to whom he

was writing, "that they should do no evil, but that they should do that

which is good?" [1851] His words are not, "We pray that ye be able to

do nothing evil;" but, "that ye do no evil." Neither does he say, "that

ye be able to do good;" but, "that ye do good." Forasmuch as it is

written, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of

God," [1852] it follows that, in order that they may do that which is

good, they must be led by Him who is good. How can Pelagius say, "That

we are able to make a good use of speech comes from God; but that we do

actually make this good use of speech proceeds from ourselves," when

the Lord declares, "It is the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in

you"? [1853] He does not say, "It is not you who have given to

yourselves the power of speaking well;" but His words are, "It is not

ye that speak." [1854] Nor does He say, "It is the Spirit of your

Father which giveth, or hath given, you the power to speak well;" but

He says, "which speaketh in you." He does not allude to the motion

[1855] of "the capacity," but He asserts the effect of the

co-operation. How can this arrogant asserter of free will say, "That we

are able to think a good thought comes from God, but that we actually

think a good thought proceeds from ourselves"? He has his answer from

the humble preacher of grace, who says, "Not that we are sufficient of

ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of

God." [1856] Observe he does not say, "to be able to think anything;"

but, "to think anything."

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[1849] See above, ch. 4.

[1850] Phil. ii. 13.

[1851] See 2 Cor. xiii. 7.

[1852] Rom. viii. 14.

[1853] Matt. x. 20.

[1854] Matt. x. 20.

[1855] See ch. 15 at the end.

[1856] 2 Cor. iii. 5.

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Chapter 27 [XXVI.]--What True Grace Is, and Wherefore Given. Merits Do

Not Precede Grace.

Now even Pelagius should frankly confess that this grace is plainly set

forth in the inspired Scriptures; nor should he with shameless

effrontery hide the fact that he has too long opposed it, but admit it

with salutary regret; so that the holy Church may cease to be harassed

by his stubborn persistence, and rather rejoice in his sincere

conversion. Let him distinguish between knowledge and love, as they

ought to be distinguished; because "knowledge puffeth up, but love

edifieth." [1857] And then knowledge no longer puffeth up when love

builds up. And inasmuch as each is the gift of God (although one is

less, and the other greater), he must not extol our righteousness above

the praise which is due to Him who justifies us, in such a way as to

assign to the lesser of these two gifts the help of divine grace, and

to claim the greater one for the human will. And should he consent that

we receive love from the grace of God, he must not suppose that any

merits of our own preceded our reception of the gift. For what merits

could we possibly have had at the time when we loved not God? In order,

indeed, that we might receive that love whereby we might love, we were

loved while as yet we had no love ourselves. This the Apostle John most

expressly declares: "Not that we loved God," says he, "but that He

loved us;" [1858] and again, "We love Him, because He first loved us."

[1859] Most excellently and truly spoken! For we could not have

wherewithal to love Him, unless we received it from Him in His first

loving us. And what good could we possibly do if we possessed no love?

Or how could we help doing good if we have love? For although God's

commandment appears sometimes to be kept by those who do not love Him,

but only fear Him; yet where there is no love, no good work is imputed,

nor is there any good work, rightly so called; because "whatsoever is

not of faith is sin," [1860] and "faith worketh by love." [1861] Hence

also that grace of God, whereby "His love is shed abroad in our hearts

through the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us," [1862] must be so

confessed by the man who would make a true confession, as to show his

undoubting belief that nothing whatever in the way of goodness

pertaining to godliness and real holiness can be accomplished without

it. Not after the fashion of him who clearly enough shows us what he

thinks of it when he says, that "grace is bestowed in order that what

God commands may be the more easily fulfilled;" which of course means,

that even without grace God's commandments may, although less easily,

yet actually, be accomplished.

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[1857] 1 Cor. viii. 1.

[1858] 1 John iv. 10.

[1859] 1 John iv. 19.

[1860] Rom. xiv. 23.

[1861] Gal. v. 6.

[1862] Rom. v. 5.

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Chapter 28 [XXVII.]--Pelagius Teaches that Satan May Be Resisted

Without the Help of the Grace of God.

In the book which he addressed to a certain holy virgin, there is a

passage which I have already mentioned, [1863] wherein he plainly

indicates what he holds on this subject; for he speaks of our

"deserving the grace of God, and by the help of the Holy Ghost more

easily resisting the evil spirit." Now why did he insert the phrase

"more easily"? Was not the sense already complete: "And by the help of

the Holy Ghost resisting the evil spirit"? But who can fail to perceive

what an injury he has done by this insertion? He wants it, of course,

to be supposed, that so great are the powers of our nature, which he is

in such a hurry to exalt,that even without the assistance of the Holy

Ghost the evil spirit can be resisted--less easily it may be, but still

in a certain measure.

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[1863] Quoted above, ch. 23 [xxii.], from the Epistola ad Demetriadem.

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Chapter 29 [XXVIII.]--When He Speaks of God's Help, He Means It Only to

Help Us Do What Without It We Still Could Do.

Again, in the first book of his Defence of the Freedom of the Will, he

says: "But while we have within us a free will so strong and so

stedfast against sinning, which our Maker has implanted in human nature

generally, still, by His unspeakable goodness, we are further defended

by His own daily help." What need is there of such help, if free will

is so strong and so stedfast against sinning? But here, as before, he

would have it understood that the purpose of the alleged assistance is,

that that may be more easily accomplished by grace which he

nevertheless supposes may be effected, less easily, no doubt, but yet

actually, without grace.

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Chapter 30 [XXIX.]--What Pelagius Thinks is Needful for Ease of

Performance is Really Necessary for the Performance.

In like manner, in another passage of the same book, he says: "In order

that men may more easily accomplish by grace that which they are

commanded to do by free will." Now, expunge the phrase "more easily,"

and you leave not only a full, but also a sound sense, if it be

regarded as meaning simply this: "That men may accomplish through grace

what they are commanded to do by free will." The addition of the words

"more easily," however, tacitly suggests the possibility of

accomplishing good works even without the grace of God. But such a

meaning is disallowed by Him who says, "Without me ye can do nothing."

[1864]

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[1864] John xv. 5.

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Chapter 31 [XXX.]--Pelagius and Coelestius Nowhere Really Acknowledge

Grace.

Let him amend all this, that if human infirmity has erred in subjects

so profound, he may not add to the error diabolical deception and

wilfulness, either by denying what he has really believed, or by

maintaining what he has rashly believed, after he has once discovered,

on recollecting the light of truth, that he ought never to have so

believed. As for that grace, indeed, by which we are justified,--in

other words, whereby "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by

the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us," [1865] --I have nowhere, in

those writings of Pelagius and Coelestius which I have had the

opportunity of reading, found them acknowledging it as it ought to be

acknowledged. In no passage at all have I observed them recognising

"the children of the promise," concerning whom the apostle thus speaks:

"They which are children of the flesh, these are not the children of

God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." [1866]

For that which God promises we do not ourselves bring about by our own

choice or natural power, but He Himself effects it by grace.

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[1865] Rom. v. 5.

[1866] Rom. ix. 8.

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Chapter 32.--Why the Pelagians Deemed Prayers to Be Necessary. The

Letter Which Pelagius Despatched to Pope Innocent with an Exposition of

His Belief.

Now I will say nothing at present about the works of Coelestius, or

those tracts of his which he produced in those ecclesiastical

proceedings, [1867] copies of the whole of which we have taken care to

send to you, along with another letter which we deemed it necessary to

add. If you carefully examine all these documents, you will observe

that he does not posit the grace of God, which helps us whether to

avoid evil or to do good, beyond the natural choice of the will, but

only in the law and teaching. Thus he even asserts that their very

prayers are necessary for the purpose of showing men what to desire and

love. All these documents, however, I may omit further notice of at

present; for Pelagius himself has lately forwarded to Rome both a

letter and an exposition of his belief, addressing it to Pope Innocent,

of blessed memory, of whose death he was ignorant. Now in this letter

he says that "there are certain subjects about which some men are

trying to vilify him. One of these is, that he refuses to infants the

sacrament of baptism, and promises the kingdom of heaven to some,

independently of Christ's redemption. Another of them is, that he so

speaks of man's ability to avoid sin as to exclude God's help, and so

strongly confides in free will that he repudiates the help of divine

grace." Now, as touching the perverted opinion he holds about the

baptism of infants (although he allows that it ought to be administered

to them), in opposition to the Christian faith and catholic truth, this

is not the place for us to enter on an accurate discussion, for we must

now complete our treatise on the assistance of grace, which is the

subject we undertook. Let us see what answer he makes out of this very

letter to the objection which he has proposed concerning this matter.

Omitting his invidious complaints about his opponents, we approach the

subject before us; and find him expressing himself as follows.

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[1867] Augustin again mentions a short treatise by Coelestius produced

by him at Rome in some proceedings of the church there, below, in ch.

36 (xxxiii.), and also in his work De Peccato Originali, chs. 2 and 5

(ii., v.), etc. Those acts of the Roman church were drawn up (as

Augustin testifies in his Contra duas Epistolas Pelagianorum, ii. 3,

"when Coelestius was present to answer charges laid against him") in

the time of Pope Zosimus, A.D. 417.

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Chapter 33 [XXXI.]--Pelagius Professes Nothing on the Subject of Grace

Which May Not Be Understood of the Law and Teaching.

"See," he says, "how this epistle will clear me before your

Blessedness; for in it we clearly and simply declare, that we possess a

free will which is unimpaired for sinning and for not sinning; [1868]

and this free will is in all good works always assisted by divine

help." Now you perceive, by the understanding which the Lord has given

you, that these words of his are inadequate to solve the question. For

it is still open to us to inquire what the help is by which he would

say that the free will is assisted; lest perchance he should, as is

usual with him, maintain that law and teaching are meant. If, indeed,

you were to ask him why he used the word "always," he might answer:

Because it is written, And in His law will he meditate day and night."

[1869] Then, after interposing a statement about the condition of man,

and his natural capacity for sinning and not sinning, he added the

following words: "Now this power of free will we declare to reside

generally in all alike--in Christians, in Jews, and in Gentiles. In all

men free will exists equally by nature, but in Christians alone is it

assisted by grace." We again ask: "By what grace?" And again he might

answer: "By the law and the Christian teaching."

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[1868] [Ad peccandum et ad non peccandum integrum liberum

arbitrium.--W.]

[1869] Ps. i. 2.

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Chapter 34.--Pelagius Says that Grace is Given According to Men's

Merits. The Beginning, However, of Merit is Faith; And This is a

Gratuitous Gift, Not a Recompense for Our Merits.

Then, again, whatever it is which he means by "grace," he says is given

even to Christians according to their merits, although (as I have

already mentioned above [1870] ), when he was in Palestine, in his very

remarkable vindication of himself, he condemned those who hold this

opinion. Now these are his words: "In the one," says he, "the good of

their created [1871] condition is naked and defenceless;" meaning in

those who are not Christians. Then adding the rest: "In these, however,

who belong to Christ, there is defence afforded by Christ's help." You

see it is still uncertain what the help is, according to the remark we

have already made on the same subject. He goes on, however, to say of

those who are not Christians: "Those deserve judgment and condemnation,

because, although they possess free will whereby they could come to

have faith and deserve God's grace, they make a bad use of the freedom

which has been granted to them. But these deserve to be rewarded, who

by the right use of free will merit the Lord's grace, and keep His

commandments." Now it is clear that he says grace is bestowed according

to merit, whatever and of what kind soever the grace is which he means,

but which he does not plainly declare. For when he speaks of those

persons as deserving reward who make a good use of their free will, and

as therefore meriting the Lord's grace, he asserts in fact that a debt

is paid to them. What, then, becomes of the apostle's saying, "Being

justified freely by His grace"? [1872] And what of his other statement

too, "By grace are ye saved"? [1873] --where, that he might prevent

men's supposing that it is by works, he expressly added, "by faith."

[1874] And yet further, lest it should be imagined that faith itself is

to be attributed to men independently of the grace of God, the apostle

says: "And that not of yourselves; for it is the gift of God." [1875]

It follows, therefore, that we receive, without any merit of our own,

that from which everything which, according to them, we obtain because

of our merit, has its beginning--that is, faith itself. If, however,

they insist on denying that this is freely given to us, what is the

meaning of the apostle's words: "According as God hath dealt to every

man the measure of faith"? [1876] But if it is contended that faith is

so bestowed as to be a recompense for merit, not a free gift, what then

becomes of another saying of the apostle: "Unto you it is given in the

behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for

His sake"? [1877] Each is by the apostle's testimony made a gift,--both

that he believes in Christ, and that each suffers for His sake. These

men however, attribute faith to free will in such a way as to make it

appear that grace is rendered to faith not as a gratuitous gift, but as

a debt--thus ceasing to be grace any longer, because that is not grace

which is not gratuitous.

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[1870] In ch. 23 [xxii.].

[1871] Conditionis bonum.

[1872] Rom. iii. 24.

[1873] Eph. i. 8.

[1874] Eph. i. 8.

[1875] Eph. i. 8.

[1876] Rom. xii. 3.

[1877] Phil. i. 29.

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Chapter 35 [XXXII.]--Pelagius Believes that Infants Have No Sin to Be

Remitted in Baptism.

But Pelagius would have the reader pass from this letter to the book

which states his belief. This he has made mention of to yourselves, and

in it he has discoursed a good deal on points about which no question

was raised as to his views. Let us, however, look simply at the

subjects about which our own controversy with them is concerned.

Having, then terminated a discussion which he had conducted to his

heart's content,--from the Unity of the Trinity to the resurrection of

the flesh, on which nobody was questioning him,--he goes on to say: "We

hold likewise one baptism, which we aver ought to be administered to

infants in the same sacramental formula as it is to adults." Well, now,

you have yourselves affirmed that you heard him admit at least as much

as this in your presence. What, however, is the use of his saying that

the sacrament of baptism is administered to children "in the same words

as it is to adults," when our inquiry concerns the thing, not merely

the words? It is a more important matter, that (as you write) with his

own mouth he replied to your own question, that "infants receive

baptism for the remission of sins." For he did not say here, too, "in

words of remission of sins," but he acknowledged that they are baptized

for the remission itself; and yet for all this, if you were to ask him

what the sin is which he supposes to be remitted to them, he would

contend that they had none whatever.

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Chapter 36 [XXXIII.]--Coelestius Openly Declares Infants to Have No

Original Sin.

Who would believe that, under so clear a confession, there is concealed

a contrary meaning, if Coelestius had not exposed it? He who in that

book of his, which he quoted at Rome in the ecclesiastical proceedings

there, [1878] distinctly acknowledged that "infants too are baptized

for the remission of sins," also denied "that they have any original

sin." But let us now observe what Pelagius thought, not about the

baptism of infants, but rather about the assistance of divine grace, in

this exposition of his belief which he forwarded to Rome. "We confess,"

says he, "free will in such a sense that we declare ourselves to be

always in need of the help of God." Well, now, we ask again, what the

help is which he says we require; and again we find ambiguity, since he

may possibly answer that he meant the law and the teaching of Christ,

whereby that natural "capacity" is assisted. We, however, on our side

require them to acknowledge a grace like that which the apostle

describes, when he says: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear;

but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind;" [1879] although it

does not follow by any means that the man who has the gift of

knowledge, whereby he has discovered what he ought to do, has also the

grace of love so as to do it.

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[1878] See above, ch. 32 [xxx.]; compare De Pecc. Orig. chs. 5, 6.

[1879] 2 Tim. i. 7.

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Chapter 37 [XXXIV.]--Pelagius Nowhere Admits the Need of Divine Help

for Will and Action.

I also have read those books or writings of his which he mentions in

the letter which he sent to Pope Innocent, of blessed memory, with the

exception of a brief epistle which he says he sent to the holy Bishop

Constantius; but I have nowhere been able to find in them that he

acknowledges such a grace as helps not only that "natural capacity of

willing and acting" (which according to him we possess, even when we

neither will a good thing nor do it), but also the will and the action

itself, by the ministration of the Holy Ghost.

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Chapter 38 [XXXV.]--A Definition of the Grace of Christ by Pelagius.

"Let them read," says he, "the epistle which we wrote about twelve

years ago to that holy man Bishop Paulinus: its subject throughout in

some three hundred lines is the confession of God's grace and

assistance alone, and our own inability to do any good thing at all

without God." Well, I have read this epistle also, and found him

dwelling throughout it on scarcely any other topic than the faculty and

capacity of nature, whilst he makes God's grace consist almost entirely

in this. Christ's grace, indeed, he treats with great brevity, simply

mentioning its name, so that his only aim seems to have been to avoid

the scandal of ignoring it altogether. It is, however, absolutely

uncertain whether he means Christ's grace to consist in the remission

of sins, or even in the teaching of Christ, including also the example

of His life (a meaning which he asserts in several passages of his

treatises); or whether he believes it to be a help towards good living,

in addition to nature and teaching, through the inspiring influence of

a burning and shining love.

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Chapter 39 [XXXVI]--A Letter of Pelagius Unknown to Augustin.

"Let them also read," says he, "my epistle to the holy Bishop

Constantius, wherein I have--briefly no doubt, but yet

plainly--conjoined the grace and help of God with man's free will."

This epistle, as I have already stated, [1880] I have not read; but if

it is not unlike the other writings which he mentions, and with which I

am acquainted, even this work does nothing for the subject of our

present inquiry.

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[1880] See above, ch. 37 [xxxiv.].

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Chapter 40 [XXXVII]--The Help of Grace Placed by Pelagius in the Mere

Revelation of Teaching.

"Let them read moreover" says he, "what I wrote, [1881] when I was in

the East, to Christ's holy virgin Demetrias, and they will find that we

so commend the nature of man as always to add the help of God's grace."

Well, I read this letter too; and it had almost persuaded me that he

did acknowledge therein the grace about which our discussion is

concerned, although he did certainly seem in many passages of this work

to contradict himself. But when there also came to my hands those other

treatises which he afterwards wrote for more extensive circulation, I

discovered in what sense he must have intended to speak of

grace,--concealing what he believed under an ambiguous generality, but

employing the term "grace" in order to break the force of obloquy, and

to avoid giving offence. For at the very commencement of this work

(where he says: "Let us apply ourselves with all earnestness to the

task which we have set before us, nor let us have any misgiving because

of our own humble ability; for we believe that we are assisted by the

mother's faith and her daughter's merit" [1882] ) he appeared to me at

first to acknowledge the grace which helps us to individual action; nor

did I notice at once the fact that he might possibly have made this

grace consist simply in the revelation of teaching.

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[1881] See above, ch. 23.

[1882] Epistle to Demetrias, ch. 1.

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Chapter 41.--Restoration of Nature Understood by Pelagius as

Forgiveness of Sins.

In this same work he says in another passage: "Now, if even without God

men show of what character they have been made by God, see what

Christians have it in their power to do, whose nature has been through

Christ restored to a better condition, and who are, moreover, assisted

by the help of divine grace." [1883] By this restoration of nature to a

better state he would have us understand the remission of sins. This he

has shown with sufficient clearness in another passage of this epistle,

where he says: "Even those who have become in a certain sense obdurate

through their long practice of sinning, can be restored through

repentance." [1884] But he may even here too make the assistance of

divine grace consist in the revelation of teaching.

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[1883] Epistle to Demetrias, ch. 3.

[1884] Epistle to Demetrias, ch. 17.

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Chapter 42 [XXXVIII.]--Grace Placed by Pelagius in the Remission of

Sins and the Example of Christ.

Likewise in another place in this epistle of his he says: "Now, if even

before the law, as we have already remarked, and long previous to the

coming of our Lord and Saviour, some men are related to have lived

righteous and holy lives; how much more worthy of belief is it that we

are capable of doing this since the illumination of His coming, who

have been restored by the grace of Christ, and born again into a better

man? How much better than they, who lived before the law, ought we to

be, who have been reconciled and cleansed by His blood, and by His

example encouraged to the perfection of righteousness!" [1885] Observe

how even here, although in different language, he has made the

assistance of grace to consist in the remission of sins and the example

of Christ. He then completes the passage by adding these words: "Better

than they were even who lived under the law; according to the apostle,

who says, Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under

the law, but under grace.' [1886] Now, inasmuch as we have," says he,

"said enough, as I suppose, on this point, let us describe a perfect

virgin, who shall testify the good at once of nature and of grace by

the holiness of her conduct, evermore warmed with the virtues of both."

[1887] Now you ought to notice that in these words also he wished to

conclude what he was saying in such a way that we might understand the

good of nature to be that which we received when we were created; but

the good of grace to be that which we receive when we regard and follow

the example of Christ,--as if sin were not permitted to those who were

or are under the law, on this account, because they either had not

Christ's example, or else do not believe in Him.

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[1885] Epistle to Demetrias, ch. 8.

[1886] Rom. vi. 14.

[1887] Epistle to Demetrias, ch. 9.

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Chapter 43 [XXXIX.]--The Forgiveness of Sins and Example of Christ Held

by Pelagius Enough to Save the Most Hardened Sinner.

That this, indeed, is his meaning, other words also of his show

us,--not contained in this work, but in the third book of his Defence

of Free Will, wherein he holds a discussion with an opponent, who had

insisted on the apostle's words when he says, "For what I would, that

do I not;" [1888] and again, "I see another law in my members, warring

against the law of my mind." [1889] To this he replied in these words:

"Now that which you wish us to understand of the apostle himself, all

Church writers [1890] assert that he spoke in the person of the sinner,

and of one who was still under the law,--such a man as was, by reason

of a very long custom of vice, held bound, as it were, by a certain

necessity of sinning, and who, although he desired good with his will,

in practice indeed was hurried headlong into evil. In the person,

however, of one man," he continues, "the apostle designates the people

who still sinned under the ancient law. This nation he declares was to

be delivered from this evil of custom through Christ, who first of all

remits all sins in baptism to those who believe in Him, and then urges

them by an imitation of Himself to perfect holiness, and by the example

of His own virtues overcomes the evil custom of their sins." Observe in

what way he supposes them to be assisted who sin under the law: they

are to be delivered by being justified through Christ's grace, as if

the law alone were insufficient for them, without some reinforcement

from Christ, owing to their long habit of sinning; not the inspiration

of love by His Holy Spirit, but the contemplation and copy of His

example in the inculcation of virtue by the gospel. Now here, at any

rate, there was the very greatest call on him to say plainly what grace

he meant, seeing that the apostle closed the very passage which formed

the ground of discussion with these telling words: "O wretched man that

I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of

God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." [1891] Now, when he places this

grace, not in the aid of His power, but in His example for imitation,

what further hope must we entertain of him, since everywhere the word

"grace" is mentioned by him under an ambiguous generality?

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[1888] Rom. vii. 15.

[1889] Rom. vii. 23.

[1890] By his ecclesiastici viri he refers, of course, to

ecclesiastical writers who had commented on St. Paul's doctrine. See

also Augustin's Contra duas Epistt. Pelag. i. 14 [viii.]; Contra

Julianum, ii. 5 [iii.], 8 [iv.], 13 [v.], 30 [viii.]; and De

Predestinatione Sanctorum, 4 [iv.].

[1891] Rom. vii. 25.

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Chapter 44 [XL.]--Pelagius Once More Guards Himself Against the

Necessity of Grace.

Then, again, in the work addressed to the holy virgin, [1892] of which

we have spoken already, there is this passage: "Let us submit ourselves

to God, and by doing His will let us merit the divine grace; and let us

the more easily, by the help of the Holy Ghost, resist the evil

spirit." Now, in these words of his, it is plain enough that he regards

us as assisted by the grace of the Holy Ghost, not because we are

unable to resist the tempter without Him by the sheer capacity of our

nature, but in order that we may resist more easily. With respect,

however, to the quantity and quality, whatever these might be, of this

assistance, we may well believe that he made them consist of the

additional knowledge which the Spirit reveals to us through teaching,

and which we either cannot, or scarcely can, possess by nature. Such

are the particulars which I have been able to discover in the book

which he addressed to the virgin of Christ, and wherein he seems to

confess grace. Of what purport and kind these are, you of course

perceive.

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[1892] The nun Demetrias. See above, chs. 23, 28.

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Chapter 45 [XLI.]--To What Purpose Pelagius Thought Prayers Ought to Be

Offered.

"Let them also read," says he, "my recent little treatise which we were

obliged to publish a short while ago in defence of free will, and let

them acknowledge how unfair is their determination to disparage us for

a denial of grace, when we throughout almost the whole work acknowledge

fully and sincerely both free will and grace." There are four books in

this treatise, all of which I read, marking such passages as required

consideration, and which I proposed to discuss: these I examined as

well as I was able, before we came to that epistle of his which was

sent to Rome. But even in these four books, that which he seems to

regard as the grace which helps us to turn aside from evil and to do

good, he describes in such a manner as to keep to his old ambiguity of

language, and thus have it in his power so to explain to his followers,

that they may suppose the assistance which is rendered by grace, for

the purpose of helping our natural capacity, consists of nothing else

than the law and the teaching. Thus our very prayers (as, indeed, he

most plainly affirms in his writings) are of no other use, in his

opinion, than to procure for us the explanation of the teaching by a

divine revelation, not to procure help for the mind of man to perfect

by love and action what it has learned should be done. The fact is, he

does not in the least relinquish that very manifest dogma of his system

in which he sets forth those three things, capacity, volition, action;

maintaining that only the first of these, the capacity, is favoured

with the constant assistance of divine help, but supposing that the

volition and the action stand in no need of God's assistance. Moreover,

the very help which he says assists our natural capacity, he places in

the law and teaching. This teaching, he allows, is revealed or

explained to us by the Holy Ghost, on which account it is that he

concedes the necessity of prayer. But still this assistance of law and

teaching he supposes to have existed even in the days of the prophets;

whereas the help of grace, which is properly so called, he will have to

lie simply in the example of Christ. But this example, you can plainly

see, pertains after all to "teaching,"--even that which is preached to

us as the gospel. The general result, then, is the pointing out, as it

were, of a road to us by which we are bound to walk, by the powers of

our free will, and needing no assistance from any one else, may suffice

to ourselves not to faint or fail on the way. And even as to the

discovery of the road itself, he contends that nature alone is

competent for it; only the discovery will be more easily effected if

grace renders assistance.

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Chapter 46 [XLII]--Pelagius Professes to Respect the Catholic Authors.

Such are the particulars which, to the best of my ability, I have

succeeded in obtaining from the writings of Pelagius, whenever he makes

mention of grace. You perceive, however, that men who entertain such

opinions as we have reviewed are "ignorant of God's righteousness, and

desire to establish their own," [1893] and are far off from "the

righteousness which we have of God" [1894] and not of ourselves; and

this they ought to have discovered and recognised in the very holy

canonical Scriptures. Forasmuch, however, as they read these Scriptures

in a sense of their own, they of course fail to observe even the most

obvious truths therein. Would that they would but turn their attention

in no careless mood to what might be learned concerning the help of

God's grace in the writings, at all events, of catholic authors; for

they freely allow that the Scriptures were correctly understood by

these, and that they would not pass them by in neglect, out of an

overweening fondness for their own opinions. For note how this very man

Pelagius, in that very treatise of his so recently put forth, and which

he formally mentions in his self-defence (that is to say, in the third

book of his Defence of Free Will), praises St. Ambrose.

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[1893] Rom. x. 3.

[1894] Phil. iii. 9.

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Chapter 47 [XLIII.]--Ambrose Most Highly Praised by Pelagius.

"The blessed Bishop Ambrose," says he, "in whose writings the Roman

faith shines forth with especial brightness, and whom the Latins have

always regarded as the very flower and glory of their authors, and who

has never found a foe bold enough to censure his faith or the purity of

his understanding of the Scriptures." Observe the sort as well as the

amount of the praises which he bestows; nevertheless, however holy and

learned he is, he is not to be compared to the authority of the

canonical Scripture. The reason of this high commendation of Ambrose

lies in the circumstance, that Pelagius sees proper to quote a certain

passage from his writings to prove that man is able to live without

sin. [1895] This, however, is not the question before us. We are at

present discussing that assistance of grace which helps us towards

avoiding sin, and leading holy lives.

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[1895] See On Nature and Grace, above, ch. 74.

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Chapter 48 [XLIV].--Ambrose is Not in Agreement with Pelagius.

I wish, indeed, that he would listen to the venerable bishop when, in

the second book of his Exposition of the Gospel according to Luke,

[1896] he expressly teaches us that the Lord co-operates also with our

wills. "You see, therefore," says he, "because the power of the Lord

co-operates everywhere with human efforts, that no man is able to build

without the Lord, no man to watch without the Lord, no man to undertake

anything without the Lord. Whence the apostle thus enjoins: Whether ye

eat, or whether ye drink, do all to the glory of God.'" [1897] You

observe how the holy Ambrose takes away from men even their familiar

expressions,--such as, "We undertake, but God accomplishes,"--when he

says here that "no man is able to undertake anything without the Lord."

To the same effect he says, in the sixth book of the same work, [1898]

treating of the two debtors of a certain creditor: "According to men's

opinions, he perhaps is the greater offender who owed most. The case,

however, is altered by the Lord's mercy, so that he loves the most who

owes the most, if he yet obtains grace." See how the catholic doctor

most plainly declares that the very love which prompts every man to an

ampler love appertains to the kindly gift of grace.

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[1896] Book ii. c. 84, on Luke iii. 22. Compare Against Two Letters of

the Pelagians, below, iv. ch. 30.

[1897] 1 Cor. x. 31.

[1898] Book vi. c. 25, on Luke vii. 41.

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Chapter 49 [XLV.]--Ambrose Teaches with What Eye Christ Turned and

Looked Upon Peter.

That repentance, indeed, itself, which beyond all doubt is an action of

the will, is wrought into action by the mercy and help of the Lord, is

asserted by the blessed Ambrose in the following passage in the ninth

book of the same work: [1899] "Good, says he, "are the tears which wash

away sin. They upon whom the Lord at last turns and looks, bewail.

Peter denied Him first, and did not weep, because the Lord had not

turned and looked upon him. He denied Him a second time, and still wept

not, because the Lord had not even yet turned and looked upon him. The

third time also he denied Him, Jesus turned and looked, and then he

wept most bitterly." Let these persons read the Gospel; let them

consider how that the Lord Jesus was at that moment within, having a

hearing before the chief of the priests; whilst the Apostle Peter was

outside, [1900] and down in the hall, [1901] sitting at one time with

the servants at the fire, [1902] at another time standing, [1903] as

the most accurate and consistent narrative of the evangelists shows. It

cannot therefore be said that it was with His bodily eyes that the Lord

turned and looked upon him by a visible and apparent admonition. That,

then, which is described in the words, "The Lord turned and looked upon

Peter," [1904] was effected internally; it was wrought in the mind,

wrought in the will. In mercy the Lord silently and secretly

approached, touched the heart, recalled the memory of the past, with

His own internal grace visited Peter, stirred and brought out into

external tears the feelings of his inner man. Behold in what manner God

is present with His help to our wills and actions; behold how "He

worketh in us both to will and to do."

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[1899] "In the ninth book of the same work," says St. Augustin. The

reference, however, is to book x. of the editions, c. 89, on Luke xxii.

61.

[1900] Matt. xxvi. 69, 71.

[1901] Mark xiv. 66.

[1902] Luke xxii. 55.

[1903] John xviii. 16.

[1904] Luke xxii. 61.

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Chapter 50.--Ambrose Teaches that All Men Need God's Help.

In the same book the same St. Ambrose says again: [1905] "Now if Peter

fell, who said, Though all men shall be offended, yet will I never be

offended,' who else shall rightly presume concerning himself? David,

indeed, because he had said, In my prosperity I said, I shall never be

moved,' confesses how injurious his confidence had proved to himself:

Thou didst turn away Thy face,' he says, and I was troubled.'" [1906]

Pelagius ought to listen to the teaching of so eminent a man, and

should follow his faith, since he has commended his teaching and faith.

Let him listen humbly; let him follow with fidelity; let him indulge no

longer in obstinate presumption, lest he perish. Why does Pelagius

choose to be sunk in that sea whence Peter was rescued by the Rock?

[1907]

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[1905] Book x. c. 89.

[1906] Ps. xxx. 7.

[1907] It is impossible to preserve the paronomasia of the original,

which plays on the meaning of the names Pelagius (pelago, sea) and

Petrus (petra, rock).

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Chapter 51 [XLVI.]--Ambrose Teaches that It is God that Does for Man

What Pelagius Attributes to Free Will.

Let him lend an ear also to the same godly bishop, who says, in the

sixth book of this same book: [1908] "The reason why they would not

receive Him is mentioned by the evangelist himself in these words,

Because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem.' [1909] But

His disciples had a strong wish that He should be received into the

Samaritan town. God, however, calls whomsoever He deigns, and whom He

wills He makes religious." What wise insight of the man of God, drawn

from the very fountain of God's grace! "God," says he, "calls

whomsoever He deigns, and whom He wills He makes religious." See

whether this is not the prophet's own declaration: "I will have mercy

on whom I will have mercy, and will show pity on whom I will be

pitiful;" [1910] and the apostle's deduction therefrom: "So then," says

he, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God

that showeth mercy." [1911] Now, when even his model man of our own

times says, that "whomsoever God deigns He calls, and whom He wills He

makes religious," will any one be bold enough to contend that that man

is not yet religious "who hastens to the Lord, and desires to be

directed by Him, and makes his own will depend upon God's; who,

moreover, cleaves so closely to the Lord, that he becomes (as the

apostle says) one spirit' with Him?" [1912] Great, however, as is this

entire work of a "religious man," Pelagius maintains that "it is

effected only by the freedom of the will." But his own blessed Ambrose,

whom he so highly commends in word, is against him, saying, "The Lord

God calls whomsoever He deigns, and whom He wills He makes religious."

It is God, then, who makes religious whomsoever He pleases, in order

that he may "hasten to the Lord, and desire to be directed by Him, and

make his own will depend upon God's, and cleave so closely to the Lord

as to become (as the apostle says) one spirit' with Him;" and all this

none but a religious man does. Who, then, ever does so much, unless he

be made by God to do it?

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[1908] It is the seventh book in the editions, c. 27, on Luke ix. 53.

[1909] Luke ix. 53.

[1910] Ex. xxxiii. 19.

[1911] Rom. ix. 16.

[1912] 1 Cor. vi. 17. These are the words of Pelagius, which have been

already quoted above, in ch. 24.

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Chapter 52 [XLVII.]--If Pelagius Agrees with Ambrose, Augustin Has No

Controversy with Him.

Inasmuch, however, as the discussion about free will and God's grace

has such difficulty in its distinctions, that when free will is

maintained, God's grace is apparently denied; whilst when God's grace

is asserted, free will is supposed to be done away with,--Pelagius can

so involve himself in the shades of this obscurity as to profess

agreement with all that we have quoted from St. Ambrose, and declare

that such is, and always has been, his opinion also; and endeavour so

to explain each, that men may suppose his opinion, to be in fair accord

with Ambrose's. So far therefore, as concerns the questions of God's

help and grace, you are requested to observe the three things which he

has distinguished so very plainly, under the terms "ability," "will,"

and "actuality," that is, "capacity," "volition," and "action." [1913]

If, then, he has come round to an agreement with us, then not the

"capacity" alone in man, even if he neither wills nor performs the

good, but the volition and the action also,--in other words, our

willing well and doing well,--things which have no existence in man,

except when he has a good will and acts rightly:--if, I repeat, he thus

consents to hold with us that even the volition and the action are

assisted by God, and so assisted that we can neither will nor do any

good thing without such help; if, too, he believes that this is that

very grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ which makes us

righteous through His righteousness, and not our own, so that our true

righteousness is that which we have of Him,--then, so far as I can

judge, there will remain no further controversy between us concerning

the assistance we have from the grace of God.

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[1913] See above, ch. 4.

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Chapter 53 [XLVIII.]--In What Sense Some Men May Be Said to Live

Without Sin in the Present Life.

But in reference to the particular point in which he quoted the holy

Ambrose with so much approbation,--because he found in that author's

writings, from the praises he accorded to Zacharias and Elisabeth, the

opinion that a man might possibly in this life be without sin; [1914]

although this cannot be denied if God wills it, with whom all things

are possible, yet he ought to consider more carefully in what sense

this was said. Now, so far as I can see, this statement was made in

accordance with a certain standard of conduct, which is among men held

to be worthy of approval and praise, and which no human being could

justly call in question for the purpose of laying accusation or

censure. Such a standard Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth are said to

have maintained in the sight of God, for no other reason than that

they, by walking therein, never deceived people by any dissimulation;

but as they in their sincerity appeared to men, so were they known in

the sight of God. [1915] The statement, however, was not made with any

reference to that perfect state of righteousness in which we shall one

day live truly and absolutely in a condition of spotless purity. The

Apostle Paul, indeed, has told us that he was "blameless, as touching

the righteousness which is of the law;" [1916] and it was in respect of

the same law that Zacharias also lived a blameless life. This

righteousness, however, the apostle counted as "dung" and "loss," in

comparison with the righteousness which is the object of our hope,

[1917] and which we ought to "hunger and thirst after," [1918] in order

that hereafter we may be satisfied with the vision thereof, enjoying it

now by faith, so long as "the just do live by faith." [1919]

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[1914] Ambrose on St. Luke, Book i. c. 17.

[1915] Luke i. 6; compare De Perfect. Just. ch. 38.

[1916] Phil. iii. 6.

[1917] Phil. iii. 8.

[1918] Matt. v. 6.

[1919] Rom. i. 17.

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Chapter 54 [XLIX.]--Ambrose Teaches that No One is Sinless in This

World.

Lastly, let him give good heed to his venerable bishop, when he is

expounding the Prophet Isaiah, [1920] and says that "no man in this

world can be without sin." Now nobody can pretend to say that by the

phrase "in this world" he simply meant, in the love of this world. For

he was speaking of the apostle, who said, "Our conversation is in

heaven;" [1921] and while unfolding the sense of these words, the

eminent bishop expressed himself thus: "Now the apostle says that many

men, even while living in the present world, are perfect with

themselves, who could not possibly be deemed perfect, if one looks at

true perfection. For he says himself: We now see through a glass,

darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I

know, even as also I am known.' [1922] Thus, there are those who are

spotless in this world, there are those who will be spotless in the

kingdom of God; although, of course, if you sift the thing minutely, no

one could be spotless, because no one is without sin." That passage,

then, of the holy Ambrose, which Pelagius applies in support of his own

opinion, was either written in a qualified sense, probable, indeed, but

not expressed with minute accuracy; or if the holy and lowly-minded

author did think that Zacharias and Elisabeth lived according to the

highest and absolutely perfect righteousness, which was incapable of

increase or addition, he certainly corrected his opinion on a minuter

examination of it.

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[1920] This work of Ambrose is no longer extant. It is again quoted by

Augustin in his work, De Peccato Originali, c. 47 [xli.]; in his De

Nuptiis et Concupisc. i. 40 [xxxv.]; in his Contra Julianum, i. 11

[iv.], ii. 24 [viii.]; and in his Contra duas Epist. Pelagianorum, c.

30 [xi.]. Ambrose himself mentions this work of his in his Exposition

of Luke, Book ii. c. 56, on Luke ii. 19.

[1921] Phil. iii. 20.

[1922] 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

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Chapter 55 [L.]--Ambrose Witnesses that Perfect Purity is Impossible to

Human Nature.

He ought, moreover, carefully to note that, in the very same context

from which he quoted that passage of Ambrose's, which seemed so

satisfactory for his purpose, he also said this: "To be spotless from

the beginning is an impossibility to human nature." [1923] In this

sentence the venerable Ambrose does undoubtedly predicate feebleness

and infirmity of that natural "capacity," which Pelagius refuses

faithfully to regard as corrupted by sin, and therefore boastfully

extols. Beyond question, this runs counter to this man's will and

inclination, although it does not contravene the truthful confession of

the apostle, wherein he says: "We too were once by nature the children

of wrath, even as others." [1924] For through the sin of the first man,

which came from his free will, our nature became corrupted and ruined;

and nothing but God's grace alone, through Him who is the Mediator

between God and men, and our Almighty Physician, succours it. Now,

since we have already prolonged this work too far in treating of the

assistance of the divine grace towards our justification, by which God

co-operates in all things for good with those who love Him, [1925] and

whom He first loved [1926] --giving to them that He might receive from

them: we must commence another treatise, as the Lord shall enable us,

on the subject of sin also, which by one man has entered into the

world, along with death, and so has passed upon all men, [1927] setting

forth as much as shall seem needful and sufficient, in opposition to

those persons who have broken out into violent and open error, contrary

to the truth here stated.

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[1923] See Augustin, above, De Natur� et Grati�, c. 75 [lxiii.].

[1924] Eph. ii. 3.

[1925] Rom. viii. 28.

[1926] 1 John iv. 19.

[1927] Rom. v. 12.

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Book II.

On Original Sin.

Wherein Augustin shows that Pelagius really differs in no respect, on

the question of original sin and the baptism of infants, from his

follower Coelestius, who, refusing to acknowledge original sin and even

daring to deny the doctrine in public, was condemned in trials before

the bishops--first at Carthage, and afterwards at Rome; for this

question is not, as these heretics would have it, one wherein persons

might err without danger to the faith. Their heresy, indeed, aimed at

nothing else than the very foundations of Christian belief. He

afterwards refutes all such as maintained that the blessing of

matrimony is disparaged by the doctrine of original depravity, and an

injury done to God himself, the Creator of man who is born by means of

matrimony.

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Chapter 1 [I.]--Caution Needed in Attending to Pelagius' Deliverances

on Infant Baptism.

Next I beg of you, [1928] carefully to observe with what caution you

ought to lend an ear, on the question of the baptism of infants, to men

of this character, who dare not openly deny the laver of regeneration

and the forgiveness of sins to this early age, for fear that Christian

ears would not bear to listen to them; and who yet persist in holding

and urging their opinion, that the carnal generation is not held guilty

of man's first sin, although they seem to allow infants to be baptized

for the remission of sins. You have, indeed, yourselves informed me in

your letter, that you heard Pelagius say in your presence, reading out

of that book of his which he declared that he had also sent to Rome,

that they maintain that "infants ought to be baptized with the same

formula of sacramental words as adults." [1929] Who, after that

statement, would suppose that one ought to raise any question at all on

this subject? Or if he did, to whom would he not seem to indulge a very

calumnious disposition--previous to the perusal of their plain

assertions, in which they deny that infants inherit original sin, and

contend that all persons are born free from all corruption?

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[1928] For the persons addressed, see above, in Book i. c. 1, of On the

Grace of Christ.

[1929] See above, On the Grace of Christ, ch. 35.

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Chapter 2 [II.]--Coelestius, on His Trial at Carthage, Refuses to

Condemn His Error; The Written Statement Which He Gave to Zosimus.

Coelestius, indeed, maintained this erroneous doctrine with less

restraint. To such an extent did he push his freedom as actually to

refuse, when on trial before the bishops at Carthage, [1930] to condemn

those who say, "That Adam's sin injured only Adam himself, and not the

human race; and that infants at their birth are in the same state that

Adam was in before his transgression." [1931] In the written statement,

too, which he presented to the most blessed Pope Zosimus at Rome, he

declared with especial plainness, "that original sin binds no single

infant." Concerning the ecclesiastical proceedings at Carthage we copy

the following account of his words.

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[1930] See Concerning the Proceedings of Pelagius, ch. 23.

[1931] Pelagius, at Diospolis, condemned this position of Coelestius.

Hence the comparative restraint of Pelagius, and the greater freedom in

holding the error which is here attributed to Coelestius.

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Chapter 3 [III.]--Part of the Proceedings of the Council of Carthage

Against Coelestius.

"The bishop Aurelius said: Let what follows be recited.' It was

accordingly recited, That the sin of Adam was injurious to him alone,

and not to the human race.' Then, after the recital, Coelestius said: I

said that I was in doubt about the transmission of sin, [1932] but so

as to yield assent to any man whom God has gifted with the grace of

knowledge; for I have heard different opinions from those who have been

even appointed presbyters in the Catholic Church.' The deacon Paulinus

[1933] said: Tell us their names.' Coelestius answered: The holy

presbyter Rufinus, [1934] who lived at Rome with the holy Pammachius. I

have heard him declare that there is no transmission of sin.' The

deacon Paulinus then asked: Is there any one else?' Coelestius replied:

I have heard more say the same.' The deacon Paulinus rejoined: Tell us

their names.' Coelestius said: Is not one priest enough for you?'" Then

afterwards in another place we read: "The bishop Aurelius said: Let the

rest of the accusation be read.' It then was recited That infants at

their birth are in the same state that Adam was before the

transgression;' and they read to the very end of the brief accusation

which had been previously put in. [IV.] The bishop Aurelius inquired:

Have you, Coelestius, taught at any time, as the deacon Paulinus has

stated, that infants are at their birth in the same state that Adam was

before his transgression?' Coelestius answered: Let him explain what he

meant when he said, "before the transgression.'" The deacon Paulinus

then said: Do you on your side deny that you ever taught this doctrine?

It must be one of two things: he must either say that he never so

taught, or else he must now condemn the opinion.' Coelestius rejoined:

I have already said, Let him explain the words he mentioned, "before

the transgression."' The deacon Paulinus then said: You must deny ever

having taught this.' The bishop Aurelius said: I ask, What conclusion I

have on my part to draw from this man's obstinacy; my affirmation is,

that although Adam, as created in Paradise, is said to have been made

immortal at first, he afterwards became corruptible through

transgressing the commandment. Do you say this, brother Paulinus?' I

do, my lord,' answered the deacon Paulinus. Then the bishop Aurelius

said: As regards the condition of infants before baptism at the present

day, the deacon Paulinus wishes to be informed whether it is such as

Adam's was before the transgression; and whether it derives the guilt

of transgression from the same origin of sin from which it is born?'

The deacon Paulinus asked: Let him deny whether he taught this, or

not.' Coelestius answered: As touching the transmission of sin, I have

already asserted, that I have heard many persons of acknowledged

position in the catholic Church deny it altogether; and on the other

hand, others affirm it: it may be fairly deemed a matter for inquiry,

but not a heresy. I have always maintained that infants require

baptism, and ought to be baptized. What else does he want?'"

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[1932] De traduce peccati, the technical phrase to express the

conveyance by birth of original sin.

[1933] This Paulinus, according to Mercator (Commonit. super nomine

Coelestii), was the deacon of Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, and the author

of his biography, which he wrote at the instance of Augustin. According

to his own showing, he lived in Africa, and wrote the Life of Ambrose

when John was pretorian prefect, i.e. either in the year 412, or 413,

or 422. The trial mentioned in the text took place about the

commencement of the year 412, according to Augustin's letter to Pope

Innocent (See Augustin's letter, 175, 1. 6). See above, in the treatise

On the Proceedings of Pelagius, 23.

[1934] Mercator (Commonit. adv. H�res. Pelagii) informs us that a

certain Syrian called Rufinus introduced the discussion against

original sin and its transmission into Rome in the pontificate of

Anastasius. According to some, this was the Rufinus of Aquileia, whom

Jerome (in Epist. ad Ctesiphont.) notices as the precursor of Pelagius

in his error about the sinless nature of man; according, however, to

others, it is the other Rufinus, mentioned by Jerome in his 66th

Epistle, who is possibly the same as he who rejects the transmission of

original sin in a treatise On Faith, which J. Sismondi published as the

work of Rufinus, a presbyter of the province of Palestine. It is, at

any rate, hardly possible to suppose that the Aquileian Rufinus either

went to Rome, or lodged there with Pammachius, in the time of Pope

Anastasius.

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Chapter 4.--Coelestius Concedes Baptism for Infants, Without Affirming

Original Sin.

You, of course, see that Coelestius here conceded baptism for infants

only in such a manner as to be unwilling to confess that the sin of the

first man, which is washed away in the laver of regeneration, passes

over to them, although at the same time he did not venture to deny

this; and on account of this doubt he refused to condemn those who

maintain "That Adam's sin injured only himself, and not the human

race;" and "that infants at their birth are in the same condition

wherein Adam was before the transgression."

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Chapter 5 [V.]--Coelestius' Book Which Was Produced in the Proceedings

at Rome.

But in the book which he published at Rome, and produced in the

proceedings before the church there, he so speaks on this question as

to show that he really believes what he had professed to be in doubt

about. For these are his words: [1935] "That infants, however, ought to

be baptized for the remission of sins, according to the rule of the

Church universal, and according to the meaning of the Gospel, we

confess. For the Lord has determined that the kingdom of heaven should

only be conferred on baptized persons; [1936] and since the resources

of nature do not possess it, it must necessarily be conferred by the

gift of grace." Now if he had not said anything elsewhere on this

subject, who would not have supposed that he acknowledged the remission

of original sin even in infants at their baptism, by saying that they

ought to be baptized for the remission of sins? Hence the point of what

you have stated in your letter, that Pelagius' answer to you was on

this wise, "That infants are baptized with the same words of

sacramental formula as adults," and that you were rejoiced to hear the

very thing which you were desirous of hearing, and yet that you

preferred holding a consultation with us concerning his words.

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[1935] See above, On the Grace of Christ, ch. 36.

[1936] John iii. 5.

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Chapter 6 [VI.]--Coelestius the Disciple is In This Work Bolder Than

His Master.

Carefully observe, then, what Coelestius has advanced so very openly,

and you will discover what amount of concealment Pelagius has practised

upon you. Coelestius goes on to say as follows: "That infants, however,

must be baptized for the remission of sins, was not admitted by us with

the view of our seeming to affirm sin by transmission. This is very

alien from the catholic meaning, because sin is not born with a

man,--it is subsequently committed by the man for it is shown to be a

fault, not of nature, but of the will. It is fitting, therefore, to

confess this, lest we should seem to make different kinds of baptism;

it is, moreover, necessary to lay down this preliminary safeguard, lest

by the occasion of this mystery evil should, to the disparagement of

the Creator, be said to be conveyed to man by nature, before that it

has been committed by man." Now Pelagius was either afraid or ashamed

to avow this to be his own opinion before you; although his disciple

experienced neither a qualm nor a blush in openly professing it to be

his, without any obscure subterfuges, in presence of the Apostolic See.

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Chapter 7.--Pope Zosimus Kindly Excuses Him.

The bishop, however, who presides over this See, upon seeing him

hurrying headlong in so great presumption like a madman, chose in his

great compassion, with a view to the man's repentance, if it might be,

rather to bind him tightly by eliciting from him answers to questions

proposed by himself, than by the stroke of a severe condemnation to

drive him over the precipice, down which he seemed to be even now ready

to fall. I say advisedly, "down which he seemed to be ready to fall,"

rather than "over which he had actually fallen," because he had already

in this same book of his forecast the subject with an intended

reference to questions of this sort in the following words: "If it

should so happen that any error of ignorance has stolen over us human

beings, let it be corrected by your decisive sentence."

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Chapter 8 [VII.]--Coelestius Condemned by Zosimus.

The venerable Pope Zosimus, keeping in view this deprecatory preamble,

dealt with the man, puffed up as he was with the blasts of false

doctrine, so as that he should condemn all the objectionable points

which had been alleged against him by the deacon Paulinus, and that he

should yield his assent to the rescript of the Apostolic See which had

been issued by his predecessor of sacred memory. The accused man,

however, refused to condemn the objections raised by the deacon, yet he

did not dare to hold out against the letter of the blessed Pope

Innocent; indeed, he went so far as to "promise that he would condemn

all the points which the Apostolic See condemned." Thus the man was

treated with gentle remedies, as a delirious patient who required rest;

but, at the same time, he was not regarded as being yet ready to be

released from the restraints of excommunication. The interval of two

months being granted him, until communications could be received from

Africa, a place for recovery was conceded to him, under the mild

restorative of the sentence which had been pronounced. For in truth, if

he would have laid aside his vain obstinacy, and be now willing to

carry out what he had undertaken, and would carefully read the very

letter to which he had replied by promising submission, he would yet

come to a better mind. But after the rescripts were duly issued from

the council of the African bishops, there were very good reasons why

the sentence should be carried out against him, in strictest accordance

with equity. What these reasons were you may read for yourselves, for

we have sent you all the particulars.

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Chapter 9 [VIII.]--Pelagius Deceived the Council in Palestine, But Was

Unable to Deceive the Church at Rome.

Wherefore Pelagius, too, if he will only reflect candidly on his own

position and writings, has no reason for saying that he ought not to

have been banned with such a sentence. For although he deceived the

council in Palestine, seemingly clearing himself before it, he entirely

failed in imposing on the church at Rome (where, as you well know, he

is by no means a stranger), although he went so far as to make the

attempt, if he might somehow succeed. But, as I have just said, he

entirely failed. For the most blessed Pope Zosimus recollected what his

predecessor, who had set him so worthy an example, had thought of these

very proceedings. Nor did he omit to observe what opinion was

entertained about this man by the trusty Romans, whose faith deserved

to be spoken of in the Lord, [1937] and whose consistent zeal in

defence of catholic truth against this heresy he saw prevailing amongst

them with warmth, and at the same time most perfect harmony. The man

had lived among them for a long while, and his opinions could not

escape their notice; moreover, they had so completely found out his

disciple Coelestius, as to be able at once to adduce the most

trustworthy and irrefragable evidence on this subject. Now what was the

solemn judgment which the holy Pope Innocent formed respecting the

proceedings in the Synod of Palestine, by which Pelagius boasts of

having been acquitted, you may indeed read in the letter which he

addressed to me. It is duly mentioned also in the answer which was

forwarded by the African Synod to the venerable Pope Zosimus and which,

along with the other instructions, we have despatched to your loving

selves. [1938] But it seems to me, at the same time, that I ought not

to omit producing the particulars in the present work.

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[1937] Rom. i. 8.

[1938] Albina, Pinianus, and Melania. Literally, they are here

addressed as "your Love."

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Chapter 10 [IX.]--The Judgment of Innocent Respecting the Proceedings

in Palestine.

Five bishops, then, of whom I was one, wrote him a letter, [1939]

wherein we mentioned the proceedings in Palestine, of which the report

had already reached us. We informed him that in the East, where this

man lived, there had taken place certain ecclesiastical proceedings, in

which he was thought to have been acquitted on all the charges. To this

communication from us Innocent replied in a letter which contains the

following among other words: "There are," says he, "sundry positions,

as stated in these very Proceedings, which, when they were objected

against him, he partly suppressed by avoiding them, and partly confused

in absolute obscurity, by wresting the sense of many words; whilst

there are other allegations which he cleared off,--not, indeed, in the

honest way which he might seem at the time to use, but rather by

methods of sophistry, meeting some of the objections with a flat

denial, and tampering with others by a fallacious interpretation.

Would, however, that he would even now adopt what is the far more

desirable course of turning from his own error back to the true ways of

catholic faith; that he would also, duly considering God's daily grace,

and acknowledging the help thereof, be willing and desirous to appear,

amidst the approbation of all men, to be truly corrected by the method

of open conviction,--not, indeed, by judicial process, but by a hearty

conversion to the catholic faith. We are therefore unable either to

approve of or to blame their proceedings at that trial; for we cannot

tell whether the proceedings were true, or even, if true, whether they

do not really show that the man escaped by subterfuge, rather than that

he cleared himself by entire truth." [1940] You see clearly from these

words, how that the most blessed Pope Innocent without doubt speaks of

this man as of one who was by no means unknown to him. You see what

opinion he entertained about his acquittal. You see, moreover, what his

successor the holy Pope Zosimus was bound to recollect,--as in truth he

did,--so as to confirm without hesitation the judgment of his

predecessor in this case.

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[1939] Epistle 177, in the collection of Augustin's letters.

[1940] Innocent's letter occurs amongst the epistles of Augustin,

letter 183. 3, 4.

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Chapter 11 [X.]--How that Pelagius Deceived the Synod of Palestine.

Now I pray you carefully to observe by what evidence Pelagius is shown

to have deceived his judges in Palestine, not to mention other points,

on this very question of the baptism of infants, lest we should seem to

any one to have used calumny and suspicion, rather than to have

ascertained the certain fact, when we alleged that Pelagius concealed

the opinion which Coelestius expressed with greater frankness, while at

the same time he actually entertained the same views. Now, from what

has been stated above, it has been clearly seen that Coelestius refused

to condemn the assertion that "Adam's sin injured only himself, and not

the human race, and that infants at their birth are in the same state

that Adam was before the transgression," because he saw that, if he

condemned these propositions, he would affirm that there was in infants

a transmission of sin from Adam. When, however, it was objected to

Pelagius that he was of one mind with Coelestius on this point, he

condemned the words without hesitation. I am quite aware that you have

read all this before. Since, however, we are not writing this account

for you alone, we proceed to transcribe the very words of the synodal

acts, lest the reader should be unwilling either to turn to the record

for himself, or if he does not possess it, take the trouble to procure

a copy. Here, then, are the words:--

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Chapter 12 [XI.]--A Portion of the Proceedings of the Synod of

Palestine in the Cause of Pelagius.

"The synod said: [1941] Now, forasmuch as Pelagius has pronounced his

anathema on this uncertain utterance of folly, rightly replying that a

man by God's help and grace is able to live anamartetos, that is to

say, without sin, let him give us his answer on other articles also.

Another particular in the teaching of Coelestius, disciple of Pelagius,

selected from the heads which were mentioned and heard at Carthage

before the holy Aurelius bishop of Carthage, and other bishops, was to

this effect: That Adam was made mortal, and that he would have died,

whether he sinned or did not sin; that Adam's sin injured himself

alone, and not the human race; that the law no less than the gospel

leads us to the kingdom; that before the coming of Christ there were

persons without sin; that newborn infants are in the same condition

that Adam was before the transgression; that, on the one hand, the

entire human race does not die on account of Adam's death and

transgression, nor, on the other hand, does the whole human race rise

again through the resurrection of Christ; that the holy bishop Augustin

wrote a book in answer to his followers in Sicily, on articles which

were subjoined, and in this book, which was addressed to Hilary, are

contained the following statements: That a man is able to be without

sin if he wishes; that infants, even if they are unbaptized, have

eternal life; that rich men, even if they are baptized, unless they

renounce and give up all, have, whatever good they may seem to have

done, nothing of it reckoned unto them, neither can they possess the

kingdom of heaven.' Pelagius then said: As regards man's ability to be

without sin, my opinion has been already spoken. With respect, however,

to the allegation that there were even before the Lord's coming persons

who lived without sin, we also on our part say, that before the coming

of Christ there certainly were persons who passed their lives in

holiness and righteousness, according to the accounts which have been

handed down to us in the Holy Scriptures. As for the other points,

indeed, even on their own showing, they are not of a character which

obliges me to be answerable for them; but yet, for the satisfaction of

the sacred Synod, I anathematize those who either now hold or have ever

held these opinions."

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[1941] Compare On the Proceedings of Pelagius, chs. 16, 23.

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Chapter 13 [XII.]--Coelestius the Bolder Heretic; Pelagius the More

Subtle.

You see, indeed, not to mention other points, how that Pelagius

pronounced his anathema against those who hold that "Adam's sin injured

only himself, and not the human race; and that infants are at their

birth in the same condition in which Adam was before the

transgression." Now what else could the bishops who sat in judgment on

him have possibly understood him to mean by this, but that the sin of

Adam is transmitted to infants? It was to avoid making such an

admission that Coelestius refused to condemn this statement, which this

man on the contrary anathematized. If, therefore, I shall show that he

did not really entertain any other opinion concerning infants than that

they are born without any contagion of a single sin, what difference

will there remain on this question between him and Coelestius, except

this, that the one is more open, the other more reserved; the one more

pertinacious, the other more mendacious; or, at any rate, that the one

is more candid, the other more astute? For, the one before the church

of Carthage refused to condemn what he afterwards in the church at Rome

publicly confessed to be a tenet of his own; at the same time

professing himself "ready to submit to correction if an error had

stolen over him, considering that he was but human;" whereas the other

both condemned this dogma as being contrary to the truth lest he should

himself be condemned by his catholic judges, and yet kept it in reserve

for subsequent defence, so that either his condemnation was a lie, or

his interpretation a trick.

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Chapter 14 [XIII.]--He Shows That, Even After the Synod of Palestine,

Pelagius Held the Same Opinions as Coelestius on the Subject of

Original Sin.

I see, however, that it may be most justly demanded of me, that I do

not defer my promised demonstration, that he actually entertains the

same views as Coelestius. In the first book of his more recent work,

written in defence of free will (which work he mentions in the letter

he despatched to Rome), he says: "Everything good, and everything evil,

on account of which we are either laudable or blameworthy, is not born

with us but done by us: for we are born not fully developed, but with a

capacity for either conduct; and we are procreated as without virtue,

so also without vice; and previous to the action of our own proper

will, that alone is in man which God has formed." Now you perceive that

in these words of Pelagius, the dogma of both these men is contained,

that infants are born without the contagion of any sin from Adam. It is

therefore not astonishing that Coelestius refused to condemn such as

say that Adam's sin injured only himself, and not the human race; and

that infants are at their birth in the same state in which Adam was

before the transgression. But it is very much to be wondered at, that

Pelagius had the effrontery to anathematize these opinions. For if, as

he alleges, "evil is not born with us, and we are procreated without

fault, and the only thing in man previous to the action of his own will

is what God has formed," then of course the sin of Adam did only injure

himself, inasmuch as it did not pass on to his offspring. For there is

not any sin which is not an evil; or a sin that is not a fault; or else

sin was created by God. But he says: "Evil is not born with us, and we

are procreated without fault; and the only thing in men at their birth

is what God has formed." Now, since by this language he supposes it to

be most true, that, according to the well-known sentence of his:

"Adam's sin was injurious to himself alone, and not to the human race,"

why did Pelagius condemn this, if it were not for the purpose of

deceiving his catholic judges? By parity of reasoning, it may also be

argued: "If evil is not born with us, and if we are procreated without

fault, and if the only thing found in man at the time of his birth is

what God has formed," it follows beyond a doubt that "infants at their

birth are in the same condition that Adam was before the

transgression," in whom no evil or fault was inherent, and in whom that

alone existed which God had formed. And yet Pelagius pronounced

anathema on all those persons "who hold now, or have at any time held,

that newborn babes are placed by their birth in the same state that

Adam was in before the transgression,"--in other words, are without any

evil, without any fault, having that only which God had formed. Now,

why again did Pelagius condemn this tenet also, if it were not for the

purpose of deceiving the catholic Synod, and saving himself from the

condemnation of an heretical innovator?

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Chapter 15 [XIV.]--Pelagius by His Mendacity and Deception Stole His

Acquittal from the Synod in Palestine.

For my own part, however, I, as you are quite aware, and as I also

stated in the book which I addressed to our venerable and aged Aurelius

on the proceedings in Palestine, really felt glad that Pelagius in that

answer of his had exhausted the whole of this question. [1942] To me,

indeed, he seemed most plainly to have acknowledged that there is

original sin in infants, by the anathema which he pronounced against

those persons who supposed that by the sin of Adam only himself, and

not the human race, was injured, and who entertained the opinion that

infants are in the same state in which the first man was before the

transgression. When, however, I had read his four books (from the first

of which I copied the words which I have just now quoted), and

discovered that he was still cherishing thoughts which were opposed to

the catholic faith touching infants, I felt all the greater surprise at

a mendacity which he so unblushingly maintained in a synod of the

Church, and on so great a question. For if he had already written these

books, how did he profess to anathematize those who had ever

entertained the opinions alluded to? If he purposed, however,

afterwards to publish such a work, how could he anathematize those who

at the time were holding the opinions? Unless, to be sure, by some

ridiculous subterfuge he meant to say that the objects of his anathema

were such persons as had in some previous time held, or were then

holding, these opinions; but that in respect of the future--that is, as

regarded those persons who were about to take up with such views--he

felt that it would be impossible for him to prejudge either himself or

other people, and that therefore he was guilty of no lie when he was

afterwards detected in the maintenance of similar errors. This plea,

however, he does not advance, not only because it is a ridiculous one,

but because it cannot possibly be true; because in these very books of

his he both argues against the transmission of sin from Adam to

infants, and glories in the proceedings of the Synod in Palestine,

where he was supposed to have sincerely anathematized such as hold the

opinions in dispute, and where he, in fact, stole his acquittal by

practising deceit.

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[1942] See On the Proceedings of Pelagius, ch. 24.

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Chapter 16 [XV.]--Pelagius' Fraudulent and Crafty Excuses.

For what is the significance to the matter with which we now have to do

of his answers to his followers, when he tells them that "the reason

why he condemned the points which were objected against him, is because

he himself maintains that primal sin was injurious not only to the

first man, but to the whole human race, not by transmission, but by

example;" in other words, not because those who have been propagated

from him have derived any fault from him, but because all who

afterwards have sinned, have imitated him who committed the first sin?

Or when he says that "the reason why infants are not in the same state

in which Adam was before the transgression, is because they are not yet

able to receive the commandment, whereas he was able; and because they

do not yet make use of that choice of a rational will which he

certainly made use of, since otherwise no commandment would have been

given to him"? How does such an exposition as this of the points

alleged against him justify him in thinking that he rightly condemned

the propositions, "Adam's sin injured only himself, and not the whole

race of man;" and "infants at their birth are in the self-same state in

which Adam was before he sinned;" and that by the said condemnation he

is not guilty of deceit in holding such opinions as are found in his

subsequent writings, how that "infants are born without any evil or

fault, and that there is nothing in them but what God has formed,"--no

wound, in short, inflicted by an enemy?

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Chapter 17.--How Pelagius Deceived His Judges.

Now, is it by making such statements as these, meeting objections which

are urged in one sense with explanations which are meant in another,

that he designs to prove to us that he did not deceive those who sat in

judgment on him? Then he utterly fails in his purpose. In proportion to

the craftiness of his explanations, was the stealthiness with which he

deceived them. For, just because they were catholic bishops, when they

heard the man pouring out anathemas upon those who maintained that

"Adam's sin was injurious to none but himself, and not to the human

race," they understood him to assert nothing but what the catholic

Church has been accustomed to declare, on the ground of which it truly

baptizes infants for the remission of sins--not, indeed, sins which

they have committed by imitation owing to the example of the first

sinner, but sins which they have contracted by their very birth, owing

to the corruption of their origin. When, again, they heard him

anathematizing those who assert that "infants at their birth are in the

same state in which Adam was before the transgression," they supposed

him to refer to none others than those persons who "think that infants

have derived no sin from Adam, and that they are accordingly in that

state that he was in before his sin." For, of course, no other

objection would be brought against him than that on which the question

turned. When, therefore, he so explains the objection as to say that

infants are not in the same state that Adam was in before he sinned,

simply because they have not yet arrived at the same firmness of mind

or body, not because of any propagated fault that has passed on to

them, he must be answered thus: "When the objections were laid against

you for condemnation, the catholic bishops did not understand them in

this sense; therefore, when you condemned them, they believed that you

were a catholic. That, accordingly, which they supposed you to

maintain, deserved to be released from censure; but that which you

really maintained was worthy of condemnation. It was not you, then,

that were acquitted, who held tenets which ought to be condemned; but

that opinion was freed from censure which you ought to have held and

maintained. You could only be supposed to be acquitted by having been

believed to entertain opinions worthy to be praised; for your judges

could not suppose that you were concealing opinions which merited

condemnation. Rightly have you been adjudged an accomplice of

Coelestius, in whose opinions you prove yourself to be a sharer. And

though you kept your books shut during your trial, you published them

to the world after it was over."

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Chapter 18 [XVII.]--The Condemnation of Pelagius.

This being the case, you of course feel that episcopal councils, and

the Apostolic See, and the whole Roman Church, and the Roman Empire

itself, [1943] which by God's gracious favour has become Christian, has

been most righteously moved against the authors of this wicked error,

until they repent and escape from the snares of the devil. For who can

tell whether God may not give them repentance to discover, and

acknowledge, and even proclaim His truth, [1944] and to condemn their

own damnable error? But whatever may be the bent of their own will, we

cannot doubt that the merciful kindness of the Lord has sought the good

of many persons who followed them, for no other reason than because

they saw them associated in communion with the catholic Church.

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[1943] Possidius, in his Life of Augustin, ch. 18, says: "Even the most

pious Emperor Honorius, upon hearing that the weighty sentence of the

catholic Church of God had been pronounced against them, in pursuance

of the same, determined that they should be regarded as heretics, under

condemnation by his own laws." These enactments are printed by the

Benedictine editors in the second part of their Appendix.

[1944] 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.

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Chapter 19.--Pelagius' Attempt to Deceive the Apostolic See; He Inverts

the Bearings of the Controversy.

But I would have you carefully observe the way in which Pelagius

endeavoured by deception to overreach even the judgment of the bishop

of the Apostolic See on this very question of the baptism of infants.

He sent a letter to Rome to Pope Innocent of blessed memory; and when

it found him not in the flesh, it was handed to the holy Pope Zosimus,

and by him directed to us. In this letter he complains of being

"defamed by certain persons for refusing the sacrament of baptism to

infants, and promising the kingdom of heaven irrespective of Christ's

redemption." The objections, however, are not urged against them in the

manner he has stated. For they neither deny the sacrament of baptism to

infants, nor do they promise the kingdom of heaven to any irrespective

of the redemption of Christ. As regards, therefore, his complaint of

being defamed by sundry persons, he has set it forth in such terms as

to be able to give a ready answer to the alleged charge against him,

without injury to his own dogma. [XVIII.] The real objection against

them is, that they refuse to confess that unbaptized infants are liable

to the condemnation of the first man, and that original sin has been

transmitted to them and requires to be purged by regeneration; their

contention being that infants must be baptized solely for being

admitted into the kingdom of heaven, as if they could only have eternal

death apart from the kingdom of heaven, who cannot have eternal life

without partaking of the Lord's body and blood. This, I would have you

know, is the real objection to them respecting the baptism of infants;

and not as he has represented it, for the purpose of enabling himself

to save his own dogmas while answering what is actually a proposition

of his own, under colour of meeting an objection.

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Chapter 20.--Pelagius Provides a Refuge for His Falsehood in Ambiguous

Subterfuges.

And then observe how he makes his answer, how he provides in the

obscure mazes of his double sense retreats for his false doctrine,

quenching the truth in his dark mist of error; so that even we, on our

first perusal of his words, almost rejoiced at their propriety and

correctness. But the fuller discussions in his books, in which he is

generally forced, in spite of all his efforts at concealment, to

explain his meaning, have made even his better statements suspicious to

us, lest on a closer inspection of them we should detect them to be

ambiguous. For, after saying that "he had never heard even an impious

heretic say this" (namely, what he set forth as the objection) "about

infants," he goes on to ask: "Who indeed is so unacquainted with Gospel

lessons, as not only to attempt to make such an affirmation, but even

to be able to lightly say it or even let it enter his thought? And then

who is so impious as to wish to exclude infants from the kingdom of

heaven, by forbidding them to be baptized and to be born again in

Christ?"

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Chapter 21 [XIX.]--Pelagius Avoids the Question as to Why Baptism is

Necessary for Infants.

Now it is to no purpose that he says all this. He does not clear

himself thereby. Not even they have ever denied the impossibility of

infants entering the kingdom of heaven without baptism. But this is not

the question; what we are discussing concerns the obliteration [1945]

of original sin in infants. Let him clear himself on this point, since

he refuses to acknowledge that there is anything in infants which the

laver of regeneration has to cleanse. On this account we ought

carefully to consider what he has afterwards to say. After adducing,

then, the passage of the Gospel which declares that "whosoever is not

born again of water and the Spirit cannot enter into the kingdom of

heaven" [1946] (on which matter, as we have said, they raise no

question), he goes on at once to ask: "Who indeed is so impious as to

have the heart to refuse the common redemption of the human race to an

infant of any age whatever?" But this is ambiguous language; for what

redemption does he mean? Is it from evil to good? or from good to

better? Now even Coelestius, at Carthage, [1947] allowed a redemption

for infants in his book; although, at the same time, he would not admit

the transmission of sin to them from Adam.

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[1945] Purgatione.

[1946] John iii. 5.

[1947] See above, in the preface to the treatise On the Perfection of a

Righteous Man, towards the end.

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Chapter 22 [XX.]--Another Instance of Pelagius' Ambiguity.

Then, again, observe what he subjoins to the last remark: "Can any

one," says he, "forbid a second birth to an eternal and certain life,

to him who has been born to this present uncertain life?" In other

words: "Who is so impious as to forbid his being born again to the life

which is sure and eternal, who has been born to this life of

uncertainty?" When we first read these words, we supposed that by the

phrase "uncertain life" he meant to designate this present temporal

life; although it appeared to us that he ought rather to have called it

"mortal" than "uncertain," because it is brought to a close by certain

death. But for all this, we thought that he had only shown a preference

for calling this mortal life an uncertain one, because of the general

view which men take that there is undoubtedly not a moment in our lives

when we are free from this uncertainty. And so it happened that our

anxiety about him was allayed to some extent by the following

consideration, which rose almost to a proof, notwithstanding the fact

of his unwillingness openly to confess that infants incur eternal death

who depart this life without the sacrament of baptism. We argued: "If,

as he seems to admit, eternal life can only accrue to them who have

been baptized, it follows of course that they who die unbaptized incur

everlasting death. This destiny, however, cannot by any means justly

befall those who never in this life committed any sins of their own,

unless on account of original sin."

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Chapter 23 [XXI.]--What He Means by Our Birth to an "Uncertain" Life.

Certain brethren, however, afterwards failed not to remind us that

Pelagius possibly expressed himself in this way, because on this

question he is represented as having his answer ready for all

inquirers, to this effect: "As for infants who die unbaptized, I know

indeed whither they go not; yet whither they go, I know not;" that is,

I know they do not go into the kingdom of heaven. But as to whither

they go, he was (and for the matter of that, still is [1948] ) in the

habit of saying that he knew not, because he dared not say that those

went to eternal death, who he was persuaded had never committed sin in

this life, and whom he would not admit to have inherited original sin.

Consequently those very words of his which were forwarded to Rome to

secure his absolute acquittal, are so steeped in ambiguity that they

afford a shelter for their doctrine, out of which may sally forth an

heretical sense to entrap the unwary straggler; for when no one is at

hand who can give the answer, any solitary man may find himself weak.

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[1948] Dicebat, aut dicit. These two latter words are not superfluous,

as some have thought; they intimate that Pelagius still clave to his

error.

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Chapter 24.--Pelagius' Long Residence at Rome.

The truth indeed is, that in the book of his faith which he sent to

Rome with this very letter [1949] to the before-mentioned Pope

Innocent, to whom also he had written the letter, he only the more

evidently exposed himself by his efforts at concealment. He says:

[1950] "We hold one baptism, which we say ought to be administered in

the same sacramental words in the case of infants as in the case of

adults." He did not, however, say, "in the same sacrament" (although if

he had so said, there would still have been ambiguity), but "in the

same sacramental words,"--as if remission of sins in infants were

declared by the sound of the words, and not wrought by the effect of

the acts. For the time, indeed, he seemed to say what was agreeable

with the catholic faith; but he had it not in his power permanently to

deceive that see. Subsequent to the rescript of the African Council,

into which province this pestilent doctrine had stealthily made its

way--without, however, spreading widely or sinking deeply--other

opinions also of this man were by the industry of some faithful

brethren discovered and brought to light at Rome, where he had dwelt

for a very long while, and had already engaged in sundry discourses and

controversies. In order to procure the condemnation of these opinions,

Pope Zosimus, as you may read, annexed them to his letter, which he

wrote for publication throughout the catholic world. Among these

statements, Pelagius, pretending to expound the Apostle Paul's Epistle

to the Romans, argues in these words: "If Adam's sin injured those who

have not sinned, then also Christ's righteousness profits those who do

not believe." He says other things, too, of the same purport; but they

have all been refuted and answered by me with the Lord's help in the

books which I wrote, On the Baptism of Infants. [1951] But he had not

the courage to make those objectionable statements in his own person in

the fore-mentioned so-called exposition. This particular one, however,

having been enunciated in a place where he was so well known, his words

and their meaning could not be disguised. In those books, from the

first of which I have already before quoted, [1952] he treats this

point without any suppression of his views. With all the energy of

which he is capable, he most plainly asserts that human nature in

infants cannot in any wise be supposed to be corrupted by propagation;

and by claiming salvation for them as their due, he does despite to the

Saviour.

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[1949] See above, ch. 19.

[1950] See above ch. 1, and On the Grace of Christ, ch. 35.

[1951] See especially Book iii. chs. 2, 5, 6 [III.].

[1952] In ch. 14 [XIII.].

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Chapter 25 [XXII.]--The Condemnation of Pelagius and Coelestius.

These things, then, being as I have stated them, it is now evident that

there has arisen a deadly heresy, which, with the Lord's help, the

Church by this time guards against more directly--now that those two

men, Pelagius and Coelestius, have been either offered repentance, or

on their refusal been wholly condemned. They are reported, or perhaps

actually proved, to be the authors of this perversion; at all events,

if not the authors (as having learnt it from others), they are yet its

boasted abettors and teachers, through whose agency the heresy has

advanced and grown to a wider extent. This boast, too, is made even in

their own statements and writings, and in unmistakeable signs of

reality, as well as in the fame which arises and grows out of all these

circumstances. What, therefore, remains to be done? Must not every

catholic, with all the energies wherewith the Lord endows him, confute

this pestilential doctrine, and oppose it with all vigilance; so that

whenever we contend for the truth, compelled to answer, but not fond of

the contest, the untaught may be instructed, and that thus the Church

may be benefited by that which the enemy devised for her destruction;

in accordance with that word of the apostle's, "There must be heresies,

that they which are approved may be made manifest among you"? [1953]

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[1953] 1 Cor. xi. 19.

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Chapter 26 [XXIII.]--The Pelagians Maintain that Raising Questions

About Original Sin Does Not Endanger the Faith.

Therefore, after the full discussion with which we have been able to

rebut in writing this error of theirs, which is so inimical to the

grace of God bestowed on small and great through our Lord Jesus Christ,

it is now our duty to examine and explode that assertion of theirs,

which in their desire to avoid the odious imputation of heresy they

astutely advance, to the effect that "calling this subject into

question produces no danger to the faith,"--in order that they may

appear, forsooth, if they are convicted of having deviated from it, to

have erred not criminally, but only, as it were, courteously. [1954]

This, accordingly, is the language which Coelestius used in the

ecclesiastical process at Carthage: [1955] "As touching the

transmission of sin," he said, "I have already said that I have heard

many persons of acknowledged position in the catholic Church deny it,

and on the other hand many affirm it; it may fairly, indeed, be deemed

a matter for inquiry, but not a heresy. I have always maintained that

infants require baptism, and ought to be baptized. What else does he

want?" He said this, as if he wanted to intimate that only then could

he be deemed chargeable with heresy, if he were to assert that they

ought not to be baptized. As the case stood, however, inasmuch as he

acknowledged that they ought to be baptized, he thought that he had not

erred [criminally], and therefore ought not to be adjudged a heretic,

even though he maintained the reason of their baptism to be other than

the truth holds, or the faith claims as its own. On the same principle,

in the book which he sent to Rome, he first explained his belief, so

far as it suited his pleasure, from the Trinity of the One Godhead down

to the kind of resurrection of the dead that is to be; on all which

points, however, no one had ever questioned him, or been questioned by

him. And when his discourse reached the question which was under

consideration, he said: "If, indeed, any questions have arisen beyond

the compass of the faith, on which there might be perhaps dissension on

the part of a great many persons, in no case have I pretended to

pronounce a decision on any dogma, as if I possessed a definitive

authority in the matter myself; but whatever I have derived from the

fountain of the prophets and the apostles, I have presented for

approbation to the judgment of your apostolic office; so that if any

error has crept in among us, human as we are, through our ignorance, it

may be corrected by your sentence." [1956] You of course clearly see

that in this action of his he used all this deprecatory preamble in

order that, if he had been discovered to have erred at all, he might

seem to have erred not on a matter of faith, but on questionable points

outside the faith; wherein, however necessary it may be to correct the

error, it is not corrected as a heresy; wherein also the person who

undergoes the correction is declared indeed to be in error, but for all

that is not adjudged a heretic.

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[1954] This is far from a clear translation of the terse original: Non

criminaliter, sed quasi civiliter errasse videantur.

[1955] See above, ch. 3 [IV.]

[1956] See above, ch. 6.

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Chapter 27 [XXIII.]--On Questions Outside the Faith--What They Are, and

Instances of the Same.

But he is greatly mistaken in this opinion. The questions which he

supposes to be outside the faith are of a very different character from

those in which, without any detriment to the faith whereby we are

Christians, there exists either an ignorance of the real fact, and a

consequent suspension of any fixed opinion, or else a conjectural view

of the case, which, owing to the infirmity of human thought, issues in

conceptions at variance with truth: as when a question arises about the

description and locality of that Paradise where God placed man whom He

formed out of the ground, without any disturbance, however, of the

Christian belief that there undoubtedly is such a Paradise; or as when

it is asked where Elijah is at the present moment, and where

Enoch--whether in this Paradise or in some other place, although we

doubt not of their existing still in the same bodies in which they were

born; or as when one inquires whether it was in the body or out of the

body that the apostle was caught up to the third heaven,--an inquiry,

however, which betokens great lack of modesty on the part of those who

would fain know what he who is the subject of the mystery itself

expressly declares his ignorance of, [1957] without impairing his own

belief of the fact; or as when the question is started, how many are

those heavens, to the "third" of which he tells us that he was caught

up; or whether the elements of this visible world are four or more;

what it is which causes those eclipses of the sun or the moon which

astronomers are in the habit of foretelling for certain appointed

seasons; why, again, men of ancient times lived to the age which Holy

Scripture assigns to them; and whether the period of their puberty,

when they begat their first son, was postponed to an older age,

proportioned to their longer life; or where Methuselah could possibly

have lived, since he was not in the Ark, inasmuch as (according to the

chronological notes of most copies of the Scripture, both Greek and

Latin) he is found to have survived the deluge; or whether we must

follow the order of the fewer copies--and they happen to be extremely

few--which so arrange the years as to show that he died before the

deluge. Now who does not feel, amidst the various and innumerable

questions of this sort, which relate either to God's most hidden

operations or to most obscure passages of the Scriptures, and which it

is difficult to embrace and define in any certain way, that ignorance

may on many points be compatible with sound Christian faith, and that

occasionally erroneous opinion may be entertained without any room for

the imputation of heretical doctrine?

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[1957] 2 Cor. xii. 2.

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Chapter 28 [XXIV.]--The Heresy of Pelagius and Coelestius Aims at the

Very Foundations of Our Faith.

This is, however, in the matter of the two men by one of whom we are

sold under sin, [1958] by the other redeemed from sins--by the one have

been precipitated into death, by the other are liberated unto life; the

former of whom has ruined us in himself, by doing his own will instead

of His who created him; the latter has saved us in Himself, by not

doing His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him: [1959] and it is

in what concerns these two men that the Christian faith properly

consists. For "there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men,

the man Christ Jesus;" [1960] since "there is none other name under

heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved;" [1961] and "in Him hath

God defined unto all men their faith, in that He hath raised Him from

the dead." [1962] Now without this faith, that is to say, without a

belief in the one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

without faith, I say, in His resurrection by which God has given

assurance to all men and which no man could of course truly believe

were it not for His incarnation and death; without faith, therefore, in

the incarnation and death and resurrection of Christ, the Christian

verity unhesitatingly declares that the ancient saints could not

possibly have been cleansed from sin so as to have become holy, and

justified by the grace of God. And this is true both of the saints who

are mentioned in Holy Scripture, and of those also who are not indeed

mentioned therein, but must yet be supposed to have existed,--either

before the deluge, or in the interval between that event and the giving

of the law, or in the period of the law itself,--not merely among the

children of Israel, as the prophets, but even outside that nation, as

for instance Job. For it was by the self-same faith in the one Mediator

that the hearts of these, too, were cleansed, and there also was "shed

abroad in them the love of God by the Holy Ghost," [1963] "who bloweth

where He listeth," [1964] not following men's merits, but even

producing these very merits Himself. For the grace of God will in no

wise exist unless it be wholly free.

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[1958] Rom. vii. 14.

[1959] John iv. 34, v. 30.

[1960] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

[1961] Acts iv. 12.

[1962] Acts xvii. 31.

[1963] Rom. v. 5.

[1964] John iii. 8.

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Chapter 29.--The Righteous Men Who Lived in the Time of the Law Were

for All that Not Under the Law, But Under Grace. The Grace of the New

Testament Hidden Under the Old.

Death indeed reigned from Adam until Moses, [1965] because it was not

possible even for the law given through Moses to overcome it: it was

not given, in fact, as something able to give life; [1966] but as

something that ought to show those that were dead and for whom grace

was needed to give them life, that they were not only prostrated under

the propagation and domination of sin, but also convicted by the

additional guilt of breaking the law itself: not in order that any one

might perish who in the mercy of God understood this even in that early

age; but that, destined though he was to punishment, owing to the

dominion of death, and manifested, too, as guilty through his own

violation of the law, he might seek God's help, and so where sin

abounded, grace might much more abound, [1967] even the grace which

alone delivers from the body of this death. [1968] [XXV.] Yet,

notwithstanding this, although not even the law which Moses gave was

able to liberate any man from the dominion of death, there were even

then, too, at the time of the law, men of God who were not living under

the terror and conviction and punishment of the law, but under the

delight and healing and liberation of grace. Some there were who said,

"I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;"

[1969] and, "There is no rest in my bones, by reason of my sins;"

[1970] and, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right

spirit in my inward parts;" [1971] and, "Stablish me with Thy directing

Spirit;" [1972] and, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." [1973] There

were some, again, who said: "I believed, therefore have I spoken."

[1974] For they too were cleansed with the self-same faith with which

we ourselves are. Whence the apostle also says: "We having the same

spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believe, and therefore

have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." [1975] Out of

very faith was it said, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a

son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel," [1976] "which is, being

interpreted, God with us." [1977] Out of very faith too was it said

concerning Him: "As a bridegroom He cometh out of His chamber; as a

giant did He exult to run His course. His going forth is from the

extremity of heaven, and His circuit runs to the other end of heaven;

and no one is hidden from His heat." [1978] Out of very faith, again,

was it said to Him: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre

of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved

righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, Thy God, hath

anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." [1979] By

the self-same Spirit of faith were all these things foreseen by them as

to happen, whereby they are believed by us as having happened. They,

indeed, who were able in faithful love to foretell these things to us

were not themselves partakers of them. The Apostle Peter says, "Why

tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which

neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that

through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as

they." [1980] Now on what principle does he make this statement, if it

be not because even they were saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus

Christ, and not the law of Moses, from which comes not the cure, but

only the knowledge of sin? [1981] Now, however, the righteousness of

God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the

prophets. [1982] If, therefore, it is now manifested, it even then

existed, but it was hidden. This concealment was symbolized by the veil

of the temple. When Christ was dying, this veil was rent asunder,

[1983] to signify the full revelation of Him. Even of old, therefore

there existed amongst the people of God this grace of the one Mediator

between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; but like the rain in the

fleece which God sets apart for His inheritance, [1984] not of debt,

but of His own will, it was latently present, but is now patently

visible amongst all nations as its "floor," the fleece being dry,--in

other words, the Jewish people having become reprobate. [1985]

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[1965] Rom. v. 14.

[1966] Gal. iii. 21.

[1967] Rom. v. 20.

[1968] Rom. vii. 24, 25.

[1969] Ps. li. 5.

[1970] Ps. xxxviii. 3.

[1971] Ps. li. 10.

[1972] Ps. li. 12.

[1973] Ps. li. 11.

[1974] Ps. cxvi. 10.

[1975] 2 Cor. iv. 13.

[1976] Isa. vii. 14.

[1977] Matt. i. 23.

[1978] Ps. xix. 5, 6.

[1979] Ps. xlv. 6, 7.

[1980] Acts xv. 10, 11.

[1981] Rom. iii. 20.

[1982] Rom. iii. 21.

[1983] Matt. xxvii. 51.

[1984] Ps. lxviii. 9.

[1985] Judg. vi. 36-40.

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Chapter 30 [XXVI]--Pelagius and Coelestius Deny that the Ancient Saints

Were Saved by Christ.

We must not therefore divide the times, as Pelagius and his disciples

do, who say that men first lived righteously by nature, then under the

law, thirdly under grace,--by nature meaning all the long time from

Adam before the giving of the law. "For then," say they, "the Creator

was known by the guidance of reason; and the rule of living rightly was

carried written in the hearts of men, not in the law of the letter, but

of nature. But men's manners became corrupt; and then," they say, "when

nature now tarnished began to be insufficient, the law was added to it

whereby as by a moon the original lustre was restored to nature after

its blush was impaired. But after the habit of sinning had too much

prevailed among men, and the law was unequal to the task of curing it,

Christ came; and the Physician Himself, through His own self, and not

through His disciples, brought relief to the malady at its most

desperate development."

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Chapter 31.--Christ's Incarnation Was of Avail to the Fathers, Even

Though It Had Not Yet Happened.

By disputation of this sort, they attempt to exclude the ancient saints

from the grace of the Mediator, as if the man Christ Jesus were not the

Mediator between God and those men; on the ground that, not having yet

taken flesh of the Virgin's womb, He was not yet man at the time when

those righteous men lived. If this, however, were true, in vain would

the apostle say: "By man came death, by man came also the resurrection

of the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be

made alive." [1986] For inasmuch as those ancient saints, according to

the vain conceits of these men, found their nature self-sufficient, and

required not the man Christ to be their Mediator to reconcile them to

God, so neither shall they be made alive in Him, to whose body they are

shown not to belong as members, according to the statement that it was

on man's account that He became man. If, however, as the Truth says

through His apostles, even as all die in Adam, even so shall all be

made alive in Christ; forasmuch as the resurrection of the dead comes

through the one man, even as death comes through the other man; what

Christian man can be bold enough to doubt that even those righteous men

who pleased God in the more remote periods of the human race are

destined to attain to the resurrection of eternal life, and not eternal

death, because they shall be made alive in Christ? that they are made

alive in Christ, because they belong to the body of Christ? that they

belong to the body of Christ, because Christ is the head even to them?

[1987] and that Christ is the head even to them, because there is but

one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus? But this He

could not have been to them, unless through His grace they had believed

in His resurrection. And how could they have done this, if they had

been ignorant that He was to come in the flesh, and if they had not by

this faith lived justly and piously? Now, if the incarnation of Christ

could be of no concern to them, on the ground that it had not yet come

about, it must follow that Christ's judgment can be of no concern to

us, because it has not yet taken place. But if we shall stand at the

right hand of Christ through our faith in His judgment, which has not

yet transpired, but is to come to pass, it follows that those ancient

saints are members of Christ through their faith in His resurrection,

which had not in their day happened, but which was one day to come to

pass.

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[1986] 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.

[1987] 1 Cor. xi. 3.

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Chapter 32 [XXVII.]--He Shows by the Example of Abraham that the

Ancient Saints Believed in the Incarnation of Christ.

For it must not be supposed that those saints of old only profited by

Christ's divinity, which was ever existent, and not also by the

revelation of His humanity, which had not yet come to pass. What the

Lord Jesus says, "Abraham desired to see my day, and he saw it, and was

glad," [1988] meaning by the phrase his day to understand his time,

affords of course a clear testimony that Abraham was fully imbued with

belief in His incarnation. It is in respect of this that He has a

"time;" for His divinity exceeds all time, for it was by it that all

times were created. If, however, any one supposes that the phrase in

question must be understood of that eternal "day" which is limited by

no morrow, and preceded by no yesterday,--in a word, of the very

eternity in which He is co-eternal with the Father,--how would Abraham

really desire this, unless he was aware that there was to be a future

mortality belonging to Him whose eternity he wished for? Or, perhaps,

some one would confine the meaning of the phrase so far as to say, that

nothing else is meant in the Lord's saying, "He desired to see my day,"

than "He desired to see me," who am the never-ending Day, or the

unfailing Light, as when we mention the life of the Son, concerning

which it is said in the Gospel: "So hath He given to the Son to have

life in Himself." [1989] Here the life is nothing less than Himself. So

we understand the Son Himself to be the life, when He said, "I am the

way, the truth, and the life;" [1990] of whom also it was said, "He is

the true God, and eternal life." [1991] Supposing, then, that Abraham

desired to see this equal divinity of the Son's with the Father,

without any precognition of His coming in the flesh--as certain

philosophers sought Him, who knew nothing of His flesh--can that other

act of Abraham, when he orders his servant to place his hand under his

thigh, and to swear by the God of heaven, [1992] be rightly understood

by any one otherwise than as showing that Abraham well knew that the

flesh in which the God of heaven was to come was the offspring of that

very thigh? [1993]

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[1988] John viii. 56.

[1989] John v. 26.

[1990] John xiv. 6.

[1991] 1 John v. 20.

[1992] Gen. xxiv. 2, 3.

[1993] The word "thigh," kry, occurs in the phrase, "to come out from

the thigh of any one," in the sense of being begotten by any one, or

descended from him, in several passages: see Gen. xlvi. 26; Ex. i. 5;

Judg. viii. 30. In the last of these passages, the A.V. phrase, "of his

body begotten," is vkry y'tsy, the offspring of his thigh. Abraham was

the first to use this form of adjuration; after him his grandson Jacob,

Gen. xlvii. 29. The comment of Augustin in the text, which he repeats

elsewhere (see his Sermon 75), occurs also in other Fathers, e.g.

Jerome, Theodoret, Ambrose (De Abrahamo, i. cap. ult.), Prosper

(Pr�dicat. i. 7), and Gregory the Great, who says: "He orders him to

put his hand under his thigh, since through that member would descend

the flesh of Him who was Abraham's son according to the flesh, and his

Lord owing to His divinity."

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Chapter 33 [XVIII.]--How Christ is Our Mediator.

Of this flesh and blood Melchizedek also, when he blessed Abram

himself, [1994] gave the testimony which is very well known to

Christian believers, so that long afterwards it was said to Christ in

the Psalms: "Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of

Melchizedek." [1995] This was not then an accomplished fact, but was

still future; yet that faith of the fathers, which is the self-same

faith as our own, used to chant it. Now, to all who find death in Adam,

Christ is of this avail, that He is the Mediator for life. He is,

however, not a Mediator, because He is equal with the Father; for in

this respect He is Himself as far distant from us as the Father; and

how can there be any medium where the distance is the very same?

Therefore the apostle does not say, "There is one Mediator between God

and men, even Jesus Christ;" but his words are, "The Man Christ Jesus."

[1996] He is the Mediator, then, in that He is man,--inferior to the

Father, by so much as He is nearer to ourselves, and superior to us, by

so much as He is nearer to the Father. This is more openly expressed

thus: "He is inferior to the Father, because in the form of a servant;"

[1997] superior to us, because without spot of sin.

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[1994] Gen. xiv. 18-20.

[1995] Ps. cx. 4.

[1996] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

[1997] Phil. ii. 7.

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Chapter 34 [XXIX.]--No Man Ever Saved Save by Christ.

Now, whoever maintains that human nature at any period required not the

second Adam for its physician, because it was not corrupted in the

first Adam, is convicted as an enemy to the grace of God; not in a

question where doubt or error might be compatible with soundness of

belief, but in that very rule of faith which makes us Christians. How

happens it, then, that the human nature, which first existed, is

praised by these men as being so far less tainted with evil manners?

How is it that they overlook the fact that men were even then sunk in

so many intolerable sins, that, with the exception of one man of God

and his wife, and three sons and their wives, the whole world was in

God's just judgment destroyed by the flood, even as the little land of

Sodom was afterwards with fire? [1998] From the moment, then, when "by

one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death

passed upon all men, in whom all sinned," [1999] the entire mass of our

nature was ruined beyond doubt, and fell into the possession of its

destroyer. And from him no one--no, not one--has been delivered, or is

being delivered, or ever will be delivered, except by the grace of the

Redeemer.

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[1998] See Gen. vii. and xix.

[1999] Rom. v. 12.

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Chapter 35 [XXX.]--Why the Circumcision of Infants Was Enjoined Under

Pain of So Great a Punishment.

The Scripture does not inform us whether before Abraham's time

righteous men or their children were marked by any bodily or visible

sign. [2000] Abraham himself, indeed, received the sign of

circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith. [2001] And he

received it with this accompanying injunction: All the male infants of

his household were from that very time to be circumcised, while fresh

from their mother's womb, on the eighth day from their birth; [2002] so

that even they who were not yet able with the heart to believe unto

righteousness, should nevertheless receive the seal of the

righteousness of faith. And this command was imposed with so fearful a

sanction, that God said: "That soul shall be cut off from his people,

whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised on the eighth day."

[2003] If inquiry be made into the justice of so terrible a penalty,

will not the entire argument of these men about free will, and the

laudable soundness and purity of nature, however cleverly maintained,

fall to pieces, struck down and fractured to atoms? For, pray tell me,

what evil has an infant committed of his own will, that, for the

negligence of another in not circumcising him, he himself must be

condemned, and with so severe a condemnation, that that soul must be

cut off from his people? It was not of any temporal death that this

fear was inflicted, since of righteous persons, when they died, it used

rather to be said, "And he was gathered unto his people;" [2004] or,

"He was gathered to his fathers:" [2005] for no attempt to separate a

man from his people is long formidable to him, when his own people is

itself the people of God.

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[2000] Sacramento.

[2001] Rom. iv. 11.

[2002] Gen. xvii. 10.

[2003] Gen. xvii. 14.

[2004] Gen. xxv. 17.

[2005] 1 Macc. ii. 69.

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Chapter 36 [XXXI]--The Platonists' Opinion About the Existence of the

Soul Previous to the Body Rejected.

What, then, is the purport of so severe a condemnation, when no wilful

sin has been committed? For it is not as certain Platonists have

thought, because every such infant is thus requited in his soul for

what it did of its own wilfulness previous to the present life, as

having possessed previous to its present bodily state a free choice of

living either well or ill; since the Apostle Paul says most plainly,

that before they were born they did neither good nor evil. [2006] On

what account, therefore, is an infant rightly punished with such ruin,

if it be not because he belongs to the mass of perdition, and is

properly regarded as born of Adam, condemned under the bond of the

ancient debt unless he has been released from the bond, not according

to debt, but according to grace? And what grace but God's, through our

Lord Jesus Christ? Now there was a forecast of His coming undoubtedly

contained not only in other sacred institutions [2007] of the ancient

Jews, but also in their circumcision of the foreskin. For the eighth

day, in the recurrence of weeks, became the Lord's day, on which the

Lord arose from the dead; and Christ was the rock [2008] whence was

formed the stony blade for the circumcision; [2009] and the flesh of

the foreskin was the body of sin.

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[2006] Rom. ix. 11.

[2007] Sacramenta.

[2008] 1 Cor. x. 4.

[2009] Ex. iv. 25.

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Chapter 37 [XXXII.]--In What Sense Christ is Called "Sin."

There was a change of the sacramental ordinances made after the coming

of Him whose advent they prefigured; but there was no change in the

Mediator's help, who, even previous to His coming in the flesh, all

along delivered the ancient members of His body by their faith in His

incarnation; and in respect of ourselves too, though we were dead in

sins and in the uncircumcision of our flesh, we are quickened together

in Christ, in whom we are circumcised with the circumcision not made

with the hand, [2010] but such as was prefigured by the old manual

circumcision, that the body of sin might be done away [2011] which was

born with us from Adam. The propagation of a condemned origin condemns

us, unless we are cleansed by the likeness of sinful flesh, in which He

was sent without sin, who nevertheless concerning sin condemned sin,

having been made sin for us. [2012] Accordingly the apostle says: "We

beseech you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God. For He hath

made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the

righteousness of God in Him." [2013] God, therefore, to whom we are

reconciled, has made Him to be sin for us,--that is to say, a sacrifice

by which our sins may be remitted; for by sins are designated the

sacrifices for sins. And indeed He was sacrificed for our sins, the

only one among men who had no sins, even as in those early times one

was sought for among the flocks to prefigure the Faultless One who was

to come to heal our offences. On whatever day, therefore, an infant may

be baptized after his birth, he is as if circumcised on the eighth day;

inasmuch as he is circumcised in Him who rose again the third day

indeed after He was crucified, but the eighth according to the weeks.

He is circumcised for the putting off of the body of sin; in other

words, that the grace of spiritual regeneration may do away with the

debt which the contagion of carnal generation contracted. "For no one

is pure from uncleanness" (what uncleanness, pray, but that of sin?),

"not even the infant, whose life is but that of a single day upon the

earth." [2014]

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[2010] Col. ii. 11, 13.

[2011] Rom. vi. 6.

[2012] Rom. viii. 3 and Gal. iii. 13.

[2013] 2 Cor. v. 20, 21.

[2014] Job xiv. 4, 5.

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Chapter 38 [XXXIII.]--Original Sin Does Not Render Marriage Evil.

But they argue thus, saying: "Is not, then, marriage an evil, and the

man that is produced by marriage not God's work?" As if the good of the

married life were that disease of concupiscence with which they who

know not God love their wives--a course which the apostle forbids;

[2015] and not rather that conjugal chastity, by which carnal lust is

reduced to the good purposes of the appointed procreation of children.

Or as if, forsooth, a man could possibly be anything but God's work,

not only when born in wedlock, but even if he be produced in

fornication or adultery. In the present inquiry, however, when the

question is not for what a Creator is necessary, but for what a

Saviour, we have not to consider what good there is in the procreation

of nature, but what evil there is in sin, whereby our nature has been

certainly corrupted. No doubt the two are generated

simultaneously--both nature and nature's corruption; one of which is

good, the other evil. The one comes to us from the bounty of the

Creator, the other is contracted from the condemnation of our origin;

the one has its cause in the good-will of the Supreme God, the other in

the depraved will of the first man; the one exhibits God as the maker

of the creature, the other exhibits God as the punisher of

disobedience: in short, the very same Christ was the maker of man for

the creation of the one, and was made [2016] man for the healing of the

other.

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[2015] 1 Thess. iv. 5.

[2016] This translation is intended to preserve, however faintly,

Augustin's antithesis, factor est hominis and factus est homo.

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Chapter 39 [XXXIV.]--Three Things Good and Laudable in Matrimony.

Marriage, therefore, is a good in all the things which are proper to

the married state. And these are three: it is the ordained means of

procreation, it is the guarantee [2017] of chastity, it is the bond of

union. [2018] In respect of its ordination for generation the Scripture

says, "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children,

guide the house;" [2019] as regards its guaranteeing chastity, it is

said of it, "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband;

and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the

wife;" [2020] and considered as the bond of union: "What God hath

joined together, let not man put asunder." [2021] Touching these

points, we do not forget that we have treated at sufficient length,

with whatever ability the Lord has given us, in other works of ours,

which are not unknown to you. [2022] In relation to them all the

Scripture has this general praise: "Marriage is honourable in all, and

the bed undefiled." [2023] For, inasmuch as the wedded state is good,

insomuch does it produce a very large amount of good in respect of the

evil of concupiscence; for it is not lust, but reason, which makes a

good use of concupiscence. Now lust lies in that law of the

"disobedient" members which the apostle notes as "warring against the

law of the mind;" [2024] whereas reason lies in that law of the wedded

state which makes good use of concupiscence. If, however, it were

impossible for any good to arise out of evil, God could not create man

out of the embraces of adultery. As, therefore, the damnable evil of

adultery, whenever man is born in it, is not chargeable on God, who

certainly amidst man's evil work actually produces a good work; so,

likewise, all which causes shame in that rebellion of the members which

brought the accusing blush on those who after their sin covered these

members with the fig-tree leaves, [2025] is not laid to the charge of

marriage, by virtue of which the conjugal embrace is not only

allowable, but is even useful and honourable; but it is imputable to

the sin of that disobedience which was followed by the penalty of man's

finding his own members emulating against himself that very

disobedience which he had practised against God. Then, abashed at their

action, since they moved no more at the bidding of his rational will,

but at their own arbitrary choice as it were, instigated by lust, he

devised the covering which should conceal such of them as he judged to

be worthy of shame. For man, as the handiwork of God, deserved not

confusion of face; nor were the members which it seemed fit to the

Creator to form and appoint by any means designed to bring the blush to

the creature. Accordingly, that simple nudity was displeasing neither

to God nor to man: there was nothing to be ashamed of, because nothing

at first accrued which deserved punishment.

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[2017] Fides.

[2018] Connubii sacramentum.

[2019] 1 Tim. v. 14.

[2020] 1 Cor. vii. 4.

[2021] Matt. xix. 6.

[2022] De Bono Conjugali, 3 sqq.

[2023] Heb. xiii. 4.

[2024] Rom. vii. 23.

[2025] Gen. iii. 7.

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Chapter 40 [XXXV.]--Marriage Existed Before Sin Was Committed. How

God's Blessing Operated in Our First Parents.

There was, however, undoubtedly marriage, even when sin had no prior

existence; and for no other reason was it that woman, and not a second

man, was created as a help for the man. Moreover, those words of God,

"Be fruitful and multiply," [2026] are not prophetic of sins to be

condemned, but a benediction upon the fertility of marriage. For by

these ineffable words of His, I mean by the divine methods which are

inherent in the truth of His wisdom by which all things were made, God

endowed the primeval pair with their seminal power. Suppose, however,

that nature had not been dishonoured by sin, God forbid that we should

think that marriages in Paradise must have been such, that in them the

procreative members would be excited by the mere ardour of lust, and

not by the command of the will for producing offspring,--as the foot is

for walking, the hand for labour, and the tongue for speech. Nor, as

now happens, would the chastity of virginity be corrupted to the

conception of offspring by the force of a turbid heat, but it would

rather be submissive to the power of the gentlest love; and thus there

would be no pain, no blood-effusion of the concumbent virgin, as there

would also be no groan of the parturient mother. This, however, men

refuse to believe, because it has not been verified in the actual

condition of our mortal state. Nature, having been vitiated by sin, has

never experienced an instance of that primeval purity. But we speak to

faithful men, who have learnt to believe the inspired Scriptures, even

though no examples are adduced of actual reality. For how could I now

possibly prove that a man was made of the dust, without any parents,

and a wife formed for him out of his own side? [2027] And yet faith

takes on trust what the eye no longer discovers.

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[2026] Gen. i. 28.

[2027] Gen. ii. 7, 22.

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Chapter 41 [XXXVI.]--Lust and Travail Come from Sin. Whence Our Members

Became a Cause of Shame.

Granted, therefore, that we have no means of showing both that the

nuptial acts of that primeval marriage were quietly discharged,

undisturbed by lustful passion, and that the motion of the organs of

generation, like that of any other members of the body, was not

instigated by the ardour of lust, but directed by the choice of the

will (which would have continued such with marriage had not the

disgrace of sin intervened); still, from all that is stated in the

sacred Scriptures on divine authority, we have reasonable grounds for

believing that such was the original condition of wedded life.

Although, it is true, I am not told that the nuptial embrace was

unattended with prurient desire; as also I do not find it on record

that parturition was unaccompanied with groans and pain, or that actual

birth led not to future death; yet, at the same time, if I follow the

verity of the Holy Scriptures, the travail of the mother and the death

of the human offspring would never have supervened if sin had not

preceded. Nor would that have happened which abashed the man and woman

when they covered their loins; because in the same sacred records it is

expressly written that the sin was first committed, and then

immediately followed this hiding of their shame. [2028] For unless some

indelicacy of motion had announced to their eyes--which were of course

not closed, though not open to this point, that is, not attentive--that

those particular members should be corrected, they would not have

perceived anything on their own persons, which God had entirely made

worthy of all praise, that called for either shame or concealment. If,

indeed, the sin had not first occurred which they had dared to commit

in their disobedience, there would not have followed the disgrace which

their shame would fain conceal.

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[2028] Gen. iii. 7.

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Chapter 42 [XXXVII.]--The Evil of Lust Ought Not to Be Ascribed to

Marriage. The Three Good Results of the Nuptial Ordinance: Offspring,

Chastity, and the Sacramental Union.

It is then manifest that that must not be laid to the account of

marriage, even in the absence of which, marriage would still have

existed. The good of marriage is not taken away by the evil, although

the evil is by marriage turned to a good use. Such, however, is the

present condition of mortal men, that the connubial intercourse and

lust are at the same time in action; and on this account it happens,

that as the lust is blamed, so also the nuptial commerce, however

lawful and honourable, is thought to be reprehensible by those persons

who either are unwilling or unable to draw the distinction between

them. They are, moreover, inattentive to that good of the nuptial state

which is the glory of matrimony; I mean offspring, chastity, and the

pledge. [2029] The evil, however, at which even marriage blushes for

shame is not the fault of marriage, but of the lust of the flesh. Yet

because without this evil it is impossible to effect the good purpose

of marriage, even the procreation of children, whenever this process is

approached, secrecy is sought, witnesses removed, and even the presence

of the very children which happen to be born of the process is avoided

as soon as they reach the age of observation. Thus it comes to pass

that marriage is permitted to effect all that is lawful in its state,

only it must not forget to conceal all that is improper. Hence it

follows that infants, although incapable of sinning, are yet not born

without the contagion of sin,--not, indeed, because of what is lawful,

but on account of that which is unseemly: for from what is lawful

nature is born; from what is unseemly, sin. Of the nature so born, God

is the Author, who created man, and who united male and female under

the nuptial law; but of the sin the author is the subtlety of the devil

who deceives, and the will of the man who consents.

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[2029] Sacramentum; see above, ch. 39.

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Chapter 43 [XXXVIII.]--Human Offspring, Even Previous to Birth, Under

Condemnation at the Very Root. Uses of Matrimony Undertaken for Mere

Pleasure Not Without Venial Fault.

Where God did nothing else than by a just sentence to condemn the man

who wilfully sins, together with his stock; there also, as a matter of

course, whatsoever was even not yet born is justly condemned in its

sinful root. In this condemned stock carnal generation holds every man;

and from it nothing but spiritual regeneration liberates him. In the

case, therefore, of regenerate parents, if they continue in the same

state of grace, it will undoubtedly work no injurious consequence, by

reason of the remission of sins which has been bestowed upon them,

unless they make a perverse use of it,--not alone all kinds of lawless

corruptions, but even in the marriage state itself, whenever husband

and wife toil at procreation, not from the desire of natural

propagation of their species, but are mere slaves to the gratification

of their lust out of very wantonness. As for the permission which the

apostle gives to husbands and wives, "not to defraud one another,

except with consent for a time, that they may have leisure for prayer,"

[2030] he concedes it by way of indulgent allowance, and not as a

command; but this very form of the concession evidently implies some

degree of fault. The connubial embrace, however, which

marriage-contracts point to as intended for the procreation of

children, considered in itself simply, and without any reference to

fornication, is good and right; because, although it is by reason of

this body of death (which is unrenewed as yet by the resurrection)

impracticable without a certain amount of bestial motion, which puts

human nature to the blush, yet the embrace is not after all a sin in

itself, when reason applies the concupiscence to a good end, and is not

overmastered to evil.

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[2030] 1 Cor. vii. 5.

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Chapter 44 [XXXIX.]--Even the Children of the Regenerate Born in Sin.

The Effect of Baptism.

This concupiscence of the flesh would be prejudicial, [2031] just in so

far as it is present in us, [2032] if the remission of sins were not so

beneficial [2033] that while it is present in men, both as born and as

born again, it may in the former be prejudicial as well as present, but

in the latter present simply but never prejudicial. In the unregenerate

it is prejudicial to such an extent indeed, that, unless they are born

again, no advantage can accrue to them from being born of regenerate

parents. The fault of our nature remains in our offspring so deeply

impressed as to make it guilty, even when the guilt of the self-same

fault has been washed away in the parent by the remission of

sins--until every defect which ends in sin by the consent of the human

will is consumed and done away in the last regeneration. This will be

identical with that renovation of the very flesh itself which is

promised in its future resurrection, when we shall not only commit no

sins, but be even free from those corrupt desires which lead us to sin

by yielding consent to them. To this blessed consummation advances are

even now made by us, through the grace of that holy laver which we have

put within our reach. The same regeneration which now renews our

spirit, so that all our past sins are remitted, will by and by also

operate, as might be expected, to the renewal to eternal life of that

very flesh, by the resurrection of which to an incorruptible state the

incentives of all sins will be purged out of our nature. But this

salvation is as yet only accomplished in hope: it is not realized in

fact; it is not in present possession, but it is looked forward to with

patience. [XL.] And thus there is a whole and perfect cleansing, in the

self-same baptismal laver, not only of all the sins remitted now in our

baptism, which make us guilty owing to the consent we yield to wrong

desires, and to the sinful acts in which they issue; but of these said

wrong desires also, which, if not consented to by us, would contract no

guilt of sin, and which, though not in this present life removed, will

yet have no existence in the life beyond.

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[2031] The three phrases here marked with asterisks have a more clearly

expressed relation in the original: obesset, inesset, prodesset.

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Chapter 45.--Man's Deliverance Suited to the Character of His

Captivity.

The guilt, therefore, of that corruption of which we are speaking will

remain in the carnal offspring of the regenerate, until in them also it

be washed away in the laver of regeneration. A regenerate man does not

regenerate, but generates, sons according to the flesh; and thus he

transmits to his posterity, not the condition of the regenerated, but

only of the generated. Therefore, be a man guilty of unbelief, or a

perfect believer, he does not in either case beget faithful children,

but sinners; in the same way that the seeds, not only of a wild olive,

but also of a cultivated one, produce not cultivated olives, but wild

ones. So, likewise, his first birth holds a man in that bondage from

which nothing but his second birth delivers him. The devil holds him,

Christ liberates him: Eve's deceiver holds him, Mary's Son frees him:

he holds him, who approached the man through the woman; He frees him,

who was born of a woman that never approached a man: he holds him, who

injected into the woman the cause of lust; He liberates him, who

without any lust was conceived in the woman. The former was able to

hold all men in his grasp through one; nor does any deliver them out of

his power but One, whom he was unable to grasp. The very sacraments

indeed of the Church, which she [2034] administers with due ceremony,

according to the authority of very ancient tradition (so that these

men, notwithstanding their opinion that the sacraments are imitatively

rather than really used in the case of infants, still do not venture to

reject them with open disapproval),--the very sacraments, I say, of the

holy Church show plainly enough that infants, even when fresh from the

womb, are delivered from the bondage of the devil through the grace of

Christ. For, to say nothing of the fact that they are baptized for the

remission of sins by no fallacious, but by a true and faithful mystery,

there is previously wrought on them the exorcism and the exsufflation

of the hostile power, which they profess to renounce by the mouth of

those who bring them to baptism. Now, by all these consecrated and

evident signs of hidden realities, they are shown to pass from their

worst oppressor to their most excellent Redeemer, who, by taking on

Himself our infirmity in our behalf, has bound the strong man, that He

may spoil his goods; [2035] seeing that the weakness of God is

stronger, not only than men, but also than angels. While, therefore,

God delivers small as well as great, He shows in both instances that

the apostle spoke under the direction of the Truth. For it is not

merely adults, but little babes too whom He rescues from the power of

darkness, in order to transfer them to the kingdom of God's dear Son.

[2036]

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[2034] That is, the Church, according to one reading--concelebrat; but

another reading, concelebrant, understands "the Pelagians" to be the

subject of the proposition.

[2035] Matt. xii. 29.

[2036] Col. i. 13.

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Chapter 46.--Difficulty of Believing Original Sin. Man's Vice is a

Beast's Nature.

No one should feel surprise, and ask: "Why does God's goodness create

anything for the devil's malignity to take possession of?" The truth

is, God's gift is bestowed on the seminal elements of His creature with

the same bounty wherewith "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on

the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." [2037] It is

with so large a bounty that God has blessed the very seeds, and by

blessing has constituted them. Nor has this blessing been eliminated

out of our excellent nature by a fault which puts us under

condemnation. Owing, indeed, to God's justice, who punishes, this fatal

flaw has so far prevailed, that men are born with the fault of original

sin; but yet its influence has not extended so far as to stop the birth

of men. Just so does it happen in persons of adult age: whatever sins

they commit, do not eliminate his manhood from man; nay, God's work

continues still good, however evil be the deeds of the impious. For

although "man being placed in honour abideth not; and being without

understanding, is compared with the beasts, and is like them," [2038]

yet the resemblance is not so absolute that he becomes a beast. There

is a comparison, no doubt, between the two; but it is not by reason of

nature, but through vice--not vice in the beast, but in nature. For so

excellent is a man in comparison with a beast, that man's vice is

beast's nature; still man's nature is never on this account changed

into beast's nature. God, therefore, condemns man because of the fault

wherewithal his nature is disgraced, and not because of his nature,

which is not destroyed in consequence of its fault. Heaven forbid that

we should think beasts are obnoxious to the sentence of condemnation!

It is only proper that they should be free from our misery, inasmuch as

they cannot partake of our blessedness. What, then, is there surprising

or unjust in man's being subjected to an impure spirit--not on account

of nature, but on account of that impurity of his which he has

contracted in the stain of his birth, and which proceeds, not from the

divine work, but from the will of man;--since also the impure spirit

itself is a good thing considered as spirit, but evil in that it is

impure? For the one is of God, and is His work, while the other

emanates from man's own will. The stronger nature, therefore, that is,

the angelic one, keeps the lower, or human, nature in subjection, by

reason of the association of vice with the latter. Accordingly the

Mediator, who was stronger than the angels, became weak for man's sake.

[2039] So that the pride of the Destroyer is destroyed by the humility

of the Redeemer; and he who makes his boast over the sons of men of his

angelic strength, is vanquished by the Son of God in the human weakness

which He assumed.

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[2037] Matt. v. 45.

[2038] Ps. xlix. 12.

[2039] 2 Cor. viii. 9.

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Chapter 47 [XLI.]--Sentences from Ambrose in Favour of Original Sin.

And now that we are about to bring this book to a conclusion, we think

it proper to do on this subject of Original Sin what we did before in

our treatise On Grace, [2040] --adduce in evidence against the

injurious talk of these persons that servant of God, the Archbishop

Ambrose, whose faith is proclaimed by Pelagius to be the most perfect

among the writers of the Latin Church; for grace is more especially

honoured in doing away with original sin. In the work which the saintly

Ambrose wrote, Concerning the Resurrection, he says: "I fell in Adam,

in Adam was I expelled from Paradise, in Adam I died; and He does not

recall me unless He has found me in Adam,--so as that, as I am

obnoxious to the guilt of sin in him, and subject to death, I may be

also justified in Christ." [2041] Then, again, writing against the

Novatians, he says: "We men are all of us born in sin; our very origin

is in sin; as you may read when David says, Behold, I was shapen in

iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.' [2042] Hence it is

that Paul's flesh is a body of death;' [2043] even as he says himself,

Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Christ's flesh,

however, has condemned sin, which He experienced not by being born, and

which by dying He crucified, that in our flesh there might be

justification through grace, where previously there was impurity

through sin." [2044] The same holy man also, in his Exposition of

Isaiah, speaking of Christ, says: "Therefore as man He was tried in all

things, and in the likeness of men He endured all things; but as born

of the Spirit, He was free from sin. For every man is a liar, and no

one but God alone is without sin. It is therefore an observed and

settled fact, that no man born of a man and a woman, that is, by means

of their bodily union, is seen to be free from sin. Whosoever, indeed,

is free from sin, is free also from a conception and birth of this

kind." [2045] Moreover, when expounding the Gospel according to Luke,

he says: "It was no cohabitation with a husband which opened the

secrets of the Virgin's womb; rather was it the Holy Ghost which

infused immaculate seed into her unviolated womb. For the Lord Jesus

alone of those who are born of woman is holy, inasmuch as He

experienced not the contact of earthly corruption, by reason of the

novelty of His immaculate birth; nay, He repelled it by His heavenly

majesty." [2046]

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[2040] See above, De Grati� Christi, 49-51 (xlv., xlvi.).

[2041] Ambrose's De Exc. Sal. ii. 6.

[2042] Ps. li. 5.

[2043] Rom. vii. 24.

[2044] Ambrose's De Poenitentia, i. 2, 3.

[2045] Quoted from a work by St. Ambrose, On Isaiah, not now extant.

[2046] See Book ii. 56. of this Commentary on St. Luke, ch. ii.

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Chapter 48.--Pelagius Rightly Condemned and Really Opposed by Ambrose.

These words, however, of the man of God are contradicted by Pelagius,

notwithstanding all his commendation of his author, when he himself

declares that "we are procreated, as without virtue, so without vice."

[2047] What remains, then, but that Pelagius should condemn and

renounce this error of his; or else be sorry that he has quoted Ambrose

in the way he has? Inasmuch, however, as the blessed Ambrose, catholic

bishop as he is, has expressed himself in the above-quoted passages in

accordance with the catholic faith, it follows that Pelagius, along

with his disciple Coelestius, was justly condemned by the authority of

the catholic Church for having turned aside from the true way of faith,

since he repented not for having bestowed commendation on Ambrose, and

for having at the same time entertained opinions in opposition to him.

I know full well with what insatiable avidity you [2048] read whatever

is written for edification and in confirmation of the faith; but yet,

notwithstanding its utility as contributing to such an end, I must at

last bring this treatise to a conclusion.

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[2047] See above, ch. 14 (xiii.).

[2048] The three friends to whom these two books are addressed were

pious members of the same family; Pinianus was the husband, Melania his

wife, and Albina her mother.

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on marriage and concupiscence.

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Extract from Augustin's "Retractations,"

Book II. Chap. 53,

On the Following Treatise,

"De nuptiis et concupiscentia."

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"I Addressed two books to the Illustrious Count Valerius, upon hearing

that the Pelagians had brought sundry vague charges upon us--how, for

instance, we condemned marriage by maintaining Original Sin. These

books are entitled, On Marriage and Concupiscence. We maintain that

marriage is good; and that it must not be supposed that the

concupisence of the flesh, or "the law in our members which wars

against the law of mind," [2049] is a fault of marriage. Conjugal

chastity makes a good use of the evil of concupiscence in the

procreation of children. My first treatise contained two books. The

first of them found its way into the hands of Julianus the Pelagian,

who wrote four books in opposition to it. Out of these, somebody

extracted sundry passages, and sent them to Count Valerius; he handed

them to us, and after I had received them I wrote a second book in

answer to these extracts. The first book of this work of mine opens

with these words: "Our new heretics, most beloved son Valerius," while

the second begins thus: "Amid the cares of your duty as a soldier."

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[2049] Rom. vii. 23.

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advertisement to the reader on the following treatise.

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On revising these two Books, which he addressed to the Count Valerius,

Augustin placed them immediately after his reply to the discourse of

the Arians, which was affixed to the Proceedings with Emeritus. [2050]

Now these proceedings are stated to have taken place on the 20th of

September, in the year of our Lord 418. [2051] There can be no doubt,

then, that these subjoined books--or, at any rate, the former of

them--were written either at the close of the year 418, or in the

beginning of the year 419. For, concerning this first book, Augustin

says himself: "This book of mine, however, which he [Julianus] says he

answered in four books, I wrote after the condemnation of Pelagius and

Coelestius. This," he adds, "I have deemed it right to mention, because

he declares that my words had been used by the enemies of the truth to

bring it into odium. Let no one, therefore, suppose that it was owing

to this book of mine that condemnation had been passed on the new

heretics who are enemies of the grace of Christ." [2052] From these

words one may see at once that this first book was published about the

same time as the condemnation of the Pelagians in the year 418.

Soon after its publication it began to be assailed by the Pelagians,

who observed that its perusal was producing in the minds of the

catholics much odium against their heresy. One of them, Julianus,

[2053] influenced with a warm desire of furthering the heretical

movement, attacked the first book of Augustin's treatise in four books

of his own. Out of these, sundry extracts were culled by some

interested person, and forwarded to Count Valerius. Valerius despatched

them from Ravenna to Rome, to Alypius, [2054] in order that he, on

returning to Africa, might hand them to Augustin for the purpose of an

early refutation, together with a letter in which Valerius thanked

Augustin for the previous work which he also mentioned. Augustin saw at

once that these extracts had been taken out of the work of Julianus;

and, although he preferred reserving his answer to the selections till

he had received the entire work from which they were culled, he still

thought that he was bound to avoid all delay in satisfying the Count

Valerius. Without loss of time, therefore, he drew up in answer his

second book, with the same title as before, On Marriage and

Concupiscence, which, as we think, must be assigned to the year 420,

since the holy doctor wrote it immediately after the expression of

thanks for the first book; for it is clearly improbable that Valerius

should have waited two years or more to make the acknowledgment of his

gratitude.

Moreover, the Valerius whom Augustin dignifies with the title of

Illustrious as well as Count, was much employed in public life--not, to

be sure, in the forum, but in the field; and from this circumstance we

find it difficult to accede to the opinion that supposes him to have

been the same person with the Valerius who was Count of the Private

Estate in the year 425, Consul in 432, and lastly Master of the Offices

under Theodosius the younger in the year 434. These appointments,

indeed, had no connection with military service, nor had the prefects

of Theodosius anything in common with those of Honorius.

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[2050] The Donatist bishop.

[2051] [This work gives an account of the meeting of the catholic

bishops at C�sarea on Sept. 20, 418, at which Emeritus was present by

invitation. Cf. Smith and Wace, Dict of Christ. Biog. ii. 107.--W.]

[2052] Against Two Epistles of the Pelagians, ch. 9.

[2053] Bishop of Eclanum in Italy. See below at beginning of Book ii.

[2054] The great friend of Augustin.

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A Letter [2055] Addressed to the Count Valerius,

on augustin's forwarding to him what he calls his first book "on

marriage and concupiscence."

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To the illustrious and deservedly eminent Lord and his most dearly

beloved son in the love of Christ, Valerius, Augustin sends greeting in

the Lord.

1. While I was chafing at the long disappointment of receiving no

acknowledgments from your Highness of the many letters which I had

written to you, I all at once received three letters from your

Grace,--one by the hand of my fellow bishop Vindemialis, which was not

meant for me only, and two, soon afterwards, through my brother

presbyter Firmus. This holy man, who is bound to me, as you may have

ascertained from his own lips, by the ties of a most intimate love, had

much conversation with me about your excellence, and gave me undoubted

proofs of his complete knowledge of your character "in the bowels of

Christ;" [2056] by these means he had sight, not only of the letters of

which the fore-mentioned bishop and he himself had been the bearers,

but also of those which we expressed our disappointment at not having

received. Now his information respecting you was all the more pleasant

to us, inasmuch as he gave me to understand, what it was out of your

power to do, that you would not, even at my earnest request for an

answer, become the extoller of your own praises, contrary to the

permission of Holy Scripture. [2057] But I ought myself to hesitate to

write to you in this strain, lest I should incur the suspicion of

flattering you, my illustrious and deservedly eminent lord and dearly

beloved son in the love of Christ.

2. Now, as to your praises in Christ, or rather Christ's praises in

you, see what delight and joy it was to me to hear of them from him,

who could neither deceive me because of his fidelity to me, nor be

ignorant of them by reason of his friendship with you. But other

testimony, which though inferior in amount and certainty has still

reached my ear from divers quarters, assures me how sound and catholic

is your faith; how devout your hope of the future; how great your love

to God and the brethren; how humble your mind amid the highest honours,

as you do not trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, and art

rich in good works; [2058] how your house is a rest and comfort of the

saints, and a terror to evil-doers; how great is your care that no man

lay snares for Christ's members (either among His old enemies or those

of more recent days), although he use Christ's name as a cloak for his

wiles; and at the same time, though you give no quarter to the error of

these enemies, how provident you are to secure their salvation. This

and the like, we frequently hear, as I have already said, even from

others; but at the present moment we have, by means of the

above-mentioned brother, received a fuller and more trustworthy

knowledge.

3. Touching, however, the subject of conjugal purity, that we might be

able to bestow our commendation and love upon you for it, could we

possibly listen to the information of any one but some bosom friend of

your own, who had no mere superficial acquaintance with you, but knew

your innermost life? Concerning, therefore, this excellent gift of God

to you, I am delighted to converse with you with more frankness and at

greater length. I am quite sure that I shall not prove burdensome to

you, even if I send you a prolix treatise, the perusal of which will

only ensure a longer converse between us. For this have I discovered,

that amidst your manifold and weighty cares you pursue your reading

with ease and pleasure; and that you take great delight in any little

performances of ours, even if they are addressed to other persons,

whenever they have chanced to fall into your hands. Whatever,

therefore, is addressed to yourself, in which I can speak to you as it

were personally, you will deign both to notice with greater attention,

and to receive with a higher pleasure. From the perusal, then, of this

letter, turn to the book which I send with it. It will in its very

commencement, in a more convenient manner, intimate to your Reverence

the reason, both why it has been written, and why it has been submitted

specially to your consideration.

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[2055] This is the 200th in the collection of Augustin's Letters.

[2056] Phil. i. 8.

[2057] Prov. xxvii. 2.

[2058] 1 Tim. vi. 17.

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on marriage and concupiscence,

In Two Books,

addressed to the count valerius

by aurelius augustin, bishop of hippo;

written in 419 and 420.

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Book I. [2059]

Wherein He expounds the peculiar and natural blessings of marriage. He

shows that among these blessings must not be reckoned fleshly

concupiscence; insomuch as this is wholly evil, such as does not

proceed from the very nature of marriage, but is an accident thereof

arising from original sin. This evil, notwithstanding, is rightly

employed by marriage for the procreation of children. But, as the

result of this concupiscence, it comes to pass that, even from the

lawful marriage of the children of God, men are not born children of

God, but of the world, and are bound with the chain of sin, although

their parents have been liberated therefrom by grace; and are led

captive by the devil, if they be not in like manner rescued by the

self-same grace of Christ. He explains how it is that concupiscence

remains in the baptized in act though not in guilt. He teaches, that by

the sanctity of baptism, not merely this original guilt, but all other

sins of men whatever, are taken away. He lastly quotes the authority of

Ambrose to show that the evil of concupiscence must be distinguished

from the good of marriage.

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Chapter 1.--Concerning the Argument of This Treatise.

Our new heretics, my dearest son Valerius, who maintain that infants

born in the flesh have no need of that medicine of Christ whereby sins

are healed, are constantly affirming, in their excessive hatred of us,

that we condemn marriage and that divine procedure by which God creates

human beings by means of men and women, inasmuch as we assert that they

who are born of such a union contract that original sin of which the

apostle says, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin;

and so death passed upon all men, for in him all sinned;" [2060] and

because we do not deny, that of whatever kind of parents they are born,

they are still under the devil's dominion, unless they be born again in

Christ, and by His grace be removed from the power of darkness and

translated into His kingdom, [2061] who willed not to be born from the

same union of the two sexes. Because, then, we affirm this doctrine,

which is contained in the oldest and unvarying rule of the catholic

faith, these propounders of the novel and perverse dogma, who assert

that there is no sin in infants to be washed away in the laver of

regeneration, [2062] in their unbelief or ignorance calumniate us, as

if we condemned marriage, and as if we asserted to be the devil's work

what is God's own work--the human being which is born of marriage. Nor

do they reflect that the good of marriage is no more impeachable on

account of the original evil which is derived therefrom, than the evil

of adultery and fornication is excusable on account of the natural good

which is born of them. For as sin is the work of the devil, from

whencesoever contracted by infants; so man is the work of God, from

whencesoever born. Our purpose, therefore, in this book, so far as the

Lord vouchsafes us in His help, is to distinguish between the evil of

carnal concupiscence from which man who is born therefrom contracts

original sin, and the good of marriage. For there would have been none

of this shame-producing concupiscence, which is impudently praised by

impudent men, if man had not previously sinned; while as to marriage,

it would still have existed even if no man had sinned, since the

procreation of children in the body that belonged to that life would

have been effected without that malady which in "the body of this

death" [2063] cannot be separated from the process of procreation.

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[2060] In quo omnes peccaverunt, Rom. v. 5.

[2061] Col. i. 15.

[2062] Titus iii. 5.

[2063] Rom. vii. 24.

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Chapter 2. [II.]--Why This Treatise Was Addressed to Valerius.

Now there are three very special reasons, which I will briefly

indicate, why I wished to write to you particularly on this subject.

One is, because by the gift of Christ you are a strict observer of

conjugal chastity. Another is, because by your great care and diligence

you have effectually withstood those profane novelties which we are

resisting in our present discussion. The third is, because of my

learning that something which they had committed to writing had found

its way into your hands; and although in your robust faith you could

despise such an attempt, it is still a good thing for us also to know

how to bring aid to our faith by defending it. For the Apostle Peter

instructs us to be "ready always to give an answer to every one that

asketh us a reason of the faith and hope that is in us;" [2064] and the

Apostle Paul says, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with

salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." [2065] These

are the motives which chiefly impel me to hold such converse with you

in this volume, as the Lord shall enable me. I have never liked,

indeed, to intrude the perusal of any of my humble labours on any

eminent person, who is like yourself conspicuous to all from the

elevation of his office, without his own request,--especially when he

is not blessed with the enjoyment of a dignified retirement, but is

still occupied in the public duties of a soldier's profession; this has

always seemed to me to savour more impertinence than of respectful

esteem. If, then, I have incurred censure of this kind, while acting on

the reasons which I have now mentioned, I crave the favour of your

forgiveness, and kindly regard to the following arguments.

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[2064] 1 Pet. iii. 15. [The reading "faith and hope" stands in certain

Latin Biblical mss. Also, e.g., Codices Harleianus and Toletanus.

Traces of a similar reading are not unknown also in Greek (Origen,

Basil) and Syriac (Peshitto) sources.--W.]

[2065] Col. iv. 6.

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Chapter 3 [III.]--Conjugal Chastity the Gift of God.

That chastity in the married state is God's gift, is shown by the most

blessed Paul, when, speaking on this very subject, he says: "But I

would that all men were even as I myself: but every man hath his proper

gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that." [2066]

Observe, he tells us that this gift is from God; and although he

classes it below that continence in which he would have all men to be

like himself, he still describes it as a gift of God. Whence we

understand that, when these precepts are given to us in order that we

should do them, nothing else is stated than that there ought to be

within us our own will also for receiving and having them. When,

therefore, these are shown to be gifts of God, it is meant that they

must be sought from Him if they are not already possessed; and if they

are possessed, thanks must be given to Him for the possession;

moreover, that our own wills have but small avail for seeking,

obtaining, and holding fast these gifts, unless they be assisted by

God's grace.

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[2066] 1 Cor. vii. 7.

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Chapter 4.--A Difficulty as Regards the Chastity of Unbelievers. None

But a Believer is Truly a Chaste Man. [2067]

What, then, have we to say when conjugal chastity is discovered even in

some unbelievers? Must it be said that they sin, in that they make a

bad use of a gift of God, in not restoring it to the worship of Him

from whom they received it? Or must these endowments, perchance, be not

regarded as gifts of God at all, when they are not believers who

exercise them; according to the apostle's sentiment, when he says,

"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin?" [2068] But who would dare to say

that a gift of God is sin? For the soul and the body, and all the

natural endowments which are implanted in the soul and the body, even

in the persons of sinful men, are still gifts of God; for it is God who

made them, and not they themselves. When it is said, "Whatsoever is not

of faith is sin," only those things are meant which men themselves do.

When men, therefore, do without faith those things which seem to

appertain to conjugal chastity, they do them either to please men,

whether themselves or others, or to avoid incurring such troubles as

are incidental to human nature in those things which they corruptly

desire, or to pay service to devils. Sins are not really resigned, but

some sins are overpowered by other sins. God forbid, then, that a man

be truly called chaste who observes connubial fidelity to his wife from

any other motive than devotion to the true God.

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[2067] See Augustin's work Against Julianus, iv. 3.

[2068] Rom. xiv. 23.

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Chapter 5 [IV.]--The Natural Good of Marriage. All Society Naturally

Repudiates a Fraudulent Companion. What is True Conjugal Purity? No

True Virginity and Chastity Except in Devotion to True Faith.

The union, then, of male and female for the purpose of procreation is

the natural good of marriage. But he makes a bad use of this good who

uses it bestially, so that his intention is on the gratification of

lust, instead of the desire of offspring. Nevertheless, in sundry

animals unendowed with reason, as, for instance, in most birds, there

is both preserved a certain kind of confederation of pairs, and a

social combination of skill in nest-building; and their mutual division

of the periods for cherishing their eggs and their alternation in the

labor of feeding their young, give them the appearance of so acting,

when they mate, as to be intent rather on securing the continuance of

their kind than on gratifying lust. Of these two, the one is the

likeness of man in a brute; the other, the likeness of the brute in

man. With respect, however, to what I ascribed to the nature of

marriage, that the male and the female are united together as

associates for procreation, and consequently do not defraud each other

(forasmuch as every associated state has a natural abhorrence of a

fraudulent companion), although even men without faith possess this

palpable blessing of nature, yet, since they use it not in faith, they

only turn it to evil and sin. In like manner, therefore, the marriage

of believers converts to the use of righteousness that carnal

concupiscence by which "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit." [2069]

For they entertain the firm purpose of generating offspring to be

regenerated--that the children who are born of them as "children of the

world" may be born again and become "sons of God." Wherefore all

parents who do not beget children with this intention, this will, this

purpose, of transferring them from being members of the first man into

being members of Christ, but boast as unbelieving parents over

unbelieving children,--however circumspect they be in their

cohabitation, studiously limiting it to the begetting of

children,--really have no conjugal chastity in themselves. For inasmuch

as chastity is a virtue, hating unchastity as its contrary vice, and as

all the virtues (even those whose operation is by means of the body)

have their seat in the soul, how can the body be in any true sense said

to be chaste, when the soul itself is committing fornication against

the true God? Now such fornication the holy psalmist censures when he

says: "For, lo, they that are far from Thee shall perish: Thou hast

destroyed all them that go a whoring from Thee." [2070] There is, then,

no true chastity, whether conjugal, or vidual, or virginal, except that

which devotes itself to true faith. For though consecrated virginity is

rightly preferred to marriage, yet what Christian in his sober mind

would not prefer catholic Christian women who have been even more than

once married, to not only vestals, but also to heretical virgins? So

great is the avail of faith, of which the apostle says, "Whatsoever is

not of faith is sin;" [2071] and of which it is written in the Epistle

to the Hebrews, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." [2072]

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[2069] Gal. v. 17.

[2070] Ps. lxxiii. 27.

[2071] Rom. xiv. 23.

[2072] Heb. xi. 6.

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Chapter 6 [V.]--The Censuring of Lust is Not a Condemnation of

Marriage; Whence Comes Shame in the Human Body. Adam and Eve Were Not

Created Blind; Meaning of Their "Eyes Being Opened."

Now, this being the real state of the question, they undoubtedly err

who suppose that, when fleshly lust is censured, marriage is condemned;

as if the malady of concupiscence was the outcome of marriage and not

of sin. Were not those first spouses, whose nuptials God blessed with

the words, "Be fruitful and multiply," [2073] naked, and yet not

ashamed? Why, then, did shame arise out of their members after sin,

except because an indecent motion arose from them, which, if men had

not sinned, would certainly never have existed in marriage? Or was it,

forsooth, as some hold (who give little heed to what they read), that

human beings were, like dogs, at first created blind; and--absurder

still--obtained sight, not as dogs do, by growing, but by sinning? Far

be it from us to entertain such an opinion. But they gather that

opinion of theirs from reading: "She took of the fruit thereof, and did

eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat: and the

eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked."

[2074] This accounts for the opinion of unintelligent persons, that the

eyes of the first man and woman were previously closed, because Holy

Scripture testifies that they were then opened. Well, then, were

Hagar's eyes, the handmaid of Sarah, previously shut, when, with her

thirsty and sobbing child, she opened her eyes [2075] and saw the well?

Or did those two disciples, after the Lord's resurrection, walk in the

way with Him with their eyes shut, since the evangelist says of them

that "in the breaking of bread their eyes were opened, and they knew

Him"? [2076] What, therefore, is written concerning the first man and

woman, that "the eyes of them both were opened," [2077] we ought to

understand as that they gave attention to perceiving and recognising

the new state which had befallen their body. Now that their eyes were

opened, their body appeared to them naked, and they knew it. If this

were not the meaning, how, when the beast of the field and the fowls of

the air were brought unto him, [2078] could Adam have given them names

if his eyes were shut? He could not have done this without

distinguishing them; and he could not distinguish them without seeing

them. How, too, could the woman herself have been beheld so clearly by

him when he said, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh"?

[2079] If, indeed, any one shall be so determined on cavilling as to

insist that Adam might have acquired a discernment of these objects,

not by sight but by touch, what explanation will he have to give of the

passage wherein we are told how the woman "saw that the tree," from

which she was about to pluck the forbidden fruit, "was pleasant for the

eyes to behold"? [2080] No; "they were both naked, and were not

ashamed," [2081] not because they had no eyesight, but because they

perceived no reason to be ashamed in their members, which had all along

been seen by them. For it is not said: They were both naked, and knew

it not; but "they were not ashamed." Because, indeed, nothing had

previously happened which was not lawful, so nothing had ensued which

could cause them shame.

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[2073] Gen. i. 28.

[2074] Gen. iii. 6, 7.

[2075] Gen. xxi. 17-19.

[2076] Luke xxiv. 31.

[2077] Gen. iii. 7.

[2078] Gen. ii. 19.

[2079] Gen. ii. 23.

[2080] Gen. iii. 6.

[2081] Gen. ii. 25.

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Chapter 7 [VI.]--Man's Disobedience Justly Requited in the Rebellion of

His Own Flesh; The Blush of Shame for the Disobedient Members of the

Body.

When the first man transgressed the law of God, he began to have

another law in his members which was repugnant to the law of his mind,

and he felt the evil of his own disobedience when he experienced in the

disobedience of his flesh a most righteous retribution recoiling on

himself. Such, then, was "the opening of his eyes" which the serpent

had promised him in his temptation [2082] --the knowledge, in fact, of

something which he had better been ignorant of. Then, indeed, did man

perceive within himself what he had done; then did he distinguish evil

from good,--not by avoiding it, but by enduring it. For it certainly

was not just that obedience should be rendered by his servant, that is,

his body, to him, who had not obeyed his own Lord. Well, then, how

significant is the fact that the eyes, and lips, and tongue, and hands,

and feet, and the bending of back, and neck, and sides, are all placed

within our power--to be applied to such operations as are suitable to

them, when we have a body free from impediments and in a sound state of

health; but when it must come to man's great function of the

procreation of children the members which were expressly created for

this purpose will not obey the direction of the will, but lust has to

be waited for to set these members in motion, as if it had legal right

over them, and sometimes it refuses to act when the mind wills, while

often it acts against its will! Must not this bring the blush of shame

over the freedom of the human will, that by its contempt of God, its

own Commander, it has lost all proper command for itself over its own

members? Now, wherein could be found a more fitting demonstration of

the just depravation of human nature by reason of its disobedience,

than in the disobedience of those parts whence nature herself derives

subsistence by succession? For it is by an especial propriety that

those parts of the body are designated as natural. This, then, was the

reason why the first human pair, on experiencing in the flesh that

motion which was indecent because disobedient, and on feeling the shame

of their nakedness, covered these offending members with fig-leaves;

[2083] in order that, at the very least, by the will of the ashamed

offenders, a veil might be thrown over that which was put into motion

without the will of those who wished it: and since shame arose from

what indecently pleased, decency might be attained by concealment.

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[2082] Gen. iii. 5.

[2083] Gen. iii. 7.

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Chapter 8 [VII.]--The Evil of Lust Does Not Take Away the Good of

Marriage.

Forasmuch, then, as the good of marriage could not be lost by the

addition of this evil, some imprudent persons suppose that this is not

an added evil, but something which appertains to the original good. A

distinction, however, occurs not only to subtle reason, but even to the

most ordinary natural judgment, which was both apparent in the case of

the first man and woman, and also holds good still in the case of

married persons to-day. What they afterward effected in

propagation,--that is the good of marriage; but what they first veiled

through shame,--that is the evil of concupiscence, which everywhere

shuns sight, and in its shame seeks privacy. Since, therefore, marriage

effects some good even out of that evil, it has whereof to glory; but

since the good cannot be effected without the evil, it has reason for

feeling shame. The case may be illustrated by the example of a lame

man. Suppose him to attain to some good object by limping after it,

then, on the one hand, the attainment itself is not evil because of the

evil of the man's lameness; nor, on the other hand, is the lameness

good because of the goodness of the attainment. So, on the same

principle, we ought not to condemn marriage because of the evil of

lust; nor must we praise lust because of the good of marriage.

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Chapter 9 [VIII.]--This Disease of Concupiscence in Marriage is Not to

Be a Matter of Will, But of Necessity; What Ought to Be the Will of

Believers in the Use of Matrimony; Who is to Be Regarded as Using, and

Not Succumbing To, the Evil of Concupiscence; How the Holy Fathers of

the Old Testament Formerly Used Wives.

This disease of concupiscence is what the apostle refers to, when,

speaking to married believers, he says: "This is the will of God, even

your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that

every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in

sanctification and honour; not in the disease of desire, even as the

Gentiles which know not God." [2084] The married believer, therefore,

must not only not use another man's vessel, which is what they do who

lust after others' wives; but he must know that even his own vessel is

not to be possessed in the disease of carnal concupiscence. And this

counsel is not to be understood as if the apostle prohibited

conjugal--that is to say, lawful and honourable--cohabitation; but so

as that that cohabitation (which would have no adjunct of unwholesome

lust, were it not that man's perfect freedom of choice had become by

preceding sin so disabled that it has this fatal adjunct) should not be

a matter of will, but of necessity, without which, nevertheless, it

would be impossible to attain to the fruition of the will itself in the

procreation of children. And this wish is not in the marriages of

believers determined by the purpose of having such children born as

shall pass through life in this present world, but such as shall be

born again in Christ, and remain in Him for evermore. Now if this

result should come about, the reward of a full felicity will spring

from marriage; but if such result be not realized, there will yet ensue

to the married pair the peace of their good will. Whosoever possesses

his vessel (that is, his wife) with this intention of heart, certainly

does not possess her in the "disease of desire," as the Gentiles which

know not God, but in sanctification and honour, as believers who hope

in God. A man turns to use the evil of concupiscence, and is not

overcome by it, when he bridles and restrains its rage, as it works in

inordinate and indecorous motions; and never relaxes his hold upon it

except when intent on offspring, and then controls and applies it to

the carnal generation of children to be spiritually regenerated, not to

the subjection of the spirit to the flesh in a sordid servitude. That

the holy fathers of olden times after Abraham, and before him, to whom

God gave His testimony that "they pleased Him," [2085] thus used their

wives, no one who is a Christian ought to doubt, since it was permitted

to certain individuals amongst them to have a plurality of wives, where

the reason was for the multiplication of their offspring, not the

desire of varying gratification.

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[2084] 1 Thess. iv. 3-5.

[2085] See Heb. xi. 4-6.

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Chapter 10 [IX.]--Why It Was Sometimes Permitted that a Man Should Have

Several Wives, Yet No Woman Was Ever Allowed to Have More Than One

Husband. Nature Prefers Singleness in Her Dominations.

Now, if to the God of our fathers, who is likewise our God, such a

plurality of wives had not been displeasing for the purpose that lust

might have a fuller range of indulgence; then, on such a supposition,

the holy women also ought each to have rendered service to several

husbands. But if any woman had so acted, what feeling but that of a

disgraceful concupiscence could impel her to have more husbands, seeing

that by such licence she could not have more children? That the good

purpose of marriage, however, is better promoted by one husband with

one wife, than by a husband with several wives, is shown plainly enough

by the very first union of a married pair, which was made by the Divine

Being Himself, with the intention of marriages taking their beginning

therefrom, and of its affording to them a more honourable precedent. In

the advance, however, of the human race, it came to pass that to

certain good men were united a plurality of good wives,--many to each;

and from this it would seem that moderation sought rather unity on one

side for dignity, while nature permitted plurality on the other side

for fecundity. For on natural principles it is more feasible for one to

have dominion over many, than for many to have dominion over one. Nor

can it be doubted, that it is more consonant with the order of nature

that men should bear rule over women, than women over men. It is with

this principle in view that the apostle says, "The head of the woman is

the man;" [2086] and, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own

husbands." [2087] So also the Apostle Peter writes: "Even as Sara

obeyed Abraham, calling him lord." [2088] Now, although the fact of the

matter is, that while nature loves singleness in her dominations, but

we may see plurality existing more readily in the subordinate portion

of our race; yet for all that, it was at no time lawful for one man to

have a plurality of wives, except for the purpose of a greater number

of children springing from him. Wherefore, if one woman cohabits with

several men, inasmuch as no increase of offspring accrues to her

therefrom, but only a more frequent gratification of lust, she cannot

possibly be a wife, but only a harlot.

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[2086] 1 Cor. xi. 3.

[2087] Col. iii. 18.

[2088] 1 Pet. iii. 6.

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Chapter 11 [X.]--The Sacrament of Marriage; Marriage Indissoluble; The

World's Law About Divorce Different from the Gospel's.

It is certainly not fecundity only, the fruit of which consists of

offspring, nor chastity only, whose bond is fidelity, but also a

certain sacramental bond [2089] in marriage which is recommended to

believers in wedlock. Accordingly it is enjoined by the apostle:

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church."

[2090] Of this bond the substance [2091] undoubtedly is this, that the

man and the woman who are joined together in matrimony should remain

inseparable as long as they live; and that it should be unlawful for

one consort to be parted from the other, except for the cause of

fornication. [2092] For this is preserved in the case of Christ and the

Church; so that, as a living one with a living one, there is no

divorce, no separation for ever. And so complete is the observance of

this bond in the city of our God, in His holy mountain [2093] --that is

to say, in the Church of Christ--by all married believers, who are

undoubtedly members of Christ, that, although women marry, and men take

wives, for the purpose of procreating children, it is never permitted

one to put away even an unfruitful wife for the sake of having another

to bear children. And whosoever does this is held to be guilty of

adultery by the law of the gospel; though not by this world's rule,

which allows a divorce between the parties, without even the allegation

of guilt, and the contraction of other nuptial engagements,--a

concession which, the Lord tells us, even the holy Moses extended to

the people of Israel, because of the hardness of their hearts. [2094]

The same condemnation applies to the woman, if she is married to

another man. So enduring, indeed, are the rights of marriage between

those who have contracted them, as long as they both live, that even

they are looked on as man and wife still, who have separated from one

another, rather than they between whom a new connection has been

formed. For by this new connection they would not be guilty of

adultery, if the previous matrimonial relation did not still continue.

If the husband die, with whom a true marriage was made, a true marriage

is now possible by a connection which would before have been adultery.

Thus between the conjugal pair, as long as they live, the nuptial bond

has a permanent obligation, and can be cancelled neither by separation

nor by union with another. But this permanence avails, in such cases,

only for injury from the sin, not for a bond of the covenant. In like

manner the soul of an apostate, which renounces as it were its marriage

union with Christ, does not, even though it has cast its faith away,

lose the sacrament of its faith, which it received in the laver of

regeneration. It would undoubtedly be given back to him if he were to

return, although he lost it on his departure from Christ. He retains,

however, the sacrament after his apostasy, to the aggravation of his

punishment, not for meriting the reward.

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[2089] Quoddam sacramentum. See above, On Original Sin, ch. 39 [xxxiv].

[2090] Eph. v. 25.

[2091] Res sacramenti.

[2092] Matt. v. 32.

[2093] Ps. xlviii. 2.

[2094] Matt. xix. 8.

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Chapter 12 [XI.]--Marriage Does Not Cancel a Mutual Vow of Continence;

There Was True Wedlock Between Mary and Joseph; In What Way Joseph Was

the Father of Christ.

But God forbid that the nuptial bond should be regarded as broken

between those who have by mutual consent agreed to observe a perpetual

abstinence from the use of carnal concupiscence. Nay, it will be only a

firmer one, whereby they have exchanged pledges together, which will

have to be kept by an especial endearment and concord,--not by the

voluptuous links of bodies, but by the voluntary affections of souls.

For it was not deceitfully that the angel said to Joseph: "Fear not to

take unto thee Mary thy wife." [2095] She is called his wife because of

her first troth of betrothal, although he had had no carnal knowledge

of her, nor was destined to have. The designation of wife was neither

destroyed nor made untrue, where there never had been, nor was meant to

be, any carnal connection. That virgin wife was rather a holier and

more wonderful joy to her husband because of her very pregnancy without

man, with disparity as to the child that was born, without disparity in

the faith they cherished. And because of this conjugal fidelity they

are both deservedly called "parents" [2096] of Christ (not only she as

His mother, but he as His father, as being her husband), both having

been such in mind and purpose, though not in the flesh. But while the

one was His father in purpose only, and the other His mother in the

flesh also, they were both of them, for all that, only the parents of

His humility, not of His sublimity; of His weakness, not of His

divinity. For the Gospel does not lie, in which one reads, "Both His

father and His mother marvelled at those things which were spoken about

Him;" [2097] and in another passage, "Now His parents went to Jerusalem

every year;" [2098] and again a little afterwards, "His mother said

unto Him, Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Behold, Thy father and

I have sought Thee sorrowing." [2099] In order, however, that He might

show them that He had a Father besides them, who begat Him without a

mother, He said to them in answer: "How is it that ye sought me? Wist

ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" [2100] Furthermore,

lest He should be thought to have repudiated them as His parents by

what He had just said, the evangelist at once added: "And they

understood not the saying which He spake unto them; and He went down

with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." [2101]

Subject to whom but His parents? And who was the subject but Jesus

Christ, "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be

equal with God"? [2102] And wherefore subject to them,who were far

beneath the form of God, except that "He emptied Himself, and took upon

Him the form of a servant," [2103] --the form in which His parents

lived? Now, since she bore Him without his engendering, they could not

surely have both been His parents, of that form of a servant, if they

had not been conjugally united, though without carnal connection.

Accordingly the genealogical series (although both parents of Christ

are mentioned together in the succession) [2104] had to be extended, as

it is in fact, [2105] down rather to Joseph's name, that no wrong might

be done, in the case of this marriage, to the male, and indeed the

stronger sex, while at the same time there was nothing detrimental to

truth, since Joseph, no less than Mary, was of the seed of David,

[2106] of whom it was foretold that Christ should come.

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[2095] Matt. i. 20.

[2096] Luke ii. 41.

[2097] Luke ii. 33. So the Vulgate as well as the best Greek texts,

instead of the "And Joseph and His mother marvelled," etc., of the

common text.

[2098] Luke ii. 41.

[2099] Luke ii. 48.

[2100] Luke ii. 49.

[2101] Luke ii. 50, 51.

[2102] Phil. ii. 6.

[2103] Phil. ii. 7.

[2104] Matt. i. 16.

[2105] Compare Luke iii. 23 with Matt. i. 16.

[2106] Luke i. 27.

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Chapter 13.--In the Marriage of Mary and Joseph There Were All the

Blessings of the Wedded State; All that is Born of Concubinage is

Sinful Flesh.

The entire good, therefore, of the nuptial institution was effected in

the case of these parents of Christ: there was offspring, there was

faithfulness, there was the bond. [2107] As offspring, we recognise the

Lord Jesus Himself; the fidelity, in that there was no adultery; the

bond, [2108] because there was no divorce. [XII.] Only there was no

nuptial cohabitation; because He who was to be without sin, and was

sent not in sinful flesh, but in the likeness of sinful flesh, [2109]

could not possibly have been made in sinful flesh itself without that

shameful lust of the flesh which comes from sin, and without which He

willed to be born, in order that He might teach us, that every one who

is born of sexual intercourse is in fact sinful flesh, since that alone

which was not born of such intercourse was not sinful flesh.

Nevertheless conjugal intercourse is not in itself sin, when it is had

with the intention of producing children; because the mind's good-will

leads the ensuing bodily pleasure, instead of following its lead; and

the human choice is not distracted by the yoke of sin pressing upon it,

inasmuch as the blow of the sin is rightly brought back to the purposes

of procreation. This blow has a certain prurient activity which plays

the king in the foul indulgences of adultery, and fornication, and

lasciviousness, and uncleanness; whilst in the indispensable duties of

the marriage state, it exhibits the docility of the slave. In the one

case it is condemned as the shameless effrontery of so violent a

master; in the other, it gets modest praise as the honest service of so

submissive an attendant. This lust, then, is not in itself the good of

the nuptial institution; but it is obscenity in sinful men, a necessity

in procreant parents, the fire of lascivious indulgences, the shame of

nuptial pleasures. Wherefore, then, may not persons remain man and wife

when they cease by mutual consent from cohabitation; seeing that Joseph

and Mary continued such, though they never even began to cohabit?

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[2107] Sacramentum.

[2108] Sacramentum.

[2109] Rom. viii. 3.

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Chapter 14 [XIII.]--Before Christ It Was a Time for Marrying; Since

Christ It Has Been a Time for Continence.

Now this propagation of children which among the ancient saints was a

most bounden duty for the purpose of begetting and preserving a people

for God, amongst whom the prophecy of Christ's coming must needs have

had precedence over everything, now has no longer the same necessity.

For from among all nations the way is open for an abundant offspring to

receive spiritual regeneration, from whatever quarter they derive their

natural birth. So that we may acknowledge that the scripture which says

there is "a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing,"

[2110] is to be distributed in its clauses to the periods before Christ

and since. The former was the time to embrace, the latter to refrain

from embracing.

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[2110] Eccles. iii. 5.

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Chapter 15.--The Teaching of the Apostle on This Subject.

Accordingly the apostle also, speaking apparently with this passage in

view, declares: "But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it

remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had them

not; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that

rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they

possessed not; and they that use this world, as though they used it

not: for the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you

without solicitude." [2111] This entire passage (that I may express my

view on this subject in the shape of a brief exposition of the

apostle's words) I think must be understood as follows: "This I say,

brethren, the time is short." No longer is God's people to be

propagated by carnal generation; but, henceforth, it is to be gathered

out by spiritual regeneration. "It remaineth, therefore, that they that

have wives" be not subject to carnal concupiscence; "and they that

weep," under the sadness of present evil, should rejoice in the hope of

future blessing; "and they that rejoice," over any temporary advantage,

should fear the eternal judgment; "and they that buy," should so hold

their possessions as not to cleave to them by overmuch love; "and they

that use this world" should reflect that it is passing away, and does

not remain. "For the fashion of this world passeth away: but," he says,

"I would have you to be without solicitude,"--in other words: I would

have you lift up your heart, that it may dwell among those things which

do not pass away. He then goes on to say: "He that is unmarried careth

for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but

he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he

may please his wife." [2112] And thus to some extent he explains what

he had already said: "Let them that have wives be as though they had

none." For they who have wives in such a way as to care for the things

of the Lord, how they may please the Lord, without having any care for

the things of the world in order to please their wives, are, in fact,

just as if they had no wives. And this is effected with greater ease

when the wives, too, are of such a disposition, because they please

their husbands not merely because they are rich, because they are high

in rank, noble in race, and amiable in natural temper, but because they

are believers, because they are religious, because they are chaste,

because they are good men.

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[2111] 1 Cor. vii. 29-31.

[2112] 1 Cor. iii. 32, 33.

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Chapter 16 [XIV.]--A Certain Degree of Intemperance is to Be Tolerated

in the Case of Married Persons; The Use of Matrimony for the Mere

Pleasure of Lust is Not Without Sin, But Because of the Nuptial

Relation the Sin is Venial.

But in the married, as these things are desirable and praiseworthy, so

the others are to be tolerated, that no lapse occur into damnable sins;

that is, into fornications and adulteries. To escape this evil, even

such embraces of husband and wife as have not procreation for their

object, but serve an overbearing concupiscence, are permitted, so far

as to be within range of forgiveness, though not prescribed by way of

commandment: [2113] and the married pair are enjoined not to defraud

one the other, lest Satan should tempt them by reason of their

incontinence. [2114] For thus says the Scripture: "Let the husband

render unto the wife her due: [2115] and likewise also the wife unto

the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband:

and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the

wife. Defraud ye not one the other; except it be with consent for a

time, that ye may have leisure for prayer; [2116] and then come

together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. But I

speak this by permission, [2117] and not of commandment." [2118] Now in

a case where permission [2119] must be given, it cannot by any means be

contended that there is not some amount of sin. Since, however, the

cohabitation for the purpose of procreating children, which must be

admitted to be the proper end of marriage, is not sinful, what is it

which the apostle allows to be permissible, [2120] but that married

persons, when they have not the gift of continence, may require one

from the other the due of the flesh--and that not from a wish for

procreation, but for the pleasure of concupiscence? This gratification

incurs not the imputation of guilt on account of marriage, but receives

permission [2121] on account of marriage. This, therefore, must be

reckoned among the praises of matrimony; that, on its own account, it

makes pardonable that which does not essentially appertain to itself.

For the nuptial embrace, which subserves the demands of concupiscence,

is so effected as not to impede the child-bearing, which is the end and

aim of marriage.

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[2113] 1 Cor. vii. 6.

[2114] 1 Cor. vii. 5.

[2115] So also the best mss. of the original.

[2116] So again, after the best witnesses in the original.

[2117] [The Latin word for "permission" is venia, which also means

"indulgence," "forbearance," "forgiveness;" and so the sins that may be

forgiven are called "venial sins," i.e. "pardonable," and in this sense

"permissible," sins. Augustin's argument here turns on this word.--W.]

[2118] 1 Cor. vii. 3-6.

[2119] [The Latin word for "permission" is venia, which also means

"indulgence," "forbearance," "forgiveness;" and so the sins that may be

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Chapter 17 [XV.]--What is Sinless in the Use of Matrimony? What is

Attended With Venial Sin, and What with Mortal?

It is, however, one thing for married persons to have intercourse only

for the wish to beget children, which is not sinful: it is another

thing for them to desire carnal pleasure in cohabitation, but with the

spouse only, which involves venial sin. For although propagation of

offspring is not the motive of the intercourse, there is still no

attempt to prevent such propagation, either by wrong desire or evil

appliance. They who resort to these, although called by the name of

spouses, are really not such; they retain no vestige of true matrimony,

but pretend the honourable designation as a cloak for criminal conduct.

Having also proceeded so far, they are betrayed into exposing their

children, which are born against their will. They hate to nourish and

retain those whom they were afraid they would beget. This infliction of

cruelty on their offspring so reluctantly begotten, unmasks the sin

which they had practised in darkness, and drags it clearly into the

light of day. The open cruelty reproves the concealed sin. Sometimes,

indeed, this lustful cruelty, or, if you please, cruel lust, resorts to

such extravagant methods as to use poisonous drugs to secure

barrenness; or else, if unsuccessful in this, to destroy the conceived

seed by some means previous to birth, preferring that its offspring

should rather perish than receive vitality; or if it was advancing to

life within the womb, should be slain before it was born. Well, if both

parties alike are so flagitious, they are not husband and wife; and if

such were their character from the beginning, they have not come

together by wedlock but by debauchery. But if the two are not alike in

such sin, I boldly declare either that the woman is, so to say, the

husband's harlot; or the man the wife's adulterer.

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Chapter 18 [XVI.]--Continence Better Than Marriage; But Marriage Better

Than Fornication.

Forasmuch, then, as marriage cannot be such as that of the primitive

men might have been, if sin had not preceded; it may yet be like that

of the holy fathers of the olden time, in such wise that the carnal

concupiscence which causes shame (which did not exist in paradise

previous to the fall, and after that event was not allowed to remain

there), although necessarily forming a part of the body of this death,

is not subservient to it, but only submits its function, when forced

thereto, for the sole purpose of assisting in the procreation of

children; otherwise, since the present time (as we have already [2122]

said) is the period for abstaining from the nuptial embrace, and

therefore makes no necessary demand on the exercise of the said

function, seeing that all nations now contribute so abundantly to the

production of an offspring which shall receive spiritual birth, there

is the greater room for the blessing of an excellent continence. "He

that is able to receive it, let him receive it." [2123] He, however,

who cannot receive it, "even if he marry, sinneth not;" [2124] and if a

woman have not the gift of continence, let her also marry. [2125] "It

is good, indeed, for a man not to touch a woman." [2126] But since "all

men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given," [2127]

it remains that "to avoid fornication, every man ought to have his own

wife, and every woman her own husband." [2128] And thus the weakness of

incontinence is hindered from falling into the ruin of profligacy by

the honourable estate of matrimony. Now that which the apostle says of

women, "I will therefore that the younger women marry," [2129] is also

applicable to males: I will that the younger men take wives; that so it

may appertain to both sexes alike "to bear children, to be" fathers and

"mothers of families, to give none occasion to the adversary to speak

reproachfully." [2130]

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[2122] See above, ch. 14 [xiii.].

[2123] Matt. xix. 12.

[2124] 1 Cor. vii. 28.

[2125] 1 Cor. vii. 9.

[2126] 1 Cor. vii. 1.

[2127] Matt. xix. 9.

[2128] 1 Cor. vii. 2.

[2129] 1 Tim. v. 14.

[2130] 1 Tim. v. 14.

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Chapter 19 [XVII.]--Blessing of Matrimony.

In matrimony, however, let these nuptial blessings be the objects of

our love--offspring, fidelity, the sacramental bond. [2131] Offspring,

not that it be born only, but born again; for it is born to punishment

unless it be born again to life. Fidelity, not such as even unbelievers

observe one towards the other, in their ardent love of the flesh. For

what husband, however impious himself, likes an adulterous wife? Or

what wife, however impious she be, likes an adulterous husband? This is

indeed a natural good in marriage, though a carnal one. But a member of

Christ ought to be afraid of adultery, not on account of himself, but

of his spouse; and ought to hope to receive from Christ the reward of

that fidelity which he shows to his spouse. The sacramental bond,

again, which is lost neither by divorce nor by adultery, should be

guarded by husband and wife with concord and chastity. For it alone is

that which even an unfruitful marriage retains by the law of piety, now

that all that hope of fruitfulness is lost for the purpose of which the

couple married. Let these nuptial blessings be praised in marriage by

him who wishes to extol the nuptial institution. Carnal concupiscence,

however, must not be ascribed to marriage: it is only to be tolerated

in marriage. It is not a good which comes out of the essence of

marriage, but an evil which is the accident of original sin.

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[2131] See above, ch. 11, and On Original Sin, ch. 39.

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Chapter 20 [XVIII]--Why Children of Wrath are Born of Holy Matrimony.

This is the reason, indeed, why of even the just and lawful marriages

of the children of God are born, not children of God, but children of

the world; because also those who generate, if they are already

regenerate, beget children not as children of God, but as still

children of the world. "The children of this world," says our Lord,

"beget and are begotten." [2132] From the fact, therefore, that we are

still children of this world, our outer man is in a state of

corruption; and on this account our offspring are born as children of

the present world; nor do they become sons of God, except they be

regenerated. [2133] Yet inasmuch as we are children of God, our inner

man is renewed from day to day. [2134] And yet even our outer man has

been sanctified through the laver of regeneration, and has received the

hope of future incorruption, on which account it is justly designated

as "the temple of God." "Your bodies," says the apostle, "are the

temples of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, and which ye have of God;

and ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a great price:

therefore glorify and carry God in your body." [2135] The whole of this

statement is made in reference to our present sanctification, but

especially in consequence of that hope of which he says in another

passage, "We ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit,

even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to

wit, the redemption of our body." [2136] If, then, the redemption of

our body is expected, as the apostle declares, it follows, that being

an expectation, it is as yet a matter of hope, and not of actual

possession. Accordingly the apostle adds: "For we are saved by hope:

but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he

yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with

patience wait for it." [2137] Not, therefore, by that which we are

waiting for, but by that which we are now enduring, are the children of

our flesh born. God forbid that a man who possesses faith should, when

he hears the apostle bid men "love their wives," [2138] love that

carnal concupiscence in his wife which he ought not to love even in

himself; as he may know, if he listens to the words of another apostle:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any

man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that

is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and

the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the

world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of

God abideth for ever, even as also God abideth for ever." [2139]

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[2132] Luke xx. 34. Augustin quotes an interpolation current in the

Latin Bibles of his day, and found also in certain Greek (D. Origen)

and Syriac (Curetonian version) witnesses.

[2133] See De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione, ii. 11 [ix.].

[2134] 2 Cor. iv. 16.

[2135] 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. Note the odd interpolation "and carry," which

was a common Latin reading.

[2136] Rom. viii. 23.

[2137] Rom. viii. 24, 25.

[2138] Col. iii. 19.

[2139] 1 John ii. 15-17. The last clause, though not in Jerome's

Vulgate, was yet read by some of the Latin Fathers--by Cyprian and

Lucifer, for instance, and something like it also by one of the

Egyptian versions.

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Chapter 21 [XIX.]--Thus Sinners are Born of Righteous Parents, Even as

Wild Olives Spring from the Olive.

That, therefore, which is born of the lust of the flesh is really born

of the world, and not of God; but it is born of God, when it is born

again of water and of the Spirit. The guilt of this concupiscence,

regeneration alone remits, even as natural generation contracts it.

What, then, is generated must be regenerated, in order that likewise

since it cannot be otherwise, what has been contracted may be remitted.

It is, no doubt, very wonderful that what has been remitted in the

parent should still be contracted in the offspring; but nevertheless

such is the case. That this mysterious verity, which unbelievers

neither see nor believe, might get some palpable evidence in its

support, God in His providence has secured in the example of certain

trees. For why should we not suppose that for this very purpose the

wild olive springs from the olive? Is it not indeed credible that, in a

thing which has been created for the use of mankind, the Creator

provided and appointed what should afford an instructive example,

applicable to the human race? It is a wonderful thing, then, how those

who have been themselves delivered by grace from the bondage of sin,

should still beget those who are tied and bound by the self-same chain,

and who require the same process of loosening? Yes; and we admit the

wonderful fact. But that the embryo of wild olive trees should latently

exist in the germs of true olives, who would deem credible, if it were

not proved true by experiment and observation? In the same manner,

therefore, as a wild olive grows out of the seed of the wild olive, and

from the seed of the true olive springs also nothing but a wild olive,

notwithstanding the very great difference there is between the wild

olive and the olive; so what is born in the flesh, either of a sinner

or of a just man, is in both instances a sinner, notwithstanding the

vast distinction which exists between the sinner and the righteous man.

He that is begotten is no sinner as yet in act, and is still new from

his birth; but in guilt he is old. Human from the Creator, he is a

captive of the destroyer, and needs a redeemer. The difficulty,

however, is how a state of captivity can possibly befall the offspring,

when the parents have been themselves previously redeemed from it. Now

it is no easy matter to unravel this intricate point, or to explain it

in a set discourse; therefore unbelievers refuse to accept it as true;

just as if in that other point about the wild olive and the olive,

which we gave in illustration, any reason could be easily found, or

explanation clearly given, why the self-same shoot should sprout out of

so dissimilar a stock. The truth, however, of this can be discovered by

any one who is willing to make the experiment. Let it then serve for a

good example for suggesting belief of what admits not of ocular

demonstration.

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Chapter 22 [XX.]--Even Infants, When Unbaptized, are in the Power of

the Devil; Exorcism in the Case of Infants, and Renunciation of the

Devil.

Now the Christian faith unfalteringly declares, what our new heretics

have begun to deny, both that they who are cleansed in the laver of

regeneration are redeemed from the power of the devil, and that those

who have not yet been redeemed by such regeneration are still captive

in the power of the devil, even if they be infant children of the

redeemed, unless they be themselves redeemed by the self-same grace of

Christ. For we cannot doubt that that blessing of God applies to every

stage of human life, which the apostle describes when he says

concerning Him: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and

hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." [2140] From this

power of darkness, therefore, of which the devil is the prince,--in

other words, from the power of the devil and his angels,--infants are

delivered when they are baptized; and whosoever denies this, is

convicted by the truth of the Church's very sacraments, which no

heretical novelty in the Church of Christ is permitted to destroy or

change, so long as the Divine Head rules and helps the entire body

which He owns--small as well as great. It is true, then, and in no way

false, that the devil's power is exorcised in infants, and that they

renounce him by the hearts and mouths of those who bring them to

baptism, being unable to do so by their own; in order that they may be

delivered from the power of darkness, and be translated into the

kingdom of their Lord. What is that, therefore, within them which keeps

them in the power of the devil until they are delivered from it by

Christ's sacrament of baptism? What is it, I ask, but sin? Nothing

else, indeed, has the devil found which enables him to put under his

own control that nature of man which the good Creator made good. But

infants have committed no sin of their own since they have been alive.

Only original sin, therefore, remains, whereby they are made captive

under the devil's power, until they are redeemed therefrom by the laver

of regeneration and the blood of Christ, and pass into their Redeemer's

kingdom,--the power of their enthraller being frustrated, and power

being given them to become "sons of God" instead of children of this

world. [2141]

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[2140] Col. i. 13.

[2141] John i. 12.

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Chapter 23 [XXI.]--Sin Has Not Arisen Out of the Goodness of Marriage;

The Sacrament of Matrimony a Great One in the Case of Christ and the

Church--A Very Small One in the Case of a Man and His Wife.

If now we interrogate, so to speak, those goods of marriage to which we

have often referred, [2142] and inquire how it is that sin could

possibly have been propagated from them to infants, we shall get this

answer from the first of them--the work of procreation of offspring:

"My happiness would in paradise have been greater if sin had not been

committed. For to me belongs that blessing of almighty God: Be

fruitful, and multiply.' [2143] For accomplishing this good work,

divers members were created suited to each sex; these members were, of

course, in existence before sin, but they were not objects of shame."

This will be the answer of the second good--the fidelity of chastity:

"If sin had not been committed, what in paradise could have been more

secure than myself, when there was no lust of my own to spur me, none

of another to tempt me?" And then this will be the answer of the

sacramental bond of marriage,--the third good: "Of me was that word

spoken in paradise before the entrance of sin: A man shall leave his

father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they two

shall become one flesh.'" [2144] This the apostle applies to the case

of Christ and of the Church, and calls it then "a great sacrament."

[2145] What, then, in Christ and in the Church is great, in the

instances of each married pair it is but very small, but even then it

is the sacrament of an inseparable union. What now is there in these

three blessings of marriage out of which the bond of sin could pass

over to posterity? Absolutely nothing. And in these blessings it is

certain that the goodness of matrimony is entirely comprised; and even

now good wedlock consists of these same blessings.

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[2142] See above, chs. 11, 19, and On Original Sin, ch. 39.

[2143] Gen. i. 29.

[2144] Gen. ii. 24.

[2145] Eph v. 32. [In the original Greek, "a great mystery;" i.e., "a

great revelation,"--W.]

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Chapter 24.--Lust and Shame Come from Sin; The Law of Sin; The

Shamelessness of the Cynics.

But if, in like manner, the question be asked of the concupiscence of

the flesh, how it is that acts now bring shame which once were free

from shame, will not her answer be, that she only began to have

existence in men's members after sin? [XXII.] And, therefore, that the

apostle designated her influence as "the law of sin," [2146] inasmuch

as she subjugated man to herself when he was unwilling to remain

subject to his God; and that it was she who made the first married pair

ashamed at that moment when they covered their loins; even as all are

still ashamed, and seek out secret retreats for cohabitation, and dare

not have even the children, whom they have themselves thus begotten, to

be witnesses of what they do. It was against this modesty of natural

shame that the Cynic philosophers, in the error of their astonishing

shamelessness, struggled so hard: they thought that the intercourse

indeed of husband and wife, since it was lawful and honourable, should

therefore be done in public. Such barefaced obscenity deserved to

receive the name of dogs; and so they went by the title of "Cynics."

[2147]

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[2146] Rom. vii. 23.

[2147] Cynici, i.e. Kunikoi, "dog-like."

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Chapter 25 [XXIII.]--Concupiscence in the Regenerate Without Consent is

Not Sin; In What Sense Concupiscence is Called Sin.

Now this concupiscence, this law of sin which dwells in our members, to

which the law of righteousness forbids allegiance, saying in the words

of the apostle, "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body,

that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your

members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin:" [2148] --this

concupiscence, I say, which is cleansed only by the sacrament of

regeneration, does undoubtedly, by means of natural birth, pass on the

bond of sin to a man's posterity, unless they are themselves loosed

from it by regeneration. In the case, however, of the regenerate,

concupiscence is not itself sin any longer, whenever they do not

consent to it for illicit works, and when the members are not applied

by the presiding mind to perpetrate such deeds. So that, if what is

enjoined in one passage, "Thou shalt not covet," [2149] is not kept,

that at any rate is observed which is commanded in another place, "Thou

shalt not go after thy concupiscences." [2150] Inasmuch, however, as by

a certain manner of speech it is called sin, since it arose from sin,

and, when it has the upper hand, produces sin, the guilt of it prevails

in the natural man; but this guilt, by Christ's grace through the

remission of all sins, is not suffered to prevail in the regenerate

man, if he does not yield obedience to it whenever it urges him to the

commission of evil. As arising from sin, it is, I say, called sin,

although in the regenerate it is not actually sin; and it has this

designation applied to it, just as speech which the tongue produces is

itself called "tongue;" and just as the word "hand" is used in the

sense of writing, which the hand produces. In the same way

concupiscence is called sin, as producing sin when it conquers the

will: so to cold and frost the epithet "sluggish" is given; not as

arising from, but as productive of, sluggishness; benumbing us, in

fact.

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[2148] Rom. vi. 12, 13.

[2149] Ex. xx. 17; "non concupisces" in the Latin; hence the play on

the word.

[2150] Ecclus. xviii. 30.

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Chapter 26.--Whatever is Born Through Concupiscence is Not Undeservedly

in Subjection to the Devil by Reason of Sin; The Devil Deserves Heavier

Punishment Than Men.

This wound which the devil has inflicted on the human race compels

everything which has its birth in consequence of it to be under the

devil's power, as if he were rightly plucking fruit off his own tree.

Not as if man's nature, which is only of God, came from him, but sin

alone, which is not of God. For it is not on its own account that man's

nature is under condemnation, because it is the work of God, and

therefore laudable; but on account of that condemnable corruption by

which it has been vitiated. Now it is by reason of this condemnation

that it is in subjection to the devil, who is also in the same damnable

state. For the devil is himself an unclean spirit: good, indeed, so far

as he is a spirit, but evil as being unclean; for by nature he is a

spirit, by the corruption thereof an unclean one. Of these two, the one

is of God, the other of himself. His hold over men, therefore, whether

of an advanced age or in infancy, is not because they are human, but

because they are polluted. He, then, who feels surprise that God's

creature is a subject of the devil, should cease from such feeling. For

one creature of God is in subjection to another creature of God, the

less to the greater, a human being to an angelic one; and this is not

owing to nature, but to a corruption of nature: polluted is the

sovereign, polluted also the subject. All this is the fruit of that

ancient stock of pollution which he has planted in man; himself being

destined to suffer a heavier punishment at the last judgment, as being

the more polluted; but at the same time even they who will have to bear

a less heavy burden in that condemnation are subjects of him as the

prince and author of sin, for there will be no other cause of

condemnation than sin.

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Chapter 27 [XXIV.]--Through Lust Original Sin is Transmitted; Venial

Sins in Married Persons; Concupiscence of the Flesh, the Daughter and

Mother of Sin.

Wherefore the devil holds infants guilty who are born, not of the good

by which marriage is good, but of the evil of concupiscence, which,

indeed, marriage uses aright, but at which even marriage has occasion

to feel shame. Marriage is itself "honourable in all" [2151] the goods

which properly appertain to it; but even when it has its "bed

undefiled" (not only by fornication and adultery, which are damnable

disgraces, but also by any of those excesses of cohabitation such as do

not arise from any prevailing desire of children, but from an

overbearing lust of pleasure, which are venial sins in man and wife),

yet, whenever it comes to the actual process of generation, the very

embrace which is lawful and honourable cannot be effected without the

ardour of lust, so as to be able to accomplish that which appertains to

the use of reason and not of lust. Now, this ardour, whether following

or preceding the will, does somehow, by a power of its own, move the

members which cannot be moved simply by the will, and in this manner it

shows itself not to be the servant of a will which commands it, but

rather to be the punishment of a will which disobeys it. It shows,

moreover, that it must be excited, not by a free choice, but by a

certain seductive stimulus, and that on this very account it produces

shame. This is the carnal concupiscence, which, while it is no longer

accounted sin in the regenerate, yet in no case happens to nature

except from sin. It is the daughter of sin, as it were; and whenever it

yields assent to the commission of shameful deeds, it becomes also the

mother of many sins. Now from this concupiscence whatever comes into

being by natural birth is bound by original sin, unless, indeed, it be

born again in Him whom the Virgin conceived without this concupiscence.

Wherefore, when He vouchsafed to be born in the flesh, He alone was

born without sin.

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[2151] Heb. xiii. 4.

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Chapter 28 [XXV.]--Concupiscence Remains After Baptism, Just as Languor

Does After Recovery from Disease; Concupiscence is Diminished in

Persons of Advancing Years, and Increased in the Incontinent.

If the question arises, how this concupiscence of the flesh remains in

the regenerate, in whose case has been effected a remission of all sins

whatever; seeing that human semination takes place by its means, even

when the carnal offspring of even a baptized parent is born: or, at all

events, if it may be in the case of a baptized parent concupiscence and

not be sin, why should this same concupiscence be sin in the

offspring?--the answer to be given is this: Carnal concupiscence is

remitted, indeed, in baptism; not so that it is put out of existence,

but so that it is not to be imputed for sin. Although its guilt is now

taken away, it still remains until our entire infirmity be healed by

the advancing renewal of our inner man, day by day, when at last our

outward man shall be clothed with incorruption. [2152] It does not

remain, however, substantially, as a body, or a spirit; but it is

nothing more than a certain affection of an evil quality, such as

languor, for instance. There is not, to be sure, anything remaining

which may be remitted whenever, as the Scripture says, "the Lord

forgiveth all our iniquities." [2153] But until that happens which

immediately follows in the same passage, "Who healeth all thine

infirmities, who redeemeth thy life from corruption," [2154] there

remains this concupiscence of the flesh in the body of this death. Now

we are admonished not to obey its sinful desires to do evil: "Let not

sin reign in your mortal body." [2155] Still this concupiscence is

daily lessened in persons of continence and increasing years, and most

of all when old age makes a near approach. The man, however, who yields

to it a wicked service, receives such great energies that, even when

all his members are now failing through age, and those especial parts

of his body are unable to be applied to their proper function, he does

not ever cease to revel in a still increasing rage of disgraceful and

shameless desire.

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[2152] 1 Cor. xv. 53.

[2153] Ps. ciii. 3.

[2154] Ps. ciii. 4.

[2155] Rom. vi. 12.

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Chapter 29 [XXVI.]--How Concupiscence Remains in the Baptized in Act,

When It Has Passed Away as to Its Guilt.

In the case, then, of those persons who are born again in Christ, when

they receive an entire remission of all their sins, it is of course

necessary that the guilt also of the still indwelling concupiscence

should be remitted, in order that (as I said) it should not be imputed

to them for sin. For even as in the case of those sins which cannot be

themselves permanent, since they pass away as soon as they are

committed, the guilt yet is permanent, and (if not remitted) will

remain for evermore; so, when the concupiscence is remitted, the guilt

of it also is taken away. For not to have sin means this, not to be

deemed guilty of sin. If a man have (for example) committed adultery,

though he do not repeat the sin, he is held to be guilty of adultery

until the indulgence in guilt be itself remitted. He has the sin,

therefore, remaining, although the particular act of his sin no longer

exists, since it has passed away along with the time when it was

committed. For if to desist from sinning were the same thing as not to

have sins, it would be sufficient if Scripture were content to give us

the simple warning, "My son, hast thou sinned? Do so no more." [2156]

This, however, does not suffice, for it goes on to say, "Ask

forgiveness for thy former sins." [2157] Sins remain, therefore, if

they are not forgiven. But how do they remain if they are passed away?

Only thus, they have passed away in their act, but they are permanent

in their guilt. Contrariwise, then, may it happen that a thing may

remain in act, but pass away in guilt.

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[2156] Ecclus. xxi. 1.

[2157] Ecclus. xxi. 1.

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Chapter 30 [XXVII.]--The Evil Desires of Concupiscence; We Ought to

Wish that They May Not Be.

For the concupiscence of the flesh is in some sort active, even when it

does not exhibit either an assent of the heart, where its seat of

empire is, or those members whereby, as its weapons, it fulfils what it

is bent on. But what in this action does it effect, unless it be its

evil and shameful desires? For if these were good and lawful, the

apostle would not forbid obedience to them, saying, "Let not sin

therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts

thereof." [2158] He does not say, that ye should have the lusts

thereof, but "that ye should obey the lusts thereof;" in order that (as

these desires are greater or less in different individuals, according

as each shall have progressed in the renewal of the inner man) we may

maintain the fight of holiness and chastity, for the purpose of

withholding obedience to these lusts. Nevertheless, our wish ought to

be nothing less than the nonexistence of these very desires, even if

the accomplishment of such a wish be not possible in the body of this

death. This is the reason why the same apostle, in another passage,

addressing us as if in his own person, gives us this instruction: "For

what I would," says he, "that do I not; but what I hate, that do I."

[2159] In a word, "I covet." [2160] For he was unwilling to do this,

that he might be perfect on every side. "If, then, I do that which I

would not," he goes on to say, "I consent unto the law that it is

good." [2161] Because the law, too, wills not that which I also would

not. For it wills not that I should have concupiscence, for it says,

"Thou shall not covet;" [2162] and I am no less unwilling to cherish so

evil a desire. In this, therefore, there is complete accord between the

will of the law and my own will. But because he was unwilling to covet,

[2163] and yet did covet, [2164] and for all that did not by any means

obey this concupiscence so as to yield assent to it, he immediately

adds these words: "Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that

dwelleth in me." [2165]

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[2158] Rom. vi. 12.

[2159] Rom. vii. 15.

[2160] "Concupisco" in the Latin, and hence used in this discussion.

[2161] Rom. vii. 16.

[2162] "Concupisco" in the Latin, and hence used in this discussion.

[2163] "Concupisco" in the Latin, and hence used in this discussion

[2164] "Concupisco" in the Latin, and hence used in this discussion.

[2165] Rom. vii. 17.

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Chapter 31 [XXVIII.]--Who is the Man that Can Say, "It is No More I

that Do It"?

A man, however, is much deceived if, while consenting to the lust of

his flesh, and then both resolving in his mind to do its desires and

setting about it, he supposes that he has still a right to say, "It is

not I that do it," even if he hates and loathes himself for assenting

to evil desires. The two things are simultaneous in his case: he hates

the thing himself because he knows that it is evil; and yet he does it,

because he is bent on doing it. Now if, in addition to all this, he

proceeds to do what the Scripture forbids him, when it says, "Neither

yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin,"

[2166] and completes with a bodily act what he was bent on doing in his

mind; and says, "It is not I that do the thing, but sin that dwelleth

in me," [2167] because he feels displeased with himself for resolving

on and accomplishing the deed,--he so greatly errs as not to know his

own self. For, whereas he is altogether himself, his mind determining

and his body executing his own purpose, he yet supposes that he is

himself no longer! [XXIX.] That man, therefore, alone speaks the truth

when he says, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in

me," who only feels the concupiscence, and neither resolves on doing it

with the consent of his heart, nor accomplishes it with the ministry of

his body.

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[2166] Rom. vi. 13.

[2167] Rom. vii. 17.

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Chapter 32.--When Good Will Be Perfectly Done.

The apostle then adds these words: "For I know that in me (that is, in

my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but

how to perfect that which is good I find not." [2168] Now this is said,

because a good thing is not then perfected, when there is an absence of

evil desires, as evil is perfected when evil desires are obeyed. But

when they are present, but are not obeyed, neither evil is performed,

since obedience is not yielded to them; nor good, because of their

inoperative presence. There is rather an intermediate condition of

things: good is effected in some degree, because the evil concupiscence

has gained no assent to itself; and in some degree there is a remnant

of evil, because the concupiscence is present. This accounts for the

apostle's precise words. He does not say, To do good is not present to

him, but "how to perfect it." For the truth is, one does a good deal of

good when he does what the Scripture enjoins, "Go not after thy lusts;"

[2169] yet he falls short of perfection, in that he fails to keep the

great commandment, "Thou shalt not covet." [2170] The law said, "Thou

shalt not covet," in order that, when we find ourselves lying in this

diseased state, we might seek the medicine of Grace, and by that

commandment know both in what direction our endeavours should aim as we

advance in our present mortal condition, and to what a height it is

possible to reach in the future immortality. For unless perfection

could somewhere be attained, this commandment would never have been

given to us.

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[2168] Rom. vii. 18.

[2169] Ecclus. xviii. 30.

[2170] Ex. xx. 7.

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Chapter 33 [XXX.]--True Freedom Comes with Willing Delight in God's

Law.

The apostle then repeats his former statement, the more fully to

recommend its purport: "For the good," says he, "that I would, I do

not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now, if I do that I

would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

Then follows this: "I find then the law, when I would act, to be good

to me; for evil is present with me." [2171] In other words, I find that

the law is a good to me, when I wish to do what the law would have me

do; inasmuch as it is not with the law itself (which says, "Thou shalt

not covet") that evil is present; no, it is with myself that the evil

is present, which I would not do, because I have the concupiscence even

in my willingness. "For," he adds, "I delight in the law of God after

the inward man; but I see another law in my members warring against the

law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which

is in my members." [2172] This delight with the law of God [2173] after

the inward man, comes to us from the mighty grace of God; for thereby

is our inward man renewed day by day, [2174] because it is thereby that

progress is made by us with perseverance. In it there is not the fear

that has torment, but the love that cheers and gratifies. We are truly

free there, where we have no unwilling joy.

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[2171] Rom. vii. 19-21. The punctuation of the passage in Latin differs

from that ordinarily used with us, and hence this sense results.

[2172] Rom. vii. 22, 23.

[2173] This sharing of joy with the law of God: "Ista condelectatio

legi Dei."

[2174] 2 Cor. iv. 16.

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Chapter 34.--How Concupiscence Made a Captive of the Apostle; What the

Law of Sin Was to the Apostle.

Then, indeed, this statement, "I see another law in my members warring

against the law of my mind," refers to that very concupiscence which we

are now speaking of--the law of sin in our sinful flesh. But when he

said, "And bringing me into captivity to the law of sin," that is, to

its own self, "which is in my members," he either meant "bringing me

into captivity," in the sense of endeavouring to make me captive, that

is, urging me to approve and accomplish evil desire; or rather (and

this opens no controversy), in the sense of leading me captive

according to the flesh, and, if this is not possessed by the carnal

concupiscence which he calls the law of sin, no unlawful desire--such

as our mind ought not to obey--would,of course, be there to excite and

disturb. The fact, however, that the apostle does not say, Bringing my

flesh into captivity, but "Bringing me into captivity," leads us to

look out for some other meaning for the phrase, and to understand the

term "bringing me into captivity" as if he had said, endeavouring to

make me captive. But why, after all, might he not say, "Bringing me

into captivity," and at the same time mean us to understand his flesh?

Was it not spoken by one concerning Jesus, when His flesh was not found

in the sepulchre: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where

they have laid Him"? [2175] Was Mary's then an improper question,

because she said, "My Lord," and not "My Lord's body" or "flesh"?

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[2175] John xx. 2.

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Chapter 35 [XXXI.]--The Flesh, Carnal Affection.

But we have in the apostle's own language, a little before, a

sufficiently clear proof that he might have meant his flesh when he

said, "Bringing me into captivity." For after declaring, "I know that

in me dwelleth no good thing," he at once added an explanatory sentence

to this effect, "That is,in my flesh." [2176] It is then the flesh, in

which there dwells nothing good, that is brought into captivity to the

law of sin. Now he designates that as the flesh wherein lies a certain

morbid carnal affection, not the mere conformation of our bodily fabric

whose members are not to be used as weapons for sin--that is, for that

very concupiscence which holds this flesh of ours captive. So far,

indeed, as concerns this actual bodily substance and nature of ours, it

is already God's temple in all faithful men, whether living in marriage

or in continence. If, however, absolutely nothing of our flesh were in

captivity, not even to the devil, because there has accrued to it the

remission of sin, that sin be not imputed to it (and this is properly

designated the law of sin); yet if under this law of sin, that is,

under its own concupiscence, our flesh were not to some degree held

captive, how could that be true which the apostle states, when he

speaks of our "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our

body"? [2177] In so far, then, as there is now this waiting for the

redemption of our body, there is also in some degree still existing

something in us which is a captive to the law of sin. Accordingly he

exclaims, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body

of this death? The grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." [2178]

What are we to understand by such language, but that our body, which is

undergoing corruption, weighs heavily on our soul? When, therefore,

this very body of ours shall be restored to us in an incorrupt state,

there shall be a full liberation from the body of this death; but there

will be no such deliverance for them who shall rise again to

condemnation. To the body of this death then is understood to be owing

the circumstance that there is in our members another law which wars

against the law of the mind, so long as the flesh lusts against the

spirit--without, however, subjugating the mind, inasmuch as on its

side, too, the spirit has a concupiscence contrary to the flesh. [2179]

Thus, although the actual law of sin partly holds the flesh in

captivity (whence comes its resistance to the law of the mind), still

it has not an absolute empire in our body, notwithstanding its mortal

state, since it refuses obedience to its desires. [2180] For in the

case of hostile armies between whom there is an earnest conflict, even

the side which is inferior in the fight usually holds a something which

it has captured; and although in some such way there is somewhat in our

flesh which is kept under the law of sin, yet it has before it the hope

of redemption: and then there will remain not a particle of this

corrupt concupiscence; but our flesh, healed of that diseased plague,

and wholly clad in immortality, shall live for evermore in eternal

blessedness.

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[2176] Rom. vii. 18.

[2177] Rom. viii. 23.

[2178] Rom. vii. 24.

[2179] Gal. v. 17.

[2180] Rom. vi. 12.

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Chapter 36.--Even Now While We Still Have Concupiscence We May Be Safe

in Christ.

But the apostle pursues the subject, and says, "So then with the mind I

myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin;" [2181]

which must be thus understood: "With my mind I serve the law of God,"

by refusing my consent to the law of sin; "with my flesh, however," I

serve "the law of sin," by having the desires of sin, from which I am

not yet entirely freed, although I yield them no assent. Then let us

observe carefully what he has said after all the above: "There is

therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

[2182] Even now, says he, when the law in my members keeps up its

warfare against the law of my mind, and retains in captivity somewhat

in the body of this death, there is no condemnation to them which are

in Christ Jesus. And listen why: "For the law of the spirit of life in

Christ Jesus," says he, "hath made me free from the law of sin and

death." [2183] How made me free, except by abolishing its sentence of

guilt by the remission of all my sins; so that, though it still

remains, only daily lessening more and more, it is nevertheless not

imputed to me as sin?

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[2181] Rom. vii. 25.

[2182] Rom. viii. 1.

[2183] Rom. viii. 2.

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Chapter 37 [XXXII.]--The Law of Sin with Its Guilt in Unbaptized

Infants. By Adam's Sin the Human Race Has Become a "Wild Olive Tree."

Until, then, this remission of sins takes place in the offspring, they

have within them the law of sin in such manner, that it is really

imputed to them as sin; in other words, with that law there is

attaching to them its sentence of guilt, which holds them debtors to

eternal condemnation. For what a parent transmits to his carnal

offspring is the condition of his own carnal birth, not that of his

spiritual new birth. For, that he was born in the flesh, although no

hindrance after the remission of his guilt to his fruit, still remains

hidden, as it were, in the seed of the olive, even though, because of

the remission of his sins, it in no respect injures the oil--that is,

in plain language, his life which he lives, "righteous by faith,"

[2184] after Christ, whose very name comes from the oil, that is, from

the anointing. [2185] That, however, which in the case of a regenerate

parent, as in the seed of the pure olive, is covered without any guilt,

which has been remitted, is still no doubt retained in the case of his

offspring, which is yet unregenerate, as in the wild olive, with all

its guilt, until here also it be remitted by the self-same grace. When

Adam sinned, he was changed from that pure olive, which had no such

corrupt seed whence should spring the bitter issue of the wild olive,

into a wild olive tree; and, inasmuch as his sin was so great, that by

it his nature became commensurately changed for the worse, he converted

the entire race of man into a wild olive stock. The effect of this

change we see illustrated, as has been said above, in the instance of

these very trees. Whenever God's grace converts a sapling into a good

olive, so that the fault of the first birth (that original sin which

had been derived and contracted from the concupiscence of the flesh) is

remitted, covered, and not imputed, there is still inherent in it that

nature from which is born a wild olive, unless it, too, by the same

grace, is by the second birth changed into a good olive.

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[2184] Rom. i. 17.

[2185] An allusion, of course, to the meaning of the word "Christ,"

from Chrisma, and meaning "the Anointed One."

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Chapter 38 [XXXIII.]--To Baptism Must Be Referred All Remission of

Sins, and the Complete Healing of the Resurrection. Daily Cleansing.

Blessed, therefore, is the olive tree "whose iniquities are forgiven,

and whose sins are covered;" blessed is it "to which the Lord hath not

imputed sin." [2186] But this, which has received the remission, the

covering, and the acquittal, even up to the complete change into an

eternal immortality, still retains a secret force which furnishes seed

for a wild and bitter olive tree, unless the same tillage of God prunes

it also, by remission, covering, and acquittal. There will, however, be

left no corruption at all in even carnal seed, when the same

regeneration, which is now effected through the sacred laver, purges

and heals all man's evil to the very end. By its means the very same

flesh, through which the carnal mind was formed, shall become

spiritual,--no longer having that carnal lust which resists the law of

the mind, no longer emitting carnal seed. For in this sense must be

understood that which the apostle whom we have so often quoted says

elsewhere: "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He

might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word; that

He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or

wrinkle, or any such thing." [2187] It must, I say, be understood as

implying, that by this laver of regeneration and word of sanctification

all the evils of regenerate men of whatever kind are cleansed and

healed,--not the sins only which are all now remitted in baptism, but

those also which after baptism are committed by human ignorance and

frailty; not, indeed, that baptism is to be repeated as often as sin is

repeated, but that by its one only ministration it comes to pass that

pardon is secured to the faithful of all their sins both before and

after their regeneration. For of what use would repentance be, either

before baptism, if baptism did not follow; or after it, if it did not

precede? Nay, in the Lord's Prayer itself, which is our daily

cleansing, of what avail or advantage would it be for that petition to

be uttered, "Forgive us our debts," [2188] unless it be by such as have

been baptized? And in like manner, how great soever be the liberality

and kindness of a man's alms, what, I ask, would they profit him

towards the remission of his sins if he had not been baptized? In

short, on whom but on the baptized shall be bestowed the very

felicities of the kingdom of heaven; where the Church shall have no

spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; where there shall be nothing

blameworthy, nothing unreal; where there shall be not only no guilt for

sin, but no concupiscence to excite it?

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[2186] Ps. xxxiii. 1, 2.

[2187] Eph. v. 25.

[2188] Matt. vi. 12.

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Chapter 39 [XXXIV.]--By the Holiness of Baptism, Not Sins Only, But All

Evils Whatsoever, Have to Be Removed. The Church is Not Yet Free from

All Stain.

And thus not only all the sins, but all the ills of men of what kind

soever, are in course of removal by the holiness of that Christian

laver whereby Christ cleanses His Church, that He may present it to

Himself, not in this world, but in that which is to come, as not having

spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Now there are some who maintain

that such is the Church even now, and yet they are in it. Well then,

since they confess that they have some sins themselves, if they say the

truth in this (and, of course, they do, as they are not free from

sins), then the Church has "a spot" in them; whilst if they tell an

untruth in their confession (as speaking from a double heart), then the

Church has in them "a wrinkle." If, however, they assert that it is

themselves, and not the Church, which has all this, they then as good

as acknowledge that they are not its members, nor belong to its body,

so that they are even condemned by their own confession.

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Chapter 40 [XXXV.]--Refutation of the Pelagians by the Authority of St.

Ambrose, Whom They Quote to Show that the Desire of the Flesh is a

Natural Good.

In respect, however, to this concupiscence of the flesh, we have

striven in this lengthy discussion to distinguish it accurately from

the goods of marriage. This we have done on account of our modern

heretics, who cavil whenever concupiscence is censured, as if it

involved a censure of marriage. Their object is to praise concupiscence

as a natural good, that so they may defend their own baneful dogma,

which asserts that those who are born by its means do not contract

original sin. Now the blessed Ambrose, bishop of Milan, by whose

priestly office I received the washing of regeneration, briefly spoke

on this matter, when, expounding the prophet Isaiah, he gathered from

him the nativity of Christ in the flesh: "Thus," says the bishop, "He

was both tempted in all points as a man, [2189] and in the likeness of

man He bare all things; but inasmuch as He was born of the Spirit, He

kept Himself from sin. For every man is a liar; and there is none

without sin but God alone. It has, therefore, been ever firmly

maintained, that it is clear that no man from husband and wife, that is

to say, by means of that conjunction of their persons, is free from

sin. He who is free from sin is also free from conception of this

kind." Well now, what is it which St. Ambrose has here condemned in the

true doctrine of this deliverance?--is it the goodness of marriage, or

not rather the worthless opinion of these heretics, although they had

not then come upon the stage? I have thought it worth while to adduce

this testimony, because Pelagius mentions Ambrose with such

commendation as to say: "The blessed Bishop Ambrose, in whose writings

more than anywhere else the Roman faith is clearly stated, has

flourished like a beautiful flower among the Latin writers. His

fidelity and extremely pure perception of the sense of Scripture no

opponent even has ever ventured to impugn." [2190] I hope he may regret

having entertained opinions opposed to Ambrose, but not that he has

bestowed this praise on that holy man.

Here, then, you have my book, which, owing to its tedious length and

difficult subject, it has been as troublesome for me to compose as for

you to read, in those little snatches of time in which you have been

able (or at least, as I suppose, have been able) to find yourself at

leisure. Although it has been indeed drawn up with considerable labour

amidst my ecclesiastical duties, as God has vouchsafed to give me His

help, I should hardly have intruded it on your notice, with all your

public cares, if I had not been informed by a godly man, who has an

intimate knowledge of you, that you take such pleasure in reading as to

lie awake by the hour, night after night, spending the precious time in

your favourite pursuit.

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[2189] Heb. iv. 15.

[2190] Pro libero arbitrio, lib. 3.

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[2059] Written about the beginning of the year A.D. 419.

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preliminary notes on the second book.

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(1) From the Preface of Augustin's "Unfinished Work Against Julianus."

I Wrote a treatise, under the title On Marriage and Concupiscence, and

addressed it to the Count Valerius, on learning that he had been

informed of the Pelagians that they charge us with condemning marriage.

Now in that treatise I showed the distinction, as criticially and

accurately as I was able, between the good of marriage and the evil of

carnal concupiscence,--an evil which is well used by conjugal chastity.

On receiving my treatise, the illustrious man whom I have named sent me

in a short paper [2191] a few sentences culled from a work of Julianus,

[2192] a Pelagian heretic. In this work he has thought fit to extend to

four books his answer to the before-mentioned treatise of mine, which

is limited to one book only, On Marriage and Concupiscence. I do not

know to whom we were indebted for the said extracts: he confined his

selection, evidently on purpose, to the first book of Julianus' work.

At the request of Valerius, I lost no time in drawing up my answer to

the extracts. And thus it happened that I have written a second book

also under the same title; and in reply to this Julianus has drawn up

to eight books, in excess of his loquacious powers.

(2) From Augustin's Epistle to Claudius [CCVII.].

"Whoever has perused this second book of mine, addressed (as the first

was) to the Count Valerius, and drawn up (as, indeed, both were) for

his use, will have discovered that there are some points in which I

have not answered Julianus, but that I meant my work rather for him who

made the extracts from that writer's books, and who did not arrange

them in the order in which he found them. He deemed some considerable

alteration necessary in his arrangement, very probably with the view of

appropriating by this method as his own the thoughts which evidently

were another person's."

Book II. [2193]

Augustin, in this latter book, refutes sundry sentences which had been

culled by some unknown author from the first of four books that

Julianus had published in opposition to the former book of his treatise

"On Marriage and Concupiscence;" which sentences had been forwarded to

him at the instance of the Count Valerius. He vindicates the Catholic

doctrine of original sin from his opponent's cavils and subtleties, and

particularly shows how diverse it is from the infamous heresy of the

Manicheans.

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[2191] In chartula.

[2192] [This able and learned man was much the most formidable of the

Pelagian writers. Besides this book, Augustin wrote three large works

against him, the treatise Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, and the

two treatises Against Julian the last of which is usually called The

Unfinished Work from the circumstance that Augustin left it incomplete

at his death. Julian was a son of a dear friend of Augustin, and was

himself much loved by him. He became a "lector" in 404, and was

ordained bishop by Innocent I. about 417. Under Zosimus' vacillating

policy he took strong ground on the Pelagian side, and, refusing to

sign Zosimus' Tractoria, was exiled with his seventeen

fellow-recusants, and passed his long life in vain endeavours to obtain

recognition for the Pelagian party. His writings included two letters

to Zosimus, a Confession of Faith, the two letters answered in Against

Two Letters of the Pelagians (though he seems to have repudiated the

former of these), and two large books against Augustin, the first of

which was his four books against the first book of the present

treatise, against extracts from which the second book was written,

whilst Augustin's Against Julian, in six books, traverses the whole

work. To this second book Julian replied in a rejoinder addressed to

Florus, and consisting of eight books. Augustin's Unfinished Work is a

reply to this. Julian's character was as noble as his energy was great

and his pen acute. He stands out among his fellow-Pelagians as the

sufferer for conscience' sake. A full account of his works may be read

in the Preface to Augustin's Unfinished Work, with which may be

compared the article on him in Smith and Wace's Dictionary of Christian

Biography--W.]

[2193] Written A.D. 420.

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Chapter 1 [I.]--Introductory Statement.

I Cannot tell you, dearly loved and honoured son Valerius, how great is

the pleasure which my heart receives when I hear of your warm and

earnest interest in the testimony of the word of God against the

heretics; and this, too, amidst your military duties and the cares

which devolve on you in the eminent position you so justly occupy, and

the pressing functions, moreover, of your political life. After reading

the letter of your Eminence, in which you acknowledge the book which I

dedicated to you, I was roused to write this also; for you request me

to attend to the statement, which my brother and fellow-bishop Alypius

is commissioned to make to me, about the discussion which is being

raised by the heretics over sundry passages of my book. Not only have I

received this information from the narrative of my said brother, but I

have also read the extracts which he produced, and which you had

yourself forwarded to Rome, after his departure from Ravenna. On

discovering the boastful language of our adversaries, as I could easily

do in these extracts, I determined, with the help of the Lord, to reply

to their taunts with all the truthfulness and scriptural authority that

I could command.

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Chapter 2 [II.]--In This and the Four Next Chapters He Adduces the

Garbled Extracts He Has to Consider.

The paper which I now answer starts with this title: "Headings out of a

book written by Augustin, in reply to which I have culled a few

passages out of books." I perceive from this that the person who

forwarded these written papers to your Excellency wanted to make his

extracts out of the books he does not name, with a view, so far as I

can judge, to getting a quicker answer, in order that he might not

delay your urgency. Now, after considering what books they were which

he meant, I suppose that it must have been those which Julianus

mentioned in the Epistle he sent to Rome, [2194] a copy of which found

its way to me at the same time. For he there says: "They go so far as

to allege that marriage, now in dispute, was not instituted by God,--a

declaration which may be read in a work of Augustin's, to which I have

lately replied in a treatise of four books." These are the books, as I

believe, from which the extracts were taken. It would, then, have been

perhaps the better course if I had set myself deliberately to disprove

and refute that entire work of his, [2195] which he spread out into

four volumes. But I was most unwilling to delay my answer, even as you

yourself lost no time in forwarding to me the written statements which

I was requested to reply to.

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[2194] See Augustin's Unfinished Work against Julian, i. 18.

[2195] This Augustin afterwards did by the publication of six book

against Julianus, on receiving his entire work. Augustin tells us

(Unfinished Work, i. 19) that he had long endeavoured to procure a copy

of Julianus' books for the purpose of refuting them, and only succeeded

in getting them after some difficulty and delay.

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Chapter 3.--The Same Continued.

The words which he has quoted and endeavoured to refute out of my book,

which I sent to you, and with which you are very well acquainted, are

the following: "They are constantly affirming, in their excessive

hatred of us, that we condemn marriage and that divine procedure by

which God creates human beings by means of men and women, inasmuch as

we maintain that they who are born of such a union contract original

sin, and do not deny that, of whatever parents they are born, they are

still under the devil's dominion unless they be born again in Christ."

[2196] Now, in quoting these words of mine, he took care to omit the

testimony of the apostle, which I adduced by the weighty significance

of which he felt himself too hard pressed. For, after saying that men

at their birth contract original sin, I at once introduced the

apostle's words: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by

sin; and so death passed upon all men, for in him all men sinned."

[2197] Well, as I have already mentioned, he omitted this passage of

the apostle, and then closed up the other remarks of mine which have

been now quoted. For he knew too well how acceptable to the hearts and

consciences of all faithful catholics are these words of the apostle,

which I had adopted, but which he omitted,--words which are so direct

and so clear, that these new-fangled heretics use every effort in their

dark and tortuous glosses to obscure and deprave their force.

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[2196] See above, Book i. ch. 1 of this treatise.

[2197] Rom. v. 12.

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Chapter 4.--The Same Continued.

But he has added other words of mine, where I have said: "Nor do they

reflect that the good of marriage is no more impeachable by reason of

the original evil which is derived therefrom, than the evil of adultery

and fornication can be excused by reason of the natural good which is

born of them. For as sin is the work of the devil, whether derived from

this source or from that; so is man, whether born of this or that, the

work of God." Here, too, he has left out some words, in which he was

afraid of catholic ears. For to come to the words here quoted, it had

previously been said by us: "Because, then, we affirm this doctrine,

which is contained in the oldest and unvarying rule of the catholic

faith, these propounders of novel and perverse dogmas, who deny that

there is in infants any sin to be washed away in the laver of

regeneration, in their unbelief or ignorance calumniate us as if we

condemned marriage, and as if we asserted to be the devil's work what

is God's own work, to wit, the human being which is born of marriage."

[2198] All this passage he has passed over, and merely quoted the words

which follow it, as given above. Now, in the omitted words he was

afraid of the clause which suits all hearts in the catholic Church and

appeals to the very faith which has been firmly established and

transmitted from ancient times with unfaltering voice and excites their

hostility most strongly against us. The clause is this: "They deny that

there is in infants any sin to be washed away in the laver of

regeneration." For all persons run to church with their infants for no

other reason in the world than that the original sin which is

contracted in them by their first and natural birth may be cleansed by

the regeneration of their second birth.

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[2198] Book i. of this treatise, ch. 1.

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Chapter 5.--The Same Continued.

He then returns [2199] to our words, which were quoted before: "We

maintain that they who are born of such a union contract original sin;

and we do not deny that, of whatever parents they are born, they are

still under the devil's dominion unless they be born again in Christ."

Why he should again refer to these words of ours I cannot tell; he had

already cited them a little before. He then proceeds to quote what we

said of Christ: "Who willed not to be born from the same union of the

two sexes." But here again he quietly ignored the words which I placed

just previous to these words; my entire sentence being this: "That by

His grace they may be removed from the power of darkness, and

translated into the kingdom of Him who willed not to be born from the

same union of the two sexes." Observe, I pray you, what my words were

which he shunned, in the temper of one who is thoroughly opposed to

that grace of God which comes through our "Lord Jesus Christ." He knows

well enough that it is the height of improbity and impiety to exclude

infants from their interest in the apostle's words, where he said of

God the Father: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and

hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear son." [2200] This, no

doubt, is the reason why he preferred to omit rather than quote these

words.

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[2199] See The Unfinished Work, i. 64.

[2200] Col. i. 13.

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Chapter 6.--The Same Continued.

He has next adduced that passage of ours, wherein we said: "For there

would have been none of this shame-producing concupiscence, which is

impudently praised by impudent men, if man had not previously sinned;

while as to marriage, it would still have existed, even if no man had

sinned: for the procreation of children would have been effected

without this disease." Up to this point he cited my words; but he

shrank from adding what comes next--"in the body of that chaste life,

although without it this cannot be done in the body of this death.'" He

would not complete my sentence, but mutilated it somewhat, because he

dreaded the apostle's exclamation, of which my words gave him a

reminder: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body

of this death? The grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." [2201]

For the body of this death existed not in paradise before sin;

therefore did we say, "In the body of that chaste life," which was the

life of paradise, "the procreation of children could have been effected

without the disease, without which now in the body of this death it

cannot be done." The apostle, however, before arriving at that mention

of man's misery and God's grace which we have just quoted, had first

said: "I see another law in my members warring against the law of my

mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my

members." Then it is that he exclaimed, "O wretched man that I am! who

shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God, through

Jesus Christ our Lord." In the body of this death, therefore, such as

it was in paradise before sin, there certainly was not "another law in

our members warring against the law of our mind"--which now, even when

we are unwilling, and withhold consent, and use not our members to

fulfil that which it desires, still dwells in these members, and

harasses our resisting and repugnant mind. And this conflict in itself,

although not involving condemnation, because it does not consummate

sin, is nevertheless "wretched," inasmuch as it has no peace. I think,

then, that I have shown you clearly enough that this man had a special

object as well as method in quoting my words: he adduced them for

refutation in such manner as in some instances to interrupt the context

of my sentences by removing what stood between them, and in other

instances to curtail them by withdrawing their concluding words; and

his reason for doing all this I think I have sufficiently explained.

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[2201] Rom. vii. 24.

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Chapter 7 [III.]--Augustin Adduces a Passage Selected from the Preface

of Julianus. (See "The Unfinished Work," i. 73.)

Let us now look at those words of ours which he adduced just as it

suited him, and to which he would oppose his own. For they are followed

by his words; moreover, as the person insinuated who sent you the paper

of extracts, he copied something out of a preface, which was no doubt

the preface of the books from which he selected a few passages. The

paragraph thus copied stands as follows: "The teachers of our day, most

holy brother, [2202] who are the instigators of the disgraceful faction

which is now overheated with its zeal, are determined on compassing the

injury and discredit of the men with whose sacred fervour they are set

on fire, by nothing less than the ruin of the whole Church; little

thinking how much honour they have conferred on those whose renown they

have shown to be only capable of being destroyed along with the

catholic religion. For, if one should say, either that there is free

will in man, or that God is the Creator of those that are born, [2203]

he is at once set down as a Coelestian and a Pelagian. To avoid being

called heretics, they turn Manicheans; and so, whilst shirking a

pretended infamy, they incur a real reproach; just like the animals,

which in hunting they surround with dyed feathers, in order to scare

and drive them into their nets; [2204] the poor brutes are not gifted

with reason, and so they are thrust all together by a vain panic into a

real destruction." [2205]

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[2202] He calls Florus "most holy father" elsewhere (see The Unfinished

Work, iv. 5). This man, to whom Julianus dedicated his work, is called

a colleague or fellow-bishop of Julianus by Augustin (The Unfinished

Work, iii. 187).

[2203] Conditor nascentium, i.e. the Maker of all men's births.

[2204] For a description of this curious mode of capture, see Dr.

Smith's Greek and Roman Antiquities, s. v. Rete.

[2205] See The Unfinished Work, i. 3.

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Chapter 8.--Augustin Refutes the Passage Adduced Above.

Well, now, whoever you are that have said all this, what you say is by

no means true; by no means, I repeat; you are much deceived, or you aim

at deceiving others. We do not deny free will; but, even as the Truth

declares, "if the Son shall make you free, then shall ye be free

indeed." [2206] It is yourselves who invidiously deny this Liberator,

since you ascribe a vain liberty to yourselves in your captivity.

Captives you are; for "of whom a man is overcome," as the Scripture

says, "of the same is he brought in bondage;" [2207] and no one except

by the grace of the great Liberator is loosed from the chain of this

bondage, from which no man living is free. For "by one man sin entered

into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for

in him all have sinned." [2208] Thus, then, God is the Creator of those

that are born in such wise that all pass from the one into

condemnation, who have not the One Liberator by regeneration. For He is

described as "the Potter, forming out of the same lump one vessel unto

honour in His mercy, and another unto dishonour [2209] in judgment."

And so runs the Church's canticle "mercy and judgment." [2210] You are

therefore only misleading yourself and others when you say, "If one

should affirm, either that there is free will in man, or that God is

the Creator of those that are born, he is at once set down as a

Coelestian and a Pelagian;" [2211] for the catholic faith says these

things. If, however, any one says that there is a free will in man for

worshipping God aright, without His assistance; and whosoever says that

God is the Creator of those that are born in such wise as to deny that

infants have any need of one to redeem them from the power of the

devil: that is the man who is set down as a disciple of Coelestius and

Pelagius. Therefore that men have within them a free will, and that God

is the Creator of those that are born, are propositions which we both

allow. You are not Coelestians and Pelagians for merely saying this.

But what you do really say is this, that any man whatever has freedom

enough of will for doing good without God's help, and that infants

undergo no such change as being "delivered from the power of darkness

and translated into the kingdom of God;" [2212] and because you say so,

you are Coelestians and Pelagians. Why, then, do you hide under the

covering of a common dogma for deceit, concealing your own especial

delinquency which has gained for you a party-name; and why, to terrify

the ignorant with a shocking term, do you say of us, "To avoid being

called heretics, they turn Manicheans?"

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[2206] John viii. 36.

[2207] 2 Pet. ii. 19.

[2208] Rom. v. 12.

[2209] Rom. ix. 21.

[2210] Ps. ci. 1.

[2211] See The Unfinished Work, iii. 101.

[2212] Col. i. 13.

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Chapter 9.--The Catholics Maintain the Doctrine of Original Sin, and

Thus are Far from Being Manicheans.

Listen, then, for a little while, and observe what is involved in this

question. Catholics say that human nature was created good by the good

God as Creator; but that, having been corrupted by sin, it needs the

physician Christ. The Manicheans affirm, that human nature was not

created by God good, and corrupted by sin; but that man was formed by

the prince of eternal darkness of a mixture of two natures which had

ever existed--one good and the other evil. The Pelagians and

Coelestians say that human nature was created good by the good God; but

that it is still so sound and healthy in infants at their birth, that

they have no need at that age of Christ's medicine. Recognise, then,

your name in your dogma; and cease from intruding upon the catholics,

who refute you, a name and a dogma which belong to others. For truth

rejects both parties--the Manicheans and yourselves. To the Manicheans

it says: "Have ye not read that He which made man at the beginning,

made them male and female; and said, For this cause shall a man leave

father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall

be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What,

therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." [2213]

Now Christ shows, in this passage, that God is both the Creator of man,

and the uniter in marriage of husband and wife; whereas the Manicheans

deny both these propositions. To you, however, He says: "The Son of man

is come to seek and to save that which is lost." [2214] But you,

admirable Christians as you are, answer Christ: "If you came to seek

and to save that which was lost, then you did not come for infants; for

they were not lost, but are born in a state of salvation: go to older

men; we give you a rule from your own words: They that be whole need

not a physician, but they that are sick.'" [2215] Now, as it happens,

the Manichean, who says that man has evil mixed in his nature, must

wish his good soul at any rate to be saved by Christ; whereas you

contend that there is in infants nothing to be sired by Christ, since

they are already safe. [2216] And thus the Manichean besets human

nature with his detestable censure, and you with your cruel praise. For

whosoever shall believe your laudation, will never bring their babes to

the Saviour. Entertaining such impious views as these, of what use is

it that you fearlessly face that which is enacted for you [2217] in

order to induce salutary fear and to treat you as a human being, and

not as that poor animal of yours which was surrounded with the coloured

feathers to be driven into the hunting toils? Need was that you should

hold the truth, and, on account of zeal for it, have no fear; but, as

things are, you evade fear in such wise that, if you feared, you would

rather run away from the net of the malignant one than run into it. The

reason why your catholic mother alarms you is, because she fears for

both you and others from you; and if by the help of her sons who

possess any authority in the State she acts with a view to make you

afraid, she does so, not from cruelty, but from love. You, however, are

a very brave man; and you deem it the coward's part to be afraid of

men. Well then, fear God; and do not try with such obstinacy to subvert

the ancient foundations of the catholic faith. Although I could even

wish that spirited temper of yours would entertain some little fear of

human authority, at least in the present case. I could wish, I say,

that it would rather tremble through cowardice than perish through

audacity.

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[2213] Matt. xix. 4-6.

[2214] Luke xix. 10.

[2215] Matt. ix. 12.

[2216] The words "in body" are added here in the text of the

Benedictine edition, though it is found in almost none of the mss.,

because it is found in the passage as quoted in the Unfinished Work,

iii. 138.

[2217] This clause alludes to the Imperial edicts which Honorius

issued, enacting penalties against the Pelagian heretics.

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Chapter 10 [IV.]--In What Manner the Adversary's Cavils Must Be

Refuted.

Let us now look at the rest of what he has joined together in his

selections. But what should be my course of proceeding? Ought I to set

forth every passage of his for the purpose of answering it, or,

omitting everything which the catholic faith contains, as not in

dispute between us, only handle and confute those statements in which

he strays away from the beaten path of truth, and endeavours to graft

on catholic stems the poisonous shoots of his Pelagian heresy? This is,

no doubt, the easier course. But I suppose I must not lose sight of a

possible contingency, that any one, after reading my book, without

perusing all that has been alleged by him, may think that I was

unwilling to bring forward the passages on which his allegations

depend, and by which are shown to be truly deduced the statements which

I am controverting as false. I should be glad, therefore, if the reader

will without exception kindly observe and consider the two classes of

contributions which occur in this little work of ours--that is to say,

all that he has alleged, and the answers which on my side I give him.

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Chapter 11.--The Devil the Author, Not of Nature, But Only of Sin.

Now, the man who forwarded to your Love the paper in question has

introduced the contents thereof with this title: "In opposition to

those persons who condemn matrimony, and ascribe its fruits to the

devil." This, then, is not in opposition to us, who neither condemn

matrimony, which we even commend in its order with a just commendation,

nor ascribe its fruits to the devil. For the fruits of matrimony are

men which are orderly engendered from it, and not the sins which

accompany their birth. Human beings are not under the devil's dominion

because they are human beings, in which respect they are the fruits of

matrimony; but because they are sinful, in which resides the

transmission of their sins. For the devil is the author of sin, not of

nature.

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Chapter 12.--Eve's Name Means Life, and is a Great Sacrament of the

Church.

Now, observe the rest of the passage in which he thinks he finds, to

our prejudice, what is consonant with the above-quoted title. "God,"

says he, "who had framed Adam out of the dust of the ground, formed Eve

out of his rib, [2218] and said, She shall be called Life, because she

is the mother of all who live." Well now, it is not so written. But

what matters that to us? For it constantly happens that our memory

fails in verbal accuracy, while the sense is still maintained. Nor was

it God, but her husband, who gave Eve her name, which should signify

Life; for thus it is written: "And Adam called his wife's name Life,

because she is the mother of all living." [2219] But very likely he

might have understood the Scripture as testifying that God gave Eve

this name through Adam, as His prophet. For in that she was called

Life, and the mother of all living, there lies a great sacrament of the

Church, of which it would detain us long to speak, and which is

unnecessary to our present undertaking. The very same thing which the

apostle says, "This is a great sacrament: but I speak concerning Christ

and the Church," was also spoken by Adam when he said, "For this cause

shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his

wife; and they twain shall be one flesh." [2220] The Lord Jesus,

however, in the Gospel mentions God as having said this of Eve; and the

reason, no doubt, is, that God declared through the man what the man,

in fact, uttered as a prophecy. Now, observe what follows in the paper

of extracts: "By that primitive name," says he, "He showed for what

labour the woman had been provided; and He said accordingly, Be

fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.'" [2221] Now, who

amongst ourselves denies that the woman was provided for the work of

child-bearing by the Lord God, the beneficent Creator of all good? See

further what he goes on to say: "God, therefore, who created them male

and female, [2222] furnished them with members suitable for

procreation, and ordained that bodies should be produced from bodies;

and yet is security for their capacity for effecting the work,

executing all that exists with that power which He used in creation."

[2223] Well, even this we acknowledge to be catholic doctrine, as we

also do with regard to the passage which he immediately subjoins: "If,

then, offspring comes only through sex, and sex only through the body,

and the body through God, who can hesitate to allow that fecundity is

rightly attributed to God?"

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[2218] Gen. ii. 22, 23.

[2219] Gen. iii. 20, margin.

[2220] Compare Eph. v. 32 with Gen. ii. 24.

[2221] Gen. i. 28.

[2222] Gen. i. 27.

[2223] For once a difficulty occurs (for which, however, St. Augustin

is not responsible) in the construction of the original. The obscure

passage is here translated in accordance with a suggestion in some of

the editions. It stands in the original thus: "Quorum tamen efficienti�

potenti� operationis intervenit omne quod est e� administrans virtute

qu� condidit." Some editors suggest "potentia" (nominative) "Dei

operationis intervenit;" but there is no ms. authority for the Dei.

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Chapter 13.--The Pelagian Argument to Show that the Devil Has No Rights

in the Fruits of Marriage.

After these true and catholic statements, which are, moreover, really

contained in the Holy Scriptures, although they are not adduced by him

in a catholic spirit, with the earnestness of a catholic mind, he loses

no time in introducing to us the heresy of Pelagius and Coelestius, for

which purpose he wrote, indeed, his previous remarks. Mark carefully

the following words: "You now who say, We do not deny that they, are

still, of whatever parents born, under the devil's power, unless they

be born again in Christ,' show us what the devil can recognise as his

own in the sexes, by reason of which he can (to use your phrase)

rightly claim as his property the fruit which they produce. Is it the

difference of the sexes? But this is inherent in the bodies which God

made. Is it their union? But this union is justified in the privilege

of the primeval blessing no less than institution. For it is the voice

of God that says, A man shall leave his father and his mother, and

shall cleave to his wife; and they two shall be one flesh.' [2224] It

is again the voice of God which says, Be fruitful, and multiply, and

replenish the earth.' [2225] Or is it, perchance, their fertility? But

this is the very reason why matrimony was instituted."

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[2224] Gen. ii. 24.

[2225] Gen. i. 28.

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Chapter 14 [V.]--Concupiscence Alone, in Marriage, is Not of God.

You see the terms of his question to us: what the devil can find in the

sexes to call his own, by reason of which they should be in his power,

who are born of parents of whatsoever kind, unless they be born again

in Christ; he asks us, moreover, whether it is the difference in the

sexes which we ascribe to the devil, or their union, or their very

fruitfulness. We answer, then, nothing of these qualities, inasmuch as

the difference of sex belongs to "the vessels" of the parents; while

the union of the two pertains to the procreation of children; and their

fruitfulness to the blessing pronounced on the marriage institution.

But all these things are of God; yet amongst them he was unwilling to

name that "lust of the flesh, which is not of the Father, but is of the

world;" [2226] and "of this world" the devil is said to be "the

prince." [2227] Now, the devil found no carnal concupiscence in the

Lord, because the Lord did not come as a man to men by its means.

Accordingly, He says Himself: "The prince of this world cometh, and

findeth nothing in me" [2228] --nothing, that is, of sin; neither that

which is derived from birth, nor that which is added during life. Among

all the natural goods of procreation which he mentioned, he was, I

repeat, unwilling to name this particular fact of concupiscence, over

which even marriage blushes, which glories in all these

before-mentioned goods. For why is the especial work of parents

withdrawn and hidden even from the eyes of their children, except that

it is impossible for them to be occupied in laudable procreation

without shameful lust? Because of this it was that even they were

ashamed who first covered their nakedness. [2229] These portions of

their person were not suggestive of shame before, but deserved to be

commended and praised as the work of God. They put on their covering

when they felt their shame, and they felt their shame when, after their

own disobedience to their Maker, they felt their members disobedient to

themselves. Our quoter of extracts likewise felt ashamed of this

concupiscence. For he mentioned the difference of the sexes; he

mentioned also their union, and he mentioned their fertility; but this

last concomitant of lust he blushed to mention. And no wonder if mere

talkers are ashamed of that which we see parents themselves, so

interested in their function, blush to think of.

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[2226] 1 John ii. 16.

[2227] John xiv. 30.

[2228] John xiv. 30.

[2229] Gen. iii. 7.

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Chapter 15.--Man, by Birth, is Placed Under the Dominion of the Devil

Through Sin; We Were All One in Adam When He Sinned.

He then proceeds to ask: "Why, then, are they in the devil's power whom

God created?" And he finds an answer to his own question apparently

from a phrase of mine. "Because of sin," says he, "not because of

nature." Then framing his answer in reference to mine, he says: "But as

there cannot be offspring without the sexes, so there cannot be sin

without the will." Yes, indeed, such is the truth. For even as "by one

man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so also has death

passed through to all men, for in him all have sinned." [2230] By the

evil will of that one man all sinned in him, since all were that one

man, from whom, therefore, they individually derived original sin. "For

you allege," says he, "that the reason why they are in the devil's

power is because they are born of the union of the two sexes." I

plainly aver that it is by reason of transgression that they are in the

devil's power, and that their participation, moreover, of this

transgression is due to the circumstance that they are born of the said

union of the sexes, which cannot even accomplish its own honourable

function without the incident of shameful lust. This has also, in fact,

been said by Ambrose, of most blessed memory, bishop of the church in

Milan, when he gives as the reason why Christ's birth in the flesh was

free from all sinful fault, that His conception was not the result of a

union of the two sexes; whereas there is not one among human beings

conceived in such union who is without sin. These are his precise

words: "On that account, and being man, He was tried by every sort of

temptation, and in the likeness of man He bore them all; inasmuch,

however, as He was born of the Spirit, He abstained from all sin. For

every man is a liar, and none is without sin, but God only. It has

accordingly," adds he, "been constantly observed, that clearly no one

who is born of a man and a woman, that is to say, through the union of

their bodies, is free from sin; for whoever is free from sin is free

also from conception of this kind." [2231] Well now, will you dare, ye

disciples of Pelagius and Coelestius, to call this man a Manichean? as

the heretic Jovinian did, when the holy bishop maintained the permanent

virginity of the blessed Mary even after child-bearing, in opposition

to this man's impiety. If, however, you do not dare to call him a

Manichean, why do you call us Manicheans when we defend the catholic

faith in the self-same cause and with the self same opinions? But if

you will taunt that most faithful man with having entertained Manichean

error in this matter, there is no help for it, you must enjoy your

taunts as best you may, and so fill up Jovinian's measure more fully;

as for ourselves, we can patiently endure along with such a man of God

your taunts and jibes. And yet your heresiarch Pelagius commends

Ambrose's faith and extreme purity in the knowledge of the Scriptures

so greatly, as to declare that not even an enemy could venture to find

fault with him. Observe, then, to what length you have gone, and

refrain from following any further in the audacious steps of Jovinian.

And yet that man, although by his excessive commendation of marriage he

put it on a par with holy virginity, never denied the necessity of

Christ to save those who are born of marriage even fresh from their

mother's womb, and to redeem them from the power of the devil. This,

however, you deny; and because we oppose you in defence of those who

cannot yet speak for themselves, and in defence of the very foundations

of the catholic faith, you taunt us, with being Manicheans. But let us

now see what comes next.

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[2230] Rom. v. 12.

[2231] Ambrose On Isaiah; see also his Epistle (81) to Siricius.

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Chapter 16 [VI.]--It is Not of Us, But Our Sins, that the Devil is the

Author.

He puts to us, then, another question, saying, "Whom, then, do you

confess to be the author of infants? The true God?" I answer: [2232]

"Yes; the true God." He then remarks, "But He did not make evil;" and

again asks, "Whether we confess the devil to be the creator of

infants?" Then again he answers, "But he did not create human nature."

He then closes the subject, as it were, with this inference: "Since

union is evil, and the condition of our bodies is degraded, therefore

you ascribe our bodies to an evil creator." My answer to this is, I do

not ascribe to an evil creator our bodies, but our sins; by reason of

which it came to pass that, whereas in our bodies, that is to say, in

what God has made, all was honourable and well-pleasing, there yet

accrued in the intercourse of male and female what caused shame, so

that their union was not such as might have been in the body of that

unimpaired life, but such as we see with a blush in the body of this

death. "But God," says he, "has divided in sex what He would unite in

operation. So that from Him comes the union of bodies, from whom first

came the creation of bodies." We have already furnished an answer to

this statement, when we said that these bodies are of God. But as

regards the disobedience of the members of these bodies, this comes

through the lust of the flesh which "is not of the Father." [2233] He

goes on to say, that "it is impossible for evil fruits to spring from

so many good things, such as bodies, sexes, and their unions; or that

human beings should be made by God for the purpose of their being, by

lawful right, as you maintain, held in possession by the devil." Now it

has been already affirmed, that they are not thus held because they are

men, which designation belongs to their nature, of which the devil is

not the author; but because they are sinners, which designation is the

result of that fault of nature of which the devil is the author.

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[2232] This is the Benedictine reading; but another reading has "he

answers," which seems to suit the context. See the following: "again he

answers."

[2233] 1 John ii. 16.

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Chapter 17 [VII.]--The Pelagians are Not Ashamed to Eulogize

Concupiscence, Although They are Ashamed to Mention Its Name.

But among so many names of good things, such as bodies, sexes, unions,

he never once mentions the lust or concupiscence of the flesh. He is

silent, because he is ashamed; and yet with a strange shamelessness of

shame (if the expression may be used), he is not ashamed to praise what

he is ashamed to mention. Now just observe how he prefers to point to

his object by circumlocution rather than by direct mention of it.

"After that the man," says he, "by natural appetite knew his wife." See

again, he refused to say, He knew his wife by carnal concupiscence; but

he used the phrase, "by natural appetite," by which it is open to us to

understand that holy and honourable will which wills the procreation of

children, and not that lust, of which even he is so much ashamed,

forsooth, that he prefers to use ambiguous language to us, to

expressing his mind in unmistakeable words. "Now what is the meaning of

his phrase--"by natural appetite"? Is not both the wish to be saved and

the wish to beget, nourish, and educate children, natural appetite? and

is it not likewise of reason, and not of lust? Since, however, we can

ascertain his intention, we are pretty sure that he meant by these

words to indicate the lust of the organs of generation. Do not the

words in question appear to you to be the fig-leaves, under cover of

which is hidden nothing else but that which he feels ashamed of? For

just as they of old sewed the leaves together [2234] as a girdle of

concealment, so has this man woven a web of circumlocution to hide his

meaning. Let him weave out his statement: "But when the man knew his

wife by natural appetite, the divine Scripture says, Eve conceived, and

bare a son, and called his name Cain. But what," he adds, "does Adam

say? Let us hear: I have obtained a man from God. So that it is evident

that he was God's work, and the divine Scripture testifies to his

having been received from God." [2235] Well, who can entertain a doubt

on this point? Who can deny this statement, especially if he be a

catholic Christian? A man is God's work; but carnal concupiscence

(without which, if sin had not preceded, man would have been begotten

by means of the organs of generation, not less obedient than the other

members to a quiet and normal will) is not of the Father, but is of the

world. [2236]

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[2234] Gen. iii. 7.

[2235] Gen. iv. 1.

[2236] 1 John ii. 16.

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Chapter 18.--The Same Continued.

But now, I pray you, look a little more attentively, and observe how he

contrives to find a name wherewith to cover again what he blushes to

unfold. "For," says he, "Adam begot him by the power of his members,

not by diversity of merits." Now I confess I do not understand what he

meant by the latter clause, not by diversity of merits; but when he

said, "by the power of his members," I believe he wished to express

what he is ashamed to say openly and clearly. He preferred to use the

phrase, "by the power of his members," rather than say, "by the lust of

the flesh." Plainly--even if the thought did not occur to him--he

intimated a something which has an evident application to the subject.

For what is more powerful than a man's members, when they are not in

due submission to a man's will? Even if they be restrained by

temperance or continence, their use and control are not in any man's

power. Adam, then, begat his sons by what our author calls "the power

of his members," over which, before he begat them, he blushed, after

his sin. If, however, he had never sinned, he would not have begotten

them by the power, but in the obedience, of his members. For he would

himself have had the power to rule them as subjects to his will, if he,

too, by the same will had only submitted himself as a subject to a more

powerful One.

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Chapter 19 [VIII.]--The Pelagians Misunderstand "Seed" In Scripture.

He goes on to say: "After a while the divine Scripture says again, Adam

knew Eve his wife; and she bare a son, and he called his name Seth:

saying, The Lord hath raised me up another seed instead of Abel, whom

Cain slew.'" He then adds: "The Divinity is said to have raised up the

seed itself; as a proof that the sexual union was His appointment."

This person did not understand what the Scripture records; for he

supposed that the reason why it is said, The Lord hath raised me up

another seed instead of Abel, was none other than that God might be

supposed to have excited in him a desire for sexual intercourse, by

means whereof seed might be raised for being poured into the woman's

womb. He was perfectly unaware that what the Scripture has said is not

"Has raised me up seed" in the sense he uses, but only as meaning "Has

given me a son." Indeed, Adam did not use the words in question after

his sexual intercourse, when he emitted his seed, but after his wife's

confinement, in which he received his son by the gift of God. For what

gratification is there (except perhaps for lascivious persons, and

those who, as the apostle says with prohibition, "possess their vessel

in the lust of concupiscence" [2237] ) in the mere shedding of seed as

the ultimate pleasure of sexual union, unless it is followed by the

true and proper fruit of marriage--conception and birth?

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[2237] 1 Thess. iv. 5.

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Chapter 20.--Original Sin is Derived from the Faulty Condition of Human

Seed.

This, however, I would not say, as implying at all that we must look

for some other creator than the supreme and true God, of either human

seed or of man himself who comes from the seed; but as meaning, that

the seed would have issued from the human being by the quiet and normal

obedience of his members to his will's command, if sin had not

preceded. The question now before us does not concern the nature of

human seed, but its corruption. Now the nature has God for its author;

it is from its corruption that original sin is derived. If, indeed, the

seed had itself no corruption, what means that passage in the Book of

Wisdom, "Not being ignorant that they were a naughty generation, and

that their malice was inbred, and that their cogitation would never be

changed; for their seed was accursed from the beginning"? [2238] Now

whatever may be the particular application of these words, they are

spoken of mankind. How, then, is the malice of every man inbred, and

his seed cursed from the beginning, unless it be in respect of the

fact, that "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin;

and so death passed upon all men, for in him all have sinned"? [2239]

But where is the man whose "evil cogitation can never be changed,"

unless because it cannot be effected by himself, but only by divine

grace; without the assistance of which, what are human beings, but that

which the Apostle Peter says of them, when he describes them as

"natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed"? [2240]

Accordingly, the Apostle Paul, in a certain passage, having both

conditions in view,--even the wrath of God with which we are born, and

the grace whereby we are delivered,--says: "Among whom also we all had

our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling

the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the

children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for

His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins,

hath quickened us together with Christ; by whose grace we are saved."

[2241] What, then, is man's "natural malice," and "the seed cursed from

the beginning;" and what are "the natural brute beasts made to be taken

and destroyed," and what the "by nature children of wrath"? Was this

the condition of the nature which was formed in Adam? God forbid!

Inasmuch as his pure nature, however, was corrupted in him, it has run

on in this condition by natural descent through all, and still is

running; so that there is no deliverance for it from this ruin, except

by the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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[2238] Wisd. xii. 10, 11.

[2239] Rom. v. 12.

[2240] 2 Pet. ii. 12.

[2241] Eph. ii. 3-5.

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Chapter 21 [IX.]--It is the Good God That Gives Fruitfulness, and the

Devil That Corrupts the Fruit.

What, therefore, is this man's meaning, in the next passage, wherein he

says concerning Noah and his sons, that "they were blessed, even as

Adam and Eve were; for God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply,

and have dominion over the earth'"? [2242] To these words of the

Almighty he added some of his own, saying: "Now that pleasure, which

you would have seem diabolical, was resorted to in the case of the

above-mentioned married pairs; and it continued to exist, both in the

goodness of its institution and in the blessing attached to it. For

there can be no doubt that the following words were addressed to Noah

and his sons in reference to their bodily connection with their wives,

which had become by this time unalterably fixed by use: Be fruitful,

and multiply, and replenish the earth.'" It is unnecessary for us to

employ many words in repeating our former argument. The point here in

question is the corruption in our nature, whereby its goodness has been

depraved, of which corruption the devil is the author. That goodness of

nature, as it is in itself, the author of which is God, is not the

question we have to consider. Now God has never withdrawn from

corrupted and depraved nature His own mercy and goodness, so as to

deprive man of fruitfulness, vivacity, and health, as well as the very

substance of his mind and body, his senses also and reason, as well as

food, and nourishment, and growth. He, moreover, "maketh His sun to

arise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on

the unjust;" [2243] and all that is good in human nature is from the

good God, even in the case of those men who will not be delivered from

evil.

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[2242] Gen. ix. 1.

[2243] Matt. v. 45.

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Chapter 22.--Shall We Be Ashamed of What We Do, or of What God Does?

It is, however, of pleasure that this man spoke in his passage, because

pleasure can be even honourable: of carnal concupiscence, or lust,

which produces shame, he made no mention. In some subsequent words,

however, he uncovered his susceptibility of shame; and he was unable to

dissemble what nature herself has prescribed so forcibly. "There is

also," says he, "that statement: Therefore shall a man leave his father

and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they twain shall be

one flesh.'" Then after these words of God, he goes on to offer some of

his own, saying: "That he might express faith in works, the prophet

approached very near to a perilling of modesty." What a confession! How

clear and extorted from him by the force of truth! The prophet, it

would seem, to express faith in works, almost imperilled modesty, when

he said, "They twain shall become one flesh;" wishing it to be

understood of the sexual union of the male and the female. Let the

cause be alleged, why the prophet, in expressing the works of God,

should approach so near an imperilling of modesty? Is it then the case

that the works of man ought not to produce shame, but must be gloried

in at all events, and that the works of God must produce shame? Is it,

that in setting forth and expressing the works of God the prophet's

love or labour receives no honour, but his modesty is imperilled? What,

then, was it possible for God to do, which it would be a shame for His

prophet to describe? And, what is a weightier question still, could a

man be ashamed of any work which not man, but God, has made in man?

whereas workmen in all cases strive, with all the labour and diligence

in their power, to avoid shame in the works of their own hands. The

truth, however, is, that we are ashamed of that very thing which made

those primitive human beings ashamed, when they covered their loins.

That is the penalty of sin; that is the plague and mark of sin; that is

the temptation and very fuel of sin; that is the law in our members

warring against the law of our mind; that is the rebellion against our

own selves, proceeding from our very selves, which by a most righteous

retribution is rendered us by our disobedient members. It is this which

makes us ashamed, and justly ashamed. If it were not so, what could be

more ungrateful, more irreligious in us, if in our members we were to

suffer confusion of face, not for our own fault or penalty, but because

of the works of God?

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Chapter 23 [X.]--The Pelagians Affirm that God in the Case of Abraham

and Sarah Aroused Concupiscence as a Gift from Heaven.

He has much also to say, though to no purpose, concerning Abraham and

Sarah, how they received a son according to the promise; and at last he

mentions the word concupiscence. But he does not add the usual phrase,

"of the flesh," because this is the very thing which causes the shame.

Whereas, on account of concupiscence there is sometimes a call for

boasting, inasmuch as there is a concupiscence of the spirit against

the flesh, [2244] and a concupiscence of wisdom. [2245] Accordingly, he

says: "Now you have certainly defined as naturally evil this

concupiscence which is indispensable for fecundity; whence comes it,

therefore, that it is aroused in aged men by the gift of Heaven? Make

it clear then, if you can, that that belongs to the devil's work, which

you see is conferred by God as a gift." He says this, just as if

concupiscence of the flesh had been previously wanting in them, and as

if God had bestowed it upon them. No doubt it was inherent in this body

of death; that fecundity, however, was wanting of which God is the

author; and this was actually given whensoever God willed to confer the

gift. Be it, however, far from us to affirm, what he thought we meant

to say, that Isaac was begotten without the heat of sexual union.

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[2244] Gal. v. 17.

[2245] Wisd. vi. 21. The word in the Latin Bible in both cases is

"concupiscentia."

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Chapter 24 [XI.]--What Covenant of God the New-Born Babe Breaks. What

Was the Value of Circumcision.

But let him inform us how it was that his [2246] soul would be cut off

from his people if he had not been circumcised on the eighth day. How

could he have so sinned, how so offended God, as to be punished for the

neglect of others towards him with so severe a sentence, had there been

no original sin in the case? For thus ran the commandment of God

concerning the circumcision of infants: "The uncircumcised man-child,

whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised on the eighth day, his

soul shall be cut off from his people; because he hath broken my

covenant." [2247] Let him tell us, if he can, how that child broke

God's covenant,--an innocent babe, so far as he was personally

concerned, of eight days' age; and yet there is by no means any

falsehood uttered here by God or Holy Scripture. The fact is, the

covenant of God which he then broke was not this which commanded

circumcision, but that which forbade the tree; when "by one man sin

entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all

men, for in him all have sinned." [2248] And in his case the expiation

of this was signified by the circumcision of the eighth day, that is,

by the sacrament of the Mediator who was to be incarnate. For it was

through this same faith in Christ, who was to come in the flesh, and

was to die for us, and on the third day (which coming after the seventh

or Sabbath day, was to be the eighth) to rise again, that even holy men

were saved of old. For "He was delivered for our offences, and raised

again for our justification." [2249] Ever since circumcision was

instituted amongst the people of God, which was at that time the sign

of the righteousness of faith, it availed also to signify the cleansing

even in infants of the original and primitive sin, just as baptism in

like manner from the time of its institution began to be of avail for

the renewal of man. Not that there was no justification by faith before

circumcision; for even when he was still in uncircumcision, Abraham was

himself justified by faith, being the father of those nations which

should also imitate his faith. [2250] In former times, however, the

sacramental mystery of justification by faith lay concealed in every

mode. Still it was the self-same faith in the Mediator which saved the

saints of old, both small and great--not the old covenant, "which

gendereth to bondage;" [2251] not the law, which was not so given as to

be able to give life; [2252] but the grace of God through Jesus Christ

our Lord. [2253] For as we believe that Christ has come in the flesh,

so they believed that He was to come; as, again, we believe that He has

died, so they believed that He would die; and as we believe that He has

risen from the dead, so they believed that He would rise again; whilst

both we and they believe alike, that He will hereafter come to judge

the quick and the dead. Let not this man, then, throw any hindrance in

the way of its salvation upon human nature, by setting up a bad defence

of its merits; because we are all born under sin, and are delivered

therefrom by the only One who was born without sin.

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[2246] i.e., Isaac's.

[2247] Gen. xvii. 14.

[2248] Rom. v. 12.

[2249] Rom. iv. 25.

[2250] Rom. iv. 10, 11.

[2251] Gal. iv. 24.

[2252] Gal. iii. 21.

[2253] Rom. vii. 25.

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Chapter 25 [XII.]--Augustin Not the Deviser of Original Sin.

"This sexual connection of bodies," he says, "together with the ardour,

with the pleasure, with the emission of seed, was made by God, and is

praiseworthy on its own account, and is therefore to be approved; it,

moreover, became sometimes even a great gift to pious men." He

distinctly and severally repeated the phrases, "with ardour," "with

pleasure," "with emission of seed." He did not, however, venture to

say, "with lust." Why is this, if it be not that he is ashamed to name

what he does not blush to praise? A gift, indeed, for pious men is the

prosperous propagation of children; but not that shame-producing

excitement of the members, which our nature would not feel were it in a

sound state, although corrupted nature now experiences it. On this

account, indeed, it is that he who is born of it requires to be born

again, in order that he may be a member of Christ; and that he of whom

he is born, even though he be already born again, wants to be freed

from that which exists in this body of death by reason of the law of

sin. Now since this is the case, how is it he goes on to say, "You

must, therefore, of necessity confess that the original sin which you

had devised is done away with"? It was not I who devised the original

sin, which the catholic faith holds from ancient times; but you, who

deny it, are undoubtedly an innovating heretic. In the judgment of God,

all are in the devil's power, born in sin, unless they are regenerated

in Christ.

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Chapter 26 [XIII.]--The Child in No Sense Formed by Concupiscence.

But as he was speaking of Abraham and Sarah, he goes on to say: "If,

indeed, you were to affirm that the natural use was strong in them, and

there was no offspring, my answer will be: Whom the Creator promised,

the Creator also gave; the child which is born is not the work of

cohabitation, but of God. He, indeed, who made the first man of the

dust, fashions all men out of seed. As, therefore, the dust of the

earth, which was taken as the material, was not the author of man; so

likewise that power of sexual pleasure which forms and commingles the

seminal elements does not complete the entire process of man's making,

but rather presents to God, out of the treasures of nature, material

with which He vouchsafes to make the human being." Now the whole of

this statement of his, except where he says, that the seminal elements

are formed and commingled by sexual pleasure, would be correctly

expressed by him were he only earnest in making it to defend the

catholic sense. To us, however, who are fully aware what he strives to

make out of it, he speaks indeed correctly in a perverse manner. The

exceptional statement to the general truth, which I do not deny belongs

to this passage, is untrue for this reason, because the pleasure in

question of carnal concupiscence does not form the seminal elements.

These are already in the body, and are formed by the same true God who

created the body itself. They do not receive their existence from the

libidinous pleasure, but are excited and emitted in company with it.

Whether, indeed, such pleasure accompanies the commingling of the

seminal elements of the two sexes in the womb, is a question which

perhaps women may be able to determine from their inmost feelings; but

it is improper for us to push an idle curiosity so far. That

concupiscence, however, which we have to be ashamed of, and the shame

of which has given to our secret members their shameful designation,

pudenda, had no existence in the body during its life in paradise

before the entrance of sin; but it began to exist "in the body of this

death" after sin, the rebellion of the members retaliating man's own

disobedience. Without this concupiscence it was quite possible to

effect the function of the wedded pair in the procreation of children:

just as many a laborious work is accomplished by the compliant

operation of our other limbs, without any lascivious heat; for they are

simply moved by the direction of the will, not excited by the ardour of

concupiscence.

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Chapter 27.--The Pelagians Argue that God Sometimes Closes the Womb in

Anger, and Opens It When Appeased.

Carefully consider the rest of his remarks: "This likewise," says he,

"is confirmed by the apostle's authority. For when the blessed Paul

spoke of the resurrection of the dead, he said, "Thou fool, that which

thou sowest is not quickened." [2254] And afterwards, But God giveth it

a body as it pleaseth Him, and to every seed its own body.' If,

therefore, God," says he, "has assigned to human seed, as to every

thing else, its own proper body, which no wise or pious man will deny,

how will you prove that any person is born guilty? Do, I beg of you,

reflect with what a noose this assertion of natural sin is choked. But

come," he says, "deal more gently with yourself, I pray you. Believe

me, God made even you: it must, however, be confessed, that a serious

error has infected you. For what profaner opinion can be broached than

that either God did not make man, or else that He made him for the

devil; or, at any rate, that the devil framed God's image, that is,

man,--which clearly is a statement not more absurd than impious? Is

then," says he, "God so poor in resources, so lacking in all sense of

propriety, as not to have had aught which He could confer on holy men

as their reward, except what the devil, after making them his dupes,

might infuse into them for their vitiation? [2255] Would you like to

know, however, that even in the case of those who are no saints, God

can be proved to have bestowed this power of procreation of children?

When Abraham, struck with fear among a foreign nation, said that Sarah,

his wife, was his sister, it is said that Abimelech, the king of the

country, abducted her for a night's enjoyment of her. But God, who had

the holy woman's honour in His keeping, appeared to Abimelech in his

sleep, and restrained the royal audacity; threatening him with death if

he went to the length of violating the wife. Then Abimelech said: Wilt

thou, O Lord, slay an innocent and righteous nation? Did they not tell

me that they were brother and sister? Therefore Abimelech arose early

in the morning, and took a thousand pieces of silver, and sheep, and

oxen, and men-servants, and women-servants, and gave them to Abraham,

and sent away his wife untouched. But Abraham prayed unto God for

Abimelech; and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his

maid-servants.'" [2256] Now why he narrated all this at so great a

length, you may find in these few words which he added: "God," he says,

"at the prayer of Abraham, restored their potency of generation, which

had been taken away from the wombs of even the meanest servants;

because God had closed up every womb in the house of Abimelech. [2257]

Consider now," says he, "whether that ought to be called a natural evil

which sometimes God when angry takes away, and when appeased restores.

He," says he, "makes the children both of the pious and of the ungodly,

inasmuch as the circumstance of their being parents appertains to that

nature which rejoices in God as its Author, whilst the fact of their

impiety belongs to the depravity of their desires, and this comes to

every person whatever as the consequence of free will."

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[2254] 1 Cor. xv. 36.

[2255] The translation adopts the conjecture of the Benedictine

editors: in vitium, instead of in vitio or initio, as the mss. read.

[2256] See Gen. xx. 2, 4, 5, 8, 14, 17.

[2257] Gen. xx. 18.

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Chapter 28 [XIV.]--Augustin's Answer to This Argument. Its Dealing with

Scripture.

Now to this lengthy statement of his we have to say in answer, that, in

the passages which he has quoted from the sacred writings, there is

nothing said about that shameful lust, which we say did not exist in

the body of our first parents in their blessedness, when they were

naked and were not ashamed. [2258] The first passage from the apostle

was spoken of the seeds of corn, which first die in order to be

quickened. For some reason or other, he was unwilling to complete the

verse for his quotation. All he adduces from it is: "Thou fool, that

which thou sowest is not quickened;" but the apostle adds, "except it

die." [2259] This writer, however, so far as I can judge, wished this

passage, which treats only of corn seeds, to be understood of human

seed, by such as read it without either understanding the Holy

Scriptures or recollecting them. Indeed, he not merely curtailed this

particular sentence, by omitting the clause, "except it die," but he

omitted the following words, in which the apostle explained of what

seeds he was speaking; for the apostle adds: "And that which thou

sowest, thou sowest not that body which shall be, but the bare grain,

it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain." [2260] This he

omitted, and closed up his context with what the apostle then writes:

"But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed its

own body;" just as if the apostle spoke of man in cohabitation when he

said, "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened," with a view

to our understanding of human seed, that it is quickened by God, not by

man in cohabitation begetting children. For he had previously said:

"Sexual pleasure does not complete the entire process of man's making,

but rather presents to God, out of the treasures of nature, material

with which He vouchsafes to make the human being." [2261] He then added

the quotation, as if the apostle affirmed as follows: Thou fool, that

which thou sowest is not quickened,--quickened, that is, by thyself;

but God forms the human being out of thy seed. As if the apostle had

not said the intermediate words, which this writer chose to pass over;

and as if the apostle's aim was to speak of human seed thus: "Thou

fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened; but God giveth to the

seed a body such as pleaseth Him, and to every seed its own body."

Indeed, after the apostle's words, he introduces remarks of his own to

this effect: "If, therefore, God has assigned to human seed, as to

everything else, its own proper body, which no wise or pious man will

deny;" quite as if the apostle in the passage in question spoke of

human seed.

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[2258] Gen. ii. 25.

[2259] 1 Cor. xv. 36.

[2260] 1 Cor. xv. 37.

[2261] Above, ch. 26 [xiii.].

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Chapter 29.--The Same Continued. Augustin Also Asserts that God Forms

Man at Birth.

Though I have given special attention to the point, I have failed to

discover what assistance he could obtain from this deceitful use of

Scripture, except that he wanted to produce the apostle as a witness,

and by him to prove, what we also assert, that God forms man of human

seed. And inasmuch as no passage directly occurred to him, he

deceitfully manipulated this particular one; fearing no doubt that, if

the apostle should chance to seem to have spoken of corn seeds, and not

of human, in this passage, we should have suggested to us at once by

such procedure of his, how to refute him: not indeed as the pure-minded

advocate of a chastened will, but as the impudent proclaimer of a

profligate voluptuousness. But from the very seeds, forsooth, which the

farmers sow in their fields he can be refuted. For why can we not

suppose that God could have granted to man in his happy state in

paradise, the same course with regard to his own seed which we see

granted to the seeds of corn, in such wise that the former might be

sown without any shameful lust, the members of generation simply

obeying the inclination of the will; just as the latter is sown without

any shameful lust, the hands of the husbandman merely moving in

obedience to his will? There being, indeed, this difference, that the

desire of begetting children in the parent is a nobler one than that

which characterizes the farmer, of filling his barns. Then, again, why

might not the almighty Creator, with His incontaminable ubiquity, and

his power of creating from human seed just what it pleased Him, have

operated in women, with respect to what He even now makes, in the

self-same manner as He operates in the ground with corn seeds according

to His will, making blessed mothers conceive without lustful passion,

and bring forth children without parturient pains, inasmuch as there

was not (in that state of happiness, and in the body which was not as

yet the body of this death, but rather of that life) in woman when

receiving seed anything to produce shame, as there was nothing when

giving birth to offspring to cause pain? Whoever refuses to believe

this, or is unwilling to have it supposed that, while men previous to

any sin lived in that happy state of paradise, such a condition as that

which we have sketched could not have been permitted in God's will and

kindness, must be regarded as the lover of shameful pleasure, rather

than the encomiast of desirable fecundity.

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Chapter 30 [XV.]--The Case of Abimelech and His House Examined.

Then, again, as to the passage which he has adduced from the inspired

history concerning Abimelech, and God's choosing to close up every womb

in his household that the women should not bear children, and

afterwards opening them that they might become fruitful, what is all

this to the point? What has it to do with that shameful concupiscence

which is now the question in dispute? Did God, then, deprive those

women of this feeling, and give it to them again just when He liked?

The punishment however, was that they were unable to bear children, and

the blessing that they were able to bear them, after the manner of this

corruptible flesh. For God would not confer such a blessing upon this

body of death, as only that body of life in paradise could have had

before sin entered; that is, the process of conceiving without the

prurience of lust, and of bearing children without excruciating pain.

But why should we not suppose, since, indeed, Scripture says that every

womb was closed, that this took place with something of pain, so that

the women were unable to bear cohabitation, and that God inflicted this

pain in His wrath, and removed it in His mercy? For if lust was to be

taken away as an impediment to begetting offspring, it ought to have

been taken away from the men, not from the women. For a woman might

perform her share in cohabitation by her will, even if the lust ceased

by which she is stimulated, provided it were not absent from the man

for exciting him; unless, perhaps (as Scripture informs us that even

Abimelech himself was healed), he would tell us that virile

concupiscence was restored to him. If, however, it were true that he

had lost this, what necessity was there that he should be warned by God

to hold no connection with Abraham's wife? The truth is, Abimelech is

said to have been healed, because his household was cured of the

affliction which smote it.

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Chapter 31 [XVI.]--Why God Proceeds to Create Human Beings, Who He

Knows Will Be Born in Sin.

Let us now look at those three clauses of his, than which three, he

says, nothing more profane could possibly be uttered: "Either God did

not make man, or else He made him for the devil; or, at any rate, the

devil framed God's image, that is, man." Now, the first and the last of

these sentences, even he himself must allow, if he be not reckless and

perverse, were never uttered by us. The dispute is confined to that

which he puts second between the other two. In respect of this, he is

so far mistaken as to suppose that we had said that God made man for

the devil; as if, in the case of human beings whom God creates of human

parents, His care and purpose and provision were, that by means of His

workmanship the devil should have as slaves those whom he is unable to

make for himself. God forbid that any sort of pious belief, however

childish, should ever entertain such a sentiment as this! Of His own

goodness God has made man--the first without sin, all others under

sin--for the purposes of His own profound thoughts. For just as He knew

full well what to do with reference to the malice of the devil himself,

and what He does is just and good, however unjust and evil he is, about

whom He takes His measures; and just as He was not unwilling to create

him because He foresaw that he would be evil; so in regard to the

entire human race, though not a man of it is born without the taint of

sin, He who is supremely good Himself is always working out good,

making some men, as it were, "vessels of mercy," whom grace

distinguishes from those who are "vessels of wrath;" whilst He makes

others, as it were, "vessels of wrath," that He may make known the

riches of His glory towards the vessels of mercy. [2262] Let, then,

this objector go and contest the point against the apostle, whose words

I use; nay, against the very Potter, whom the apostle forbids us

answering again, in the well-known words: "Who art thou, O man, that

repliest against God! Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it,

Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of

the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto

dishonour?" [2263] Well now, will this man contend that the vessels of

wrath are not under the dominion of the devil? or else, because they

are under this dominion, are they made by another creator than He who

makes the vessels of mercy? Or does He make them of other material, and

not out of the self-same lump? Here, then, he may object, and say:

"Therefore God makes these vessels for the devil." As if God knew not

how to make such a use of even these for the furtherance of His own

good and righteous works, as He makes of the very devil himself.

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[2262] Rom. ix. 23.

[2263] Rom. ix. 20, 21.

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Chapter 32 [XVII.]--God Not the Author of the Evil in Those Whom He

Creates.

Then, does God feed the children of perdition, the goats on His left

hand, [2264] for the devil and nourish and clothe them for the devil

"because He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and

sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust"? [2265] He creates, then,

the evil just in the same way as He feeds and nourishes the evil;

because what He bestows on them by creating them appertains to the

goodness of nature; and the growth which He gives them by food and

nourishment, He bestows on them, of course, as a kindly help, not to

their evil character, but to that same good nature which He in His

goodness created. For in as far as they are human beings--this is a

good of that nature whose author and maker is God; but in as far as

they are born with sin and so destined to perdition unless they are

born again, they belong to the seed which was cursed from the

beginning, [2266] by the fault of the primitive disobedience. This

fault, however, is turned to good account by the Maker of even the

vessels of wrath, that He may make known the riches of His glory on the

vessels of mercy: [2267] and that no one may attribute to any merits of

his own, pertaining as he does to the self-same mass, his deliverance

through grace; but "he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

[2268]

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[2264] Matt. xxv. 33.

[2265] Matt. v. 45.

[2266] Wisd. xii. 11.

[2267] Rom. ix. 33.

[2268] 2 Cor. x. 17.

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Chapter 33 [XVIII.]--Though God Makes Us, We Perish Unless He Re-makes

Us in Christ.

From this most true and firmly-established principle of the apostolic

and catholic faith the writer before us departs in company with the

Pelagians. He will not have it that men are born under the dominion of

the devil, lest infants be carried to Christ to be delivered from the

power of darkness, and to be translated into His kingdom. [2269] Thus

he becomes the accuser of the Church which is spread over the world;

into this Church everywhere infants, when to be baptized, are first

exorcised, for no other reason than that the prince of this world may

be cast out [2270] of them. For by him must they be necessarily

possessed, as vessels of wrath, since they are born of Adam, unless

they be born again in Christ, and transferred through grace as vessels

of mercy into His kingdom. In his attack, however, upon this most

firmly-established truth, he would avoid the appearance of an assault

upon the entire Church of Christ. Accordingly, he limits his appeal to

me alone, and in the tone of reproof and admonition he says: "But God

made even you, though it must be confessed that a serious error has

infected you." Well now, I thankfully acknowledge that God did make

even me; and still I must have perished with the vessels of wrath, if

He had only made me of Adam, and had not re-made me in Christ.

Possessed, however, as this man is with the heresy of Pelagius, he does

not believe this: if, indeed, he persists in so great an error to the

very end, then not he, but catholics, will be able to see the character

and extent of the error which has not simply infected, but absolutely

destroyed [2271] him.

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[2269] Col. i. 13.

[2270] John xii. 31.

[2271] There is a climax in infecerit and interfecerit.

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Chapter 34 [XIX.]--The Pelagians Argue that Cohabitation Rightly Used

is a Good, and What is Born from It is Good.

I request your attention now to the following words. He says, "That

children, however, who are conceived in wedlock are by nature good, we

may learn from the apostle's words, when he speaks of men who, leaving

the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust, men with men

working together that which is disgraceful. [2272] Here," says he, "the

apostle shows the use of the woman to be both natural and, in its way,

laudable; the abuse consisting in the exercise of one's own will in

opposition to the decent use of the institution. Deservedly then," says

he, "in those who make a right use thereof, concupiscence is commended

in its kind and mode; whilst the excess of it, in which abandoned

persons indulge, is punished. Indeed, at the very time when God

punished the abuse in Sodom with His judgment of fire, He invigorated

the generative powers of Abraham and Sarah, which had become impotent

through old age. [2273] If, therefore," he goes on to say, "you think

that fault must be found with the strength of the generative organs,

because the Sodomites were steeped in sin thereby, you will have also

to censure such created things as bread and wine, since Holy Scripture

informs us that they sinned also in the abuse of these gifts. For the

Lord, by the mouth of His prophet Ezekiel, says: These, moreover, were

the sins of thy sister Sodom; in their pride, she and her children

overflowed in fulness of bread and abundance of wine; and they helped

not the hand of the poor and needy.' [2274] Choose, therefore," says

he, "which alternative you would rather have: either impute to the work

of God the sexual connection of human bodies, or account such created

things as bread and wine to be equally evil. But if you should prefer

this latter conclusion, you prove yourself to be a Manichean. The

truth, however, is this: he who observes moderation in natural

concupiscence uses a good thing well; but he who does not observe

moderation, abuses a good thing. What means your statement, then,"

[2275] he asks, "when you say that the good of marriage is no more

impeachable on account of the original sin which is derived herefrom,

than the evil of adultery and fornication can be excused because of the

natural good which is born of them'? In these words," says he, "you

conceded what you had denied, and what you had conceded you nullified;

and you aim at nothing so much as to be unintelligible. Show me any

bodily marriage without sexual connection. Else impose some one name on

this operation, and designate the conjugal union as either a good or an

evil. You answer, no doubt, that you have already defined marriages to

be good. Well then, if marriage is good,--if the human being is the

good fruit of marriage; if this fruit, being God's work, cannot be

evil, born as it is by good agency out of good,--where is the original

evil which has been set aside by so many prior admissions?"

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[2272] Rom. i. 27.

[2273] Gen. xxi. 1, 2, and xix. 24.

[2274] Ezek. xvi. 49.

[2275] See first chapter of the first book of this treatise.

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Chapter 35 [XX.]--He Answers the Arguments of Julianus. What is the

Natural Use of the Woman? What is the Unnatural Use?

My answer to this challenge is, that not only the children of wedlock,

but also those of adultery, are a good work in so far as they are the

work of God, by whom they are created: but as concerns original sin,

they are all born under condemnation of the first Adam; not only those

who are born in adultery, but likewise such as are born in wedlock,

unless they be regenerated in the second Adam, which is Christ. As to

what the apostle says of the wicked, that "leaving the natural use of

the woman, the men burned in their lust one toward another: men with

men working that which is unseemly;" [2276] he did not speak of the

conjugal use, but the "natural use," wishing us to understand how it

comes to pass that by means of the members created for the purpose the

two sexes can combine for generation. Thus it follows, that even when a

man unites with a harlot to use these members, the use is a natural

one. It is not, however, commendable, but rather culpable. But as

regards any part of the body which is not meant for generative

purposes, should a man use even his own wife in it, it is against

nature and flagitious. Indeed, the same apostle had previously [2277]

said concerning women: "Even their women did change the natural use

into that which is against nature;" and then concerning men he added,

that they worked that which is unseemly by leaving the natural use of

the woman. Therefore, by the phrase in question, "the natural use," it

is not meant to praise conjugal connection; but thereby are denoted

those flagitious deeds which are more unclean and criminal than even

men's use of women, which, even if unlawful, is nevertheless natural.

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[2276] Rom. i. 27.

[2277] Rom. ix. 26.

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Chapter 36 [XXI.]--God Made Nature Good: the Saviour Restores It When

Corrupted.

Now we do not reprehend bread and wine because some men are luxurious

and drunkards, any more than we disapprove of gold because of the

greedy and avaricious. Wherefore on the same principle we do not

censure the honourable connection between husband and wife, because of

the shame-causing lust of bodies. For the former would have been quite

possible before any antecedent commission of sin, and by it the united

pair would not have been made to blush; whereas the latter arose after

the perpetration of sin, and they were obliged to hide it, from very

shame. [2278] Accordingly, in all united pairs ever since, however well

and lawfully they have used this evil, there has been a permanent

necessity of avoiding the sight of man in any work of this kind, and

thus acknowledging what caused inevitable shame, though a good thing

would certainly cause no man to be ashamed. In this way we have two

distinct facts insensibly introduced to our notice: the good of that

laudable union of the sexes for the purpose of generating children; and

the evil of that shameful lust, in consequence of which the offspring

must be regenerated in order to escape condemnation. The man,

therefore, who, though with the lust which causes shame, joins in

lawful cohabitation, turns an evil to good account; whereas he who

joins in an unlawful cohabitation uses an evil badly; for that is more

correctly called evil than good, at which both bad and good alike

blush. We do better to believe him who has said, "I know that in me,

that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," [2279] rather than him

who calls that good, by which he is so conformed that he admits it to

be evil; but if he feels no shame, he adds the worse evil of impudence.

Rightly then did we declare that "the good of marriage is no more

impeachable because of the original sin which is derived therefrom,

than the evil of adultery and fornication can be excused, because of

the natural good which is born of them:" since the human nature which

is born, whether of wedlock or of adultery, is the work of God. Now if

this nature were an evil, it ought not to have been born; if it had not

evil, it would not have to be regenerated: and (that I may combine the

two cases in one and the same predicate) if human nature were an evil

thing, it would not have to be saved; if it had not in it any evil, it

would not have to be saved. He, therefore, who contends that nature is

not good, says that the Maker of the creature is not good; whilst he

who will have it, that nature has no evil in it, deprives it in its

corrupted condition of a merciful Saviour. From this, then, it follows,

that in the birth of human beings neither fornication is to be excused

on account of the good which is formed out of it by the good Creator,

nor is marriage to be impeached by reason of the evil which has to be

healed in it by the merciful Saviour.

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[2278] Gen. iii. 7.

[2279] Rom. vii. 18.

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Chapter 37 [XXII.]--If There is No Marriage Without Cohabitation, So

There is No Cohabitation Without Shame.

"Show me," he says, "any bodily marriage without sexual connection." I

do not show him any bodily marriage without sexual connection; but

then, neither does he show me any case of sexual connection which is

without shame. In paradise, however, if sin had not preceded, there

would not have been, indeed, generation without union of the sexes, but

this union would certainly have been without shame; for in the sexual

union there would have been a quiet acquiescence of the members, not a

lust of the flesh productive of shame. Matrimony, therefore, is a good,

in which the human being is born after orderly conception; the fruit,

too, of matrimony is good, as being the very human being which is thus

born; sin, however, is an evil with which every man is born. Now it was

God who made and still makes man; but "by one man sin entered into the

world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for in him

all sinned." [2280]

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[2280] Rom. v. 12.

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Chapter 38 [XXIII.]--Jovinian Used Formerly to Call Catholics

Manicheans; The Arians Also Used to Call Catholics Sabellians.

"By your new mode of controversy," says he, "you both profess to be a

catholic and patronize Manich�us, inasmuch as you designate matrimony

both as a great good and a great evil." Now he is utterly ignorant of

what he says, or pretends to be ignorant. Or else he does not

understand what we say, or does not wish it to be understood. But if he

does not understand, he is impeded by the pre-occupation of error; or

if he does not wish our meaning to be understood, then obstinacy is the

fault with which he defends his error. Jovinian, too, who endeavoured a

few years ago to found a new heresy, used to declare that the catholics

patronized the Manicheans, because in opposition to him they preferred

holy virginity to marriage. But this man is sure to reply, that he does

not agree with Jovinian in his indifference about marriage and

virginity. I do not myself say that this is their opinion; still these

new heretics must allow, by the fact of Jovinian's playing off the

Manicheans upon the catholics, that the expedient is not a novel one.

We then declare that marriage is a good, not an evil. But just as the

Arians charge us with being Sabellians, although we do not say that the

Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one and the same, as the

Sabellians hold; but affirm that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy

Ghost have one and the same nature, as the catholics believe: so do the

Pelagians cast the Manicheans in our teeth, although we do not declare

marriage to be an evil, as the Manicheans pretend, but affirm that evil

accrued to the first man and woman, that is to say, to the first

married pair, and from them passed on to all men, as the catholics

hold. As, however, the Arians, while avoiding the Sabellians, fall into

worse company, because they have had the audacity to divide not the

Persons of the Trinity, but the natures; so the Pelagians, in their

efforts to escape from the pestilent error of the Manicheans, by taking

the opposite extreme, are convicted of entertaining worse sentiments

than the Manicheans themselves touching the fruit of matrimony,

inasmuch as they believe that infants stand in no need of Christ as

their Physician.

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Chapter 39 [XXIV.]--Man Born of Whatever Parentage is Sinful and

Capable of Redemption.

He then says: "You conclude that a human being, if born of fornication,

is not guilty; and if born in wedlock, is not innocent. Your assertion,

therefore, amounts to this, that natural good may possibly subsist from

adulterous connections, while original sin is actually derived from

marriage." Well now, he here attempts, but in vain before an

intelligent reader, to give a wrong turn to words which are correct

enough. Far be it from us to say, that a human being, if born in

fornication, is not guilty. But we do affirm, that a human being,

whether he be born in wedlock or in fornication, is in some respect

good, because of the Author of nature, God; we add, however, that he

derives some evil by reason of original sin. Our statement, therefore,

"that natural good can subsist even from adulterous parentage, but that

original sin is derived even from marriage," does not amount to what he

endeavours to make of it, that one born in adultery is not guilty, nor

innocent when born in wedlock; but that one who is generated in either

condition is guilty, because of original sin; and that the offspring of

either state may be freed by regeneration, because of the good of

nature.

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Chapter 40 [XXV.]--Augustin Declines the Dilemma Offered Him.

"One of these propositions," says he, "is true, the other false." My

reply is as brief as the allegation: Both are really true, neither is

false. "It is true," he goes on to say, "that the sin of adultery

cannot be excused by reason of the man who is born of it; inasmuch as

the sin which adulterers commit, pertains to corruption of the will;

but the offspring which they produce tends to the praise of fecundity.

If one were to sow wheat which had been stolen, the crop which springs

up is none the worse. Of course," says he, "I blame the thief, but I

praise the corn. So I pronounce him innocent who is born of the

generous fruitfulness of the seed; even as the apostle puts it: God

giveth it a body, as it pleases Him; and to every seed its own body;'

[2281] but, at the same time, I condemn the flagitious man who has

committed his adulterous sin in his perverse use of the divine

appointment."

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[2281] 1 Cor. xv. 38.

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Chapter 41 [XXVI.]--The Pelagians Argue that Original Sin Cannot Come

Through Marriage If Marriage is Good.

After this he proceeds with the following words: "Certainly if evil is

contracted from marriage, it may be blamed, nay, cannot be excused; and

you place under the devil's power its work and fruit, because

everything which is the cause of evil is itself without good. The human

being, however, who is born of wedlock owes his origin not to the

reproaches of wedlock, but to its seminal elements: the cause of these,

however, lies in the condition of bodies; and whosoever makes a bad use

of these bodies, deals a blow at the good desert thereof, not at their

nature. It is therefore clear," argues he, "that the good is not the

cause of the evil. If, therefore," he continues, "original evil is

derived even from marriage, the cause of the evil is the compact of

marriage; and that must needs be evil by which and from which the evil

fruit has made its appearance; even as the Lord says in the Gospel: A

tree is known by its fruits.' [2282] How then," he asks, "do you think

yourself worthy of attention, when you say that marriage is good, and

yet declare that nothing but evil proceeds from it? It is evident,

then, that marriages are guilty, since original sin is deduced from

them; and they are indefensible, too, unless their fruit be proved

innocent. But they are defended, and pronounced good; therefore their

fruit is proved to be innocent."

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[2282] Matt. vii. 16.

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Chapter 42.--The Pelagians Try to Get Rid of Original Sin by Their

Praise of God's Works; Marriage, in Its Nature and by Its Institution,

is Not the Cause of Sin.

I have an answer ready for all this; but before I give it, I wish the

reader carefully to notice, that the result of the opinions of these

persons is, that no Saviour is necessary for infants, whom they deem to

be entirely without any sins to be saved from. This vast perversion of

the truth, so hostile to God's great grace, which is given through our

Lord Jesus Christ, who "came to seek and to save what was lost," [2283]

tries to insinuate its way into the hearts of the unintelligent by

eulogizing the works of God; that is, by its eulogy of human nature, of

human seed, of marriage, of sexual intercourse, of the fruits of

matrimony--which are all of them good things. I will not say that he

adds the praise of lust; because he too is ashamed even to name it, so

that it is something else, and not it, which he seems to praise. By

this method of his, not distinguishing between the evils which have

accrued to nature and the goodness of nature's very self, he does not,

indeed, show it to be sound (because that is untrue), but he does not

permit its diseased condition to be healed. And, therefore, that first

proposition of ours, to the effect that the good thing, even the human

being, which is born of adultery, does not excuse the sin of adulterous

connection, he allows to be true; and this point, which occasions no

question to arise between us, he even defends and strengthens (as he

well may) by his similitude of the thief who sows the seed which he

stole, and out of which there arises a really good harvest. Our other

proposition, however, that "the good of marriage cannot be blamed for

the original sin which is derived from it," he will not admit to be

true; if, indeed, he assented to it, he would not be a Pelagian

heretic, but a catholic Christian. "Certainly," says he, "if evil

arises from marriage, it may be blamed, nay, cannot be excused; and you

place its work and fruit under the devil's power, because everything

which is the cause of evil is itself without good." And in addition to

this, he contrived other arguments to show that good could not possibly

be the cause of evil; and from this he drew the inference, that

marriage, which is a good, is not the cause of evil; and that

consequently from it no man could be born in a sinful state, and having

need of a Saviour: just as if we said that marriage is the cause of

sin, though it is true that the human being which is born in wedlock is

not born without sin. Marriage was instituted not for the purpose of

sinning, but of producing children. Accordingly the Lord's blessing on

the married state ran thus: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish

the earth." [2284] The sin, however, which is derived to children from

marriage does not belong to marriage, but to the evil which accrues to

the human agents, from whose union marriage comes into being. The truth

is, both the evil of shameful lust can exist without marriage, and

marriage might have been without it. It appertains, however, to the

condition of the body (not of that life, but) of this death, that

marriage cannot exist without it though it may exist without marriage.

Of course that lust of the flesh which causes shame has existence out

of the married state, whenever it urges men to the commission of

adultery, chambering and uncleanness, so utterly hostile to the purity

of marriage; or again, when it does not commit any of these things,

because the human agent gives no permission or assent to their

commission, but still rises and is set in motion and creates

disturbance, and (especially in dreams) effects the likeness of its own

veritable work, and reaches the end of its own emotion. Well, now, this

is an evil which is not even in the married state actually an evil of

marriage; but it has this apparatus all ready in the body of this

death, even against its own will, which is indispensable no doubt for

the accomplishment of that which it does will. The evil in question,

therefore, does not accrue to marriage from its own institution, which

was blessed; but entirely from the circumstance that sin entered into

the world by one man, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all

men, for in him all sinned. [2285]

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[2283] Luke xix. 10.

[2284] Gen. i. 28.

[2285] Rom. v. 12.

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Chapter 43.--The Good Tree in the Gospel that Cannot Bring Forth Evil

Fruit, Does Not Mean Marriage.

What, then, does he mean by saying, "A tree is known by its fruits," on

the ground of our reading that the Lord spake thus in the Gospel? Was,

then, the Lord speaking of this question in these words, and not rather

of men's two wills, the good and the evil, calling one of these the

good tree, and the other the corrupt tree, inasmuch as good works

spring out of a good will, and evil ones out of an evil will--the

converse being impossible, good works out of an evil will, and evil

ones out of a good will? If, however, we were to suppose marriage to be

the good tree, according to the Gospel simile which he has mentioned,

then, of course, we must on the other hand assume fornication to be the

corrupt tree. Wherefore, if a human being is said to be the fruit of

marriage, in the sense of the good fruit of a good tree, then

undoubtedly a human being could never have been born in fornication.

"For a corrupt tree bringeth not forth good fruit." [2286] Once more,

if he were to say that not adultery must be supposed to occupy the

place of the tree, but rather human nature, of which man is born, then

in this way not even marriage can stand for the tree, but only the

human nature of which man is born. His simile, therefore, taken from

the Gospel avails him nothing in elucidating this question, because

marriage is not the cause of the sin which is transmitted in the

natural birth, and atoned for in the new birth; but the voluntary

transgression of the first man is the cause of original sin. "You

repeat," says he, "your allegation, Just as sin, from whatever source

it is derived to infants, is the work of the devil, so man, howsoever

he be born, is the work of God.'" Yes, I said this, and most truly too;

and if this man were not a Pelagian, but a catholic, he too would have

nothing else to avow in the catholic faith.

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[2286] Matt. vii. 18.

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Chapter 44 [XXVII.]--The Pelagians Argue that If Sin Comes by Birth,

All Married People Deserve Condemnation.

What, then, is his object when he inquires of us, "By what means sin

may be found in an infant, through the will, or through marriage, or

through its parents"? He speaks, indeed, in such a way as if he had an

answer to all these questions, and as if by clearing all of sin

together he would have nothing remain in the infant whence sin could be

found. I beg your attention to his very words: "Through what," says he,

"is sin found in an infant? Through the will? But there has never been

one in him? Through marriage? But this appertains to the parents' work,

of whom you had previously declared that in this action they had not

sinned; though it appears from your subsequent words that you did not

make this concession truly. Marriage, therefore," he says, "must be

condemned, since it furnished the cause of the evil. Yet marriage only

indicates the work of personal agents. The parents, therefore, who by

their coming together afforded occasion for the sin, are properly

deserving of the condemnation. It does not then admit of doubt," says

he, "any longer, if we are to follow your opinion, that married persons

are handed over to eternal punishment, it being by their means brought

about that the devil has come to exercise dominion over men. And what

becomes of what you just before had said, that man was the work of God?

Because if through their birth it happens that evil is in men, and

through the evil that the devil has power over men, so in fact you

declare the devil to be the author of men, from whom comes their origin

at birth. If, however, you believe that man is made by God, and that

husband and wife are innocent, see how impossible is your standpoint,

that original sin is derived from them."

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Chapter 45.--Answer to This Argument: The Apostle Says We All Sinned in

One.

Now, there is an answer for him to all these questions given by the

apostle, who censures neither the infant's will, which is not yet

matured in him for sinning, nor marriage, which, as such, has not only

its institution, but its blessing also, from God; nor parents, so far

as they are parents, who are united together properly and lawfully for

the procreation of children; but he says, "By one man sin entered into

the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men for in

him all have sinned." [2287] Now, if these persons would only receive

this statement with catholic hearts and ears, they would not have

rebellious feelings against the grace and faith of Christ, nor would

they vainly endeavour to convert to their own particular and heretical

sense these very clear and manifest words of the apostle, when they

assert that the purport of the passage is to this effect: that Adam was

the first to sin, and that any one who wished afterwards to commit sin

found an example for sinning in him; so that sin, you must know, did

not pass from this one upon all men by birth, but by the imitation of

this one. Whereas it is certain that if the apostle meant this

imitation to be here understood, he would have said that sin had

entered into the world and passed upon all men, not by one man, but

rather by the devil. For of the devil it is written: "They that are on

his side do imitate him." [2288] He used the phrase "by one man," from

whom the generation of men, of course, had its beginning, in order to

show us that original sin had passed upon all men by generation.

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[2287] Rom. v. 12.

[2288] Wisd. ii. 24.

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Chapter 46.--The Reign of Death, What It Is; The Figure of the Future

Adam; How All Men are Justified Through Christ.

But what else is meant even by the apostle's subsequent words? For

after he had said the above, he added, "For until the law sin was in

the world," [2289] as much as to say that not even the law was able to

take away sin. "But sin," adds he, "was not imputed when there was no

law." [2290] It existed then, but was not imputed, for it was not set

forth so that it might be imputed. It is on the same principle, indeed,

that he says in another passage: "By the law is the knowledge of sin."

[2291] "Nevertheless," says he, "death reigned from Adam to Moses;"

[2292] that is, as he had already expressed it, "until the law." Not

that there was no sin after Moses, but because even the law, which was

given by Moses, was unable to deprive death of its power, which, of

course, reigns only by sin. Its reign, too, is such as to plunge mortal

man even into that second death which is to endure for evermore. "Death

reigned," but over whom? "Even over them that had not sinned after the

similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that was

to come." [2293] Of whom that was to come, if not Christ? And in what

sort a figure, except in the way of contrariety? which he elsewhere

briefly expresses: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be

made alive." [2294] The one condition was in one, even as the other

condition was in the other; this is the figure. But this figure is not

conformable in every respect; accordingly the apostle, following up the

same idea, added, "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift.

For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of

God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath

abounded unto many." [2295] But why "hath it much more abounded,"

except it be that all who are delivered through Christ suffer temporal

death on Adam's account, but have everlasting life in store for the

sake of Christ Himself? "And not as it was by one that sinned," says

he, "so is the gift: for the judgment was from one to condemnation, but

the free gift is from many offences unto justification." [2296] "By

one" what, but offence? since it is added, "the free gift is from many

offences." Let these objectors tell us how it can be "by one offence

unto condemnation," unless it be that even the one original sin which

has passed over unto all men is sufficient for condemnation? Whereas

the free gift delivers from many offences to justification, because it

not only cancels the one offence, which is derived from the primal sin,

but all others also which are added in every individual man by the

motion of his own will. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by

one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and righteousness

shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ. Therefore, by the offence of

one upon all men to condemnation; so by the righteousness of one upon

all men unto justification of life." [2297] Let them after this persist

in their vain imaginations, and maintain that one man did not hand on

sin by propagation, but only set the example of committing it. How is

it, then, that by one's offence judgment comes on all men to

condemnation, and not rather by each man's own numerous sins, unless it

be that even if there were but that one sin, it is sufficient, without

the addition of any more, to lead to condemnation,--as, indeed, it does

lead all who die in infancy who are born of Adam, without being born

again in Christ? Why, then, does he, when he refuses to hear the

apostle, ask us for an answer to his question, "By what means may sin

be discovered in an infant,--through the will, or through marriage, or

through its parents?" Let him listen in silence, and hear by what means

sin may be discovered in an infant. "By the offence of one," says the

apostle, "upon all men to condemnation." He said, moreover, all to

condemnation through Adam, and all to justification through Christ:

not, of course, that Christ removes to life all those who die in Adam;

but he said "all" and "all," because, as without Adam no one goes to

death, so without Christ no man to life. Just as we say of a teacher of

letters, when he is alone in a town: This man teaches all their

learning; not because all the inhabitants take lessons, but because no

man who learns at all is taught by any but him. Indeed, the apostle

afterwards designates as many those whom he had previously described as

all, meaning the self-same persons by the two different terms. "For,"

says he, "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by

the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." [2298]

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[2289] Rom. v. 13.

[2290] Rom. v. 13.

[2291] Rom. iii. 20.

[2292] Rom. v. 14.

[2293] Rom. v. 14.

[2294] 1 Cor. xv. 22.

[2295] Rom. v. 15.

[2296] Rom. v. 15.

[2297] Rom. v. 17, 18.

[2298] Rom. v. 19.

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Chapter 47.--The Scriptures Repeatedly Teach Us that All Sin in One.

Still let him ply his question: "By what means may sin be discovered in

an infant?" He may find an answer in the inspired pages: "By one man

sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon

all men, for in him all sinned." "Through the offence of one many are

dead." "The judgment was from one to condemnation." "By one man's

offence death reigned by one." "By the offence of one, Judgment came

upon all men to condemnation." "By one man's disobedience many were

made sinners." [2299] Behold, then, "by what means sins may be

discovered in an infant." Let him now believe in original sin; let him

permit infants to come to Christ, that they may be saved. [XXVIII.]

What means this passage of his: "He sins not who is born; he sins not

who begat him; He sins not who created him. Amidst these intrenchments

of innocence, therefore, what are the breaches through which you

pretend that sin entered?" Why does he search for a hidden chink when

he has an open door? "By one man," says the apostle; "through the

offence of one," says the apostle; "By one man's disobedience," says

the apostle. What does he want more? What does he require plainer? What

does he expect to be more impressively repeated?

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[2299] Rom. v. 12-19.

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Chapter 48.--Original Sin Arose from Adam's Depraved Will. Whence the

Corrupt Will Sprang.

"If," says he, "sin comes from the will, it is an evil will that causes

sin; if it comes from nature, then nature is evil." I at once answer,

Sin does come from the will. Perhaps he wants to know, whether original

sin also? I answer, most certainly original sin also. Because it, too,

was engendered from the will of the first man; so that it both existed

in him, and passed on to all. As for what he next proposes, "If it

comes from nature, then nature is evil," I request him to answer, if he

can, to this effect: As it is manifest that all evil works spring from

a corrupt will, like the fruits of a corrupt tree; so let him say

whence arose the corrupt will itself--the corrupt tree which yields the

corrupt fruits. If from an angel, what was the angel, but the good work

of God? If from man, what was even he, but the good work of God? Nay,

inasmuch as the corrupt will arose in the angel from an angel, and in

man from man, what were both these, previous to the evil arising within

them, but the good work of God, with a good and laudable nature?

Behold, then, evil arises out of good; nor was there any other source,

indeed, whence it could arise, but out of good. I call that will bad

which no evil has preceded; no evil works, of course, since they only

proceed from an evil will, as from a corrupt tree. Nevertheless, that

the evil will arose out of good, could not be, because that good was

made by the good God, but because it was created out of nothing--not

out of God. What, therefore, becomes of his argument, "If nature is the

work of God, it will never do for the work of the devil to permeate the

work of God"? Did not the work of the devil, I ask, arise in a work of

God, when it first arose in that angel who became the devil? Well,

then, if evil, which was absolutely nowhere previously, could arise in

a work of God, why could not evil, which had by this time found an

existence somewhere, pervade the work of God; especially when the

apostle uses the very expression in the passage, "And so death passed

upon all men"? [2300] Can it be that men are not the work of God? Sin,

therefore, has passed upon all men--in other words, the devil's work

has penetrated the work of God; or putting the same meaning in another

shape, The work done by a work of God has pervaded God's work. And this

is the reason why God alone has an unchangeable and almighty goodness:

even before any evil came into existence He made all things good; and

out of all the evils which have arisen in the good things which He has

made, He works through all for good.

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[2300] Rom. v. 12.

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Chapter 49 [XXIX.]--In Infants Nature is of God, and the Corruption of

Nature of the Devil.

"In a single man rightly is the intention blamed and the origin

praised; because there must be two things to admit of contraries: in an

infant, however, there is but one thing, nature only; because will has

no existence in his case. Now this one thing," says he, "is ascribable

either to God or to the devil. If nature," he goes on to observe, "is

of God, there cannot be original evil in it. If of the devil, there

will be nothing on the ground of which man may be vindicated for the

work of God. So that he is completely a Manichean who maintains

original sin." Let him hear rather what is true in opposition to all

this. In a single man the will is to be blamed, and his nature to be

praised; because there should be two things for the application of

contraries. Still, even in an infant, it is not the case that there is

but one thing only, that is, the nature in which man was created by the

good God; for he has also that corruption, which has passed upon all

men by one, as the apostle wisely says, and not as the folly of

Pelagius, or Coelestius, or any of their disciples would represent the

matter. Of these two things, then, which we have said exist in an

infant, one is ascribed to God, the other to the devil. From the fact,

however, that (owing to one of the two, even the corruption) both are

subjected to the power of the devil, there really ensues no

incongruity; because this happens not from the power of the devil

himself, but of God. In fact, corruption is subjected to corruption,

nature to nature, because the two are even in the devil; so that

whenever those who are beloved and elect are "delivered from the power

of darkness" [2301] to which they are justly exposed, it is clear

enough how great a gift is bestowed on the justified and good by the

good God, who brings good even out of evil.

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[2301] Col. i. 13.

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Chapter 50.--The Rise and Origin of Evil. The Exorcism and Exsufflation

of Infants, a Primitive Christian Rite.

As to the passage, which he seemed to himself to indite in a pious

vein, as it were, "If nature is of God, there cannot be original sin in

it," would not another person seem even to him to give a still more

pious turn to it, thus: "If nature is of God, there cannot arise any

sin in it?" And yet this is not true. The Manicheans, indeed, meant to

assert this, and they endeavoured to steep in all sorts of evil the

very nature of God itself, and not His creature, made out of nothing.

For evil arose in nothing else than what was good--not, however, the

supreme and unchangeable good which is God's nature, but that which was

made out of nothing by the wisdom of God. This, then, is the reason why

man is claimed for a divine work; for he would not be man unless he

were made by the operation of God. But evil would not exist in infants,

if evil had not been committed by the wilfulness of the first man, and

original sin derived from a nature thus corrupted. It is not true,

then, as he puts it, "He is completely a Manichean who maintains

original sin;" but rather, he is completely a Pelagian who does not

believe in original sin. For it is not simply from the time when the

pestilent opinions of Manich�us began to grow that in the Church of God

infants about to be baptized were for the first time exorcised with

exsufflation,--which ceremonial was intended to show that they were not

removed into the kingdom of Christ without first being delivered from

the power of darkness; [2302] nor is it in the books of Manich�us that

we read how "the Son of man come to seek and to save that which was

lost," [2303] or how "by one man sin entered into the world," [2304]

with those other similar passages which we have quoted above; or how

God "visits the sins of the fathers upon the children;" [2305] or how

it is written in the Psalm, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did

my mother conceive me;" [2306] or again, how "man was made like unto

vanity: his days pass away like a shadow;" [2307] or again, "behold,

Thou hast made my days old, and my existence as nothing before Thee;

nay, every man living is altogether vanity;" [2308] or how the apostle

says, "every creature was made subject to vanity;" [2309] or how it is

written in the book of Ecclesiastes, "vanity of vanities; all is

vanity: what profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under

the sun?" [2310] and in the book of Ecclesiasticus, "a heavy yoke is

upon the sons of Adam from the day that they go out of their mother's

womb to the day that they return to the mother of all things;" [2311]

or how again the apostle writes, "in Adam all die;" [2312] or how holy

Job says, when speaking about his own sins, "for man that is born of a

woman is short-lived and full of wrath: as the flower of grass, so does

he fall; and he departs like a shadow, nor shall he stay. Hast Thou not

taken account even of him, and caused him to enter into judgment in Thy

sight? For who shall be pure from uncleanness? Not even one, even if

his life should be but of one day upon the earth." [2313] Now when he

speaks of uncleanness here, the mere perusal of the passage is enough

to show that he meant sin to be understood. It is plain from the words,

of what he is speaking. The same phrase and sense occur in the prophet

Zechariah, in the place where "the filthy garments" are removed from

off the high priest, and it is said to him, "I have taken away thy

sins." [2314] Well now, I rather think that all these passages, and

others of like import, which point to the fact that man is born in sin

and under the curse, are not to be read among the dark recesses of the

Manicheans, but in the sunshine of catholic truth.

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[2302] Col. i. 13.

[2303] Luke xix. 10.

[2304] Rom. v. 12.

[2305] Ex. xx. 5.

[2306] Ps. li. 5.

[2307] Ps. cxliv. 4.

[2308] Ps. xxxix. 5.

[2309] Rom. viii. 20.

[2310] Eccles. i. 2, 3.

[2311] Ecclus. xl. 1.

[2312] 1 Cor. xv. 22.

[2313] Job xiv. 1-5.

[2314] Zech. iii. 4.

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Chapter 51.--To Call Those that Teach Original Sin Manicheans is to

Accuse Ambrose, Cyprian, and the Whole Church.

What, moreover, shall I say of those commentators on the divine

Scriptures who have flourished in the catholic Church? They have never

tried to pervert these testimonies to an alien sense, because they were

firmly established in our most ancient and solid faith, and were never

moved aside by the novelty of error. Were I to wish to collect these

together, and to make use of their testimony, the task would both be

too long, and I should probably seem to have bestowed less preference

than I ought on canonical authorities, [2315] from which one must never

deviate. I will merely mention the most blessed Ambrose, to whom (as I

have already observed [2316] ) Pelagius accorded so signal a testimony

of his integrity in the faith. This Ambrose, however, maintained that

there was nothing else in infants, which required the healing grace of

Christ, than original sin. [2317] But in respect of Cyprian, with his

all-glorious crown, [2318] will any one say of him, that he either was,

or ever could by any possibility have been, a Manichean, when he

suffered before the pestilent heresy had made its appearance in the

Roman world? And yet, in his book on the baptism of infants, he so

vigorously maintains original sin as to declare, that even before the

eighth day, if necessary, the infant ought to be baptized, lest his

soul should be lost; and he wished it to be understood, that the infant

could the more readily attain to the indulgence of baptism, inasmuch as

it is not so much his own sins, but the sins of another, which are

remitted to him. Well, then, let this writer dare to call these

Manicheans; let him, moreover, under this scandalous imputation asperse

that most ancient tradition of the Church, whereby infants are, as I

have said, exorcised with exsufflation, for the purpose of being

translated into the kingdom of Christ, after they are delivered from

the power of darkness--that is to say, of the devil and his angels. As

for ourselves, indeed, we are more ready to be associated with these

men, and with the Church of Christ, so firmly rooted in this ancient

faith, in suffering any amount of curse and contumely, than with the

Pelagians, to be covered with the flattery of public praise.

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[2315] i.e., Scripture.

[2316] See Book i. of this treatise, last chapter.

[2317] Ambrose On Isaiah: cited in the same Book, i. ch. 35.

[2318] i.e., of martyrdom.

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Chapter 52 [XXX.]--Sin Was the Origin of All Shameful Concupiscence.

"Do you," he asks, "repeat your affirmation, There would be no

concupiscence if man had not first sinned; marriage, however, would

have existed, even if no one had sinned'?" I never said, "There would

be no concupiscence," because there is a concupiscence of the spirit,

which craves wisdom. [2319] My words were, "There would be no shameful

concupiscence." [2320] Let my words be re-perused, even those which he

has cited, that it may be clearly seen how dishonestly they are handled

by him. However, let him call it by any name he likes. What I said

would not have existed unless man had previously sinned, was that which

made them ashamed in paradise when they covered their loins, and which

every one will allow would not have been felt, had not the sin of

disobedience first occurred. Now he who wishes to understand what they

felt, ought to consider what it was they covered. For of the fig-leaves

they made themselves "aprons," not clothes; and these aprons or kilts

are called perizomata in Greek. Now all know well enough what it is

which these peri-zomata cover, which some Latin writers explain by the

word campestria. Who is ignorant of what persons wore this kilt, and

what parts of the body such a dress concealed; even the same which the

Roman youths used to cover when they practised naked in the campus,

from which circumstance the name campester was given to the apron.

[2321]

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[2319] Wisd. vi. 21.

[2320] See above, Book i. ch. 1.

[2321] See On the City of God, Book xi. ch. 17.

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Chapter 53 [XXXI.]--Concupiscence Need Not Have Been Necessary for

Fruitfulness.

He says: "Therefore that marriage which might have been without

concupiscence, without bodily motion, without necessity for sexual

organs--to use your own statement--is pronounced by you to be laudable;

whereas such marriages as are now enacted are, according to your

decision, the invention of the devil. Those, therefore, whose

institution was possible in your dreams, you deliberately assert to be

good, while those which Holy Scripture intends, when it says, Therefore

shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his

wife, and they shall be one flesh,' [2322] you pronounce to be

diabolical evils, worthy, in short, to be called a pest, not

matrimony." It is not to be wondered at, that these Pelagian opponents

of mine try to twist my words to any meaning they wish them to bear,

when it has been their custom to do the same thing with the Holy

Scriptures, and not simply in obscure passages, but where their

testimony is clear and plain: a custom, indeed, which is followed by

all other heretics. Now who could make such an assertion, as that it

was possible for marriages to be "without bodily motion, without

necessity for sexual organs"? For God made the sexes; because, as it is

written, "He created them male and female." [2323] But how could it

possibly happen, that they who were to be united together, and by the

very union were to beget children, were not to move their bodies, when,

of course, there can be no bodily contact of one person with another if

bodily motion be not resorted to? The question before us, then, is not

about the motion of bodies, without which there could not be sexual

intercourse; but about the shameful motion of the organs of generation,

which certainly could be absent, and yet the fructifying connection be

still not wanting, if the organs of generation were not obedient to

lust, but simply to the will, like the other members of the body. Is it

not even now the case, in "the body of this death," that a command is

given to the foot, the arm, the finger, the lip, or the tongue, and

they are instantly set in motion at this intimation of our will? And

(to take a still more wonderful case) even the liquid contained in the

urinary vessels obeys the command to flow from us at our pleasure, and

when we are not pressed with its overflow; while the vessels, also,

which contain the liquid, discharge without difficulty, if they are in

a healthy state, the office assigned them by our will of propelling,

pressing out, and ejecting their contents. With how much greater ease

and quietness, then, if the generative organs of our body were

compliant, would natural motion ensue, and human conception be

effected; except in the instance of those persons who violate natural

order, and by a righteous retribution are punished with the

intractability of these members and organs! This punishment is felt by

the chaste and pure, who, without doubt, would rather beget children by

mere natural desire than by voluptuous pruriency; while unchaste

persons, who are impelled by this diseased passion, and bestow their

love upon harlots as well as wives, are excited by a still heavier

mental remorse in consequence of this carnal chastisement.

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[2322] Gen. ii. 24.

[2323] Gen. i. 27.

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Chapter 54 [XXXII.]--How Marriage is Now Different Since the Existence

of Sin.

God forbid that we should say, what this man pretends we say, "Such

marriages as are now enacted are the invention of the devil." Why, they

are absolutely the same marriages as God made at the very first. For

this blessing of His, which He appointed for the procreation of

mankind, He has not taken away even from men under condemnation, any

more than He has deprived them of their senses and bodily limbs, which

are no doubt His gifts, although they are condemned to die by an

already incurred retribution. This, I say, is the marriage whereof it

was said (only excepting the great sacrament of Christ and the Church,

which the institution prefigured): "For this cause shall a man leave

his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they

twain shall be one flesh." [2324] For this, no doubt, was said before

sin; and if no one had sinned, it might have been done without shameful

lust. And now, although it is not done without that, in the body of

this death, there is that nevertheless which does not cease to be done

so that a man may cleave to his wife, and they twain be one flesh.

When, therefore, it is alleged that marriage is now one thing, but

might have been another had no one sinned, this is not predicated of

its nature, but of a certain quality which has undergone a change for

the worse. Just as a man is said to be different, though he is actually

the same individual, when he has changed his manner of life either for

the better or the worse; for as a righteous man he is one thing, and as

a sinful man another, though the man himself be really the same

individual. In like manner, marriage without shameful lust is one

thing, and marriage with shameful lust is another. When, however, a

woman is lawfully united to her husband in accordance with the true

constitution of wedlock, and fidelity to what is due to the flesh is

kept free from the sin of adultery, and so children are lawfully

begotten, it is actually the very same marriage which God instituted at

first, although by his primeval inducement to sin, the devil inflicted

a heavy wound, not, indeed, on marriage itself, but on man and woman by

whom marriage is made, by his prevailing on them to disobey God,--a sin

which is requited in the course of the divine judgment by the

reciprocal disobedience of man's own members. United in this

matrimonial state, although they were ashamed of their nakedness, still

they were not by any means able altogether to lose the blessedness of

marriage which God appointed.

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[2324] Gen. ii. 24.

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Chapter 55 [XXXIII.]--Lust is a Disease; The Word "Passion" In the

Ecclesiastical Sense.

He then passes on from those who are united in marriage to those who

are born of it. It is in relation to these that we have to encounter

the most laborious discussions with the new heretics in connection with

our subject. Impelled by some hidden instinct from God, he makes

avowals which go far to untie the whole knot. For in his desire to

raise greater odium against us, because we had said that infants are

born in sin even of lawful wedlock, he makes the following observation:

"You assert that they, indeed, who have not been ever born might

possibly have been good; those, however, who have peopled the world,

and for whom Christ died, you decide to be the work of the devil, born

in a disordered state, and guilty from the beginning. Therefore," he

continues, "I have shown that you are doing nothing else than denying

that God is the Creator of the men who actually exist." I beg to say,

that I declare none but God to be the Creator of all men, however true

it be that all are born in sin, and must perish unless born again. It

was, indeed, the sinful corruption which had been sown in them by the

devil's persuasion that became the means of their being born in sin;

not the created nature of which men are composed. Shameful lust,

however, could not excite our members, except at our own will, if it

were not a disease. Nor would even the lawful and honourable cohabiting

of husband and wife raise a blush, with avoidance of any eye and desire

of secrecy, if there were not a diseased condition about it. Moreover,

the apostle would not prohibit the possession of wives in this disease,

did not disease exist in it. The phrase in the Greek text, en pathei

epithumias, is by some rendered in Latin, in morbo desiderii vel

concupiscenti�, in the disease of desire or of concupiscence; by

others, however, in passione concupiscenti�, in the passion of

concupiscence; or however it is found otherwise in different copies: at

any rate, the Latin equivalent passio (passion), especially in the

ecclesiastical use, is usually understood as a term of censure.

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Chapter 56.--The Pelagians Allow that Christ Died Even for Infants;

Julianus Slays Himself with His Own Sword.

But whatever opinion he may entertain about the shame-causing

concupiscence of the flesh, I must request your attention to what he

has said respecting infants (and it is in their behalf that we labour),

as to their being supposed to need a Saviour, if they are not to die

without salvation. I repeat his words once more: "You assert," says he

to me, "that they, indeed, who have not been ever born might possibly

have been good; those, however, who have peopled the world, and for

whom Christ died, you decide to be the work of the devil, born in a

disordered state, and guilty from the very beginning." Would that he

only solved the entire controversy as he unties the knot of this

question! For will he pretend to say that he merely spoke of adults in

this passage? Why, the subject in hand is about infants, about human

beings at their birth; and it is about these that he raises odium

against us, because they are defined by us as guilty from the very

first, because we declare them to be guilty, since Christ died for

them. And why did Christ die for them if they are not guilty? It is

entirely from them, yes, from them, we shall find the reason, wherefore

he thought odium should be raised against me. He asks: "How are infants

guilty, for whom Christ died?" We answer: Nay, how are infants not

guilty, since Christ died for them? This dispute wants a judge to

determine it. Let Christ be the Judge, and let Him tell us what is the

object which has profited by His death? "This is my blood," He says,

"which shall be shed [2325] for many for the remission of sins." [2326]

Let the apostle, too, be His assessor in the judgment; since even in

the apostle it is Christ Himself that speaks. Speaking of God the

Father, he exclaims: "He who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him

up for us all!" [2327] I suppose that he describes Christ as so

delivered up for us all, that infants in this matter are not separated

from ourselves. But what need is there to dwell on this point, out of

which even he no longer raises a contest? For the truth is, he not only

confesses that Christ died even for infants, but he also reproves us

out of this admission, because we say that these same infants are

guilty for whom Christ died. Now, then, let the apostle, who says that

Christ was delivered up for us all, also tell us why Christ was

delivered up for us. "He was delivered," says he, "for our offences,

and rose again for our justification." [2328] If, therefore, as even

this man both confesses and professes, both admits and objects,

infants, too, are included amongst those for whom Christ was delivered

up; and if it was for our sins that Christ was delivered up, even

infants, of course, must have original sins, for whom Christ was

delivered up; He must have something in them to heal, who (as Himself

affirms) is not needed as a Physician by the whole, but by the sick;

[2329] He must have a reason for saving them, seeing that He came into

the world, as the Apostle Paul says, "to save sinners;" [2330] He must

have something in them to remit, who testifies that He shed His blood

"for the remission of sins;" [2331] He must have good reason for

seeking them out, who "came," as He says, "to seek and to save that

which was lost;" [2332] the Son of man must find in them something to

destroy, who came for the express purpose, as the Apostle John says,

"that He might destroy the works of the devil." [2333] Now to this

salvation of infants He must be an enemy, who asserts their innocence,

in such a way as to deny them the medicine which is required by the

hurt and wounded.

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[2325] Effundetur.

[2326] Matt. xxvi. 28.

[2327] Rom. viii. 32.

[2328] Rom. iv. 25.

[2329] Matt. ix. 12.

[2330] 1 Tim. i. 15.

[2331] Matt. xxvi. 28.

[2332] Luke xix. 10.

[2333] 1 John iii. 8.

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Chapter 57 [XXXIV.]--The Great Sin of the First Man.

Now observe what follows, as he goes on to say: "If, before sin, God

created a source from which men should be born, but the devil a source

from which parents were disturbed, then beyond a doubt holiness must be

ascribed to those that are born, and guilt to those that produce.

Since, however, this would be a most manifest condemnation of marriage;

remove, I pray you, this view from the midst of the churches, and

really believe that all things were made by Jesus Christ, and that

without Him nothing was made." [2334] He so speaks here, as if he would

make us say, that there is a something in man's substance which was

created by the devil. The devil persuaded evil as a sin; he did not

create it as a nature. No doubt he persuaded nature for man is nature;

and therefore by his persuasion he corrupted it. He who wounds a limb

does not, of course, create it, but he injures it. [2335] Those wounds,

indeed, which are inflicted on the body produce lameness in a limb, or

difficulty of motion; but they do not affect the virtue whereby a man

becomes righteous: that wound, however, which has the name of sin,

wounds the very life, which was being righteously lived. This wound was

at that fatal moment of the fall inflicted by the devil to a vastly

wider and deeper extent than are the sins which are known amongst men.

Whence it came to pass, that our nature having then and there been

deteriorated by that great sin of the first man, not only was made a

sinner, but also generates sinners; and yet the very weakness, under

which the virtue of a holy life has drooped and died, is not really

nature, but corruption; precisely as a bad state of health is not a

bodily substance or nature, but disorder; very often, indeed, if not

always, the ailing character of parents is in a certain way implanted,

and reappears in the bodies of their children.

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[2334] John i. 3.

[2335] Vexat. Another reading has vitiat, "corrupts."

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Chapter 58.--Adam's Sin is Derived from Him to Every One Who is Born

Even of Regenerate Parents; The Example of the Olive Tree and the Wild

Olive.

But this sin, which changed man for the worse in paradise, because it

is far greater than we can form any judgment of, is contracted by every

one at his birth, and is remitted only in the regenerate; and this

derangement is such as to be derived even from parents who have been

regenerated, and in whom the sin is remitted and covered, to the

condemnation of the children born of them, unless these, who were bound

by their first and carnal birth, are absolved by their second and

spiritual birth. Of this wonderful fact the Creator has produced a

wonderful example in the cases of the olive and the wild olive trees,

in which, from the seed not only of the wild olive, but even of the

good olive, nothing but a wild olive springs. Wherefore, although even

in persons whose natural birth is followed by regeneration through

grace, there exists this carnal concupiscence which contends against

the law of the mind, yet, seeing that it is remitted in the remission

of sins, it is no longer accounted to them as sin, nor is it in any

degree hurtful, unless consent is yielded to its motions for unlawful

deeds. Their offspring, however, being begotten not of spiritual

concupiscence, but of carnal, like a wild olive of our race from the

good olive, derives guilt from them by natural birth to such a degree

that it cannot be liberated from that pest except by being born again.

How is it, then, that this man affirms that we ascribe holiness to

those who are born, and guilt to their parents? when the truth rather

shows that even if there has been holiness in the parents, original sin

is inherent in their children, which is abolished in them only if they

are born again.

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Chapter 59 [XXXV.]--The Pelagians Can Hardly Venture to Place

Concupiscence in Paradise Before the Commission of Sin.

This being the case, let him think what he pleases about this

concupiscence of the flesh and about the lust which lords it over the

unchaste, has to be mastered by the chaste, and yet is to be blushed at

both by the chaste and the unchaste; for I see plainly he is much

pleased with it. Let him not hesitate to praise what he is ashamed to

name; let him call it (as he has in fact called it) the vigour of the

members, and let him not be afraid of the honor of chaste ears; let him

designate it the power of the members, and let him not care about the

impudence. Let him say, if his blushes permit him, that if no one had

sinned, this vigour must have flourished like a flower in paradise; nor

would there have been any need to cover that which would have been so

moved that no one should have felt ashamed; rather, with a wife

provided, it would have been ever exercised and never repressed, lest

so great a pleasure should ever be denied to so vast a happiness. Far

be it from being thought that such blessedness could in such a spot

fail to have what it wished, or ever experience in mind or body what it

disliked. And so, should the motion of lust precede men's will, then

the will would immediately follow it. The wife, who ought certainly

never to be absent in this happy state of things, would be urged on by

it, whether about to conceive or already pregnant; and, either a child

would be begotten, or a natural and laudable pleasure would be

gratified,--for perish all seed rather than disappoint the appetite of

so good a concupiscence. Only be sure that the united pair do not apply

themselves to that use of each other which is contrary to nature, then

(with so modest a reservation) let them use, as often as they would

have delight, their organs of generation, created for the purpose. But

what if this very use, which is contrary to nature, should peradventure

give them delight; what if the aforesaid laudable lust should hanker

even after such delight; I wonder whether they should pursue it because

it was sweet, or loathe it because it was base? If they should pursue

it to gratification, what becomes of all thought about honour? If they

should loathe it, where is the peaceful composure of so good a

happiness? But at this point perchance his blushes will awake, and he

will say that so great is the tranquillity of this happy state, and so

entire the orderliness which may have existed in this state of things,

that carnal concupiscence never preceded these persons' will: only

whenever they themselves wished, would it then arise; and only then

would they entertain the wish, when there was need for begetting

children; and the result would be, that no seed would ever be emitted

to no purpose, nor would any embrace ever ensue which would not be

followed by conception and birth; the flesh would obey the will, and

concupiscence would vie with it in subserviency. Well, if he says all

this of the imagined happy state, he must at least be pretty sure that

what he describes does not now exist among men. And even if he will not

concede that lust is a corrupt condition, let him at least allow that

through the disobedience of the man and woman in the happy state the

very concupiscence of their flesh was corrupted, so that what would

once be excited obediently and orderly is now moved disobediently and

inordinately, and that to such a degree that it is not obedient to the

will of even chaste-minded husbands and wives, so that it is excited

when it is not wanted; and whenever it is necessary, it never, indeed,

follows their will, but sometimes too hurriedly, at other times too

tardily, exerts its own movements. Such, then, is the rebellion of this

concupiscence which the primitive pair received for their own

disobedience, and transfused by natural descent to us. It certainly was

not at their bidding, but in utter disorder, that it was excited, when

they covered their members, which at first were worthy to be gloried

in, but had then become a ground of shame.

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Chapter 60.--Let Not the Pelagians Indulge Themselves in a Cruel

Defence of Infants.

As I said, however, let him entertain what views he likes of this lust;

let him proclaim it as he pleases, praise it as much as he chooses (and

he pleases much, as several of his extracts show), that the Pelagians

may gratify themselves, if not with its uses, at all events with its

praises, as many of them as fail to enjoy the limitation of continence

enjoined in wedlock. Only let him spare the infants, so as not to

praise their condition uselessly, and defend them cruelly. Let him not

declare them to be safe; let him suffer them to come, not, indeed, to

Pelagius for eulogy, but to Christ for salvation. For, that this book

may be now brought to a termination, since the dissertation of this man

is ended, which was written on the short paper you sent me, I will

close with his last words: "Really believe that all things were made by

Jesus Christ, and that without Him nothing was made." [2336] Let him

grant that Jesus is Jesus even to infants; and as he confesses that all

things were made by Him, in that He is God the Word, so let him

acknowledge that infants, too, are saved by Him in that He is Jesus;

let him, I say, do this if he would be a catholic Christian. For thus

it is written in the Gospel: "And they shall call His name Jesus; for

He shall save His people from their sins" [2337] --Jesus, because Jesus

is in Latin Salvator, "Saviour." He shall, indeed, save His people; and

amongst His people surely there are infants. "From their sins" shall He

save them; in infants, too, therefore, are there original sins, on

account of which He can be Jesus, that is, Saviour, even unto them.

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[2336] John i. 3.

[2337] Matt. i. 21.

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a treatise on the soul and its origin.

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Extract from Augustin's "Retractations,"

Book II. Chap. 56,

On the Following Treatise,

"De anima et ejus origine."

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"At that time one Vincentius discovered in the possesion of a certain

presbyter called Peter, in Mauritania C�sariensis, a little work of

mine, in a particular passage of which, touching the origin of souls in

individual men, I had confessed that I knew not whether they are

propagated from the primeval soul of the first man, and from that by

parental descent, or whether they are severally assigned to each person

without propogation, as the first was to Adam; but that I was, at the

same time, quite sure that the soul was not body, but spirit. In

opposition to these opinions of mine, he addressed to this Peter two

books, which were sent to me from C�sarea by the monk Renatus. Having

read these books, I replied in four others,--one addressed to the monk

Renatus, another to the presbyter Peter, and two more to Victor

himself. That to Peter, however, though it has all the lengthiness of a

book, is yet only a letter, which I did not like to be kept separate

from the other three works. In all of them, while discussing many

points which were unavoidable, I defended my hesitancy on the point of

the origin of the souls which are given to individual men; and I

pointed out this man's many errors and presumptuous pravity. At the

same time, I treated the young man as gently as I could,--not as one

who ought to be denounced all out of hand, but as one who ought to be

still instructed; and I accepted the account of his conduct which he

wrote back to me. In this work of mine, the book addressed to Renatus

begins with these words: "Your sincerity towards us;" while that which

was written to Peter begins thus: "To his Lordship, my dearly beloved

brother and co-presbyter Peter." Of the last two books, which are

addressed to Vincentius Victor, the former one thus opens: "As to that

which I have thought it my duty to write to you."

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advertisement to the reader on the following treatise.

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The occasion of these four books was furnished by a young man named

Vincentius Victor, a native of Mauritania C�sariensis, a convert to the

catholic Church from the Rogatian faction (which split off from the

Donatist schism, and inhabited that part of Mauritania which lay around

Cartenna). This Victor, they say, had previously so high an opinion of

the Vincentius who succeeded Rogatus as the head of the

before-mentioned faction, that he adopted his name as his own. [2338]

Happening to meet with a certain work of Augustin's, in which the

writer acknowledged himself to be incapable of saying whether all souls

were propagated from Adam's soul simply, or whether every man severally

had his soul given to him by God, even as Adam himself had, without

propagation, although he declared, for all that, his conviction that

the soul was in its nature spirit, not body, Victor was equally

offended with both statements: he wondered that so great a man as

Augustin did not unhesitatingly teach what one ought to hold concerning

the origin of the soul, especially as he thought its propagation

probable; and also that he did state with so great assurance the nature

of the soul to be incorporeal. He accordingly published two books

written to one Peter, a presbyter of Spain, against Augustin on this

subject, containing some conceits of the Pelagian heretics, and other

things even worse than these. [2339]

A monk called Renatus happened then to be at C�sarea. It appears that

this man had shown to Augustin, who was staying at the same place in

the autumn of the year 418, a letter of the Bishop Optatus consulting

him about the origin of the soul. [2340] This monk, of the order of

laymen, but perfectly orthodox in the faith, induced by the

circumstance, carefully copied the books of Victor, and forwarded them

from C�sarea to Hippo the next summer; Augustin, however, only received

them at the end of autumn of the year 419, as is supposed. As soon as

the holy doctor read them, he without delay wrote the first of the four

following books to the good monk, and then the second, in the shape of

a letter, to the presbyter Peter, and the two last books to Victor

himself, but after a considerable interval, as it appears from the

following words of the fourth chapter of the second book: "If, indeed,

the Lord will that I should write to the young man, as I desire to do."

In the Retractations this little work of Augustin is placed immediately

after the treatises of the year 419, i.e. in the fifth place after the

Proceedings with Emeritus, which were completed in the month of

September in the year 418. It belongs, therefore, to the termination of

the year 419 or to the commencement of the year 420, having been

written after "the condemnation of the Pelagians by the authority of

catholic Councils and of the Apostolic See," [2341] but "very soon

after," [2342] as that happy event had happened in the year of Christ

418.

In Book I., written to Renatus, he points out his own opinion about the

nature of the soul, and his hesitation as to its origin, which had been

unjustly blamed by Victor. He reproves the man's juvenile forwardness,

shows him he had fallen into grave and unheard-of errors while

venturing to take upon himself the solution of a question which

exceeded his abilities, and points out that he adduced only doubtful

passages of Scripture, and such as were not applicable to the subject,

in his endeavour to prove that souls are not propagated, but that

entirely new ones are breathed by God into every man at his separate

birth.

In Book II., he advises Peter not to incur the imputation of having

approved of the books which had been addressed to him by Victor On the

Origin of the Soul by any use he might make of them, nor to take as

catholic doctrines that person's rash utterances contrary to the

Christian faith. Victor's various and very serious errors he points out

and briefly confutes, and he concludes with advising Peter himself to

try to persuade Victor to correct his errors.

In Book III., which was written to Victor himself, he points out the

corrections which Victor ought to make in his books if he wished to be

deemed a catholic; those opinions also and paradoxes of his, which had

been already refuted in the preceding books to Renatus and Peter, the

author briefly censures in this third book, and classifies under eleven

heads of error.

In Book IV., addressed to the same Victor, he first shows that his

hesitation on the subject of the origin of souls was undeservedly

blamed, and that he was wrongly compared with cattle, because he had

refrained from any bold conclusions on the subject. Then again, with

regard to his own unhesitating statement, that the soul was spirit, not

body, he points out how rashly Victor disapproved of this assertion,

especially when he was vainly expending his efforts to prove that the

soul was corporeal in its own nature, and that the spirit in man was

distinct from the soul itself.

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[2338] See below, Book iii. c. 2.

[2339] See below, ii. 13, 15.

[2340] See Augustin's letter 190, ch. 1.

[2341] See Book ii. 17.

[2342] See Book i. 34.

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A Treatise on the soul and its origin,

by aurelius augustin, bishop of hippo;

In Four Books,

written towards the end of 419.

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Book I. [2343]

Addressed to Renatus, the Monk.

On receiving from Renatus the two books of Vincentius Victor, who

disapproved of Augustin's opinion touching the nature of the soul, and

of his hesitation in respect of its origin, Augustin points out how the

young objector, in his self-conceit in aiming to decide on so abstruse

a subject, had fallen into insufferable mistakes. He then proceeds to

show that those passages of Scripture by which Victor thought he could

prove that human souls are not derived by propagation, but are breathed

by God afresh into each man at birth, are ambiguous, and inadequate for

the confirmation of this opinion of his.

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Chapter 1 [I.]--Renatus Had Done Him a Kindness by Sending Him the

Books Which Had Been Addressed to Him.

Your sincerity towards us, dearest brother Renatus, and your brotherly

kindness, and the affection of mutual love between us, we already had

clear proof of; but now you have afforded us a still clearer proof, by

sending me two books, written by a person whom I knew, indeed, nothing

of,--though he was not on that account to be despised,--called

Vincentius Victor (for in such form did I find his name placed at the

head of his work): this you did in the summer of last year; but owing

to my absence from home, it was the end of autumn before they found

their way to me. How, indeed, would you be likely with your very great

affection for me to fail either in means or inclination to bring under

my notice any writings of the kind, by whomsoever composed, if they

fell into your hands, even if they were addressed to some one else? How

much less likely, when my own name was mentioned and read--and that in

a context of gainsaying some words of mine, which I had published in

certain little treatises? Now you have done all this in the way you

were sure to act as my very sincere and beloved friend.

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Chapter 2 [II.]--He Receives with a Kindly and Patient Feeling the

Books of a Young and Inexperienced Man Who Wrote Against Him in a Tone

of Arrogance. Vincentius Victor Converted from the Sect of the

Rogatians.

I am somewhat pained, however, at being thus far less understood by

your Holiness than I should like to be; forasmuch as you supposed that

I should so receive your communication, as if you did me an injury, by

making known to me what another had done. You may see, indeed, how far

this feeling is from my mind, in that I have no complaint to make of

having suffered any wrong even from him. For, when he entertained views

different from my own, was he bound to preserve silence? It ought, no

doubt, to be even pleasant to me, that he broke silence in such a way

as to put it in our power to read what he had to say. He ought, I

certainly think, to have written simply to me, rather than to another

concerning me; but as he was unknown to me, he did not venture to

intrude personally on me in refuting my words. He thought there was no

necessity for applying to me in a matter on which he seemed to himself

least of all liable to be doubted, [2344] but to be holding a perfectly

well-known and certain opinion. He moreover, acted in obedience to a

friend of his by whom he tells us he was compelled to write. And if he

expressed any sentiment during the controversy which was contumelious

to me, I would prefer supposing that he did this, not with any wish to

treat me with incivility, but from the necessity of thinking

differently from me. For in all cases where a person's animus towards

one is indeterminate and unknown, I think it better to suppose the

existence of the kindlier motive, than to find fault with an

undiscovered one. Perhaps, too, he acted from love to me, as knowing

that what he had written might possibly reach me; being at the same

time unwilling that I should be in error on such points as he

especially thinks himself to be free from error regarding. I ought,

therefore, to be grateful for his kindness, although I feel obliged to

disapprove of his opinion. Accordingly, as regards the points on which

he does not entertain right views, he appears to me to deserve gentle

correction rather than severe disapproval; more especially because, if

I am rightly informed, he has lately become a catholic--a matter in

which he is to be congratulated. For he has freed himself from the

schism and errors of the Donatists (or rather the Rogatists) in which

he was previously implicated; and if he understands the catholic verity

as he ought, we may really rejoice at his conversion.

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[2344] [The Edinburgh translator conjectures minime dubitandam here:

"on which he seemed to himself to be holding no doubtful, but a

perfectly well-known and certain opinion."--W.]

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Chapter 3 [III]--The Eloquence of Vincentius, Its Dangers and Its

Tolerableness.

For he has an eloquence by which he is able to explain what he thinks.

He must, therefore, be dealt with accordingly; and we must hope that he

may entertain right sentiments, and that he may not turn useless things

into objects of desire; that he may not seem to have propounded as true

whatever he may have expressed with eloquence. But in his very

outspokenness he may have much to correct, and to prune of redundant

verbiage. And this characteristic of his has actually given offence to

you, who are a person of gravity, as your own writings indicate. This

fault, however, is either easily corrected, or, if it be resorted to

with fondness by light minds, and borne with by serious ones, it is not

attended with any injury to their faith. For we have already amongst us

men who are frothy in speech, but sound in the faith. We need not then

despair that this quality even in him (it might be endurable, however,

even if it proved permanent) may be tempered and cleansed--in fact, may

be either extended or recalled to an entire and solid criterion;

especially as he is said to be young, so that diligence may supply to

him whatever defect his inexperience may possess, and ripeness of age

may digest what crude loquacity finds indigestible. The troublesome,

dangerous, and pernicious thing is, when folly is set off by the

commendation which is accorded to eloquence, and when a poisonous

draught is drunk out of a precious goblet.

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Chapter 4 [IV.]--The Errors Contained in the Books of Vincentius

Victor. He Says that the Soul Comes from God, But Was Not Made Either

Out of Nothing or Out of Any Created Thing.

I will now proceed to point out what things are chiefly to be avoided

in his contentious statement. He says that the soul was made, indeed,

by God, but that it is not a portion of God or of the nature of

God,--which is an entirely true statement. When, however, he refuses to

allow that it is made out of nothing, and mentions no other created

thing out of which it was made; and makes God its author, in such a

sense that He must be supposed to have made it, neither out of any

non-existing things, that is, out of nothing, nor out of anything which

exists other than God, but out of His very self: he is little aware

that in the revolution of his thoughts he has come back to the position

which he thinks he has avoided, even that the soul is nothing else than

the nature of God; and consequently that there is an actual something

made out of the nature of God by the self-same God, for the making of

which the material of which He makes it is His own very self who makes

it; and that thus God's nature is changeable, and by being changed for

the worse the very nature of God Himself incurs condemnation at the

hands of the self-same God! How far all this is from being fit for your

intelligent faith to suppose, how alien it is from the heart of a

catholic, and how much to be avoided, you can readily see. For the soul

is either so made out of the breath, or God's breath is so made into

it, that it was not created out of Himself, but by Himself out of

nothing. It is not, indeed, like the case of a human being, when he

breathes: he cannot form a breath out of nothing, but he restores to

the air the breath which he inhaled out of it. We may in some such

manner suppose that certain airs surrounded the Divine Being, and that

He inhaled a particle of it by breathing, and exhaled it again by

respiration, when He breathed into man's face, and so formed for him a

soul. If this were the process, it could not have been out of His very

self, but out of the circumambient airy matter, that what He breathed

forth must have arisen. Far be it, however, from us to say, that the

Almighty could not have made the breath of life out of nothing, by

which man might become a living soul; and to crowd ourselves into such

straits, as that we must either think that something already existed

other than Himself, out of which He formed breath, or else suppose that

He formed out of Himself that which we see was made subject to change.

Now, whatever is out of Himself, must necessarily be of the self-same

nature as Himself, and therefore immutable: but the soul (as all allow)

is mutable. Therefore it is not out of Him, because it is not

immutable, as He is. If, however, it was not made of anything else, it

was undoubtedly made out of nothing--but by Himself.

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Chapter 5 [V.]--Another of Victor's Errors, that the Soul is Corporeal.

But as regards his contention, "that the soul is not spirit, but body,"

what else can he mean to make out, than that we are composed, not of

soul and body, but of two or even three bodies? For inasmuch as he says

that we consist of spirit, soul and body, and asserts that all the

three are bodies; it follows, that he supposes us to be made up of

three bodies. How absurd this conclusion is, I think ought rather to be

demonstrated to him than to you. But this is not an intolerable error

on the part of a person who has not yet discovered that there is in

existence a something, which, though it be not corporeal, yet may wear

somewhat of the similitude of a body.

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Chapter 6 [VI.]--Another Error Out of His Second Book, to the Effect,

that the Soul Deserved to Be Polluted by the Body.

But he is plainly past endurance in what he says in his second book,

when he endeavours to solve a very difficult question on original sin,

how it belongs to body and soul, if the soul is not derived by parental

descent but is breathed afresh by God into a man. Striving to explain

this troublesome and profound point, he thus expresses his view:

"Through the flesh the soul fitly recovers its primitive condition,

which it seemed to have gradually lost through the flesh, in order that

it may begin to be regenerated by the very flesh by which it had

deserved to be polluted." You observe how this person, having been so

bold as to undertake what exceeds his powers, has fallen down such a

precipice as to say, that the soul deserved to be defiled by the body;

although he could in no wise declare whence it drew on itself this

desert, before it put on flesh. For if it first had from the flesh its

desert of sin, let him tell us (if he can) whence (previous to sin) it

derived its desert to be contaminated by the flesh. For this desert,

which projected it into sinful flesh to be polluted by it, it of course

had either from itself, or, which is much more offensive to our mind,

from God. It certainly could not, previous to its being invested with

the flesh, have received from that flesh that ill desert by reason of

which it was projected into the flesh, in order to be defiled by it.

Now, if it had the ill desert from its own self, how did it get it,

seeing that it did no sin previous to its assumption of flesh? But if

it be alleged that it had the ill desert from God, then, I ask, who

could listen to such blasphemy? Who could endure it? Who could permit

it to be alleged with impunity? For the question which arises here,

remember, is not, what was the ill desert which adjudged the soul to be

condemned after it became incarnate, but what was its ill desert prior

to the flesh, which condemned it to the investiture of the flesh, that

it might be thereby polluted? Let him explain this to us, if he can,

seeing that he has dared to say that the soul deserved to be defiled by

the flesh.

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Chapter 7 [VII.]--Victor Entangles Himself in an Exceedingly Difficult

Question. God's Foreknowledge is No Cause of Sin.

In another passage, also, on proposing for explanation the very same

question in which he had entangled himself, he says, speaking in the

person of certain objectors: "Why, they ask, did God inflict upon the

soul so unjust a punishment as to be willing to relegate it into a

body, when, by reason of its association with the flesh, that begins to

be sinful which could not have been sinful?" Now, amidst the reefy sea

of such a question, it was surely his duty to beware of shipwreck; nor

to commit himself to dangers which he could not hope to escape by

passing over them, and where his only chance of safety lay in putting

back again--in a word, by repentance. He tries to free himself by means

of the foreknowledge of God, but to no purpose. For God's foreknowledge

only marks beforehand those sinners whom He purposes to heal. For if He

liberates from sin those souls which He Himself involved in sin when

innocent and pure, He then heals a wound which Himself inflicted on us,

not which He found in us. May God, however, forbid it, and may it be

altogether far from us to say, that when God cleanses the souls of

infants by the laver of regeneration, He then corrects evils which He

Himself made for them, when He commingled them, which had no sin

before, with sinful flesh, that they might be contaminated by its

original sin. As regards, however, the souls which this calumniator

alleges to have deserved pollution by the flesh, he is quite unable to

tell us how it is they deserved so vast an evil, previous to their

connection with the flesh.

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Chapter 8 [VIII.]--Victor's Erroneous Opinion, that the Soul Deserved

to Become Sinful.

Vainly supposing, then, that he was able to solve this question from

the foreknowledge of God, he keeps floundering on, and says: "If the

soul deserved to be sinful which could not have been sinful, yet

neither did it remain in sin, because, as prefigured in Christ, it was

not bound to be in sin, even as it was unable to be." Now what can he

mean when he says, "which could not have been sinful," or "was unable

to be in sin," except, as I suppose, this, if it did not come into the

flesh? For, of course, it could not have been sinful through original

sin, or have been at all involved in original sin, except through the

flesh, if it is not derived from the parent. We see it, then, liberated

from sin through grace, but we do not see how it deserved to be

involved in sin. What, then, is the meaning of these words of his, "If

the soul deserved to be sinful, yet neither did it remain in sin"? For

if I were to ask him, why it did not remain in sin, he would very

properly answer, Because the grace of Christ delivered it therefrom.

Since, then, he tells us how it came to pass that an infant's soul was

liberated from its sinfulness, let him further tell us how it happened

that it deserved to be sinful.

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Chapter 9.--Victor Utterly Unable to Explain How the Sinless Soul

Deserved to Be Made Sinful.

But what does he mean by that, which in his introduction he says has

befallen him? For previous to proposing that question of his, and as

introducing it, he affirms: "There are other opprobrious expressions

underlying the querulous murmurings of those who rail at us; and,

shaken about as in a hurricane, we are again and again dashed amongst

enormous rocks." Now, if I were to express myself about him in this

style, he would probably be angry. The words are his; and after

premising them, he propounded his question, by way of showing us the

very rocks against which he struck and was wrecked. For to such lengths

was he carried, and against such frightful reefs was he borne, drifted,

and struck, that his escape was a perfect impossibility without a

retreat--a correction, in short, of what he had said; since he was

unable to show by what desert the soul was made sinful; though he was

not afraid to say, that previous to any sin of its own it had deserved

to become sinful. Now, who deserves, without committing any sin, so

immense a punishment as to be conceived in the sin of another, before

leaving his mother's womb, and then to be no longer free from sin? But

from this punishment the free grace of God delivers the souls of such

infants as are regenerated in Christ, with no previous merits of their

own--otherwise grace is no grace." [2345] With regard, then, to this

person, who is so vastly intelligent, and who in the great depth of his

wisdom is displeased at our hesitation, which, if not well informed, is

at all events circumspect, let him tell us, if he can, what the merit

was which brought the soul into such a punishment, from which grace

delivers it without any merit. Let him speak, and, if he can, defend

his assertion with some show of reason. I would not, indeed, require so

much of him, if he had not himself declared that the soul deserved to

become sinful. Let him tell us what the desert was--whether good desert

or evil? If good, how could well-deserving lead to evil? If evil,

whence could arise any ill desert previous to the commission of any

sin? I have also to remark, that if there be a good desert, then the

liberation of the soul would not be of free grace, but it would be due

to the previous merit, and thus "grace would be no more grace." If

there be, however, an evil desert, then I ask what it is. Is it true

that the soul has come into the flesh; and that it would not have so

come unless He in whom there is no sin had Himself sent it? Never,

therefore, except by floundering worse and worse, will he contrive to

set up this view of his, in which he predicates of the soul that it

deserved to be sinful. In the case of those infants, too, in whose

baptism original sin is washed away, he found something to say after a

fashion,--to the effect, that being involved in the sin of another

could not possibly have been detrimental to them, predestinated as they

were to eternal life in the foreknowledge of God. This might admit of a

tolerably good sense, if he had not entangled himself in that formula

of his, in which he asserts that the soul deserved to be sinful: from

this difficulty he can only extricate himself by revoking his words,

with regret at having expressed them.

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[2345] Rom. xi. 6.

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Chapter 10 [IX.]--Another Error of Victor's, that Infants Dying

Unbaptized May Attain to the Kingdom of Heaven. Another, that the

Sacrifice of the Body of Christ Must Be Offered for Infants Who Die

Before They are Baptized.

But when he wished to answer with respect, however, to those infants

who are prevented by death from being first baptized in Christ, he was

so bold as to promise them not only paradise, but also the kingdom of

heaven,--finding no way else of avoiding the necessity of saying that

God condemns to eternal death innocent souls which, without any

previous desert of sin, He introduces into sinful flesh. He saw,

however, to some extent what evil he was giving utterance to, in

implying that without any grace of Christ the souls of infants are

redeemed to everlasting life and the kingdom of heaven, and that in

their case original sin may be cancelled without Christ's baptism, in

which is effected the forgiveness of sins: observing all this, and into

what a depth he had plunged in his sea of shipwreck, he says, "I am of

opinion that for them, indeed, constant oblations and sacrifices must

be continually offered up by holy priests." You may here behold another

danger, out of which he will never escape except by regret and a recall

of his words. For who can offer up the body of Christ for any except

for those who are members of Christ? Moreover, from the time when He

said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter

into the kingdom of heaven;" [2346] and again, "He that loseth his life

for my sake shall find it;" [2347] no one becomes a member of Christ

except it be either by baptism in Christ, or death for Christ. [2348]

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[2346] John iii. 5.

[2347] Matt. x. 39.

[2348] [Augustin here confesses the validity of the "baptism of blood,"

that is, martyrdom, which may take the place of baptism. See the next

chapter, and also Book ii. 17.--W.]

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Chapter 11.--Martyrdom for Christ Supplies the Place of Baptism. The

Faith of the Thief Who Was Crucified Along with Christ Taken as

Martyrdom and Hence for Baptism.

Accordingly, the thief, who was no follower of the Lord previous to the

cross, but His confessor upon the cross, from whose case a presumption

is sometimes taken, or attempted, against the sacrament of baptism, is

reckoned by St. Cyprian [2349] among the martyrs who are baptized in

their own blood, as happens to many unbaptized persons in times of hot

persecution. For to the fact that he confessed the crucified Lord so

much weight is attributed and so much availing value assigned by Him

who knows how to weigh and value such evidence, as if he had been

crucified for the Lord. Then, indeed, his faith on the cross flourished

when that of the disciples failed, and that without recovery if it had

not bloomed again by the resurrection of Him before the terror of whose

death it had drooped. They despaired of Him when dying,--he hoped when

joined with Him in dying; they fled from the author of life,--he prayed

to his companion in punishment; they grieved as for the death of a

man,--he believed that after death He was to be a king; they forsook

the sponsor of their salvation,--he honoured the companion of His

cross. There was discovered in him the full measure of a martyr, who

then believed in Christ when they fell away who were destined to be

martyrs. All this, indeed, was manifest to the eyes of the Lord, who at

once bestowed so great felicity on one who, though not baptized, was

yet washed clean in the blood, as it were, of martyrdom. But even of

ourselves, who cannot reflect with how much faith, how much hope, how

much charity he might have undergone death for Christ when living, who

begged life of Him when dying? Besides all this, there is the

circumstance, which is not incredibly reported, that the thief who then

believed as he hung by the side of the crucified Lord was sprinkled, as

in a most sacred baptism, with the water which issued from the wound of

the Saviour's side. I say nothing of the fact that nobody can prove,

since none of us knows that he had not been baptized previous to his

condemnation. However, let every man take this in the sense he may

prefer; only let no rule about baptism affecting the Saviour's own

precept be taken from this example of the thief; and let no one promise

for the case of unbaptized infants, between damnation and the kingdom

of heaven, some middle place of rest and happiness, such as he pleases

and where he pleases. For this is what the heresy of Pelagius promised

them: he neither fears damnation for infants, whom he does not regard

as having any original sin, nor does he give them the hope of the

kingdom of heaven, since they do not approach to the sacrament of

baptism. As for this man, however, although he acknowledges that

infants are involved in original sin, he yet boldly promises them, even

without baptism, the kingdom of heaven. This even the Pelagians had not

the boldness to do, though asserting infants to be absolutely without

sin. See, then, what a network of presumptuous opinion he entangles,

unless he regret having committed such views to writing.

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[2349] Cyprian's Letter to Jubianus. See likewise Augustin's work

Against the Donatists, iv. 29; also On Leviticus, question 84; also his

Retractations, ii. 18, 55.

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Chapter 12 [X.]--Dinocrates, Brother of the Martyr St. Perpetua, is

Said to Have Been Delivered from the State of Condemnation by the

Prayers of the Saint.

Concerning Dinocrates, however, the brother of St. Perpetua, there is

no record in the canonical Scripture; nor does the saint herself, or

whoever it was that wrote the account, say that the boy, who had died

at the age of seven years, died without baptism; in his behalf she is

believed to have had, when her martyrdom was imminent, her prayers

effectually heard that he should be removed from the penalties of the

lost to rest. Now, boys at that time of life are able both to lie, and,

saying the truth, both to confess and deny. Therefore, when they are

baptized they say the Creed, and answer in their behalf to such

questions as are proposed to them in examination. Who can tell, then,

whether that boy, after baptism, in a time of persecution was estranged

from Christ to idolatry by an impious father, and on that account

incurred mortal condemnation, from which he was only delivered for

Christ's sake, given to the prayers of his sister when she was at the

point of death?

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Chapter 13 [XI.]--The Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ Will

Not Avail for Unbaptized Persons, and Can Not Be Offered for the

Majority of Those Who Die Unbaptized.

But even if it be conceded to this man (what cannot by any means be

allowed with safety to the catholic faith and the rule of the Church),

that the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ may be offered for

unbaptized persons of every age, as if they were to be helped by this

kind of piety on the part of their friends to reaching the kingdom of

heaven: what will he have to say to our objections respecting the

thousands of infants who are born of impious parents and never fall, by

any mercy of God or man, into the hands of pious friends, and who

depart from that wretched life of theirs at their most tender age

without the washing of regeneration? Let him tell us, if he only can,

how it is that those souls deserved to be made sinful to such a degree

as certainly never afterwards to be delivered from sin. For if I ask

him why they deserve to be condemned if they are not baptized, he will

rightly answer me: On account of original sin. If I then inquire whence

they derived original sin, he will answer, From sinful flesh, of

course. If I go on to ask why they deserved to be condemned to a sinful

flesh, seeing they had done no evil before they came in the flesh, and

to be so condemned to undergo the contagion of the sin of another, that

neither baptism shall regenerate them, born as they are in sin, nor

sacrifices expiate them in their pollution: let him find something to

reply to this! For in such circumstances and of such parents have these

infants been born, or are still being born, that it is not possible for

them to be reached with such help. Here, at any rate, all argument is

lacking. Our question is not, why souls have deserved to be condemned

subsequently to their consorting with sinful flesh? But we ask, how it

is that souls have deserved to be condemned to undergo at all this

association with sinful flesh, seeing that they have no sin previous to

this association. There is no room for him to say: "It was no detriment

to them that they shared for a season the contagion of another's sin,

since in the prescience of God redemption had been provided for them."

For we are now speaking of those to whom no redemption brings help,

since they depart from the body before they are baptized. Nor is there

any propriety in his saying: "The souls which baptism does not cleanse,

the many sacrifices which are offered up for them will cleanse. God

foreknew this, and willed that they should for a little while be

implicated in the sins of another without incurring eternal damnation,

and with the hope of eternal happiness." For we are now speaking of

those whose birth among impious persons and of impious parents could by

no possibility find such defences and helps. And even if these could be

applied, they would, it is certain, be unable to benefit any who are

unbaptized; just as the sacrifices which he has mentioned out of the

book of the Maccabees could be of no use for the sinful dead for whom

they were offered, inasmuch as they had not been circumcised. [2350]

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[2350] 2 Macc. xii. 43.

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Chapter 14.--Victor's Dilemma: He Must Either Say All Infants are

Saved, or Else God Slays the Innocent.

Let him, then, find an answer, if he can, when the question is asked of

him, why it was that the soul, without any sin whatever, either

original or personal, deserved so to be condemned to undergo the

original sin of another as to be unable to be delivered from it; let

him see which he will choose of two alternatives: Either to say that

even the souls of dying infants who depart hence without the washing of

regeneration, and for whom no sacrifice of the Lord's body is offered,

are absolved from the bond of original sin--although the apostle

teaches that "from one all go into condemnation," [2351] --all, that

is, of course, to whom grace does not find its way to help, in order

that by One all might escape into redemption. Or else to say that souls

which have no sin, either their own or original, and are in every

respect innocent, simple, and pure, are punished with eternal damnation

by the righteous God when He inserts them Himself into sinful flesh

without any deliverance therefrom.

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[2351] Rom. v. 16.

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Chapter 15 [XII.]--God Does Not Judge Any One for What He Might Have

Done If His Life Had Been Prolonged, But Simply for the Deeds He

Actually Commits.

For my own part, indeed, I affirm that neither of the alternative cases

ought to be admitted, nor that third opinion which would have it that

souls sinned in some other state previous to the flesh, and so deserved

to be condemned to the flesh; for the apostle has most distinctly

stated that "the children being not yet born, had done neither good nor

evil." [2352] So it is evident that infants can have contracted none

but original sin to require remission of sins. Nor, again, that fourth

position, that the souls of infants who will die without baptism are by

the righteous God banished and condemned to sinful flesh, since He

foreknew that they would lead evil lives if they grew old enough for

the use of free will. But this not even he has been daring enough to

affirm, though embarrassed in such perplexities. On the contrary, he

has declared, briefly indeed, yet manifestly, against this vain opinion

in these words: "God would have been unrighteous if He had willed to

judge any man yet unborn, who had done nothing whatever of his own free

will." This was his answer when treating a question in opposition to

those persons who ask why God made man, when in His foreknowledge He

knew that he would not be good? He would be judging a man before he was

born if He had been unwilling to create him because He knew beforehand

that he would not turn out good. And there can be no doubt about it,

even as this person himself thought, that the proper course would be

for the Almighty to judge a man for his works when accomplished, not

for such as might be foreseen, nor such as might be permitted to be

done some time or other. For if the sins which a man would have

committed if he were alive are condemned in him when dead, even when

they have not been committed, no benefit is conferred on him when he is

taken away that no wickedness might change his mind; inasmuch as

judgment will be given upon him according to the wickedness which might

have developed in him, not according to the uprightness which was

actually found in him. Nor will any man possibly be safe who dies after

baptism, because even after baptism men may, I will not say sin in some

way or other, but actually go so far as to commit apostasy. What then?

Suppose a man who has been taken away after baptism should, if he had

lived, have become an apostate, are we to think that no benefit was

conferred even upon him in that he was removed and was saved from the

misery of his mind being changed by wickedness? And are we to imagine

that he will have to be judged, by reason of God's foreknowledge, as an

apostate, and not as a faithful member of Christ? How much better, to

be sure, would it have been--if sins are punished not as they have been

committed or contemplated by the human agent, but foreknown and to

happen in the cognizance of the Almighty--if the first pair had been

cast forth from paradise previous to their fall, and so sin have been

prevented in so holy and blessed a place! What, too, is to be said

about the entire nullification of foreknowledge itself, when what is

foreknown is not to happen? How, indeed, can that be rightly called the

prescience of something to be, which in fact will not come to pass? And

how are sins punished which are none, that is to say, which are not

committed before the assumption of flesh, since life itself is not yet

begun; nor after the assumption, since death has prevented?

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[2352] Rom. ix. 11.

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Chapter 16 [XIII.]--Difficulty in the Opinion Which Maintains that

Souls are Not by Propagation.

This means, then, of settling the point whereby the soul was sent into

the flesh until what time it should be delivered from the

flesh,--seeing that the soul of an infant, which has not grown old

enough for the will to become free, is the case supposed,--makes no

discovery of the reason why condemnation should overtake it without the

reception of baptism, except the reason of original sin. Owing to this

sin, we do not deny that the soul is righteously condemned, because for

sin God's righteous law has appointed punishment. But then we ask, why

the soul has been made to undergo this sinful state, if it is not

derived from that one primeval soul which sinned in the first father of

the human race. Wherefore, if God does not condemn the innocent,--if He

does not make guilty those whom He sees to be innocent,--and if nothing

liberates souls from either original sins or personal ones but Christ's

baptism in Christ's Church,--and if sins, before they are committed,

and much more when they have never been committed, cannot be condemned

by any righteous law: then this writer cannot adduce any of these four

cases; he must, if he can, explain, in respect to the souls of infants,

which, as they quit life without baptism, are sent into condemnation,

by what desert of theirs it is that they, without having ever sinned,

are consigned to a sinful flesh, there to find the sin which is to

secure their just condemnation. Moreover, if he shrinks from these four

cases which sound doctrine condemns,--that is to say, if he has not the

courage to maintain that souls, when they are even without sin, are

made sinful by God, or that they are freed from the original sin that

is in them without Christ's sacrament, or that they committed sin in

some other state before they were sent into the flesh, or that sins

which they never committed are condemned in them,--if, I say, he has

not the courage to tell us these things because they really do not

deserve to be mentioned but should affirm that infants do not inherit

original sin, and have no reason why they should be condemned should

they depart hence without receiving the sacrament of regeneration, he

will without doubt, to his own condemnation, run into the damnable

heresy of Pelagius. To avoid this, how much better is it for him to

share my hesitation about the soul's origin, without daring to affirm

that which he cannot comprehend by human reason nor defend by divine

authority! So shall he not be obliged to utter foolishness, whilst he

is afraid to confess his ignorance.

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Chapter 17 [XIV.]--He Shows that the Passages of Scripture Adduced by

Victor Do Not Prove that Souls are Made by God in Such a Way as Not to

Be Derived by Propagation: First Passage.

Here, perhaps, he may say that his opinion is backed by divine

authority, since he supposes that he proves by passages of the Holy

Scriptures that souls are not made by God by way of propagation, but

that they are by distinct acts of creation breathed afresh into each

individual. Let him prove this if he can, and I will allow that I have

learnt from him what I was trying to find out with great earnestness.

But he must go in quest of other defences, which, perhaps, he will not

find, for he has not proved his point by the passages which he has thus

far advanced. For all he has applied to the subject are to some extent

undoubtedly suitable, but they afford only doubtful demonstration to

the point which he raises respecting the soul's origin. For it is

certain that God has given to man breath and spirit, as the prophet

testifies: "Thus saith the Lord, who made the heaven, and founded the

earth, and all that is therein; who giveth breath to the people upon

it, and spirit to them that walk over it." [2353] This passage he

wishes to be taken in his own sense, which he is defending; so that the

words, "who giveth breath to the people," may be understood as implying

that He creates souls for people not by propagation, but by

insufflation of new souls in every case. Let him, then, boldly maintain

at this rate that He does not give us flesh, on the ground that our

flesh derives its original from our parents. In the instance, too,

which the apostle adduces, "God giveth it a body as it hath pleased

Him," [2354] let him deny, if he dares, that corn springs from corn,

and grass from grass, from the seed, each after its kind. And if he

dares not deny this, how does he know in what sense it is said, "He

giveth breath to the people"?--whether by derivation from parents, or

by fresh breathing into each individual?

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[2353] Isa. xlii. 5.

[2354] 1 Cor. xv. 38.

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Chapter 18.--By "Breath" Is Signified Sometimes the Holy Spirit.

How, again, does he know whether the repetition of the idea in the

sentence, "who giveth breath to the people upon it, and spirit to them

that walk over it," may not be understood of only one thing under two

expressions, and may not mean, not the life or spirit whereby human

nature lives, but the Holy Spirit? For if by the "breath" the Holy

Ghost could not be signified, the Lord would not, when He "breathed

upon" His disciples after His resurrection, have said, "Receive ye the

Holy Ghost." [2355] Nor would it have been thus written in the Acts of

the Apostles, "Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as if a mighty

breath were borne in upon them; and there appeared unto them cloven

tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were

all filled with the Holy Ghost." [2356] Suppose, now, that it was this

which the prophet foretold in the words, "who giveth breath unto the

people upon it;" and then, as an exposition of what he had designated

"breath," he went on to say, "and spirit to them that walk over it."

Surely this prediction was most manifestly fulfilled when they were all

filled with the Holy Ghost. If, however, the term "people" is not yet

applicable to the one hundred and twenty persons who were then

assembled together in one place, at all events, when the number of

believers amounted to four or five thousand, who when they were

baptized received the Holy Ghost, [2357] can any doubt that the

recipients of the Holy Ghost were then "the people," even "the men

walking in the earth"? For that spirit which is given to man as

appertaining to his nature, whether it be given by propagation or be

inbreathed as something new to individuals (and I do not determine

which of these two modes ought to be affirmed, at least until one of

the two can be clearly ascertained beyond a doubt), is not given to men

when they "walk over the earth," but whilst they are still shut up in

their mother's womb. "He gave breath, therefore, to the people upon the

earth, and spirit to them that walk over it," when many became

believers together, and were together filled with the Holy Ghost. And

He gives Him to His people, although not to all at the same time, but

to every one in His own time, until, by departing from this life, and

by coming into it, the entire number of His people be fulfilled. In

this passage of Holy Scripture, therefore, breath is not one thing, and

spirit another thing; but there is a repetition of one and the same

idea. Just as "He that sitteth in the heavens" is not one, and "the

Lord" is not another; nor, again, is it one thing "to laugh," and

another thing "to hold in derision;" but there is only a repetition of

the same meaning in the passage where we read, "He that sitteth in the

heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." [2358] So,

in precisely the same manner, in the passage, "I will give Thee the

heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for

Thy possession," [2359] it is certainly not meant that "inheritance" is

one thing, and "possession" another thing; nor that "the heathen" means

one thing, and "the uttermost parts of the earth" another; there is

only a repetition of the self-same thing. He will, indeed, discover

innumerable expressions of this sort in the sacred writings, if he will

only attentively consider what he reads. [2360]

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[2355] John xx. 22.

[2356] Acts ii. 2.

[2357] Acts iv. 31.

[2358] Ps. ii. 4.

[2359] Ps. ii. 8.

[2360] [It is the parallelism of Hebrew poetry to which Augustin here

appeals: and that soundly, although the interpretation of "spirit" in

the passage in hand, which is suggested in the chapter, is

untenable.--W.]

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Chapter 19.--The Meaning of "Breath" In Scripture.

The term, however, that is used in the Greek version, pnoe, is

variously rendered in Latin: sometimes by flatus, breath; sometimes by

spiritus, spirit; sometimes by inspiratio, inspiration. This term

occurs in the Greek editions of the passage which we are now reviewing,

"Who giveth breath to the people upon it," the word for breath being

pnoe. [2361] The same word is used in the narrative where man was

endued with life: "And God breathed upon his face the breath of life."

[2362] Again, in the psalm the same term occurs: "Let every thing that

hath spirit praise the Lord." [2363] It is the same word also in the

Book of Job: "The inspiration of the Almighty is that which teaches."

[2364] The translator refused the word flatus, breath, for adspiratio,

inspiration, although he had before him the very term pnoe, which

occurs in the text of the prophet which we are considering. We can

hardly doubt, I think, that in this passage of Job the Holy Ghost is

signified. The question discussed was concerning wisdom, whence it

comes to men: "It cometh not from number of years; but the Spirit is in

mortals, and the inspiration of the Almighty is that which teaches."

[2365] By this repetition of terms it may be quite understood that he

did not speak of man's own spirit in the clause, "The Spirit is in

mortals." He wanted to show whence men have wisdom,--that it is not

from their own selves; so by using a duplicate expression he explains

his idea; "The inspiration of the Almighty is that which teaches."

Similarly, in another passage of the same book, he says, "The

understanding of my lips shall meditate purity. The divine Spirit is

that which formed me, and the breath of the Almighty is that which

teacheth me." [2366] Here, likewise, what he calls adspiratio, or

"inspiration," is in Greek pnoe, the same word which is translated

flatus, "breath," in the passage quoted from the prophet. Therefore,

although it is rash to deny that the passage, "Who giveth breath to the

people upon it, and spirit to them that walk over it," has reference to

the soul or spirit of man,--although the Holy Ghost may with greater

credibility be understood as referred to in the passage: yet I ask on

what ground anybody can boldly determine that the prophet meant in

these words to intimate that the soul or spirit whereby our nature

possesses vitality [is not given to us by God through the process of

propagation?] [2367] Of course if the prophet had very plainly said,

"Who giveth soul to the people upon earth," it still would remain to be

asked whether God Himself gives it from an origin in the preceding

generation, just as He gives the body out of such prior material, and

that not only to men or cattle, but also to the seed of corn, or to any

other body whatever, just as it pleases Him; or whether He bestows it

by inbreathing as a new gift to each individual, as the first man

received it from Him?

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[2361] The passage stands in the LXX.: Kai didous pnoen to lao to ep'

autes.

[2362] The LXX. text of Gen. ii. 7 is, Kai enephusesen eis to proso pon

autou pnoen zoes.

[2363] Ps. cl. 6: Pasa pnoe ainesato ton Kurion.

[2364] According to the LXX., Pnoe de pantokratoros estin he

didaskousa.

[2365] Job xxxii. 7, 8.

[2366] Job xxx. 3, 4, according to the LXX., of which the text is,

Sunesis de cheileon mou kathara noesei. Pneuma theion to poiesan me,

pnoe de pantokratoros estin he didaskousa.

[2367] The words here given in brackets are suggested by the

Benedictine editor. [The Latin as it stands may be translated simply:

"that the prophet meant to signify in these words the soul or spirit

whereby our nature lives?" and is not this better than the

conjecture?--W.]

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Chapter 20.--Other Ways of Taking the Passage.

There are also some persons who understand the prophet's words, "He

gave breath to the people upon it," that is to say, upon the earth, as

if the word "breath," flatus, were simply equivalent to "soul," anima;

while they construe the next clause, "and spirit to them that walk over

it," as referring to the Holy Ghost; and they suppose that the same

order is observed by the prophet that is mentioned by the apostle:

"That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and

afterward that which is spiritual." [2368] Now from this view of the

prophet's words an elegant interpretation may, no doubt, be formed

consistent with the apostle's sense. The phrase, "to them that walk

over it," is in the Latin, "calcantibus eam;" and as the literal

meaning of these words is "treading upon it," we may understand the

idea of contempt of it to be implied. For they who receive the Holy

Ghost despise earthly things in their love of heavenly things. None of

these opinions, however, is contrary to the faith, whether one regards

the two terms, breath and spirit, to pertain to human nature, or both

of them to the Holy Ghost, or one of them, breath, to the soul, and the

other, spirit, to the Holy Ghost. If, however, the soul and spirit of

the human being be the meaning here, since undoubtedly it ought to be,

as the gift of God to him, then we must further inquire, in what way

does God bestow this gift? Is it by propagation, as He gives us our

bodily limbs by this process? Or is it bestowed on each person

severally by God's inbreathing, not by propagation, but as always a

fresh creation? These questions are not ambiguous, as this man would

make them; but we wish that they be defended by the most certain

warrant of the divine Scriptures.

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[2368] 1 Cor. xv. 46.

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Chapter 21.--The Second Passage Quoted by Victor.

On the same principle we treat the passage in which God says: "For my

Spirit shall go forth from me; and I have created every breath." [2369]

Here the former clause, "My Spirit shall go forth from me, must be

taken as referring to the Holy Ghost, of whom the Saviour similarly

says, "He proceedeth from the Father." [2370] But the other clause, "I

have created every breath," is undeniably spoken of each individual

soul. Well; but God also creates the entire body of man; and, as nobody

doubts, He makes the human body by the process of propagation: it is

therefore, of course, still open to inquiry concerning the soul (since

it is evidently God's work), whether He creates it as He does the body;

by propagation, or by inbreathing, as He made the first soul.

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[2369] Isa. lvii. 16. In the Septuagint it is, Pneuma gar par' emou

exeleusetai, kai pnoen pasan ego epoisa.

[2370] John xv. 26.

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Chapter 22.--Victor's Third Quotation.

He proceeds to favour us with a third passage, in which it is written:

"Who forms the spirit of man within him." [2371] As if any one denied

this! No; all our question is as to the mode of the formation. Now let

us take the eye of the body, and ask, who but God forms it? I suppose

that He forms it not externally, but in itself, and yet, most

certainly, by propagation. Since, then, He also forms "the human spirit

in him," the question still remains, whether it be derived by a fresh

insufflation in every instance, or by propagation.

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[2371] Zech. xii. 1, which in the Septuagint is, Kurios...plasson

pneuma anthoopou en auto.

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Chapter 23.--His Fourth Quotation.

We have read all about the mother of the Maccabean youths, who was

really more fruitful in virtues when her children suffered than of

children when they were born; how she exhorted them to constancy,

speaking in this wise: "I cannot tell, my sons, how ye came into my

womb. For it was not I who gave you spirit and soul, nor was it I that

formed the members of every one of you; but it was God, who also made

the world, and all things that are therein; who, moreover, formed the

generation of men; and searches the action [2372] of all; and who will

Himself of His great mercy restore to you your spirit and soul." [2373]

All this we know; but how it supports this man's assertion we do not

see. For what Christian would deny that God gives to men soul and

spirit? But similarly, I suppose that he cannot deny that God gives to

men their tongue, and ear, and hand, and foot, and all their bodily

sensations, and the form and nature of all their limbs. For how is he

going to deny all these to be the gifts of God, unless he forgets that

he is a Christian? As, however, it is evident that these were made by

Him, and bestowed on man by propagation; so also the question must

arise, by what means man's spirit and soul are formed by Him; by what

efficiency given to man--from the parents, or from nothing, or (as this

man asserts, in a sense which we must by all means guard against) from

some existing nature of the divine breath, not created out of nothing,

but out of His own self?

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[2372] Actum; another reading is ortum, more in accordance with the

Greek genesin, the meaning of which would be: "Searches the origin of

all things."

[2373] 2 Macc. vii. 22, 23.

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Chapter 24 [XV.]--Whether or No the Soul is Derived by Natural Descent

(Ex Traduce), His Cited Passages Fail to Show.

Forasmuch, then, as the passages of Scripture which he mentions by no

means show what he endeavours to enforce (since, indeed, they express

nothing at all on the immediate question before us), what can be the

meaning of these words of his: "We firmly maintain that the soul comes

from the breath of God, not from natural generation, because it is

given from God"? As if, forsooth, the body could be given from another,

than from Him by whom it is created, "Of whom are all things, through

whom are all things, in whom are all things;" [2374] not that they are

of His nature, but of His workmanship. "Nor is it from nothing," says

he, "because it comes forth from God." Whether this be so, is (we must

say) not the question to be here entertained. At the same time, we do

not hesitate to affirm, that the proposition which he advances, that

the soul comes to man neither out of descent nor out of nothing, is

certainly not true: this, I say, we affirm to be without doubt not

true. For it is one of two things: if the soul is not derived by

natural descent from the parent, it comes out of nothing. To pretend

that it is derived from God in such wise as to be a portion of His

nature, is simply sacrilegious blasphemy. But we solicit and seek up to

the present time some plain passages of Scripture bearing on the point,

whether the soul does not come by parental descent; but we do not want

such passages as he has adduced, which yield no illustration of the

question now before us.

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[2374] Rom. xi. 36.

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Chapter 25.--Just as the Mother Knows Not Whence Comes Her Child Within

Her, So We Know Not Whence Comes the Soul.

How I wish that, on so profound a question, so long as he is ignorant

what he should say, he would imitate the mother of the Maccabean

youths! Although she knew very well that she had conceived children of

her husband, and that they had been created for her by the Creator of

all, both in body and in soul and spirit, yet she says, "I cannot tell,

my sons, how ye came into my womb." Well now, I only wish this man

would tell us that which she was ignorant of! She, of course, knew (on

the points I have mentioned) how they came into her womb as to their

bodily substance, because she could not possibly doubt that she had

conceived them by her husband. She furthermore confessed--because this,

too, she was, of course, well aware of--that it was God who gave them

their soul and spirit, and that it was He also who formed for them

their features and their limbs. What was it, then, that she was so

ignorant of? Was it not probably (what we likewise are equally unable

to determine) whether the soul and spirit, which God no doubt bestowed

upon them, was derived to them from their parents, or breathed into

them separately as it had been into the first man? But whether it was

this, or some other particular respecting the constitution of human

nature, of which she was ignorant, she frankly confessed her ignorance;

and did not venture to defend at random what she knew nothing about.

Nor would this man say to her, what he has not been ashamed to say to

us: "Man being in honour doth not understand; he is compared to the

senseless cattle, and is like unto them." [2375] Behold how that woman

said of her sons, "I cannot tell how ye came into my womb," and yet she

is not compared to the senseless brutes. "I cannot tell," she said;

then, as if they would inquire of her why she was ignorant, she went on

to say, "For it was not I who gave you spirit and soul." He, therefore,

who gave them that gift, knows whence He made what He gave, whether He

communicated it by propagation, or breathed it as a fresh creation,--a

point which (this man says) I for my part know nothing of. "Nor was it

I that formed the features and members of every one of you." He,

however, who formed them, knows whether He formed them with the soul,

or gave the soul to them after they had been formed. She had no idea of

the manner, this or that, in which her sons came into her womb; only

one thing was she sure of, that He who gave her all she had would

restore to her what He gave. But this man would choose out what that

woman was ignorant of, on so profound and abstruse a fact of our

nature; only he would not judge her, if in error; nor compare her, if

ignorant, to the senseless cattle. Whatever the point was about which

she was ignorant, it certainly pertained to man's nature; and yet

anybody would be blameless for such ignorance. Wherefore, I too, on my

side, say concerning my soul, I have no certain knowledge how it came

into my body; for it was not I who gave it to myself. He who gave it to

me knows whether He imparted it to me from my father, or created it

afresh for me, as He did for the first man. But even I shall know, when

He Himself shall teach me, in His own good time. Now, however, I do not

know; nor am I ashamed, like him, to confess my ignorance of what I

know not.

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[2375] Ps. xlviii. 12.

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Chapter 26 [XVI.]--The Fifth Passage of Scripture Quoted by Victor.

"Learn," says he, "for, behold the apostle teaches you." Yes, indeed, I

will learn, if the apostle teaches; since it is God alone who teaches

by the apostle. But, pray, what is it which the apostle teaches?

"Behold," he adds, "how, when speaking to the men of Athens, he

strongly set forth this truth, saying: Seeing He giveth to all life and

spirit.'" Well, who thinks of denying this? "But understand," he says,

"what it is the apostle states: He giveth; not, He hath given. He

refers us to continuous and indefinite time, and does not proclaim past

and completed time. Now that which he gives without cessation, He is

always giving; just as He who gives is Himself ever existent." I have

quoted his words precisely as I found them in the second of the books

which you sent me. First, I beg you to notice to what lengths he has

gone, while endeavouring to affirm what he knows nothing about. For he

has dared to say, that God, without any cessation, and not merely in

the present time, but for ever and ever, gives souls to persons when

they are born. "He is always giving," says he, "just as He who gives is

Himself ever existent." Far be it from me to say that I do not

understand what the apostle said, for it is plain enough. But what this

man says, he even ought himself to know, is contrary to the Christian

faith; and he should be on his guard against going any further in such

assertions. For, of course, when the dead shall rise again, there will

be no more persons to be born; therefore God will bestow no longer any

souls at any birth; but those which He is now giving to men along with

their bodies He will judge. So that He is not always giving, although

He is ever existent, who at present is giving. Nor, indeed, is that at

all derivable from the apostle's expression, who giveth (not hath

given), which this writer wishes to deduce, namely, that God does not

give men souls by propagation. For souls are still given by Him, even

if it be by propagation; even as bodily endowments, such as limbs, and

sensations, and shape, and, in fact, the whole substance, are given by

God Himself to human beings, although it be by propagation that He

gives them. Nor again, because the Lord says, [2376] "If God so clothes

the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the

oven" (not using the preterite time, hath clothed, as when He first

formed the material; but employing the present form, clothes, which,

indeed, He still is doing), shall we on that account say, that the

lilies are not produced from the original source of their own kind.

What, therefore, if the soul and spirit of a human being in like manner

is given by God Himself, whenever it is given; and given, too, by

propagation from its own kind? Now this is a position which I neither

maintain nor refute. Nevertheless, if it must be defended or confuted,

I certainly recommend its being done by clear, and not doubtful proofs.

Nor do I deserve to be compared with senseless cattle because I avow

myself to be as yet incapable of determining the question, but rather

with cautious persons, because I do not recklessly teach what I know

nothing about. But I am not disposed on my own part to return railing

for railing and compare this man with brutes; but I warn him as a son

to acknowledge that he is really ignorant of that which he knows

nothing about; nor to attempt to teach that which he has not yet

learnt, lest he should deserve to be compared with those persons whom

the apostle mentions as "desiring to be teachers of the law,

understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm." [2377]

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[2376] Matt. vi. 30.

[2377] 2 Tim. i. 7.

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Chapter 27 [XVII.]--Augustin Did Not Venture to Define Anything About

the Propagation of the Soul.

For whence comes it that he is so careless about the Scriptures, which

he talks of, as not to notice that when he reads of human beings being

from God, it is not merely, as he contends, in respect of their soul

and spirit, but also as regards their body? For the apostle's

statement, "We are His offspring," [2378] this man supposes must not be

referred to the body, but only to the soul and spirit. If, indeed, our

human bodies are not of God, then that is false which the Scripture

says: "For of Him are all things, through Him are all things, and in

Him are all things." [2379] Again, with reference to the same apostle's

statement, "For as the woman is of the man, so also is the man by the

woman," [2380] let him explain to us what propagation he would choose

to be meant in the process,--that of the soul, or of the body, or of

both? But he will not allow that souls come by propagation: it remains,

therefore, that, according to him and all who deny the propagation of

souls, the apostle signified the masculine and feminine body only, when

he said, "As the woman is of the man, so also is the man by the woman;"

the woman having been made out of the man, in order that the man might

afterwards, by the process of birth, come out of the woman. If,

therefore, the apostle, when he said this, did not intend the soul and

spirit also to be understood, but only the bodies of the two sexes, why

does he immediately add, "But all things are of God," [2381] unless it

be that bodies also are of God? For so runs his entire statement: "As

the woman is of the man, so also is the man by the woman; but all

things are of God." Let, then, our disputant determine of what this is

said. If of men's bodies, then, of course, even bodies are of God. How

comes it to pass, therefore, that whenever this person reads in

Scripture the phrase, "of God," when man is in question, he will have

the words understood, not in reference to men's bodies, but only as

concerning their souls and spirits? But if the expression, "All things

are of God," was spoken both of the body of the two sexes, and of their

soul and spirit, it follows that in all things the woman is of the man,

for the woman comes from the man, and the man is by the woman: but all

things of God. What "all things" are meant, except those he was

speaking of, namely, the man of whom came the woman, and the woman who

was of the man, and also the man who came by the woman? For that man

came not by woman, out of whom came the woman; but only he who

afterwards was born of man by woman, just as men are now born. Hence it

follows that if the apostle, when he said the words we have quoted from

him, spoke of men's bodies, undoubtedly the bodies of persons of both

sexes are of God. Furthermore, if he insists that nothing in man comes

from God except their souls and spirits, then, of course, the woman is

of the man even as regards her soul and spirit; so that nothing is left

to those who dispute against the propagation of souls. But if he is for

dividing the subject in such a manner as to say that the woman is of

the man as regards her body, but is of God in respect of her soul and

spirit, how, then, will that be true which the apostle says, "All

things of God," if the woman's body is of the man in such a sense that

it is not of God? Wherefore, allowing that the apostle is more likely

to speak the truth than that this person must be preferred as an

authority to the apostle, the woman is of the man, whether in regard to

her body only, or in reference to the entire whole of which human

nature consists (but we assert nothing on these points as an absolute

certainty, but are still inquiring after their truth); and the man is

through the woman, whether it be that his whole nature as man is

derived to him from his father, and is born in him through the woman,

or the flesh alone; about which points the question is still undecided.

"All things, however, are of God," and about this there is no question;

and in this phrase are included the body, soul, and spirit, both of the

man and the woman. For even if they were not born or derived from God,

or emanated from Him as portions of His nature, yet they are of God,

inasmuch as whatever is created, formed, and made by Him, has from Him

the reality of its existence.

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[2378] Acts xvii. 28.

[2379] Rom. xi. 36.

[2380] 1 Cor. xi. 12.

[2381] 1 Cor. xi. 12.

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Chapter 28.--A Natural Figure of Speech Must Not Be Literally Pressed.

He goes on to remark: "But the apostle, by saying, And He Himself

giveth life and spirit to all,' and then by adding the words, And hath

made the whole race of men of one blood,' [2382] has referred this soul

and spirit to the Creator in respect of their origin, and the body to

propagation." Now, certainly any one who does not wish to deny at

random the propagation of souls, before ascertaining clearly whether

the opinion is correct or not, has ground for understanding, from the

apostle's words, that he meant the expression, of one blood, to be

equivalent to of one man, by the figure of speech which understands the

whole from its part. Well, then, if it be allowable for this man to

take the whole from a part in the passage, "And man became a living

soul," [2383] as if the spirit also was understood to be implied, about

which the Scripture there said nothing, why is it not allowable to

others to attribute an equally comprehensive sense to the expression,

of one blood, so that the soul and spirit may be considered as included

in it, on the ground that the human being who is signified by the term

"blood" consists not of body alone, but also of soul and spirit? For

just as the controversialist who maintains the propagation of souls,

ought not, on the one hand, to press this man too hard, because the

Scripture says concerning the first man, "In whom all have sinned"

[2384] (for the expression is not, In whom the flesh of all has sinned,

but "all," that is, "all men," seeing that man is not flesh only);--as,

I repeat, he ought not to be too hard pressed himself, because it

happens to be written "all men," in such a way that they might be

understood simply in respect of the flesh; so, on the other hand, he

ought not to bear too hard on those who hold the propagation of souls,

on the ground of the phrase, "The whole race of men of one blood," as

if this passage proved that flesh alone was transmitted by propagation.

For if it is true, as they [2385] assert, that soul does not descend

from soul, but flesh only from flesh, then the expression, "of one

blood," does not signify the entire human being, on the principle of a

part for the whole, but merely the flesh of one person alone; while

that other expression, "In whom all have sinned," must be so understood

as to indicate merely the flesh of all men, which has been handed on

from the first man, the Scripture signifying a part by the whole. If,

on the other hand, it is true that the entire human being is propagated

of each man, himself also entire, consisting of body, soul, and spirit,

then the passage, "In whom all have sinned," must be taken in its

proper literal sense; and the other phrase, "of one blood," is used

metaphorically, the whole being signified by a part, that is to say,

the whole man who consists of soul and flesh; or rather (as this person

is fond of putting it) of soul, and spirit, and flesh. For both modes

of expression the Holy Scriptures are in the habit of employing,

putting both a part for the whole and the whole for a part. A part, for

instance, implies the whole, in the place where it is said, "Unto Thee

shall all flesh come;" [2386] the whole man being understood by the

term flesh. And the whole sometimes implies a part, as when it is said

that Christ was buried, whereas it was only His flesh that was buried.

Now as regards the statement which is made in the apostle's testimony,

to the effect that "He giveth life and spirit to all," I suppose that

nobody, after the foregoing discussion, will be moved by it. No doubt

"He giveth;" the fact is not in dispute; our question is, How does He

give it? By fresh inbreathing in every instance, or by propagation? For

with perfect propriety is He said to give the substance of the flesh to

the human being, though at the same time it is not denied that He gives

it by means of propagation.

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[2382] Acts xvii. 25.

[2383] Gen. ii. 7.

[2384] Rom. v. 12.

[2385] Another reading has "he asserts," i.e. Augustin's opponent,

Victor.

[2386] Ps. lxv. 2.

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Chapter 29 [XVIII.]--The Sixth Passage of Scripture Quoted by Victor.

Let us now look at the quotation from Genesis, where the woman was

created out of the side of the man, and was brought to him, and he

said: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." Our

opponent thinks that "Adam ought to have said, Soul of my soul, or

spirit of my spirit,' if this, too, had been derived from him." But, in

fact, they who maintain the opinion of the propagation of souls feel

that they possess a more impregnable defence of their position in the

fact that in the Scripture narrative which informs us that God took a

rib out of the man's side and formed it into a woman, it is not added

that He breathed into her face the breath of life; for this reason, as

they say, because she had already been ensouled [2387] from the man.

If, indeed, she had not, they say, the sacred Scripture would certainly

not have kept us in ignorance of the circumstance. With regard to the

fact that Adam says, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my

flesh," [2388] without adding, Spirit or soul, from my spirit or soul,

they may answer, just as it has been already shown, that the

expression, "my flesh and bone," may be understood as indicating the

whole by a part, only that the portion that was taken out of man was

not dead, but ensouled; [2389] for no good ground for denying that the

Almighty was able to do all this is furnished by the circumstance that

not a human being could be found capable of cutting off a part of a

man's flesh along with the soul. Adam went on, however, to say, "She

shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." [2390] Now,

why does he not rather say (and thus confirm the opinion of our

opponents), "Since her flesh was taken out of man"? As the case stands,

indeed, they who hold the opposite view may well contend, from the fact

that it is written, not woman's flesh, but the woman herself was taken

out of man, that she must be considered in her entire nature endued

with soul and spirit. For although the soul is undistinguished by sex,

yet when women are mentioned it is not necessary to regard them apart

from the soul. On no other principle would they be thus admonished with

respect to self-adornment. "Not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls,

or costly array; but which (says the apostle) becometh women professing

godliness with a good conversation." [2391] Now, "godliness," of

course, is an inner principle in the soul or spirit; and yet they are

called women, although the ornamentation concerns that internal portion

of their nature which has no sex.

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[2387] "Animata," possessing the "anima," or soul.

[2388] Gen. ii. 23.

[2389] "Animata," possessing the "anima," or soul.

[2390] Gen. ii. 23.

[2391] 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10.

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Chapter 30--The Danger of Arguing from Silence.

Now, while the disputants are thus contending with one another in

alternate argument, I so judge between them that they must not rely on

uncertain evidence; nor make bold assertions on points of which they

are ignorant. For if the Scripture had said, "God breathed into the

woman's face the breath of life, and she became a living soul," it

would not have followed even then that the human soul is not derived by

propagation from parents, except the same statement were likewise made

concerning their son. For it might have been that whilst an unensouled

[2392] member taken from the body might require to be ensouled, [2393]

yet that the soul of the son might be derived from the father,

transfused by propagation through the mother. There is, however, an

absolute silence on the point; it is entirely concealed from our view.

Nothing is denied, but at the same time nothing is affirmed. And thus,

if in any place the Scripture is possibly not quite silent, the point

requires to be supported by clearer proofs. Whence it follows, that

neither they who maintain the propagation of souls receive any

assistance from the circumstance that God did not breathe into the

woman's face; nor ought they, who deny this doctrine on the ground that

Adam did not say, "This is soul of my soul," to persuade themselves to

believe what they know nothing of. For just as it has been possible for

the Scripture to be silent on the point of the woman's having received

her soul, like the man, by the inbreathing of God, without the question

before us being solved, but, on the contrary, remaining open; so has it

been possible for the same question to remain open and unsolved,

notwithstanding the silence of Scripture, as to whether or not Adam

said, This is soul of my soul. And hence, if the soul of the first

woman comes from the man, a part signifies the whole in his

exclamation, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh;"

inasmuch as not her flesh alone, but the entire woman, was taken out of

man. If, however, it is not from the man, but came by God's inbreathing

it into her, as at first into the man, then the whole signifies a part

in the passage, "She was taken out of the man;" since on the

supposition it was not her whole self, but her flesh that was taken.

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[2392] "Animari," or endued with the "anima," or soul.

[2393] "Animari," or endued with the "anima," or soul.

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Chapter 31.--The Argument of the Apollinarians to Prove that Christ Was

Without the Human Soul of This Same Sort.

Although, then, this question remains unsolved by these passages of

Scripture, which are certainly indecisive so far as pertains to the

point before us, yet I am quite sure of this, that those persons who

think that the soul of the first woman did not come from her husband's

soul, on the ground of its being only said, "Flesh of my flesh," and

not, "Soul of my soul," do, in fact, argue in precisely the same manner

as the Apollinarians argue, and all such gainsayers, in opposition to

the Lord's human soul, which they deny for no other reason than because

they read in the Scripture, "The Word was made flesh." [2394] For if,

say they, there was a soul in Him also, it ought to have been said,

"The Word was made man." But the reason why the great truth is stated

in the terms in question really is, that under the designation flesh,

Holy Scripture is accustomed to describe the entire human being, as in

the passage, "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God." [2395] For

flesh alone without the soul cannot see anything. Besides, many other

passages of the Holy Scriptures go to make it manifest, without any

ambiguity, that in the man Christ there is not only flesh, but a

human--that is, a reasonable--soul also. Whence they, who maintain the

propagation of souls might also understand that a part is put for the

whole in the passage, "Bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh," in such

wise that the soul, too, be understood as implied in the words, in the

same manner as we believe that the Word became flesh, not without the

soul. All that is wanted is, that they should support their opinion of

the propagation of souls on passages which are unambiguous; just as

other passages of Scripture show us that Christ possesses a human soul.

On precisely the same principle we advise the other side also, who do

away with the opinion of the propagation of souls, that they should

produce certain proofs for their assertion that souls are created by

God in every fresh case by insufflation, and that they should then

maintain the position that the saying, "This is bone of my bone, and

flesh of my flesh," was not spoken figuratively as a part for the

whole, including the soul in its signification, but in a bare literal

sense of the flesh alone.

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[2394] John i. 14.

[2395] Luke iii. 6, and Isa. xl. 5.

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Chapter 32 [XIX.]--The Self-Contradiction of Victor as to the Origin of

the Soul.

Under these circumstances, I find that this treatise of mine must now

be closed. It contains, in fact, all that seemed to me chiefly

necessary to the subject under discussion. They who peruse its contents

will know how to be on their guard against agreeing with the person

whose two books you sent me, so as not to believe with him, that souls

are produced by the breath of God in such wise as not to be made out of

nothing. The man, indeed, who supposes this, however much he may in

words deny the conclusion, does in reality affirm that souls have the

substance of God, and are His offspring, not by endowment, but by

nature. For from whomsoever a man derives the origin of his nature,

from him, in all sober earnestness, it must needs be admitted, that he

also derives the kind of his nature. But this author is, after all,

self-contradictory: at one time he says that "souls are the offspring

of God,--not, indeed, by nature, but by endowment;" and at another time

he says, that "they are not made out of nothing, but derive their

origin from God." Thus he does not hesitate to refer them to the nature

of God, a position which he had previously denied.

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Chapter 33.--Augustin Has No Objection to the Opinion About the

Propagation of Souls Being Refuted, and that About Their Insufflation

Being Maintained.

As for the opinion, that new souls are created by inbreathing without

being propagated, we certainly do not in the least object to its

maintenance,--only let it be by persons who have succeeded in

discovering some new evidence, either in the canonical Scriptures, in

the shape of unambiguous testimony towards the solution of a most

knotty question, or else in their own reasonings, such as shall not be

opposed to catholic truth, but not by such persons as this man has

shown himself to be. Unable to find anything worth saying, and at the

same time unwilling to suspend his disputatious propensity, without

measuring his strength at all, in order to avoid saying nothing, he

boldly affirmed that "the soul deserved to be polluted by the flesh,"

and that "the soul deserved to become sinful;" though previous to its

incarnation he was unable to discover any merit in it, whether good or

evil. Moreover, that "in infants departing from the body without

baptism original sin may be remitted, and that the sacrifice of

Christ's body must be offered for them," who have not been incorporated

into Christ through His sacraments in His Church, and that "they,

quitting this present life without the laver of regeneration, not only

can go to rest, but can even attain to the kingdom of heaven." He has

propounded a good many other absurdities, which it would be evidently

tedious to collect together, and to consider in this treatise. If the

doctrine of the propagation of souls is false, may its refutation not

be the work of such disputants; and may the defence of the rival

principle of the insufflation of new souls in every creative act,

proceed from better hands.

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Chapter 34.--The Mistakes Which Must Be Avoided by Those Who Say that

Men's Souls are Not Derived from Their Parents, But are Afresh

Inbreathed by God in Every Instance.

All, therefore, who wish to maintain that new souls are rightly said to

be breathed into persons at their birth, and not derived from their

parents, must by all means be cautious on each of the four points which

I have already mentioned. That is to say, do not let them affirm that

souls become sinful by another's original sin; do not let them affirm

that infants who died unbaptized can possibly reach eternal life and

the kingdom of heaven by the remission of original sin in any other way

whatever; do not let them affirm that souls had sinned in some other

place previous to their incarnation, and that on this account they were

forcibly introduced into sinful flesh; nor let them affirm that the

sins which were not actually found in them were, because they were

foreknown, deservedly punished, although they were never permitted to

reach that life where they could be committed. Provided that they

affirm none of these points, because each of them is simply false and

impious, they may, if they can, produce any conclusive testimonies of

the Holy Scriptures on this question; and they may maintain their own

opinion, not only without any prohibition from me, but even with my

approbation and best thanks. If, however, they fail to discover any

very decided authority on the point in the divine oracles, and are

obliged to propound any one of the four opinions by reason of their

failure, let them restrain their imagination, lest they should be

driven in their difficulty to enunciate the now damnable and very

recently condemned heresy of Pelagius, to the effect that the souls of

infants have not original sin. It is, indeed, better for a man to

confess his ignorance of what he knows nothing about, than either to

run into heresy which has been already condemned, or to found some new

heresy, while recklessly daring to defend over and over again opinions

which only display his ignorance. This man has made some other absurd

mistakes, indeed many, in which he has wandered out of the beaten track

of truth, without going, however, to dangerous lengths; and I would

like, if the Lord be willing, to write even to himself something on the

subject of his books; and probably I shall point them all out to him,

or a good many of them if I should be unable to notice all.

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Chapter 35 [XX.]--Conclusion.

As for this present treatise, which I have thought it proper to address

to no other person in preference to yourself, who have taken a kindly

and true interest both in our common faith and my character, as a true

catholic and a good friend, you will give it to be read or copied by

any persons you may be able to find interested in the subject, or may

deem worthy to be trusted. In it I have thought proper to repress and

confute the presumption of this young man, in such a way, however, as

to show that I love him, wishing him to be amended rather than

condemned, and to make such progress in the great house which is the

catholic Church, whither the divine compassion has conducted him, that

he may be therein "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the

Master's use, and prepared unto every good work," [2396] both by holy

living and sound teaching. But I have this further to say: if it

behoves me to bestow my love upon him, as I sincerely do, how much more

ought I to love you, my brother, whose affection towards me and whose

catholic faith I have found by the best of proofs to be cautious and

sober! The result of your loyalty has been, that you have, with a

brother's real love and duty, taken care to have the books, which

displeased you, and wherein you found my name treated in a way which

ran counter to your liking, copied out and forwarded to me. Now, I am

so far from feeling offended at this charitable act of yours, because

you did it, that I think I should have had a right, on the true claims

of friendship, to have been angry with you if you had not done it. I

therefore give you my most earnest thanks. Moreover, I have afforded a

still plainer indication of the spirit in which I have accepted your

service, by instantly composing this treatise for your consideration,

as soon as I had read those books of his.

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[2396] 2 Tim. ii. 21.

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[2343] Written about the end of 419.

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Book II.

In the Shape of a Letter Addressed to the Presbyter Peter.

He advises Peter not to incur the imputation of having approved of the

books which had been addressed to him by Victor on the origin of the

soul, by any use he might make of them, nor to take as Catholic

doctrines that person's rash utterances contrary to the Christian

faith. Victor's various errors, and those, too, of a very serious

character, he points out and briefly confutes; and he concludes with

advising Peter himself to try to persuade Victor to amend his errors.

To his Lordship, my dearly beloved brother and fellow-presbyter Peter,

Augustin, bishop, sendeth greeting in the Lord.

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Chapter 1 [I.]--Depraved Eloquence an Injurious Accomplishment.

There have reached me the two books of Vincentius Victor, which he

addressed in writing to your Holiness; they have been forwarded to me

by our brother Renatus, a layman indeed, but a person who has a prudent

and religious care about the faith both of himself and of all he loves.

On reading these books, I saw that their author was a man of great

resources in speech, of which he had enough, and more than enough; but

that on the subjects of which he wished to teach, he was as yet

insufficiently instructed. If, however, by the gracious gift of the

Lord this qualification were also conferred upon him, he would be

serviceable to many. For he possesses in no slight degree the faculty

of explaining and beautifying what he thinks; all that is wanted is,

that he should first take care to think rightly. Depraved eloquence is

a hurtful accomplishment; for to persons of inadequate information it

always carries the appearance of truth in its readiness of speech. I

know not, indeed, how you received his books; but if I am correctly

informed, you are said, after reading them, to have been so greatly

overjoyed, that you (though an elderly man and a presbyter) kissed the

face of this youthful layman, and thanked him for having taught you

what you had been previously ignorant of. Now, in this conduct of yours

I do not disapprove of your humility; indeed, I rather commend it; for

it was not the man whom you praised, but the truth itself which deigned

to speak to you through him: only I wish you were able to point out to

me what was the truth which you received through him. I should,

therefore, be glad if you would show me, in your answer to this letter,

what it was he taught you. Be it far from me to be ashamed to learn

from a presbyter, since you did not blush to be instructed by a layman,

in proclaiming and imitating your humble conduct, if the lessons were

only true in which you received instruction.

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Chapter 2 [II.]--He Asks What the Great Knowledge is that Victor

Imparts.

Therefore, brother greatly beloved, I desire to know what you learned

of him, in order that, if I have already possessed the knowledge, I may

participate in your joy; but if I happen to be ignorant, I may be

instructed by you. Did you not then understand that there are two

somethings, soul and spirit, according as it is said in Scripture,

"Thou wilt separate my soul from my spirit"? [2397] And that both of

them pertain to man's nature, so that the whole man consists of spirit,

and soul, and body? Sometimes, however, these two are combined together

under the designation of soul; for instance, in the passage, "And man

became a living soul." [2398] Now, in this place the spirit is implied.

Similarly in sundry passages the two are described under the name of

spirit, as when it is written, "And He bowed His head and gave up the

spirit;" [2399] in which passage it is the soul that must also be

understood. And that the two are of one and the same substance? I

suppose that you already knew all this. But if you did not, then you

may as well know that you have not acquired any great knowledge, the

ignorance of which would be attended with much danger. And if there

must be any more subtle discussion on such points it would be better to

carry on the controversy with himself, whose wordy qualities we have

already discovered. The questions we might consider are: whether, when

mention is made of the soul, the spirit is also implied in the term in

such a way that the two comprise the soul, the spirit being, as it

were, some part of it,--whether, in fact (as this person seemed to

think), under the designation soul, the whole is so designated from

only a part; or else, whether the two together make up the spirit, that

which is properly called soul being a part thereof; whether again, in

fact, the whole is not called from only a part, when the term spirit is

used in such a wide sense as to comprehend the soul also, as this man

supposes. These, however, are but subtle distinctions, and ignorance

about them certainly is not attended with any great danger.

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[2397] Job vii. 14. 'Apallaxeis apo pneumatos mou ten psuchen mou,

Sept.

[2398] Gen. ii. 7.

[2399] John xix. 30.

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Chapter 3.--The Difference Between the Senses of the Body and Soul.

Again, I wonder whether this man taught you the difference between the

bodily senses and the sensibilities of the soul; and whether you, who

were a person of considerable age and position before you took lessons

of this man, used to consider to be one and the same that faculty by

which white and black are distinguished, which sparrows even see as

well as ourselves, and that by which justice and injustice are

discriminated, which Tobit also perceived even after he lost the sight

of his eyes. [2400] If you held the identity, then, of course, when you

heard or read the words, "Lighten my eyes, that I sleep not in death,"

[2401] you merely thought of the eyes of the body. Or if this were an

obscure point, at all events when you recalled the words of the

apostle, "The eyes of your heart being enlightened," [2402] you must

have supposed that we possessed a heart somewhere between our forehead

and cheeks. Well, I am very far from thinking this of you, so that this

instructor of yours could not have given you such a lesson.

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[2400] Tobit iv. 5, 6; compare ii. 10.

[2401] Ps. xiii. 3.

[2402] Eph. i. 18.

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Chapter 4.--To Believe the Soul is a Part of God is Blasphemy.

And if you happened to suppose, before receiving the instruction from

this teacher, which you are rejoicing to have received, that the human

soul is a portion of God's nature, then you were ignorant how false and

terribly dangerous this opinion was. And if you only were taught by

this person that the soul is not a portion of God, then I bid you thank

God as earnestly as you can that you were not taken away out of the

body before learning so important a lesson. For you would have quitted

life a great heretic and a terrible blasphemer. However, I never could

have believed this of you, that a man who is both a catholic and a

presbyter of no contemptible position like yourself, could by any means

have thought that the soul's nature is a portion of God. I therefore

cannot help expressing to your beloved self my fears that this man has

by some means or other taught you that which is decidedly opposed to

the faith which you were holding.

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Chapter 5 [III.]--In What Sense Created Beings are Out of God.

Now, just because I do not suppose that you, a member of the catholic

Church, ever believed the human soul to be a portion of God, or that

the soul's nature is in any degree identical with God's, I have some

apprehension lest you may have been induced to fall in with this man's

opinion, that "God did not make the soul from nothing, but that the

soul is so far out of Him as to have emanated from Him." For he has put

out such a statement as this, with his other opinions, which have led

him out of the usual track on this subject to a huge precipice. Now, if

he has taught you this, I do not want you to teach it to me; nay, I

should wish you to unlearn what you have been taught. For it is not

enough to avoid believing and saying that the soul is a part of God. We

do not even say that the Son or the Holy Ghost is a part of God,

although we affirm that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are

all of one and the same nature. It is not, then, enough for us to avoid

saying that the soul is a part of God, but it is of indispensable

importance that we should say that the soul and God are not of one and

the self-same nature. This person is therefore right in declaring that

"souls are God's offspring, not by nature, but by gift;" and then, of

course, not the souls of all men, but of the faithful. But afterwards

he returned to the statement from which he had shrunk, and affirmed

that God and the soul are of the same nature--not, indeed, in so many

words, but plainly and manifestly to such a purport. For when he says

that the soul is out of God, in such a manner that God created it not

out of any other nature, nor out of nothing, but out of His own self,

what would he have us believe but the very thing which he denies, in

other words, even that the soul is of the self-same nature as God

Himself is? For every nature is either God, who has no author; or out

of God, as having Him for its Author. But the nature which has for its

author God, out of whom it comes, is either not made, or made. Now,

that nature which is not made and yet is out of Him, is either begotten

by Him or proceeds from Him. That which is begotten is His only Son,

that which proceedeth is the Holy Ghost, and this Trinity is of one and

the self-same nature. For these three are one, and each one is God, and

all three together are one God, unchangeable, eternal, without any

beginning or ending of time. That nature, on the other hand, which is

made is called "creature;" God is its Creator, even the blessed

Trinity. The creature, therefore, is said to be out of God in such wise

as not to be made out of His nature. It is predicated as out of Him,

inasmuch as it has in Him the author of its being, not so as to have

been born of Him, or to have proceeded from Him, but as having been

created, moulded, and formed by Him, in some cases, out of no other

substance,--that is, absolutely out of nothing, as, for instance, the

heaven and the earth, or rather the whole material of the universe

coeval in its creation with the world--but, in some cases, out of

another nature already created and in existence, as, for instance, man

out of the dust, woman out of the man, and man out of his parents.

Still, every creature is out of God,--but out of God as its creator

either out of nothing, or out of something previously existing, not,

however, as its begetter or its producer from His own very self.

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Chapter 6.--Shall God's Nature Be Mutable, Sinful, Impious, Even

Eternally Damned.

All this, however, I am saying to a catholic: advising with him rather

than teaching him. For I do not suppose that these things are new to

you; or that they have been long heard of by you, but not believed.

This epistle of mine, you will, I am sure, so read as to recognise in

its statement your own faith also, which is by the gracious gift of the

Lord the common property of us all in the catholic Church. Since, then

(as I was saying), I am now speaking to a catholic, whence I pray you

tell me, do you suppose that the soul, I will not say your soul or my

own soul, but the soul of the first man, was given to him? If you admit

that it came from nothing, made, however, and inbreathed into him by

God, then your belief tallies with my own. If, on the contrary, you

suppose that it came out of some other created thing, which served as

the material, as it were, for the divine Artificer to make the soul out

of, just as the dust was the material of which Adam was formed, or the

rib whence Eve was made, or the waters whence the fishes and the fowls

were created, or the ground out of which the terrestrial animals were

formed: then this opinion is not catholic, nor is it true. But further,

if you think, which may God forbid, that the divine Creator made, or is

still making, human souls neither out of nothing, nor out of some other

created thing, but out of His own self, that is, out of His own nature,

then you have learnt this of your new instructor; but I cannot

congratulate you, or flatter you, on the discovery. You have wandered

along with him very far from the catholic faith. Better would it be,

though it would be untrue, yet it would be better, I say, and more

tolerable, that you should believe the soul to have been made out of

some other created substance which God had already formed, than out of

God's own uncreated substance, so that what is mutable, and sinful, and

impious, and if persistent to the end in the impiety will have to

suffer eternal damnation, should not with horrible blasphemy be

referred to the nature of God! Away, brother, I beseech you, away with

this, I will not call it faith, but execrably impious error. May God

avert from you, a man of gravity and a presbyter, the misery of being

seduced by a youthful layman; and, while supposing that your opinion is

the catholic faith, of being lost from the number of the faithful. For

I must not deal with you as I might with him; nor does this tremendous

error, when yours, deserve the same indulgence as being that of this

young man, although you may have derived it from him. He has but just

now found his way to the catholic fold to get healing and safety;

[2403] you have a rank among the very shepherds of that fold. But we

would not that a sheep which comes to the Lord's flock for shelter from

error, should be healed of his sores in such a way, as first to infect

and destroy the shepherd by his contagious presence.

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[2403] See below in ch. 14 [x.].

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Chapter 7.--To Think the Soul Corporeal an Error.

But if you say to me, He has not taught me this; nor have I by any

means given my assent to this erroneous opinion of his, however much I

was enchanted by the sweetness of his eloquent and elegant discourse;

then I earnestly thank God. Still I cannot help asking, why, even with

kisses, as the report goes, you expressed your gratitude to him for

having taught you what you were ignorant of, previous to hearing his

discussion. Now if it be a false report which makes you to have done

and said so much, then I beg you to be kind enough to give me this

assurance, that the idle rumour may be stopped by your own written

authority. If, however, it is true that you bestowed your thanks with

such humility upon this man, I should rejoice, indeed, if he has not

taught you to believe the opinion which I have already pointed out as a

detestable one, and to be carefully avoided as such. Nor shall I find

fault [IV.] if your humble thanks to your instructor were further

earned by your having acquired from discussions with him some other

true and useful knowledge. But may I ask you what it is? Is it that the

soul is not spirit, but body? Well, I really do not think ignorance on

such a point is any great injury to Christian learning; and if you

indulge in more subtle disputes about the different kinds of bodily

substance, I think the information you obtain is more difficult than

serviceable. If, however, the Lord will that I should write to this

young man himself, as I desire to do, then perhaps your loving self

[2404] will know to what extent you are not indebted to him for your

instruction; although you rejoice in what you have learnt from him. And

now I request you not to feel annoyance in writing me an answer; so

that what is clearly useful and pertinent to our indispensable faith

may not by any chance turn out to be something different.

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[2404] Dilectio tua.

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Chapter 8.--The Thirst of the Rich Man in Hell Does Not Prove the Soul

to Be Corporeal.

Now with regard to the point, which with perfect propriety and great

soundness of view he believes, that souls after quitting the body are

judged, before they come to that final judgment to which they must

submit when their bodies are restored to them, and are either tormented

or glorified in the very same flesh wherein they once lived here on

earth; is it, let me ask you, the case that you were really ignorant of

this? Who ever had his mind so obstinately set against the gospel as

not to hear these truths, and after hearing to believe them, in the

parable of the poor man who was carried away after death to Abraham's

bosom, and of the rich man who is set forth as suffering torment in

hell? [2405] But has this man taught you how it was that the soul apart

from the body could crave from the beggar's finger a drop of water;

[2406] when he himself confessed, that the soul did not require bodily

aliment except for the purpose of protecting the perishing body which

encloses it from dissolution? These are his words: "Is it," asks he,

"because the soul craves meat and drink, that we suppose material food

passes into it?" Then shortly afterwards he says: "From this

circumstance it is understood and proved, that the sustenance of meat

and drink is not wanted for the soul, but for the body: for which

clothing also, in addition to food, is provided in like manner; so that

the supplying of food seems to be necessary to that nature, which is

also fitted for wearing clothes." This opinion of his he expounds

clearly enough; but he adds some illustrative similes, and says: "Now

what do we suppose the occupier of a house does on an inspection of his

dwelling? If he observe the tenement has a shaky roof, or a nodding

wall, or a weak foundation, does he not fetch girders and build up

buttresses, in order that he may succeed in propping up by his care and

diligence the fabric which threatened to fall, so that in the dangerous

plight of the residence the peril which evidently overhung the occupier

might be warded off? From this simile," says he, "see how the soul

craves for its flesh, from which it undoubtedly conceives the craving

itself." Such are the very lucid and adequate words in which this young

person has explained his ideas: he asserts that it is not the soul, but

the body, which requires food; out of a careful regard, no doubt, of

the former for the latter, as one that occupies a dwelling-house, and

by a prudent repair prevents the downfall with which the fleshly

tenement was threatened. Well, now, let him go on to explain to you

what probable ruin this particular soul of the rich man was so eager to

prevent by propping up, seeing that it no longer possessed a mortal

body, and yet suffered thirst, and begged for the drop of water from

the poor man's finger. Here is a good knotty question for this astute

instructor of elderly men to exercise himself on; let him inquire, and

find a solution if he can: for what purpose did that soul in hell beg

the aliment of ever so small a drop of water, when it had no ruinous

tenement to support?

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[2405] See Luke xvi. 22, 23.

[2406] Luke xvi. 24.

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Chapter 9 [V.]--How Could the Incorporeal God Breathe Out of Himself a

Corporeal Substance?

In that he believes God to be truly incorporeal, I congratulate him

that herein, at all events, he has kept himself uninfluenced by the

ravings of Tertullian. For he insisted, that as the soul is corporeal,

so likewise is God. [2407] It is therefore specially surprising that

our author, who differs from Tertullian in this point, yet labours to

persuade us that the incorporeal God does not make the soul out of

nothing, but exhales it as a corporeal breath out of Himself. What a

wonderful learning that must be to which every age erects its attentive

ears, and which contrives to gain for its disciples men of advanced

years, and even presbyters! Let this eminent man read what he has

written, read it in public; let him invite to hear the reading

well-known persons and unknown ones, learned and unlearned. Old men,

assemble with your younger instructors; learn what you used to know

nothing about; hear now what you had never heard before. Behold,

according to the teaching of this scribe, God creates a breath, not out

of something else which exists in some way or other, and not out of

that which absolutely has no existence; but out of that which He is

Himself, perfectly incorporeal, He breathes a body so that He actually

changes His own incorporeal nature into a body, before it undergoes the

change into the body of sin. Does he say, that He does not change

something out of His own nature, when He creates breath? Then, of

course, He does not make that breath out of Himself: for He is not

Himself one thing, and His nature another thing. What is this insane

man thinking of? But if he says that God creates breath out of His own

nature in such a way as to remain absolutely entire Himself, this is

not the question. The question is, whether that which comes not of some

previously created substance, nor from nothing, but from Him, is not

what He is, that is, of the same nature and essence? Now He remains

absolutely entire after the generation of His Son; but because He begat

Him of His own nature, He did not beget a something which was different

from that which He is Himself. For, putting to one side the

circumstance that the Word took on Himself a human nature and became

flesh, the Word who is the Son of God is another but not another thing:

that is, He is another person but not a different nature. And whence

does this come to pass, except from the fact that He is not created out

of something else, or out of nothing, but was begotten out of Himself;

not that He might be better than He was, but that He might be

altogether even what He is of whom He is begotten; that is, of one and

the same nature, equal, co-eternal, in every way like, equally

unchangeable, equally invisible, equally incorporeal, equally God; in a

word, that He might be altogether what the Father is, except that He

actually is Himself the Son, and not the Father? But if He remains

Himself the same God entire and unimpaired, but yet creates something

different from Himself, and worse than Himself, not out of nothing, nor

out of some other creature, but out of His very self; and that

something emanates as a body out ofthe incorporeal God; then God forbid

that a catholic should imbibe such an opinion, for it does not flow

from the divine fountain, but it is a mere fiction of the human mind.

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[2407] See Tertullian's treatise On the Soul in The Ante-Nicene

Christian Fathers, vol. iii. p. 181 sq. See also Augustin, On Heresies,

86, and Epistles, No. 190.

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Chapter 10 [VI.]--Children May Be Found of Like or of Unlike

Dispositions with Their Parents.

Then, again, how ineptly he labours to free the soul, which he supposes

to be corporeal, from the passions of the body, raising questions about

the soul's infancy; about the soul's emotions, when paralysed and

oppressed; about the amputation of bodily limbs, without cutting or

dividing the soul. But in dealing with such points as these, my duty is

to treat rather with him than with you; it is for him to labour to

assign a reason for all he says. In this way we shall not seem to wish

to be too importunate with an elderly man's gravity on the subject of a

young man's work. As to the similarity of disposition to the parents

which is discovered in their children, he does not dispute its coming

from the soul's seed. Accordingly, this is the opinion also of those

persons who do away with the soul's propagation; but the opposite party

who entertain this theory do not place on this the weight of their

assertion. For they observe also that children are unlike their parents

in disposition; and the reason of this, as they suppose, is, that one

and the same person very often has various dispositions himself, unlike

each other,--not, of course, that he has received another soul, but

that his life has undergone a change for the better or for the worse.

So they say that there is no impossibility in a soul's not possessing

the same disposition which he had by whom it was propagated, seeing

that the selfsame soul may have different dispositions at different

times. If, therefore, you think that you have learnt this of him, that

the soul does not come to us by natural transmission at birth,--I only

wish that you had discovered from him the truth of the case,--I would

with the greatest pleasure resign myself to your hands to learn the

whole truth. But really to learn is one thing, and to seem to yourself

to have learned is another thing. If, then, you suppose that you have

learned what you still are ignorant of, you have evidently not learnt,

but given a random credence to a pleasant hearsay. Falsity has stolen

over you in the suavity. [2408] Now I do not say this from feeling as

yet any certainty as to the proposition being false, which asserts that

souls are created afresh by God's inbreathing rather than derived from

the parents at birth; for I think that this is a point which still

requires proof from those who find themselves able to teach it. No; my

reason for saying it is, that this person has discussed the whole

subject in such a way as not only not to solve the point still in

dispute, but even to indulge in statements which leave no doubt as to

their falsity. In his desire to prove things of doubtful import, he has

boldly stated things which undoubtedly merit reprobation.

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[2408] This play of words too inadequately represents Augustin's

Subrepsit tibi falsiloquium per suaviloquium.

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Chapter 11 [VII.]--Victor Implies that the Soul Had a "State" And

"Merit" Before Incarnation.

Would you hesitate yourself to reprobate what he has said concerning

the soul? "You will not have it," he says, "that the soul contracts

from the sinful flesh the health, to which holy state you can see it in

due course pass by means of the flesh, so as to amend its state through

that by which it had lost its merit? Or is it because baptism washes

the body that what is believed to be conferred by baptism does not pass

on to the soul or spirit? It is only right, therefore, that the soul

should, by means of the flesh, repair that old condition which it had

seemed to have gradually lost through the flesh, in order that it may

begin a regenerate state by means of that whereby it had deserved to be

polluted." [2409] Now, do observe how grave an error this teacher has

fallen into! He says that "the soul repairs its condition by means of

the flesh through which it had lost its merit." The soul, then, must

have possessed some state and some good merit previous to the flesh,

which he would have that it recovers through the flesh, when the flesh

is cleansed in the laver of regeneration. Therefore, previous to the

flesh, the soul had lived somewhere in a good state and merit, which

state and merit it lost when it came into the flesh. His words are,

"that the soul repairs by means of the flesh that primitive condition

which it had seemed to have gradually lost through the flesh." The

soul, then, possessed before the flesh, an ancient condition (for his

term "primitive" describes the antiquity of the state); and what could

that ancient condition have possibly been, but a blessed and laudable

state? Now, he avers that this happiness is recovered through the

sacrament of baptism, although he will not admit that the soul derives

its origin through propagation from that soul which was once manifestly

happy in paradise. How is it, then, that in another passage he says

that "he constantly affirms of the soul that it exists not by

propagation, nor comes out of nothing, nor exists by its own self, nor

previous to the body"? You see how in this place he insists that souls

do exist prior to the body somewhere or other, and that in so happy a

state that the same happiness is restored to them by means of baptism.

But, as if forgetful of his own views, he goes on to speak of its

"beginning a regenerate state by means of that," meaning the flesh,

"whereby it had deserved to be polluted." In a previous statement he

had indicated some good desert which had been lost by means of the

flesh; now, however, he speaks of some evil desert, by means of which

it had happened that the soul had to come, or be sent, into the flesh;

for his words are, "By which it had deserved to be polluted;" and if it

deserved to be polluted, its merits could not, of course, have been

good. Pray let him tell us what sin it had committed previous to its

pollution by the flesh, in consequence of which it merited such

pollution by the flesh. Let him, if he can, explain to us a matter

which is utterly beyond his power, because it is certainly far above

his reach to discover what to tell us on this subject which shall be

true.

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[2409] See below, Book iii. 9.

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Chapter 12 [VIII.]--How Did the Soul Deserve to Be Incarnated?

He also says some time afterwards: "The soul therefore, if it deserved

to be sinful, although it could not have been sinful, yet did not

remain in sin; because, as it was prefigured in Christ, it was bound

not to be in a sinful state, even as it was unable to be." [2410] Now,

my brother, do you, I ask, really think thus? At any rate, have you

formed such an opinion, after having read and duly considered his

words, and after having reflected upon what extorted from you praise

during his reading, and the expression of your gratitude after he had

ended? I pray you, tell me what this means: "Although the soul deserved

to be sinful, which could not have been sinful." What mean his phrases,

deserved and could not? For it could not possibly have deserved its

alleged fate, unless it had been sinful; nor would it have been, unless

it could have been, sinful,--so as, by committing sin previous to any

evil desert, it might make for itself a position whence it might, under

God's desertion, advance to the commission of other sins. When he said,

"which could not have been sinful," did he mean, which would not have

been able to be sinful, unless it came in the flesh? But how did it

deserve a mission at all into a state where it could be sinful, when it

could not possibly have become capable of sinning anywhere else, unless

it entered that particular state? Let him, then, tell us how it so

deserved. For if it deserved to become capable of sinning, it must

certainly have already committed some sin, in consequence of which it

deserved to be sinful again. These points, however, may perhaps appear

to be obscure, or may be tauntingly said to be of such a character, but

they are really most plain and clear. The truth is, he ought not to

have said that "the soul deserved to become sinful through the flesh,"

when he will never be able to discover any desert of the soul, either

good or bad, previous to its being in the flesh.

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[2410] See above, Book i. 8, and below, Book iii. 11.

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Chapter 13 [IX.]--Victor Teaches that God Thwarts His Own

Predestination.

Let us now go on to plainer matters. For while he was confined within

these great straits, as to how souls can be held bound by the chain of

original sin, when they derive not their origin from the soul which

first sinned, but the Creator breathes them afresh at every birth into

sinful flesh,--pure from all contagion and propagation of sin:--in

order that he might avoid the objection being brought against his

argument, that thus God makes them guilty by such insufflation, he

first of all had recourse to the theory drawn from God's prescience,

that "He had provided redemption for them." Infants are by the

sacrament of this redemption baptized, so that the original sin which

they contracted from the flesh is washed away, as if God were remedying

His own acts for having made these souls polluted. But afterwards, when

he comes to speak of those who receive no such assistance, but expire

before they are baptized, he says: "In this place I do not offer myself

as an authority, but I present you with an example by way of

conjecture. We say, then, that some such method as this must be had

recourse to in the case of infants, who, being predestinated for

baptism, are yet, by the failing of this life, hurried away before they

are born again in Christ. We read," adds he, "it written of such,

Speedily was he taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his

understanding, or deceit beguile his soul. Therefore He hasted to take

him away from among the wicked, for his soul pleased the Lord; and,

being made perfect in a short time, he fulfilled a long time." [2411]

Now who would disdain having such a teacher as this? Is it the case,

then, with infants, whom people usually wish to have baptized, even

hurriedly, before they die, that, if they should be detained ever so

short a time in this life, that they might be baptized, and then at

once die, wickedness would alter their understanding, and deceit

beguile their soul; and to prevent this happening to them, a hasty

death came to their rescue, so that they were suddenly taken away

before they were baptized? By their very baptism, then, they were

changed for the worse, and beguiled by deceit, if it was after baptism

that they were snatched away. O excellent teaching, worthy to be

admired and closely followed! But he presumed greatly on the prudence

of all you who were present at his reading, and especially on yours, to

whom he addressed this treatise and handed it after the reading, in

supposing that you would believe that the scripture he quoted was

intended for the case of unbaptized infants, although it was written of

the immature ages of all those saints whom foolish men deem to be

hardly dealt with, whenever they are suddenly removed from the present

life and are not permitted to attain to the years which people covet

for themselves as a great gift of God. What, however, is the meaning of

these words of his: "Infants predestinated for baptism, who are yet, by

the failing of this life, hurried away before they are born again in

Christ," as if some power of fortune, or fate, or anything else you

please, did not permit God to fulfil what He had fore-ordained? And how

is it that He hurries them Himself away, when they have pleased Him?

Then, does He really predestinate them to be baptized, and then Himself

hinder the accomplishment of the very thing which He has predestinated?

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[2411] Wisd. iv. 11, 14, 13.

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Chapter 14 [X.]--Victor Sends Those Infants Who Die Unbaptized to

Paradise and the Heavenly Mansions, But Not to the Kingdom of Heaven.

But I beg you mark how bold he is, who is displeased with hesitancy,

which prefers to be cautious rather than overknowing in a question so

profound as this: "I would be bold to say"--such are his words--"that

they can attain to the forgiveness of their original sins, yet not so

as to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven. Just as in the case of

the thief on the cross, who confessed but was not baptized, the Lord

did not give him the kingdom of heaven, but paradise; [2412] the words

remaining accordingly in full force, Except a man be born again of

water and of the Holy Ghost, he shall not enter into the kingdom of

heaven.' [2413] This is especially true, inasmuch as the Lord

acknowledges that in His Father's house are many mansions, [2414] by

which are indicated the many different merits of those who dwell in

them; so that in these abodes the unbaptized is brought to forgiveness,

and the baptized to the reward which by grace has been prepared for

him." You observe how the man keeps paradise and the mansions of the

Father's house distinct from the kingdom of heaven, so that even

unbaptized persons may have an abundant provision in places of eternal

happiness. Nor does he see, when he says all this, that he is so

unwilling to distinguish the future abode of a baptized infant from the

kingdom of heaven as to have no fear in keeping distinct therefrom the

very house of God the Father, or the several parts thereof. For the

Lord Jesus did not say: In all the created universe, or in any portion

of that universe, but, "In my Father's house, are many mansions." But

in what way shall an unbaptized person live in the house of God the

Father, when he cannot possibly have God for his Father, except he be

born again? He should not be so ungrateful to God, who has vouchsafed

to deliver him from the sect of the Donatists or Rogatists, as to aim

at dividing the house of God the Father, and to put one portion of it

outside the kingdom of heaven, where the unbaptized may be able to

dwell. And on what terms does he himself presume that he is to enter

into the kingdom of heaven, when from that kingdom he excludes the

house of the King Himself, in what part soever He pleases? From the

case, however, of the thief who, when crucified at the Lord's side, put

his hope in the Lord who was crucified with him, and from the case of

Dinocrates, the brother of St. Perpetua, he argues that even to the

unbaptized may be given the remission of sins and an abode with the

blessed; as if any one unbelief in whom would be a sin, had shown him

that the thief and Dinocrates had not been baptized. Concerning these

cases, however, I have more fully explained my views in the book which

I wrote to our brother Renatus. [2415] This your loving self will be

able to ascertain if you will condescend to read the book; for I am

sure our brother will not find it in his heart to refuse you, if you

ask him the loan of it.

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[2412] Luke xxiii. 43.

[2413] John iii. 5.

[2414] John xiv. 2.

[2415] See Book i. of the present treatise, chs. 11 [ix.] and 12 [x.].

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Chapter 15 [XI.]--Victor "Decides" That Oblations Should Be Offered Up

for Those Who Die Unbaptized.

Still he chafes with indecision, and is well-nigh suffocated in the

terrible straits of his theory; for very likely he descries with a more

sensitive eye than you, the amount of evil which he enunciates, to the

effect that original sin in infants is effaced without Christ's

sacrament of baptism. It is, indeed, for the purpose of finding an

escape to some extent, and tardily, in the Church's sacraments that he

says: "In their behalf I most certainly decide that constant oblations

and incessant sacrifices must be offered up on the part of the holy

priests." Well, then, you may take him if you like for your arbiter, if

it were not enough to have him as your instructor. Let him decide that

you must offer up the sacrifice of Christ's body even for those who

have not been incorporated into Christ. Now this is quite a novel idea,

and foreign to the Church's discipline and the rule of truth: and yet,

when daring to propound it in his books, he does not modestly say, I

rather think; he does not say, I suppose; he does not say, I am of

opinion; nor does he say, I at least would suggest, or mention;--but he

says, I give it as my decision; so that, should we be (as might be

likely) offended by the novelty or the perverseness of his opinion, we

might be overawed by the authority of his judicial determination. It is

your own concern, my brother, how to be able to bear him as your

instructor in these views. Catholic priests, however, of right feeling

(and among them you ought to take your place) could never keep

quiet--God forbid it--and hear this man pronounce his decisions, when

they would wish him rather to recover his senses, and be sorry both for

having entertained such opinions, and for having gone so far as to

commit them to writing, and chastise himself with the most wholesome

discipline of repentance. "Now it is," says he; "on this example of the

Maccabees who fell in battle that I ground the necessity of doing this.

When they offered stealthily some interdicted sacrifices, and after

they had fallen in the battle, we find," says he, "that this remedial

measure was at once resorted to by the priests,--sacrifices were

offered up to liberate their souls, which had been bound by the guilt

of their forbidden conduct." [2416] But he says all this, as if

(according to his reading of the story) those atoning sacrifices were

offered up for uncircumcised persons, as he has decided that these

sacrifices of ours must be offered up for unbaptized persons. For

circumcision was the sacrament of that period, which prefigured the

baptism of our day.

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[2416] This is a loose reference to the narrative in 2 Macc. xii.

39-45.

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Chapter 16 [XII.]--Victor Promises to the Unbaptized Paradise After

Their Death, and the Kingdom of Heaven After Their Resurrection,

Although He Admits that This Opposes Christ's Statement.

But your friend, in comparison with what he has shown himself to be

further on, thus far makes mistakes which one may somewhat tolerate. He

apparently felt some disposition to relent; not, to be sure, at what he

ought to have misgivings about, namely, for having ventured to assert

that original sin is relaxed even in the case of the unbaptized, and

that remission is given to them of all their sins, so that they are

admitted into paradise, that is, to a place of great happiness, and

possess a claim to the happy mansions in our Father's house; but he

seems to have entertained some regret at having conceded to them abodes

of lesser blessedness outside the kingdom of heaven. Accordingly he

goes on to say, "Or if any one is perhaps reluctant to believe that

paradise is bestowed as a temporary and provisional gift on the soul of

the thief or of Dinocrates (for there remains for them still, in the

resurrection, the reward of the kingdom of heaven), although that

principal passage stands in the way, [2417] --Except a man be born

again of water and of the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom

of God.' [2418] --he may yet hold my assent as ungrudgingly given to

this point; only let him magnify [2419] both the aim and the effect of

the divine compassion and fore-knowledge." These words have I copied,

as I read them in his second book. Well, now, could any one have shown

on this erroneous point greater boldness, recklessness, or presumption?

He actually quotes and calls attention to the Lord's weighty sentence,

encloses it in a statement of his own, and then says, "Although the

opinion is opposed to the principal passage,' Except a man be born

again of water and of the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom

of God;'" he dares then to lift his haughty head in censure against the

Prince's judgment: "He may yet hold my assent as ungrudgingly given to

this point;" and he explains his point to be, that the souls of

unbaptized persons have a claim to paradise as a temporary gift; and in

this class he mentions the dying thief and Dinocrates, as if he were

prescribing, or rather prejudging, their destination; moreover, in the

resurrection, he will have them transferred to a better provision, even

making them receive the reward of the kingdom of heaven. "Although,"

says he, "this is opposed to the sentence of the Prince." Now, do you,

my brother, I pray you, seriously consider this question: What sentence

of the Prince shall that man deserve to have passed upon him, who

imposes on any person an assent of his own which runs counter to the

authority of the Prince Himself?

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[2417] Sententia illa principalis, in which principalis may mean either

"principal," "chief," or "belonging to the Prince."

[2418] John iii. 5.

[2419] Or perhaps, "as simply amplifying both the effect and the

purpose of," etc., etc.

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Chapter 17.--Disobedient Compassion and Compassionate Disobedience

Reprobated. Martyrdom in Lieu of Baptism.

The new-fangled Pelagian heretics have been most justly condemned by

the authority of catholic councils and of the Apostolic See, on the

ground of their having dared to give to unbaptized infants a place of

rest and salvation, even apart from the kingdom of heaven. This they

would not have dared to do, if they did not deny their having original

sin, and the need of its remission by the sacrament of baptism. This

man, however, professes the catholic belief on this point, admitting

that infants are tied in the bonds of original sin, and yet he releases

them from these bonds without the laver of regeneration, and after

death, in his compassion, he admits them into paradise; while, with a

still ampler compassion, he introduces them after the resurrection even

to the kingdom of heaven. Such compassion did Saul see fit to assume

when he spared the king whom God commanded to be slain; [2420]

deservedly, however, was his disobedient compassion, or (if you prefer

it) his compassionate disobedience, reprobated and condemned, that man

may be on his guard against extending mercy to his fellow-man, in

opposition to the sentence of Him by whom man was made. Truth, by the

mouth of Itself incarnate, proclaims as if in a voice of thunder:

"Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter

into the kingdom of God." [2421] And in order to except martyrs from

this sentence, to whose lot it has fallen to be slain for the name of

Christ before being washed in the baptism of Christ, He says in another

passage, "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." [2422]

And so far from promising the abolition of original sin to any one who

has not been regenerated in the laver of Christian faith, the apostle

exclaims, "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to

condemnation." [2423] And as a counterbalance against this

condemnation, the Lord exhibits the help of His salvation alone,

saying, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he

that believeth not shall be damned." [2424] Now the mystery of this

believing in the case of infants is completely effected by the response

of the sureties by whom they are taken to baptism; and unless this be

effected, they all pass by the offence of one into condemnation. And

yet, in opposition to such clear declarations uttered by the Truth,

forth marches before all men a vanity which is more foolish than

pitiful, and says: Not only do infants not pass into condemnation,

though no laver of Christian faith absolves them from the chain of

original sin, but they even after death have an intermediate enjoyment

of the felicities of paradise, and after the resurrection they shall

possess even the happiness of the kingdom of heaven. Now, would this

man dare to say all this in opposition to the firmly-established

catholic faith, if he had not presumptuously undertaken to solve a

question which transcends his powers touching the origin of the soul?

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[2420] 1 Sam. xv. 9.

[2421] John iii. 5.

[2422] Matt. x. 39.

[2423] Rom. v. 18.

[2424] Mark xvi. 16.

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Chapter 18 [XIII.]--Victor's Dilemma and Fall.

For he is hemmed in within terrible straits by those who make the

natural inquiry: "Why has God visited on the soul so unjust a

punishment as to have willed to relegate it into a body of sin, since

by its consorting with the flesh that began to be sinful, which else

could not have been sinful?" For, of course, they say: "The soul could

not have been sinful, if God had not commingled it in the participation

of sinful flesh." Well, this opponent of mine was unable to discover

the justice of God's doing this, especially in consequence of the

eternal damnation of infants who die without the remission of original

sin by baptism; and his inability was equally great in finding out why

the good and righteous God both bound the souls of infants, who He

foresaw would derive no advantage from the sacrament of Christian

grace, with the chain of original sin, by sending them into the body

which they derive from Adam,--the souls themselves being free from all

taint of propagation,--and by this means also made them amenable to

eternal damnation. No less was he unwilling to admit that these very

souls likewise derived their sinful origin from that one primeval soul.

And so he preferred escaping by a miserable shipwreck of faith, rather

than to furl his sails and steady his oars, in the voyage of his

controversy, and by such prudent counsel check the fatal rashness of

his course. Worthless in his youthful eye was our aged caution; just as

if this most troublesome and perilous question of his was more in need

of a torrent of eloquence than the counsel of prudence. And this was

foreseen even by himself, but to no purpose; for, as if to set forth

the points which were objected to him by his opponents, he says: "After

them other reproachful censures are added to the querulous murmurings

of those who rail against us; and, as if tossed about in a whirlwind,

we are dashed repeatedly among huge rocks." After saying this, he

propounded for himself the very dangerous question, which we have

already treated, wherein he has wrecked the catholic faith, unless by a

real repentance he shall have repaired the faith which he had

shattered. That whirlwind and those rocks I have myself

avoided,unwilling to entrust my frail barque to their dangers; and when

writing on this subject I have expressed myself in such a way as rather

to explain the grounds of my hesitancy, than to exhibit the rashness of

presumption. [2425] This little work of mine excited his derision, when

he met with it at your house, and in utter recklessness he flung

himself upon the reef: he showed more spirit than wisdom in his

conduct. To what lengths, however, that over-confidence of his led him,

I suppose that you can now yourself perceive. But I give heartier

thanks to God, since you even before this descried it. For all the

while he was refusing to check his headlong career, when the issue of

his course was still in doubt, he alighted on his miserable enterprise,

and maintained that God, in the case of infants who died without

Christian regeneration, conferred upon them paradise at once, and

ultimately the kingdom of heaven.

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[2425] See Augustin's treatises, On Free Will, iii. 21; On the Merits

of Sins, ii. (last chapter); Letter (166) to Jerome, and (190) to

Optatus.

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Chapter 19 [XIV.]--Victor Relies on Ambiguous Scriptures.

The passages of Scripture, indeed, which he has adduced in the attempt

to prove from them that God did not derive human souls by propagation

from the primitive soul, but as in that first instance that He formed

them by breathing them into each individual, are so uncertain and

ambiguous, that they can with the utmost facility be taken in a

different sense from that which he would assign to them. This point I

have already demonstrated [2426] with sufficient clearness, I think in

the book which I addressed to that friend o ours, of whom I have made

mention above. The passages which he has used for his proofs inform us

that God gives, or makes, or fashion men's souls; but whence He gives

them, or of what He makes or fashions them, they tell us nothing: they

leave untouched the question whether it be by propagation from the

first soul or by insufflation, like the first soul. This writer

however, simply because he reads that God "giveth" souls, [2427] "hath

made" souls, "formeth" souls, supposes that these phrases amount to a

denial of the propagation of souls; whereas, by the testimony of the

same scripture, God gives men their bodies, or makes them, or fashions

and forms them; although no one doubts that the said bodies are given,

made, and formed by Him by seminal propagation.

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[2426] See above in Book i. 17 [xiv.] and following chapters.

[2427] Isa. xlii. 5.

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Chapter 20.--Victor Quotes Scriptures for Their Silence, and Neglects

the Biblical Usage.

As for the passage which affirms that "God hath made of one blood all

nations of men," [2428] and that in which Adam says, "This is now bone

of my bones, and flesh of my flesh," [2429] inasmuch as it is not said

in the one, "of one soul," and in the other, "soul of my soul," he

supposes that it is denied that children's souls come from their

parents, or the first woman's from her husband just as if, forsooth,

had the sentence run in the way suggested, "of one soul," instead of

"of one blood," anything else than the whole human being could be

understood, without any denial of the propagation of the body. So

likewise, if it had been said, "soul of my soul," the flesh would not

be denied, of course, which evidently had been taken out of the man.

Constantly does Holy Scripture indicate the whole by a part, and a part

by the whole. For certainly, if in the passage which this man has

quoted as his proof it had been said that the human race had been made,

not "of one blood," but "of one man," it could not have prejudiced the

opinion of those who deny the propagation of souls, although man is not

soul alone, nor only flesh, but both. For they would have their answer

ready to this effect, that the Scripture here might have meant to

indicate a part by the whole, that is to say, the flesh only by the

entire human being. In like manner, they who maintain the propagation

of souls contend that in the passage where it is said, "of one blood,"

the human being is implied by the term "blood," on the principle of the

whole being expressed by a part. For just as the one party seems to be

assisted by the expression, "of one blood," instead of the phrase, "of

one man," so the other side evidently gets countenance from the

statement being so plainly written, "By one man sin entered into the

world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for in him

all sinned," [2430] instead of its being said, "in whom the flesh of

all sinned." Similarly, as one party seems to receive assistance from

the fact that Scripture says, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh

of my flesh," on the ground that a part covers the whole; so, again,

the other side derives some advantage from what is written in the

immediate sequel of the passage, "She shall be called woman, because

she was taken out of her husband." For, according to their contention,

the latter clause should have run, "Because her flesh was taken out of

her husband," if it was not true that the entire woman, soul and all,

but only her flesh, was taken out of man. The fact, however, of the

whole matter is simply this, that after hearing both sides, anybody

whose judgment is free from party prejudice sees at once that loose

quotation is unavailing in this controversy; for against one party,

which maintains the opinion of the propagation of souls, those passages

must not be adduced which mention only a part, inasmuch as the

Scripture might mean by the part to imply the whole in all such

passages; as, for instance, when we read, "The Word was made flesh,"

[2431] we of course understand not the flesh only, but the entire human

being; nor against the other party, who deny this doctrine of the

soul's propagation, is it of any avail to quote those passages which do

not mention a part of the human being, but the whole; because in these

the Scripture might possibly mean to imply a part by the whole; as we

confess that Christ was buried, whereas it was only His flesh that was

laid in the sepulchre. We therefore say, that on such grounds there is

no ground on the one hand for rashly constructing, nor on the other

hand for, with equal rashness, demolishing the theory of propagation;

but we add this advice, that other passages be duly looked out, such as

admit of no ambiguity. [2432]

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[2428] Acts xvii. 26.

[2429] Gen. ii. 23.

[2430] Rom. v. 12.

[2431] John i. 14.

[2432] Compare on this chapter Book i. 29.

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Chapter 21 [XV.]--Victor's Perplexity and Failure.

For these reasons I fail thus far to discover what this instructor has

taught you, and what grounds you have for the gratitude you have

lavished upon him. For the question remains just as it was, which

inquires about the origin of souls, whether God gives, forms, and makes

them for men by propagating them from that one soul which He breathed

into the first man, or whether it is by His own inbreathing that He

does this in every case, as He did for the first man. For that God does

form, and make, and bestow souls on men, the Christian faith does not

hesitate to aver. Now, when this person endeavoured to solve the

question without gauging his own resources, by denying the propagation

of souls, and asserting that the Creator inbreathed them into men pure

from all contagion of sin,--not out of nothing, but out of Himself,--He

dishonoured the very nature of God by opprobriously attributing

mutability to it, an imputation which was necessarily untenable. Then,

desirous of avoiding all implication which might lead to God's being

deemed unrighteous, if He ties with the bond of original sin souls

which are pure of all actual sin, although not redeemed by Christian

regeneration, he has given utterance to words and sentiments which I

only wish he had not taught you. For he has accorded to unbaptized

infants such happiness and salvation as even the Pelagian heresy could

not have ventured on doing. And yet for all this, when the question

touches the many thousands of infants who are born of the ungodly, and

die among the ungodly,--I do not mean those whom charitable persons are

unable to assist by baptism, however desirous of doing so, but those of

whose baptism nobody either has been able or shall be able to think,

and for whom no one has offered or is likely to offer the sacrifice

which, as this instructor of yours thought, ought to be offered even

for those who have not been baptized, [2433] --he has discovered no

means of solving it. If he were questioned concerning them, what their

souls deserved that God should involve them in sinful flesh to incur

eternal damnation, never to be washed in the laver of baptism, nor

atoned for by the sacrifice of Christ's body and blood, he will then

either feel himself at an utter loss, and so will regard our hesitation

with a real, though tardy favour; or else will determine that Christ's

body must be offered for all those infants which all the world over die

without Christian baptism (their names having been never heard of,

since they are unknown in the Church of Christ), although not

incorporated into the body of Christ.

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[2433] [The editions give the manifestly false reading nobis for non,

yielding the sense: "even for ourselves who have been baptized."--W.]

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Chapter 22 [XVI.]--Peter's Responsibility in the Case of Victor.

Far be it from you, my brother, that such views should be pleasant to

you, or that you should either feel pleasure in having acquired them,

or presume ever to teach them. Otherwise, even he would be a far better

man than yourself. Because at the commencement of his first book he has

prefixed the following modest and humble preface: "Though I desire to

comply with your request, I am only affording a clear proof of my

presumption." And a little further on he says, [2434] "Inasmuch as I

am, indeed, by no means confident of being able to prove what I may

have advanced; and moreover I should always be anxious not to insist on

any opinion of my own, if it is found to be an improbable one; and it

would be my hearty desire, in case my own judgment is condemned,

earnestly to follow better and truer views. For as it shows evidence of

the best intention, and a laudable purpose, to permit yourself to be

easily led to truer views of a subject; so it betokens an obstinate and

depraved mind to refuse to turn quickly aside into the pathway of

reason." Now, as he said all this sincerely, and still feels as he

spoke, he no doubt entertains a very hopeful feeling about a right

issue. In similar strain he concludes his second book: "You must not

think," says he, "that there is any chance of its ever recoiling

invidiously against you, that I constitute you the judge of my words.

And lest by chance the sharp eye of some inquisitive reader may have

opportunity of turning up and encountering any possible vestiges of

elemental error which may be left behind on my illegal sheets, I beg

you to tear up page after page with unsparing hand, if need be; and

after expending on me your critical censure, punish me further, by

smearing out the very ink which has given form to my worthless words;

so that, having your full opportunity, you may prevent all ridicule, on

the score either of the favourable opinion you so strongly entertain of

me, or of the inaccuracies which lurk in my writings."

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[2434] See below in Book iii. 20 (xiv.).

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Chapter 23 [XVII.]--Who They are that are Not Injured by Reading

Injurious Books.

Forasmuch, then, as he has both commenced and terminated his books with

such safeguards, and has placed on your shoulders the religious burden

of their correction and emendation, I only trust that he may find in

you all that he has asked you for, that you may "correct him

righteously in mercy, and reprove him; whilst the oil of the sinner

which anoints his head" [2435] is absent from your hands and

eyes,--even the indecent compliance of the flatterer, and the deceitful

leniency of the sycophant. If, however, you decline to apply correction

when you see anything to amend, you offend against love; but if he does

not appear to you to require correction, because you think him to be

right in his opinions, then you are wise against truth. He, therefore,

is a better man (since he is only too ready to be corrected, if a true

censurer be at hand) than yourself, if either knowing him to be in

error you despise him with derision, or ignorant of his wandering

course you at the same time closely follow his error. Everything,

therefore, which you find in the books that he has addressed and

forwarded to you, I beg you to consider with sobriety and vigilance;

and you will perhaps make fuller discoveries than I have myself of

statements which deserve to be censured. And as for such of their

contents as are worthy of praise and approbation,--whatever good you

have learnt therein, and by his instruction, which perhaps you were

really ignorant of before, tell us plainly what it is, that all may

know that it was for this particular benefit that you expressed your

obligations to him, and not for the manifold statements in his books

which call for their disapproval,--all, I mean, who, like yourself,

heard him read his writings, or who afterwards read the same for

themselves: lest in his ornate style they may drink poison, as out of a

choice goblet, at your instance, though not after your own example,

because they know not precisely what it is you have drunk yourself, and

what you have left untasted, and because, from your high character,

they suppose that whatever is drunk out of this fountain would be for

their health. For what else are hearing, and reading, and copiously

depositing things in the memory, than several processes of drinking?

The Lord, however, foretold concerning His faithful followers, that

even "if they should drink any deadly thing, it should not hurt them."

[2436] And thus it happens that they who read with judgment, and bestow

their approbation on whatever is commendable according to the rule of

faith, and disapprove of things which ought to be reprobated, even if

they commit to their memory statements which are declared to be worthy

of disapproval, they receive no harm from the poisonous and depraved

nature of the sentences. To myself, through the Lord's mercy, it can

never become a matter of the least regret, that, actuated by our

previous love, I have given your reverend and religious self advice and

warning on these points, in whatever way you may receive the admonition

for which I have regarded you as possessing the first claim upon me.

Abundant thanks, indeed, shall I give unto Him in whose mercy it is

most salutary to put one's trust, if this letter of mine shall either

find or else make your faith both free from the depraved and erroneous

opinions which I have been able herein to point out from this man's

books, and sound in catholic integrity.

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[2435] Ps. cxli. 5.

[2436] Mark xvi. 18.

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Book III.

Addressed to Vincentius Victor.

Augustin points out to Vincentius Victor the corrections which he ought

to make in his books concerning the origin of the soul, if he wishes to

be a Catholic. Those opinions also which had been already refuted in

the preceding books addressed to Renatus and Peter, Augustin briefly

censures in this third book, which is written to Victor himself:

moreover, he classifies them under eleven heads of error.

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Chapter 1 [I.]--Augustin's Purpose in Writing.

As to that which I have thought it my duty to write to you, my

much-loved son Victor, I would have you to entertain this above all

other thoughts in your mind, if I seemed to despise you, that it was

certainly not my intention to do so. At the same time I must beg of you

not to abuse our condescension in such a way as to suppose that you

possess my approval merely because you have not my contempt. For it is

not to follow, but to correct you, that I give you my love; and since I

by no means despair of the possibility of your amendment, I do not want

you to be surprised at my inability to despise the man who has my love.

Now, since it was my bounden duty to love you before you had united

with us, in order that you might become a catholic; how much more ought

I now to love you since your union with us, to prevent your becoming a

new heretic, and that you may become so firm a catholic that no heretic

may be able to withstand you! So far as appears from the mental

endowments which God has largely bestowed upon you, you would be

undoubtedly a wise man if you only did not believe that you were one

already, and begged of Him who maketh men wise, with a pious, humble,

and earnest prayer, that you might become one, and preferred not to be

led astray with error rather than to be honoured with the flattery of

those who go astray.

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Chapter 2 [II.]--Why Victor Assumed the Name of Vincentius. The Names

of Evil Men Ought Never to Be Assumed by Other Persons.

The first thing which caused me some anxiety about you was the title

which appeared in your books with your name; for on inquiring of those

who knew you, and were probably your associates in opinion, who

Vincentius Victor was, I found that you had been a Donatist, or rather

a Rogatist, but had lately come into communion with the catholic

Church. Now, while I was rejoicing, as one naturally does at the

recovery of those whom he sees rescued from that system of error,--and

in your case my joy was all the greater because I saw that your

ability, which so much delighted me in your writings, had not remained

behind with the enemies of truth,--additional information was given me

by your friends which caused me sorrow amid my joy, to the effect that

you wished to have the name Vincentius prefixed to your own name,

inasmuch as you still held in affectionate regard the successor of

Rogatus, who bore this name, as a great and holy man, and that for this

reason you wished his name to become your surname. Some persons also

told me that you had, moreover, boasted about his having appeared in

some sort of a vision to you, and assisted you in composing those books

the subject of which I have discussed with you in this small work of

mine, and to such an extent as to dictate to you himself the precise

topics and arguments which you were to write about. Now, if all this be

true, I no longer wonder at your having been able to make those

statements which, if you will only lend a patient ear to my admonition,

and with the attention of a catholic duly consider and weigh those

books, you will undoubtedly come to regret having ever advanced. For he

who, according to the apostle's portrait, "transforms himself into an

angel of light," [2437] has transformed himself before you into a shape

which you believe to have been, or still to be, an angel of light. In

this way, indeed, he is less able to deceive catholics when his

transformations are not into angels of light, but into heretics; now,

however, that you are a catholic, I should be sorry for you to be

beguiled by him. He will certainly feel torture at your having learnt

the truth, and so much the more in proportion to the pleasure he

formerly experienced in having persuaded you to believe error. With a

view, however, to your refraining from loving a dead person, when the

love can neither be serviceable to yourself nor profitable to him, I

advise you to consider for a moment this one point--that he is not, of

course, a just and holy man, since you withdrew yourself from the

snares of the Donatists or Rogatists on the score of their heresy; but

if you do think him to be just and holy, you ruin yourself by holding

communion with catholics. You are, indeed, only feigning yourself a

catholic if you are in mind the same as he was on whom you bestow your

love; and you are aware how terribly the Scripture has spoken on this

subject: "The Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the man who

feigns." [2438] If, however, you are sincere in communicating with us,

and do not merely pretend to be a catholic, how is it that you still

love a dead man to such a degree as to be willing even now to boast of

the name of one in whose errors you no longer permit yourself to be

held? We really do not like your having such a surname, as if you were

the monument of a dead heretic. Nor do we like your book to have such a

title as we should say was a false one if we read it on his tomb. For

we are sure Vincentius is not Victor, the conqueror, but Victus, the

conquered;--may it be, however, with fruitful effect, even as we wish

you to be conquered by the truth! And yet your thought was an astute

and skilful one, when you designated the books, which you wish us to

suppose were dictated to you by his inspiration, by the name of

Vincentius Victor; as much as to intimate that it was rather he than

you who wished to be designated by the victorious appellation, as

having been himself the conqueror of error, by revealing to you what

were to be the contents of your written treatise. But of what avail is

all this to you, my son? Be, I pray you, a true catholic, not a feigned

one, lest the Holy Spirit should flee from you, and that Vincentius be

unable to profit you at all, into whom the most malignant spirit of

error has transformed himself for the purpose of deceiving you; for it

is from that one that all these evil opinions have proceeded,

notwithstanding the artful fraud which has persuaded you to the

contrary. If this admonition shall only induce you to correct these

errors with the humility of a God-fearing man and the peaceful

submission of a catholic, they will be regarded as the mistakes of an

over-zealous young man, who is eager rather to amend them than to

persevere in them. But if he shall have by his influence prevailed on

you to contend for these opinions with obstinate perseverance, which

God forbid, it will in such a case be necessary to condemn them and

their author as heretical, as is required by the pastoral and remedial

nature of the Church's charge, to check the dire contagion before it

quietly spreads through the heedless masses, while wholesome correction

is neglected, under the name but without the reality of love.

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[2437] 2 Cor. xi. 14.

[2438] Wisd. i. 5.

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Chapter 3 [III.]--He Enumerates the Errors Which He Desires to Have

Amended in the Books of Vincentius Victor. The First Error.

If you ask me what the particular errors are, you may read what I have

written to our brethren, that servant of God Renatus, and the presbyter

Peter, to the latter of whom you yourself thought it necessary to write

the very works of which we are now treating, "in obedience," as you

allege, "to his own wish and request." Now, they will, I doubt not,

lend you my treatises for your perusal if you should like it, and even

press them upon your attention without being asked. But be that as it

may, I will not miss this present opportunity of informing you what

amendments I desire to have made in these writings of yours, as well as

in your belief. The first is, that you will have it that "The soul was

not so made by God that He made it out of nothing, but out of His own

very self." [2439] Here you do not reflect what the necessary

conclusion is, that the soul must be of the nature of God; and you know

very well, of course, how impious such an opinion is. Now, to avoid

such impiety as this, you ought so to say that God is the Author of the

soul as that it was made by Him, but not of Him. For whatever is of Him

(as, for instance, His only-begotten Son) is of the self-same nature as

Himself. But, that the soul might not be of the same nature as its

Creator, it was made by Him, but not of Him. Or, then, tell me whence

it is, or else confess that it is of nothing. What do you mean by that

expression of yours, "That it is a certain particle of an exhalation

from the nature of God"? Do you mean to say, then, that the exhalation

[2440] itself from the nature of God, to which the particle in question

belongs, is not of the same nature as God is Himself? If this be your

meaning, then God made out of nothing that exhalation of which you will

have the soul to be a particle. Or, if not out of nothing, pray tell me

of what God made it? If He made it out of Himself, it follows that He

is Himself (what should never be affirmed) the material of which His

own work is formed. But you go on to say: "When however, He made the

exhalation or breath out of Himself, He remained at the same time whole

and entire;" just as if the light of a candle did not also remain

entire when another candle is lighted from it, and yet be of the same

nature, and not another.

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[2439] See above, Book i. 4 and Book ii. 5.

[2440] Halitus (breath).

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Chapter 4 [IV.]--Victor's Simile to Show that God Can Create by

Breathing Without Impartation of His Substance.

"But," you say, "when we inflate a bag, no portion of our nature or

quality is poured into the bag, while the very breath, by the current

of which the filled bag is extended, is emitted from us without the

least diminution of ourselves." Now, you enlarge and dwell upon these

words of yours, and inculcate the simile as necessary for our

understanding how it is that God, without any injury to His own nature,

makes the soul out of His own self, and how, when it is thus made out

of Himself, it is not what Himself is. For you ask: "Is this inflation

of the bag a portion of our own soul? Or do we create human beings when

we inflate bags? Or do we suffer any injury in anything at all when we

impart our breath by inflation on diverse things? But we suffer no

injury when we transfer breath from ourselves to anything, nor do we

ever remember experiencing any damage to ourselves from inflating a

bag, the full quality and entire quantity of our breath remaining in us

notwithstanding the process." Now, however elegant and applicable this

simile seems to you, I beg you to consider how greatly it misleads you.

For you affirm that the incorporeal God breathes out a corporeal

soul,--not made out of nothing, but out of Himself,--whereas the breath

which we ourselves emit is corporeal, although of a more subtle nature

than our bodies; nor do we exhale it out of our soul, but out of the

air through internal functions in our bodily structure. Our lungs, like

a pair of bellows, are moved by the soul (at the command of which also

the other members of the body are moved), for the purpose of inhaling

and exhaling the atmospheric air. For, besides the aliments, solid or

fluid, which constitute our meat and drink, God has surrounded us with

this third aliment of the atmosphere which we breathe; and that with so

good effect, that we can live for some time without meat and drink, but

we could not possibly subsist for a moment without this third aliment,

which the air, surrounding us on all sides, supplies us with as we

breathe and respire. And as our meat and drink have to be not only

introduced into the body, but also to be expelled by passages formed

for the purpose, to prevent injury accruing either way (from either not

entering or not quitting the body); so this third airy aliment (not

being permitted to remain within us, and thus not becoming corrupt by

delay, but being expelled as soon as it is introduced) has been

furnished, not with different, but with the self-same channels both for

its entrance and for its exit, even the mouth, or the nostrils, or both

together.

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Chapter 5.--Examination of Victor's Simile: Does Man Give Out Nothing

by Breathing?

Prove now yourself what I say, for your own satisfaction in your own

case; emit breath by exhalation, and see whether you can continue long

without catching back your breath; then again catch it back by

inhalation, and see what discomfort you experience unless you again

emit it. Now, when we inflate a bag, as you prescribe, we do, in fact,

the same thing which we do to maintain life, except that in the case of

the artificial experiment our inhalation is somewhat stronger, in order

that we may emit a stronger breath, so as to fill and distend the bag

by compressing the air we blow into it, rather in the manner of a hard

puff than of the gentle process of ordinary breathing and respiration.

On what ground, then, do you say, "We suffer no injury whenever we

transfer breath from ourselves to any object, nor do we ever remember

experiencing any damage to ourselves from inflating a bag, the full

quality and entire quantity of our own breath remaining in us

notwithstanding the process"? It is very plain, my son, if ever you

have inflated a bag, that you did not carefully observe your own

performance. For you do not perceive what you lose by the act of

inflation by reason of the immediate recovery of your breath. But you

can learn all this with the greatest ease if you would simply prefer

doing so to stiffly maintaining your own statements for no other reason

than because you have made them--not inflating the bag, but inflated

yourself to the full, and inflating your hearers (whom you should

rather edify and instruct by veritable facts) with the empty prattle of

your turgid discourse. In the present case I do not send you to any

other teacher than your own self. Breathe, then, a good breath into the

bag; shut your mouth instantly, hold tight your nostrils, and in this

way discover the truth of what I say to you. For when you begin to

suffer the intolerable inconvenience which accompanies the experiment,

what is it you wish to recover by opening your mouth and releasing your

nostrils? Surely there would be nothing to recover if your supposition

be a correct one, that you have lost nothing whenever you breathe.

Observe what a plight you would be in, if by inhalation you did not

regain what you had parted with by your breathing outwards. See, too,

what loss and injury the insufflation would produce, were it not for

the repair and reaction caused by respiration. For unless the breath

which you expend in filling the bag should all return by the re-opened

channel to discharge its function of nourishing yourself, what, I

wonder, would be left remaining to you,--I will not say to inflate

another bag, but to supply your very means of living?

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Chapter 6.--The Simile Reformed in Accordance with Truth.

Well, now, you ought to have thought of all this when you were writing,

and not to have brought God before our eyes in that favourite simile of

yours, of inflated and inflateable bags, breathing forth souls out of

some other nature which was already in existence, just as we ourselves

make our breath from the air which surrounds us; or certainly you

should not, in a manner which is really as diverse from your similitude

as it is abundant in impiety, have represented God as either producing

some changeable thing without injury, indeed, to Himself, but yet out

of His own substance; or what is worse, creating it in such wise as to

be Himself the material of His own work. If, however, we are to employ

a similitude drawn from our breathing which shall suitably illustrate

this subject, the following one is more credible: Just as we, whenever

we breathe, make a breath, not out of our own nature, but, because we

are not omnipotent, out of that air that surrounds us, which we inhale

and discharge whenever we breathe and respire; and the said breath is

neither living nor sentient, although we are ourselves living and

sentient; so God can--not, indeed, out of His own nature, but (as being

so omnipotent as to be able to create whatever He wills) even out of

that which has no existence at all, that is to say, out of

nothing--make a breath that is living and sentient, but evidently

mutable, though He be Himself immutable.

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Chapter 7 [V.]--Victor Apparently Gives the Creative Breath to Man

Also.

But what is the meaning of that, which you have thought proper to add

to this simile, with regard to the example of the blessed Elisha

because he raised the dead by breathing into his face? [2441] Now, do

you really suppose that Elisha's breath was made the soul of the child?

I could not believe that even you could stray so far away from the

truth. If, now, that soul which was taken from the living child so as

to cause his death, was itself afterwards restored to him so as to

cause his restoration to life: where, I ask, is the pertinence of your

remark when you say "that no diminution accrued to Elisha," as if it

could be imagined that anything had been transferred from the prophet

to the child to cause his revival? But if you meant no more than that

the prophet breathed and remained entire, where was the necessity for

your saying that of Elisha, when raising the dead child, which you

might with no less propriety say of any one whatever when emitting a

breath, and reviving no one? Then, again, you spoke unadvisedly (though

God forbid that you should believe the breath of Elisha to have become

the soul of the resuscitated child!) when you intimated your meaning to

be a desire to keep separate what was first done by God from this that

was done by the prophet, in that the One breathed but once, and the

other thrice. These are your words: "Elisha breathed into the face of

the deceased child of the Shunammite, after the manner of the original

creation. And when by the prophet's breathing a divine force inspired

the dead limbs, reanimated to their original vigour, no diminution

accrued to Elisha, through whose breathing the dead body recovered its

revived soul and spirit. Only there is this difference, the Lord

breathed but once into man's face and he lived, while Elisha breathed

three times into the face of the dead and he lived again." Thus your

words sound as if the number of the breathings alone made all the

difference, why we should not believe that the prophet actually did

what God did. This statement, then, requires to be entirely revised.

There was so complete a difference between that work of God and this of

Elisha, that the former breathed the breath of life whereby man became

a living soul, and the latter breathed a breath which was not itself

sentient nor endued with life, but was figurative for the sake of some

signification. The prophet did not really cause the child to live again

by giving him life, but he procured God's doing that by giving him

love. [2442] As to what you allege, that he breathed three times,

either your memory, as often happens, or a faulty reading of the text,

must have misled you. Why need I enlarge? You ought not to be seeking

for examples and arguments to establish your point, but rather to amend

and change your opinion. I beg of you neither to believe, nor to say,

nor to teach "that God made the human soul not out of nothing, but out

of His own substance," if you wish to be a catholic.

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[2441] 2 Kings iv. 34.

[2442] In the original we have here another instance of Augustin's

frequent play on words, Non animando, sed amando: "not by ensouling but

by loving him," or "not by enlivening but by loving him."

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Chapter 8 [VI.]--Victor's Second Error. (See Above in Book I. 26

[XVI.].)

Do not, I pray you, believe, say, or teach that "Thus is God ever

giving souls through infinite time, just as He who gives is Himself

ever existent," if you wish to be a catholic. For a time will come when

God will not give souls, although He will not therefore Himself cease

to exist. Your phrase, "is ever giving," might be understood "to give

without cessation," so long as men are born and get offspring, even as

it is said of certain men that they are "ever learning, and never

coming to the knowledge of the truth." [2443] For this term "ever" is

not in this passage taken to mean "never ceasing to learn," inasmuch as

they do cease to learn when they have ceased to exist in this body, or

have begun to suffer the fiery pains of hell. You, however, did not

allow your word to be understood in this sense when you said "is ever

giving," since you thought that it must be applied to infinite time.

And even this was a small matter; for, as if you had been asked to

explain your phrase, "ever giving," more explicitly, you went on to

say, "just as He is Himself ever existent who gives." This assertion

the sound and catholic faith utterly condemns. For be it far from us to

believe that God is ever giving souls, just as He is Himself, who gives

them, ever existent. He is Himself ever existent in such a sense as

never to cease to exist; souls, however, He will not be ever giving;

but He will beyond doubt cease to give them when the age of generation

ceases, and children are no longer born to whom they are to be given.

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[2443] 2 Tim. iii. 7.

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Chapter 9 [VII.]--His Third Error. (See Above in Book II. 11 [VII.].)

Again, do not, I pray you, believe, say, or teach that "the soul

deservedly lost something by the flesh, although it was of good merit

previous to the flesh," if you wish to be a catholic. For the apostle

declares that "children who are not yet born, have done neither good

nor evil." [2444] How, therefore, could their soul, previous to its

participation of flesh, have had anything like good desert, if it had

not done any good thing? Will you by any chance venture to assert that

it had, previous to the flesh, lived a good life, when you cannot

actually prove to us that it even existed at all? How, then, can you

say: "You will not allow that the soul contracts health from the sinful

flesh; and to this holy state, then, you can see it in due course pass,

with the view of amending its condition, through that very flesh by

which it had lost merit"? Perhaps you are not aware that these

opinions, which attribute to the human soul a good state and a good

merit previous to the flesh, have been already condemned by the

catholic Church, not only in the case of some ancient heretics, whom I

do not here mention, but also more recently in the instance of the

Priscillianists.

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[2444] Rom. ix. 11.

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Chapter 10.--His Fourth Error. (See Above in Book I. 6 [VI.] and Book

II. 11 [VII.].)

Neither believe, nor say, nor teach that "the soul, by means of the

flesh, repairs its ancient condition, and is born again by the very

means through which it had deserved to be polluted," if you wish to be

a catholic. I might, indeed, dwell upon the strange discrepancy with

your own self which you have exhibited in the next sentence, wherein

you said that the soul through the flesh deservedly recovers its

primitive condition, which it had seemed to have gradually lost through

the flesh, in order that it may begin to be regenerated by the very

flesh through which it had deserved to be polluted." Here you--the very

man who had just before said that the soul repairs its condition

through the flesh, by reason of which it had lost its desert (where

nothing but good desert can be meant, which you will have to be

recovered in the flesh, by baptism, of course)--said in another turn of

your thought, that through the flesh the soul had deserved to be

polluted (in which statement it is no longer the good desert, but an

evil one, which must be meant). What flagrant inconsistency! but I will

pass it over, and content myself with observing, that it is absolutely

uncatholic to believe that the soul, previous to its incarnate state,

deserved either good or evil.

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Chapter 11 [VIII.]--His Fifth Error. (See Above in Book I. 8 [VIII.]

and Book II. 12 [VIII.].)

Neither believe, nor say, nor teach, if you wish to be a catholic, that

"the soul deserved to be sinful before any sin." It is, to be sure, an

extremely bad desert to have deserved to be sinful. And, of course, it

could not possibly have incurred so bad a desert previous to any sin,

especially prior to its coming into the flesh, when it could have

possessed no merit either way, either evil or good. How, then, can you

say: "If, therefore, the soul, which could not be sinful, deserved to

be sinful, it yet did not remain in sin, because as it was prefigured

in Christ it was bound not to be in a sinful state, even as it was

unable to be"? Now, just for a little consider what it is you say, and

desist from repeating such a statement. How did the soul deserve, and

how was it unable, to be sinful? How, I pray you tell me, did that

deserve to be sinful which never lived sinfully? How, I ask again, was

that made sinful which was not able to be sinful? Or else, if you mean

your phrase, "was unable," to imply inability apart from the flesh, how

in that case did the soul deserve to be sinful, and by reason of what

desert was it sent into the flesh, when previous to its union with the

flesh it was not able to be sinful, so as to deserve any evil at all?

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Chapter 12 [IX.]--His Sixth Error. (See Above in Book I. 10-12 [IX.,

X.], and in Book II. 13, 14 [IX., X.].)

If you wish to be a catholic, refrain from believing, or saying, or

teaching that "infants which are forestalled by death before they are

baptized may yet attain to forgiveness of their original sins." For the

examples by which you are misled--that of the thief who confessed the

Lord upon the cross, or that of Dinocrates the brother of St.

Perpetua--contribute no help to you in defence of this erroneous

opinion. As for the thief, although in God's judgment he might be

reckoned among those who are purified by the confession of martyrdom,

yet you cannot tell whether he was not baptized. For, to say nothing of

the opinion that he might have been sprinkled with the water which

gushed at the same time with the blood out of the Lord's side, [2445]

as he hung on the cross next to Him, and thus have been washed with a

baptism of the most sacred kind, what if he had been baptized in

prison, as in after times some under persecution were enabled privately

to obtain? or what if he had been baptized previous to his

imprisonment? If, indeed, he had been, the remission of his sins which

he would have received in that case from God would not have protected

him from the sentence of public law, so far as appertained to the death

of the body. What if, being already baptized, he had committed the

crime and incurred the punishment of robbery and lawlessness, but yet

received, by virtue of repentance added to his baptism, forgiveness of

the sins which, though baptized, he had committed? For beyond doubt his

faith and piety appeared to the Lord clearly in his heart, as they do

to us in his words. If, indeed, we were to conclude that all those who

have quitted life without a record of their baptism died unbaptized, we

should calumniate the very apostles themselves; for we are ignorant

when they were, any of them, baptized, except the Apostle Paul. [2446]

If, however, we could regard as an evidence that they were really

baptized the circumstance of the Lord's saying to St. Peter, "He that

is washed needeth not save to wash his feet," [2447] what are we to

think of the others, of whom we do not read even so much as

this,--Barnabas, Timothy, Titus, Silas, Philemon, the very evangelists

Mark and Luke, and innumerable others, about whose baptism God forbid

that we should entertain any doubt, although we read no record of it?

As for Dinocrates, he was a child of seven years of age; and as

children who are baptized so old as that can now recite the creed and

answer for themselves in the usual examination, I know not why he may

not be supposed after his baptism to have been recalled by his

unbelieving father to the sacrilege and profanity of heathen worship,

and for this reason to have been condemned to the pains from which he

was liberated at his sister's intercession. For in the account of him

you have never read, either that he was never a Christian, or died a

catechumen. But for the matter of that, the account itself that we have

of him does not occur in that canon of Holy Scripture whence in all

questions of this kind our proofs ought always to be drawn.

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[2445] John xix. 34.

[2446] Acts ix. 18.

[2447] John xiii. 10.

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Chapter 13 [X]--His Seventh Error. (See Above in Book II. 13 [IX.].)

If you wish to be a catholic, do not venture to believe, to say, or to

teach that "they whom the Lord has predestinated for baptism can be

snatched away from his predestination, or die before that has been

accomplished in them which the Almighty has predestined." There is in

such a dogma more power than I can tell assigned to chances in

opposition to the power of God, by the occurrence of which casualties

that which He has predestinated is not permitted to come to pass. It is

hardly necessary to spend time or earnest words in cautioning the man

who takes up with this error against the absolute vortex of confusion

into which it will absorb him, when I shall sufficiently meet the case

if I briefly warn the prudent man who is ready to receive correction

against the threatening mischief. Now these are your words: "We say

that some such method as this must be had recourse to in the case of

infants who, being predestinated for baptism, are yet, by the failing

of this life, hurried away before they are born again in Christ." Is it

then really true that any who have been predestinated to baptism are

forestalled before they come to it by the failing of this life? And

could God predestinate anything which He either in His foreknowledge

saw would not come to pass, or in ignorance knew not that it could not

come to pass, either to the frustration of His purpose or the discredit

of His foreknowledge? You see how many weighty remarks might be made on

this subject; but I am restrained by the fact of having treated on it a

little while ago, so that I content myself with this brief and passing

admonition.

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Chapter 14.--His Eighth Error. (See Above in Book II. 13 [IX.].)

Refuse, if you wish to be a catholic, to believe, or to say, or to

teach that "it is of infants, who are forestalled by death before they

are born again in Christ, that the Scripture says, Speedily was he

taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or

deceit beguile his soul. Therefore God hastened to take him away from

among the wicked; for his soul pleased the Lord; and being made perfect

in a short time he fulfilled long seasons.'" [2448] For this passage

has nothing to do with those to whom you apply it, but rather belongs

to those who, after they have been baptized and have progressed in

pious living, are not permitted to tarry long on earth,--having been

made perfect, not with years, but with the grace of heavenly wisdom.

This error however, of yours, by which you think that this scripture

was spoken of infants who die unbaptized, does an intolerable wrong to

the holy laver itself, if an infant, who could have been "hurried away"

after baptism, has been "hurried away" before this, for this

reason:--"lest wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit

beguile his soul." As if this "wickedness," and this "deceit which

beguiles the soul," and changes it for the worse, if it be not before

taken away, is to be believed to be in baptism itself! In a word, since

his soul had pleased God, He hastened to remove him out of the midst of

iniquity; and he tarried not for ever so little while, in order to

fulfil in him what He had predestinated; but preferred to act in

opposition to His predestined purpose, and actually hastened lest what

had pleased Him so well in the unbaptized child should be exterminated

by his baptism! As if the dying infant would perish in that, whither we

ought to run with him in our arms in order to save him from perdition.

Who, therefore, in respect of these words of the Book of Wisdom, could

believe, or say, or write, or quote them as having been written

concerning infants who die without baptism, if he only reflected upon

them with proper consideration?

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[2448] Wisd. iv. 11.

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Chapter 15 [XI.]--His Ninth Error. (See Above in Book II. 14 [X.].)

If you wish to be a catholic, I pray you, neither believe, nor say, nor

teach that "there are some mansions outside the kingdom of God which

the Lord said were in His Father's house." For He does not affirm, as

you have adduced his testimony, "There are with my Father (apud Patrem

meum) many mansions;" although, if He had even expressed Himself so,

the mansions could hardly be supposed to have any other situation than

in the house of His Father; but He plainly says, "In my Father's house

are many mansions." [2449] Now, who would be so reckless as to separate

some parts of God's house from the kingdom of God; so that, whilst the

kings of the earth are found reigning, not in their house only, nor

only in their own country, but far and wide, even in regions across the

sea, the King who made the heaven and the earth is not described as

reigning even over all His own house?

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[2449] John xiv. 2.

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Chapter 16.--God Rules Everywhere: and Yet the "Kingdom of Heaven" May

Not Be Everywhere.

You may, however, not improbably contend that all things, it is true,

belong to the kingdom of God, because He reigns in heaven, reigns on

earth, in the depths beneath, in paradise, in hell (for where does He

not reign, since His power is everywhere supreme?); but that the

kingdom of heaven is one thing, into which none are permitted to enter,

according to the Lord's own true and settled sentence, unless they are

washed in the laver of regeneration, while quite another thing is the

kingdom over the earth, or over any other parts of creation, in which

there may be some mansions of God's house; but these, although

appertaining to the kingdom of God, belong not to that kingdom of

heaven where God's kingdom exists with an especial excellence and

blessedness; and that it hence happens that, while no parts and

mansions of God's house can be rudely separated from the kingdom of

God, yet not all the mansions are prepared in the kingdom of heaven;

and still, even in the abodes which are not situated in the kingdom of

heaven, those may live happily, to whom, if they are even unbaptized,

God has willed to assign such habitations. They are no doubt in the

kingdom of God, although (as not having been baptized) they cannot

possibly be in the kingdom of heaven.

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Chapter 17.--Where the Kingdom of God May Be Understood to Be.

Now, they who say this, do no doubt seem to themselves to say a good

deal, because theirs is only a slight and careless view of Scripture;

nor do they understand in what sense we use the phrase, "kingdom of

God," when we say of it in our prayers, "Thy kingdom come;" [2450] for

that is called the kingdom of God, in which His whole family shall

reign with Him in happiness and for ever. Now, in respect of the power

which He possesses over all things, he is of course even now reigning.

What, therefore, do we intend when we pray that His kingdom may come

unless that we may deserve to reign with Him? But even they will be

under His power who shall have to suffer the pains of eternal fire.

Well, then, do we mean to predicate of these unhappy beings that they

too will be in the kingdom of God? Surely it is one thing to be

honoured with the gifts and privileges of the kingdom of God, and

another thing to be restrained and punished by the laws of the same.

However, that you may have a very manifest proof that on the one hand

the kingdom of heaven must not be parcelled out to the baptized, and

other portions of the kingdom of God be given to the unbaptized, as you

seem to have determined, I beg of you to hear the Lord's own words; He

does not say, "Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit,

he cannot enter into the kingdom or heaven;" but His words are, "he

cannot enter into the kingdom of God." His discourse with Nicodemus on

the subject before us runs thus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee,

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Observe,

He does not here say, the kingdom of heaven, but the kingdom of God.

And then, on Nicodemus asking Him in reply, "How can a man be born when

he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be

born?" the Lord, in explanation, repeats His former statement more

plainly and openly: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be

born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom

of God." Observe again, He uses the same phrase, the kingdom of God,

notthe kingdom of heaven. [2451] It is worthy of remark, that while He

varies two expressions in explaining them the second time (for after

saying, "Except a man be born again," He interprets that by the fuller

expression, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit;" and in like

manner He explains, "he cannot see," by the completer phrase, "he

cannot enter into"), He yet makes no variation here; He said "the

kingdom of God" the first time, and He afterwards repeated the same

phrase exactly. It is not now necessary to raise and discuss the

question, whether the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven must be

understood as involving different senses, or whether only one thing is

described under two designations. It is enough to find that no one can

enter into the kingdom of God, except he be washed in the laver of

regeneration. I suppose you perceive by this time how wide of the truth

it is to separate from the kingdom of God any mansions that are placed

in the house of God. And as to the idea which you have entertained that

there will be found dwelling among the various mansions, which the Lord

has told us abound in His Father's house, some who have not been born

again of water and the Spirit, I advise you, if you will permit me, not

to defer amending it, in order that you may hold the catholic faith.

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[2450] Matt. vi. 10.

[2451] John iii. 3-6.

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Chapter 18 [XII.]--His Tenth Error. (See Above in Book I. 13 [XI.] and

Book II. 15 [XI.]).

Again, if you wish to be a catholic, I pray you, neither believe, nor

say, nor teach that "the sacrifice of Christians ought to be offered in

behalf of those who have departed out of the body without having been

baptized." Because you fail to show that the sacrifice of the Jews,

which you have quoted out of the books of the Maccabees, [2452] was

offered in behalf of any who had departed this life without

circumcision. In this novel opinion of yours, which you have advanced

against the authority and teaching of the whole Church, you have used a

very arrogant mode of expression. You say, "In behalf of these, I most

certainly decide that constant oblations and incessant sacrifices must

be offered up on the part of the holy priests." Here you show, as a

layman, no submission to God's priests for instruction; nor do you

associate yourself with them (the least you could do) for inquiry; but

you put yourself before them by your proud assumption of judgment.

Away, my son, with all this pretension; men walk not so arrogantly in

the Way, which the Humble Christ taught that He Himself is. [2453] No

man enters through His narrow gate with so proud a disposition as this.

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[2452] 2 Macc. xii. 43.

[2453] John xiv. 6.

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Chapter 19 [XIII.]--His Eleventh Error. (See Above in Book I. 15 [XII.]

and Book II. 16.)

Once more, if you desire to be a catholic, do not believe, or say, or

teach that "some of those persons who have departed this life without

Christ's baptism, do not in the meantime go into the kingdom of heaven,

but into paradise; yet afterwards in the resurrection of the dead they

attain also to the blessedness of the kingdom of heaven." Even the

Pelagian heresy was not daring enough to grant them this, although it

holds that infants do not contract original sin. You, however, as a

catholic, confess that they are born in sin; and yet by some

unaccountable perverseness in the novel opinion you put forth, you

assert that they are absolved from that sin with which they were born,

and admitted into the kingdom of heaven without the baptism which

saves. Nor do you seem to be aware how much below Pelagius himself you

are in your views on this point. For he, being alarmed by that sentence

of the Lord which does not permit unbaptized persons to enter into the

kingdom of heaven, does not venture to send infants thither, although

he believes them to be free from all sin; whereas you have so little

regard for what is written, "Except a man be born again of water and of

the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," [2454] that (to

say nothing of the error which induces you recklessly to sever paradise

from the kingdom of God) you do not hesitate to promise to certain

persons, whom you, as a catholic, believe to be born under guilt, both

absolution from this guilt and the kingdom of heaven, even when they

die without baptism. As if you could possibly be a true catholic

because you build up the doctrine of original sin against Pelagius, if

you show yourself a new heretic against the Lord, by pulling down His

statement respecting baptism. For our own part, beloved brother, we do

not desire thus to gain victories over heretics: vanquishing one error

by another, and, what is still worse, a less one by a greater. You say,

"Should any one perhaps be reluctant to allow that paradise was

temporarily bestowed in the meantime on the souls of the dying thief

and of Dinocrates, while there still remains to them the reversion of

the kingdom of heaven at the resurrection, seeing that the principal

passage stands in the way of the opinion, Except a man be born again of

water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven,'

he may still hold my ungrudging assent on this point; only let him do

full honour to both the effect and the aim [2455] of the divine mercy

and foreknowledge." These are your own words, and in them you express

your agreement with the man who says that paradise is conferred on

certain unbaptized for a time, in such a sense that at the resurrection

there is in store for them the reward of the kingdom of heaven, in

opposition to "that principal passage" which has determined that none

shall enter into that kingdom who has not been born again of water and

the Holy Ghost. Pelagius was afraid to oppose himself to this

"principal passage" of the Gospel, and he did not believe that any

(whom he still did not suppose to be sinners) would enter into the

kingdom of heaven unbaptized. You, on the contrary, acknowledge that

infants have original sin, and yet you absolve them from it without the

laver of regeneration, and send them for a temporary residence in

paradise, and subsequently permit them to enter even into the kingdom

of heaven.

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[2454] John iii. 5.

[2455] Et effectum et affectum.

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Chapter 20 [XIV.]--Augustin Calls on Victor to Correct His Errors. (See

Above in Book II. 22 [XVI.].)

Now these errors, and such as these, with whatever others you may

perhaps be able to discover in your books on a more attentive and

leisurely perusal, I beg of you to correct, if you possess a catholic

mind; in other words, if you spoke in perfect sincerity when you said,

that you were not over-confident in yourself that what statements you

had made were all capable of proof; and that your constant aim was not

to maintain even your own opinion, if it were shown to be improbable;

and that it gave you much pleasure, if your own judgment were

condemned, to adopt and pursue better and truer sentiments. Well now,

my dear brother, show that you said this in no fallacious sense; so

that the catholic Church may rejoice in your capacity and character, as

possessing not only genius, but prudence withal, and piety, and

moderation, rather than that the madness of heresy should be kindled by

your contentious persistence in these errors. Now you have an

opportunity of showing also how sincerely you expressed your feelings

in the passage which immediately follows the satisfactory statement

which I have just now mentioned of yours. "For," you say, "as it is the

mark of every highest aim and laudable purpose to transfer one's self

readily to truer views; so it shows a depraved and obstinate judgment

to refuse to return promptly to the pathway of reason." Well, then,

show yourself to be influenced by this high aim and laudable purpose,

and transfer your mind readily to truer views; and do not display a

depraved and obstinate judgment by refusing to return promptly to the

pathway of reason. For if your words were uttered in frank sincerity,

if they were not mere sound of the lips, if you really felt them in

your heart, then you cannot but abhor all delay in accomplishing the

great good of correcting yourself. It was not, indeed, much for you to

allow, that it showed a depraved and obstinate judgment to refuse to

return to the pathway of reason, unless you had added "promptly." By

adding this, you showed us how execrable is his conduct who never

accomplishes the reform; inasmuch as even he who effects it but tardily

appears to you to deserve so severe a censure, as to be fairly

described as displaying a depraved and obstinate mind. Listen,

therefore, to your own admonition, and turn to good account mainly and

largely the fruitful resources of your eloquence; that so you may

promptly return to the pathway of reason, more promptly, indeed, than

when you declined therefrom, at an unstable period of your age, when

you were fortified with too little prudence and less learning.

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Chapter 21.--Augustin Compliments Victor's Talents and Diligence.

It would take me too long a time to handle and discuss fully all the

points which I wish to be amended in your books, or rather in your own

self, and to give you even a brief reason for the correction of each

particular. And yet you must not because of them despise yourself, so

as to suppose that your ability and powers of speech are to be thought

lightly of. I have discovered in you no small recollection of the

sacred Scriptures; but your erudition is less than was proportioned to

your talent, and the labour you bestowed on them. My desire, therefore,

is that you should not, on the one hand, grow vain by attributing too

much to yourself; nor, on the other hand, become cold and indifferent

by prostration or despair. I only wish that I could read your writings

in company with yourself, and point out the necessary emendations in

conversation rather than by writing. This is a matter which could be

more easily accomplished by oral communication between ourselves than

in letters. If the entire subject were to be treated in writing, it

would require many volumes. Those chief errors, however, which I have

wished to sum up comprehensively in a definite number, I at once call

your attention to, in order that you may not postpone the correction of

them, but banish them entirely from your preaching and belief; so that

the great faculty which you possess of disputation, may, by God's

grace, be employed by you usefully for edification, not for injuring

and destroying sound and wholesome doctrine.

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Chapter 22 [XV.]--A Summary Recapitulation of the Errors of Victor.

What these particular errors are, I have, to the best of my ability,

already explained. But I will run over them again with a brief

recapitulation. One is, "That God did not make the soul out of nothing,

but out of His own self." A second is, that "just as God who gives is

Himself ever existent, so is He ever giving souls through infinite

time." The third is, that "the soul lost some merit by the flesh, which

it had had previous to the flesh." The fourth is, that "the soul by

means of the flesh recovers its ancient condition, and is born again

through the very same flesh by which it had deserved to be polluted."

The fifth is, that "the soul deserved to be sinful, previous to any

sin." The sixth is, that "infants which are forestalled by death before

they are baptized, may yet attain to forgiveness of their original

sins." The seventh is, that "they whom the Lord has predestinated to be

baptized may be taken away from his predestination, or die before that

has been accomplished in them which the Almighty has predestined." The

eighth is, that "it is of infants who are fore-stalled by death, before

they are born again in Christ, that the Scripture says, Speedily was he

taken away, lest wickedness should alter his understanding,'" with the

remainder of the passage to the same effect in the Book of Wisdom. The

ninth is, that "there are outside the kingdom of God some of those

mansions which the Lord said were in His Father's house." The tenth is,

that "the sacrifice of Christians ought to be offered in behalf of

those who have departed out of the body without being baptized." The

eleventh is, that "some of those persons who have departed this life

without the baptism of Christ do not in the meanwhile go into the

kingdom, but into paradise; afterwards, however, in the resurrection of

the dead, they attain even to the blessedness of the kingdom of

heaven."

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Chapter 23.--Obstinacy Makes the Heretic.

Well, now, as for these eleven propositions, they are extremely and

manifestly perverse and opposed to the catholic faith; so that you

should no longer hesitate to root them out and cast them away from your

mind, from your words, and from your pen, if you are desirous that we

should rejoice not only at your having come over to our catholic

altars, but at your being really and truly a catholic. For if these

dogmas of yours are severally maintained with pertinacity, they may

possibly engender as many heresies as they number opinions. Wherefore

consider, I pray you, how dreadful it is that they should be all

concentrated in one person, when they would, if held severally by

various persons, be every one of them damnable in each holder. If,

however, you would in your own person cease to fight contentiously in

their defence, nay, would turn your arms against them by faithful words

and writings, you would acquire more praise as the censurer of your own

self than if you directed any amount of right criticism against any

other person; and your amendment of your own errors would bring you

more admiration than if you had never entertained them. May the Lord be

present to your heart and mind, and by His Spirit pour into your soul

such readiness in humility, such light of truth, such sweetness of

love, and such peaceful piety, that you may prefer being a conqueror of

your own spirit in the truth, than of any one else who gainsays it with

his errors. But I do not by any means wish you to think, that by

holding these opinions you have departed from the catholic faith,

although they are unquestionably opposed to the catholic faith; if so

be you are able, in the presence of that God whose eye infallibly

searches every man's heart, to look back on your own words as being

truly and sincerely expressed, when you said that you were not

over-confident in yourself as to the opinions you had broached, that

they were all capable of proof; and that your constant aim was not to

persist in your own sentiments, if they were shown to be improbable;

inasmuch as it was a real pleasure to you, when any judgment of yours

was condemned, to adopt and pursue better and truer thoughts. Now such

a temper as this, even in relation to what may have been said in an

uncatholic form through ignorance, is itself catholic by the very

purpose and readiness of amendment which it premeditates. With this

remark, however, I must now end this volume, where the reader may rest

a while, ready to renew his attention to what is to follow, when I

begin my next book.

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Book IV.

Addressed to Vincentius Victor.

He first shows, that his hesitation on the subject of the origin of

souls was undeservedly blamed, and that he was wrongly compared with

cattle, because he had refrained from any rash conclusions on the

subject. Then, again, with regard to his own unhesitating statement,

that the soul was spirit, not body, he points out how rashly Victor

disapproved of this assertion, especially when he was vainly expending

his efforts to prove that the soul was corporeal in its own nature, and

that the spirit in man was distinct from the soul itself.

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Chapter 1 [I.]--The Personal Character of This Book.

I Must now, in the sequel of my treatise, request you to hear what I

desire to say to you concerning myself--as I best can; or rather as He

shall enable me in whose hand are both ourselves and our words. For you

blamed me on two several occasions, even going so far as to mention my

name. In the beginning of your book you spoke of yourself as being

perfectly conscious of your own want of skill, and as being destitute

of the support of learning; and, when you mentioned me, bestowed on me

the complimentary phrases of "most learned" and "most skilful." But

yet, all the while, on those subjects in which you seemed to yourself

to be perfectly acquainted with what I either confess my ignorance of,

or presume with no unbecoming liberty to have some knowledge of,

you--young as you are, and a layman too--did not hesitate to censure

me, an old man and a bishop, and a person withal whom in your own

judgment you had pronounced most learned and most skilful. Well, for my

own part, I know nothing about my great learning and skill; nay, I am

very certain that I possess no such eminent qualities; moreover, I have

no doubt that it is quite within the scope of possibility, that it may

fall to the lot of even an unskilful and unlearned man occasionally to

know what a learned and skilful person is ignorant of; and in this I

plainly commend you, that you have preferred to merely personal regard

a love of truth,--for if you have not understood the truth, yet at any

rate you have thought it such. This you have done no doubt with

temerity, because you thought you knew what you were really ignorant

of; and without restraint, because, having no respect of persons, you

chose to publish abroad whatever was in your mind. You ought therefore

to understand how much greater our care should be to recall the Lord's

sheep from their errors; since it is evidently wrong for even the sheep

to conceal from the shepherds whatever faults they have discovered in

them. O that you censured me in such things as are indeed worthy of

just blame! For I must not deny that both in my conduct and in my

writings there are many points which may be censured by a sound judge

without temerity. Now, if you would select any of these for your

censure, I might be able by them to show you how I should like you to

behave in those particulars which you judiciously and fairly condemned;

moreover, I should have (as an elder to a younger, and as one in

authority to him who has to obey) an opportunity of setting you an

example under correction which should not be more humble on my part

than wholesome to both of us. With respect, however, to the points on

which you have actually censured me, they are not such as humility

obliges me to correct, but such as truth compels me partly to

acknowledge and partly to defend.

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Chapter 2 [II.]--The Points Which Victor Thought Blameworthy in

Augustin.

And they are these: The first, that I did not venture to make a

definite statement touching the origin of those souls which have been

given, or are being given, to human beings, since the first

man--because I confess my ignorance of the subject; the second, because

I said I was sure the soul was spirit, not body. Under this second

point, however, you have included two grounds of censure: one, because

I refused to believe the soul to be corporeal; the other, because I

affirmed it to be spirit. For to you the soul appears both to be body

and not to be spirit. I must therefore request your attention to my own

defence against your censure, and ask you to embrace the opportunity

which my self-defence affords you of learning what points there are in

yourself also which require your amendment. Recall, then, the words of

your book in which you first mentioned my name. "I know," you say,

"many men of very great reputation who when consulted have kept

silence, or admitted nothing clearly, but have withdrawn from their

discussions everything definite when they commence their exposition. Of

such character are the contents of sundry writings which I have read at

your house by a very learned man and renowned bishop, called Augustin.

The truth is, I suppose, they have with an overweening modesty and

diffidence investigated the mysteries of this subject, and have

consumed within themselves the judgment of their own treatises, and

have professed themselves incapable of determining anything on this

point. But, I assure you, it appears to me excessively absurd and

unreasonable that a man should be a stranger to himself; or that a

person who is supposed to have acquired the knowledge of all things,

should regard himself as unknown to his very self. For what difference

is there between a man and a brute beast, if he knows not how to

discuss and determine his own quality and nature? so that there may

justly be applied to him the statement of Scripture: Man, although he

was in honour, understood not; he is like the cattle, and is compared

with them.' [2456] For when the good and gracious God created

everything with reason and wisdom, and produced man as a rational

animal, capable of understanding, endowed with reason, and lively with

sensation,--because by His prudent arrangement He assigns their place

to all creatures which do not participate in the faculty of

reason,--what more incongruous idea could be suggested, than that God

had withheld from him the simple knowledge of himself? The wisdom of

this world, indeed, is ever aiming with much effort to attain to the

knowledge of truth; its researches, no doubt, fall short of the aim,

from its inability to know through what agency it is permitted that

truth should be ascertained; but yet there are some things on the

nature of the soul, near (I might even say, akin) to the truth which it

has attempted to discern. Under these circumstances, how unbecoming and

even shameful a thing it is, that any man of religious principle should

either have no intelligent views on this very subject, or prohibit

himself from acquiring any!"

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[2456] Ps. xlix. 12.

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Chapter 3.--How Much Do We Know of the Nature of the Body?

Well, now, this extremely lucid and eloquent castigation which you have

inflicted on our ignorance lays you so strictly under the necessity of

knowing every possible thing which appertains to the nature of man,

that, should you unhappily be ignorant of any particular, you must (and

remember it is not I, but you, that have made the necessity) be

compared with "the cattle." For although you appear to aim your censure

at us more especially, when you quote the passage, "Man, although he

was in honour, understood not," inasmuch as we (unlike yourself) hold

an honourable place in the Church; yet even you occupy too honourable a

rank in nature, not to be preferred above the cattle, with which

according to your own judgment you will have to be compared, if you

should happen to be ignorant on any of the points which manifestly

appertain to your nature. For you have not merely aspersed with your

censure those who are affected with the same ignorance as I am myself

labouring under, that is to say, concerning the origin of the human

soul (although I am not indeed absolutely ignorant even on this point,

for I know that God breathed into the face of the first man, and that

"man then became a living soul," [2457] --a truth, however, which I

could never have known by myself, unless I had read of it in the

Scripture); but you asked in so many words, "What difference is there

between a man and a brute beast, if he knows not how to discuss and

determine his own quality and nature?" And you seem to have entertained

your opinion so distinctly, as to have thought that a man ought to be

able to discuss and determine the facts of his own entire quality and

nature so clearly, that nothing concerning himself should escape his

observation. Now, if this is really the truth of the matter, I must now

compare you to "the cattle," if you cannot tell me the precise number

of the hairs of your head. But if, however far we may advance in this

life, you allow us to be ignorant of sundry facts appertaining to our

nature, I then want to know how far your concession extends, lest,

perchance, it may include the very point we are now raising, that we do

not by any means know the origin of our soul; although we know,--a

thing which belongs to faith,--beyond all doubt, that the soul is a

gift to man from God, and that it still is not of the same nature as

God Himself. Do you, moreover, think that each person's ignorance of

his own nature must be exactly on the same level as your ignorance of

it? Must everybody's knowledge, too, of the subject be equal to what

you have been able to attain to? So that if he is so unfortunate as to

possess a slightly larger amount of ignorance than yourself, you must

compare him with cattle; and on the same principle, if any one shall be

ever so little wiser than yourself on this subject, he will have the

pleasure of comparing you with equal justice to the aforesaid cattle. I

must therefore request you to tell me, to what extent you permit us to

be ignorant of our nature so as to save our distance from the

formidable cattle; and I beg you besides duly to reflect, whether he is

not further removed from cattle who knows his ignorance of any part of

the subject, than he is who thinks he knows what in fact he knows not.

The entire nature of man is certainly spirit, soul, and body;

therefore, whoever would alienate the body from man's nature, is

unwise. Those medical men, however, who are called anatomists have

investigated with careful scrutiny, by dissecting processes, even

living men, so far as men have been able to retain any life in the

hands of the examiners; their researches have penetrated limbs, veins,

nerves, bones, marrow, the internal vitals; and all to discover the

nature of the body. But none of these men have ever thought of

comparing us with the cattle, because of our ignorance of their

subject. But perhaps you will say that it is those who are ignorant of

the nature of the soul, not of the body, who are to be compared with

the brute beasts. Then you ought not to have expressed yourself at

starting in the way you have done. Your words are not, "For what

difference is there between a man and cattle, if he is ignorant of the

nature and quality of the soul;" but you say, "if he knows not how to

discuss and determine his own nature and quality." Of course our

quality and our nature must be taken account of together with the body,

but at the same time the investigation of the several elements of which

we are composed is conducted in each case separately. For my own part,

indeed, if I wished to display how far it was in my power to treat

scientifically and intelligently the entire field of man's nature, I

should have to fill many volumes; not to mention how many topics there

are which I must confess my ignorance of.

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[2457] Gen. ii. 7.

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Chapter 4 [III.]--Is the Question of Breath One that Concerns the Soul,

or Body, or What?

But to what, in your judgment, does that which we discussed in our

former book concerning the breath of man belong?--to the nature of the

soul, seeing that it is the soul which effects it in man; or to that of

the body, since the body is moved by the soul to effect it; or to that

of this air, by whose alternation of action it is discovered to effect

it; or rather to all three, that is to say, to the soul as that which

moves the body, and to the body which by its motion receives and emits

the breath, and also to the circumambient air which raises by its

entrance, and by its departure depresses? And yet you were evidently

ignorant of all this, learned and eloquent though you are, when you

supposed, and said, and wrote, and read in the presence of the crowd

assembled to hear your opinion, that it was out of our own nature that

we inflated a bag, and yet had no diminution of our nature at all by

the operation; although you might most easily ascertain how we

accomplish the process, not by any tedious examination of the pages

either of human or of inspired writings, but by a simple investigation

of your own physical action, whenever you liked. This, then, being the

case, how can I trust you to teach me concerning the origin of

souls,--a subject which I confess myself to be ignorant of,--you who

are actually ignorant of what you are doing unintermittingly with your

nose and mouth, and of why you are doing it? May the Lord bring it to

pass that you may be advised by me, and accept rather than resist so

manifest a truth, and one so ready to your hand. May you also not

interrogate your lungs about the bag inflation in such a temper as to

prefer inflating them in opposition to me, rather than acquiesce in

their tuition, when they answer your inquiry with entire truth,--not by

speech and altercation, but by breath and respiration. Then I could

bear with you patiently while you correct and reproach me for my

ignorance of the origin of souls; nay, I could even warmly thank you,

if, besides inflicting on me rebuke, you would convince me with truth.

For if you could teach me the truth I am ignorant of, it would be my

duty to bear with all patience any blows you might deal against me, not

in word only, but even with hand.

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Chapter 5 [IV.]--God Alone Can Teach Whence Souls Come.

Now with respect to the question between us, I confess to your loving

self [2458] I greatly desire to know one of two things if I

can,--either concerning the origin of souls, of which I am ignorant, or

whether this knowledge is within our reach so long as we are in the

present life. For what if our controversy touches the very points of

which it is enjoined to us, "Seek not out the things that are too high

for thee, neither search the things that are above thy strength; but

whatever things the Lord hath commanded and taught thee, think

thereupon for evermore." [2459] This, then, is what I desire to know,

either from God Himself, who knows what He creates, or even from some

competently learned man who knows what he is saying, not from a person

who is ignorant of the breath he heaves. It is not everybody who

recollects his own infancy; and do you suppose that a man is able,

witho